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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 19 March 2014

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WEDNESDAY, 19 MARCH 2014

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

TABLED PAPER

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Seeney)—

[4679](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Seeney) to a paper petition (2214-14) presented by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3), from 6,090 petitioners, requesting the House to discontinue investigations into any shipping terminal developments along the Gold Coast and instead promote the Broadwater and other coastal areas as essential assets for the city

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Bus and Train Tunnel

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.01 pm): This government is getting on with the job of delivering better infrastructure through better planning. Earlier today I announced the name and released the draft reference design for the underground bus and train project, or the BaT Tunnel. This government is now getting down to the business end of the modelling and consultation for this once-in-a-generation project, a project that will unlock the future of public transport through the heart of Brisbane. The jewel in the crown will be the new George Street station, now planned for 63 George Street, directly across the road from the Queens Wharf project and within a stone's throw of QUT and thousands of university students, delivering on their travel needs.

A second river crossing dedicated to public transport was talked about by Labor for years and years and years and years and years. I probably missed a year or two there! But it was never delivered. I digress; I remember well Peter Beattie sitting on the fast bullet train in Shanghai, from Pudong Airport into town, and talking about that. Was it September 2005 or September 2006?

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: It was September 2005. They never delivered. They talked and talked, but they never delivered. Their proposals lacked vision. They were unaffordable and only solved half of the problem, half of the challenges facing the growing South-East Queensland region.

In contrast, what we will deliver is one of the most innovative public transport connections in the world. I was delighted to be joined this morning at the Gabba by the Treasurer, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Lord Mayor and also the member for Brisbane Central. Also with us at the announcement was one very special guest, Ms Lynne Doyle from Capalaba. I want to congratulate her because Lynne Doyle had the winning entry in our naming competition, which saw over 1,000 entries. I was delighted to be there for the presentation of her prize, which is a go card with six months free travel which Minister Emerson presented—the only gold go card in the system. She will have six months free travel on the public transport system across South-East Queensland. More importantly, her suggestion will become a part of Brisbane's and, indeed, Queensland's history.

With the naming and the release of the draft reference design, we are one step closer to delivering this world-class public transport project for Brisbane. Now we want more community input. There will be six community information sessions taking place from 27 March to 9 April in and around Brisbane. A virtual information session will also take place online on Monday, 14 April from noon to 2 pm, and information displays will be available for viewing at six Brisbane City Council libraries as well as the State Library of Queensland. I would urge anyone interested in the BaT Tunnel to jump online or visit a session over the next four weeks and speak to the project team to have their say.

We promised to revitalise front-line services. We promised to deliver better infrastructure through better planning, and this project delivers on that promise. We are also a government that is listening and we were very keen to hear from the community and, indeed, industry. I look forward to hearing the feedback from Queenslanders because it is their project. Thanks to this can-do government, it will be delivered.

Planning Reform

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.05 pm): Planning reform is at the heart of our government's strategy for growing the Queensland economy and ensuring affordable housing for Queenslanders. Our aim has been to create the most efficient and effective planning and development assessment system in Australia, and we have taken great strides towards reaching that goal. I am pleased to announce to the House that our efforts to reform planning policy in Queensland have also not gone unnoticed in the planning world. Last night in Sydney, SARA, the State Assessment and Referral Agency, won a major national planning award at the Planning Institute of Australia's 2014 awards. I want to record my congratulations to Greg Chemello and his team in my department for their great effort. SARA has now been nationally recognised as a driver of planning excellence and is being looked at by other states. SARA was introduced by my department to simplify the way development applications were referred to and assessed by the state. It is a one-stop shop, a whole-of-government development assessment coordinator. The Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning became the single point for state assessment referrals in July 2013 to make the approvals process much more streamlined. Before this, under the Labor government, developers and councils were juggling proposals through multiple state agencies who often contradicted themselves, a process which cost valuable time and money and produced inconsistent outcomes and eroded business confidence. Last night's national award follows SARA's recognition at the state Planning Institute awards here in Brisbane last year.

The Newman government is delivering on its promise to provide better planning and infrastructure for all Queenslanders. Our efforts to unravel the red tape that has constrained our property and construction industry are clearly working. The latest data shows that over 24 consecutive monthly increases Queensland's total trend dwelling approvals were 45.2 per cent higher over the year to January 2014 compared to the national figures of just 28 per cent over the same period. Building starts are also up, reflecting boosted confidence in Queensland's construction industry. There is more to come to create the most efficient and effective planning and development system in Australia. The next cab off the rank will be the planning for Queensland's development bill, which will simplify Queensland's planning and development system and replace the cumbersome Sustainable Planning Act 2009. We will continue to consult and work with councils, businesses and stakeholders to drive the necessary reforms. We are getting on with ensuring Queensland remains a great state with great opportunity.

Queensland Economy

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.08 pm): Queensland is a growing state and, if we want to maintain that quality of life that Queenslanders enjoy today, the government will need to be able to provide the necessary front-line services. When we consider what services might be needed, we have to confront some sobering numbers. By 2036 Queensland will have a population of between 6.9 million and 7.7 million people. Taking the medium-level projection, we will need to provide services for 7.1 million people. In that time the percentage of Queenslanders over 65—perhaps there are even some in this chamber—will have increased from around 13 per cent now to almost 20 per cent by 2036. In reality, there will be 1.4 million people over 65—Premier, that is you and me and a couple of those opposite—needing the services that older Queenslanders require, and more than a quarter of a million of them will be over 85. At the same time, the number of school-age children in Queensland will increase by almost 400,000. This government is looking to the future of our great state and we need to plan now how we will fund the services Queensland will need in the coming decades. The road, the rails, the hospitals and the schools for seven million Queenslanders need to be considered now.

One thing we know is that we will not be able to fund that infrastructure if we are still burdened with the highest per capita government debt levels of any state. Since I spoke in the House yesterday there has been another \$13 million in Labor interest payments on that Labor debt that is headed towards \$80 billion—another \$13 million of Labor interest in one day alone! I welcome the news today—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I beg your pardon? I am just waiting for an interjection. I welcome the news today—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: Madam Speaker, I do not know why he is so bashful with his interjections. I welcome the news today that the Queensland Council of Unions has accepted the offer to take part in discussions on how to pay down some of that debt so we can securely fund our future. As you have heard me say, I am keen to hear the views of all Queenslanders on the issue. I know the Council of Unions' president, John Battams, does recognise that debt is a problem; he has come out and said that. He is keen on the idea of raising property taxes as a solution, and that is certainly one idea. It would mean that every Queenslander with superannuation will be paying off Labor's spending spree via their superannuation fund's property investments. It would mean that every Queenslander in rented accommodation would be paying through increased rents. It would mean that every Queenslander who has tried to secure his or her own future by buying an investment property would also be paying. That is one view, Madam Speaker, but we want to hear the views of those Queenslanders, too, as we consider the choices before us—the ones who are paying the taxes.

As I have said before, all state governments have limited options for raising funds. If we want the same quality of life for future Queenslanders that we enjoy today, then we need to confront the choices before us to ensure that that future generation will have access to the services and infrastructure that will ensure Queensland remains a great state full of great opportunity.

Crime and Corruption Commission

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.11 pm): I rise to advise the House that I propose to introduce legislation today to give effect to, amongst other things, two separate reports delivered last year under the operations of the Crime and Misconduct Commission by the independent advisory panel comprising the Hon. Ian Callinan AC and Professor Nicholas Aroney, and the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee report consequent to the CMC's release and destruction of Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry documents.

The aim of these changes is to create a new Crime and Corruption Commission and refocus the work of that commission on combating major crime and corruption activities. At the same time we propose reforming the upper governance structure of the organisation to give effect to the PCMC's recommendation in relation to the appointment of a CEO.

The government believes that the CMC has served the people of Queensland well in various forms since its inception. However, in view of the difficulties that emerged last year, it is time to bring the CMC into the 21st century. What may have seemed appropriate some 25 years ago is no longer necessarily appropriate to combat the changing face of crime and corruption which challenges our contemporary society. We cannot afford a rear-vision mirror strategy in our efforts to fight crime and corruption. We must make use of the best tools available. By refocusing the new Crime and Corruption Commission, we will put in place the best possible mechanisms to achieve this end.

Solicitor-General, Resignation

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.13 pm): I also advise the House that yesterday I received a letter from the Solicitor-General, Mr Walter Sofronoff QC, advising of his resignation from that office. Mr Sofronoff has served in this office since 2005, after having been admitted to the bar in 1977 and taking silk in 1988. In that role he developed an unquestionable reputation as one of the state's—if not Australia's—most formidable advocates.

As one of Queensland's most respected counsel, he has also served as president of the Bar Association of Queensland, president of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Tribunal and a member of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting. He is a qualified mediator and a member of the legal panel in the Royal Australian Navy Reserve. Over the last two years Mr Sofronoff has provided significant advice to the government on a wide range of important matters. I instance in particular legal and strategic advice in relation to dealing with criminal gangs and advice in relation to sexual offenders. The government appreciates Mr Sofronoff's service to the state, and I extend my personal thanks to him and wish him well for the future.

Emergency Services

 **Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (2.14 pm): There are few things more important to the people of Queensland than a rapid response when a life is in danger. Emergency service workers put their lives on the line at a moment's notice to ensure that every Queenslanders is safe when severe weather or natural disaster strike. That is why this government has committed a record half a billion dollars to our fire and emergency services, and this government wants to ensure that our hardworking emergency services remain world leaders in their fields.

Disaster happens anywhere at any time, and we need to be in the best position to manage and help affected communities. From swift water rescue, emergency helicopters, volunteer marine rescue and disaster recovery, this government values the contribution of our hardworking staff and particularly our volunteers. For these vital emergency services to continue, we need to have a stable funding model not just for this year but also for the decades and future generations to come—future generations those opposite displayed a striking disregard for, leaving nothing but a legacy of \$80 billion in Labor debt. After disaster struck, true to form the former Labor government opposite would simply borrow more money to pay for the recovery, plunging Queenslanders even further into debt.

The emergency management levy ensures Queenslanders will not be subjected to such irresponsible financial Labor mismanagement. The Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, the assistant minister and I met on this very matter back in February. We have been talking with the community over the past few months, and this government is listening to their concerns. I am pleased to announce a proposal to make amendments to the levy. This will allow community organisations like churches, showgrounds, libraries and community halls with an E-class category to be exempt from this levy. Under this proposal it will be up to community organisations who believe they are eligible to apply directly to councils for an exemption. I expect this proposal will commence on 1 July this year, and any approved community organisation that has already paid the levy would also be eligible for a refund. Reporting obligations for local government will also be made more flexible for one year to allow the implementation of these important changes.

Unlike the ALP, this government is about listening to the community and boosting front-line services. We are about ensuring that when Queenslanders are in trouble emergency services can respond. As we all know, this is a great state with great opportunity. But it is also a safe state, and we are committed to providing ongoing support for our hardworking front-line services.

Oral Health Services, Waiting Lists

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.17 pm): This government is building Australia's best free public health system here in Queensland. I am pleased to advise members of further progress towards addressing the Labor legacy of long public dental waiting lists in this state. Long dental waiting times for public patients up to a decade and more were an intractable problem under the former government; now they are being consigned to history. Under the National Partnership Agreement on treating more dental patients, the Newman LNP government committed \$39 million in extra funding in 2013-14.

I am very pleased to advise that, as a result of Queensland Health exceeding the performance targets set under the National Partnership Agreement for December 2013, a \$30 million award payment from the Commonwealth government is now due. This will reimburse much of the extra funding that has been provided to Hospital and Health Services to treat dental waiting list patients.

When the national partnership commenced in late February 2013, there were 112,000 people waiting for check-ups on public dental waiting lists across Queensland; 62,000—or 55 per cent—of these people had been waiting for longer than two years and, as I indicated, some of them for more than a decade. At the end of February 2014 the total number of people waiting for a check-up has reduced to 62,000, with approximately 4,000 people—or just six per cent—waiting for longer than two years. In 12 months that is an overall reduction from 112,000 waiting for a check-up to 62,000 and a long-wait reduction from 62,000 Queenslanders to just 4,000. This is a wonderful achievement, and I would congratulate Queensland public health dentists and the private sector for their partnership in achieving this.

Hospital and health services have continued to work with private dental practices to ensure more eligible patients receive dental treatment, and those patients do not have a hang-up as to whether they are treated publicly or privately. Vouchers are provided to people who have been on

public dental waiting lists for long periods. However, many patients requiring urgent dental care are also given a voucher. Over the last year vouchers for private treatment were sent to more than 89,000 people. Of these vouchers, 53,000 were to provide urgent care, 32,500 were for those waiting for a check-up, and 3,000 were for people waiting for a denture. At the end of February 2014, 93 per cent of recipients had completed their treatment to the value of about \$35 million. In the 12 months since February 2013, 17 per cent of publicly funded dental treatment has been delivered in partnership with the private sector compared with less than two per cent in recent years, particularly under those opposite. While progress to date has been encouraging, there is still more work to be done to ensure waiting times for dental check-ups and access to urgent dental care meet the needs of all eligible Queenslanders.

Kindergarten Services

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (2.20 pm): As the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, I inform the House of yet another example of how this government is delivering on its election promise to revitalise front-line services. We know that access to quality education in the early years offers lifelong benefits to our children. This is why I am delighted to advise the House that more Queensland children are now attending kindergarten than ever before. The latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that 97.4 per cent of Queensland children are attending kindergarten in the year prior to starting their full-time schooling. This represents a vast improvement over recent years. My department reported kindy attendance rates of 29 per cent in 2008 and 77 per cent in 2012.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: It is not thanks to Labor, because we have taken it from 29 per cent to 77 per cent. We are supporting kindy participation in Queensland. Thanks to the support from the federal government, we have been able to significantly increase access to kindergarten services in Queensland. Just this year we have 19 new or extended kindergarten services opening—thanks to the LNP, not the Labor Party. That is more than 5,700 extra places for Queensland children—thanks to the LNP, not the Labor Party. We are investing in quality infrastructure. Some \$34 million has been provided to kindy services to undertake renovations or refurbishments—thanks to the LNP, not the Labor Party. We are providing subsidies to support kindy programs. There are now approximately 1,220 long-day-care services approved to deliver kindy programs. We also acknowledge that we have more work to do in supporting kindy participation across Queensland, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and we have a number of strategies in place such as over 180 kids now enrolled in e-kindy distance education—thanks to the LNP, not Labor; \$1.9 million to support children with disability participate in a kindy program; and grants available to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children transition between home and early childhood settings.

This government recognises the importance of supporting the transition between each stage of a child's education—from kindy to primary school, to high school and then to further education. We will continue to work with the federal government to encourage attendance and participation in early childhood education as a means of achieving better results all the way through from crayon to career. Ultimately, that is why this government is focused on lifting student outcomes and providing a solid foundation for Queensland's future prosperity so we remain a great state with great opportunity.

Small Business, Business and Industry Portal

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.23 pm): Queensland's 410,000 small businesses are the backbone of our four-pillar economy, representing some 96 per cent of all registered businesses in Queensland. The Newman government knows that a strong and thriving small business sector is key to growing our economy, creating jobs and revitalising front-line service delivery. We are committed to supporting our small businesses by giving them the tools to prosper and develop in an increasingly competitive market. We recognise that a small business operator's time is scarce and they require access to information that suits their schedule, not someone else's. My department is paving the way for next generation service delivery today through the business and industry portal—our one-stop shop for business interaction with the state government. The BIP, as it is affectionately known, has grown from strength to strength, now offering more than 700 products and services designed to equip our small businesses with the tools and know-how to help them grow. The website content is updated regularly to ensure that we are providing the most up-to-date and relevant information, and the proof is in the pudding. The BIP is delivering for small business with over 1.4 million unique visitors logging

on in the financial year to date, an increase of 134 per cent on the same period last financial year. But that is not surprising when one considers that the BIP has saved Queensland businesses a quarter of a billion dollars in time and money over the last two years.

Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, the government is further boosting assistance to small business via a free 10-part digital learning series called webinars, running from today until late May. Webinars are becoming increasingly popular with small business, with thousands benefiting from our online services during 2012-13. Operators have the opportunity to log in live to these sessions or view the recording of the webinar at a time that is convenient to them and their business. From social media to social engine optimisation, these new practical webinars will provide small business operators with cutting-edge techniques aimed at ensuring they remain competitive in the digital age. I encourage small business operators across Queensland to sign up for upcoming webinars. They can register for any of the sessions and also access essential information and tools on the BIP at www.business.qld.gov.au/events.

Nature Play Queensland

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (2.26 pm): The Newman government is focusing on front-line services and is delivering real outcomes for Queenslanders. We have seen significant drops in waiting lists for public housing, hospitals and more boots on the beat. I commend my colleagues for these and other significant achievements and for giving Queenslanders hope for a brighter, healthier future full of opportunities in this great state. I recently announced Nature Play Queensland. It is an initiative that encourages Queensland communities to value nature and encourages families to prioritise nature play in their children's lives. It is about moving our kids from screen time to green time and making playing outdoors and exploring our national parks and forests a bigger part of their everyday lives. Nature Play began as an initiative of the Western Australia government and is currently delivered through Nature Play Western Australia, a not-for-profit organisation. The Queensland government is partnering with Nature Play Western Australia and is the first government to bring this great initiative to the east coast of Australia.

Childhood obesity is reaching epidemic proportions in Queensland and this is a fun and practical solution to getting the whole community involved. Unstructured outdoor play is fundamental to a full and healthy childhood and to help build the foundations for lifelong health and fitness as well as a sense of environmental responsibility. The Nature Play concept includes a passport, a website with over 200 missions that can be completed and special Nature Play events. It will include missions such as nature scavenger hunts, climbing a hill or making a bushwalking stick, providing plenty of fun and excitement at the same time as getting our kids outside and fit and healthy. I am pleased to announce that I have approved funding of \$1.5 million over three years to establish Nature Play Queensland and implement this initiative right throughout the state. This is yet another exciting initiative to deliver on our election promise to revitalise front-line services and increase Queensland children's involvement in recreation and sport. It is about giving our children a passport to better health, fitness and a future full of opportunities in a great state.

Natural Resources, Projects

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.28 pm): The Newman government is committed to delivering tangible benefits and outcomes for Queenslanders for generations to come. One of our election promises was to address bread and butter environmental issues and support sustainable agriculture and natural resource management projects and the groups who deliver these projects across Queensland. We support the productive and responsible use of our natural resources and improvements to the quality of Queensland's land and water resources—something that was unfortunately all too often ignored by Labor in favour of slogans and spin and regulation and red tape. In contrast, we are committed to working with and supporting regional bodies and community groups to achieve the best outcomes for the management of Queensland's land and water resources to ensure the people of this state see the benefits for generations to come.

To ensure that we deliver on this commitment we have chosen a number of projects that will deliver real changes and real benefits and result in tangible outcomes for Queensland's natural resources. These projects will provide a significant boost in natural resource management—projects worth \$31 million over the next three years right across the state.

In particular, this historic investment is helping to strengthen the agriculture pillar of the Queensland economy. The projects receiving a share of this \$31 million funding injection have a strong on-the-ground focus in line with the government's regional natural resource management goals, including a diverse range of initiatives that will deliver important outcomes.

Importantly, we will improve our land and water resources to help protect Queensland's iconic Great Barrier Reef—a cornerstone of our tourism industry. With more than \$9 million of funding—

Madam SPEAKER: I ask the minister to wrap up.

Mr CRIPPS: Madam Speaker, certainly. More than \$9 million of this funding will be allocated to on-the-ground projects in Great Barrier Reef catchments. A range of pest, weed and feral animal controls, sustainable agriculture and water-quality projects will be rolled out across the state.

This \$31 million commitment will ensure that our natural resource management groups, who are the custodians of invaluable local knowledge and expertise in managing natural resources in the regions, are able to make a real difference to the health of the environment at a regional, local catchment and landscape level.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner, Report

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (2.30 pm): Chapter 13 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 gives the CMC the power to obtain warrants or emergency authorisations for surveillance devices. The PPRA requires the parliamentary commissioner to inspect the records of the CMC from time to time to determine the level of compliance with chapter 13 by the CMC and its officers.

The parliamentary commissioner reported to the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee on 17 December 2013 in relation to his inspection of the CMC surveillance device warrant records between 16 April and 13 November 2013. All surveillance device warrants and retrieval warrants were in compliance with the relevant sections of the PPRA.

Section 363(5) of that act provides that I must table the parliamentary commissioner's report within 14 sitting days of receipt. Accordingly, I lay upon the table of the House a letter from the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner enclosing his report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Misconduct Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000.

Tabled paper: Office of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner: Report on the Results of the Inspection of the Records of the Crime and Misconduct Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 [[4680](#)].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Madam SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 3.32 pm.

Solicitor-General, Resignation

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (2.32 pm): My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney-General outline to the House in detail the reasons the Solicitor-General gave for his sudden resignation and will he today table the resignation letter?

Mr BLEIJIE: Madam Speaker, thank you.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Treasurer. I am somewhat surprised by the question, I must admit. I have come to this chamber ill-prepared for such a question. It has hit me for six. Before I get into the answer, I have to say that I hear a lot of my ministerial colleagues in this place, particularly the honourable Treasurer and Deputy Premier, complaining that they do not get asked enough questions in this place.

Mr Seeney: I don't get any.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. This is my second question in two years from anyone over that side. So I know my honourable colleagues complain and I have remained silent about it.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The shadow Attorney-General, I am not sure, because if the number of questions in this House is anything to go by then—

Ms Palaszczuk: If you can't answer it, sit down.

Mr BLEIJIE: I can answer the honourable member. It is a very shadow Attorney-General.

The point is this. As I have said—and obviously the opposition leader was not listening when I made my ministerial statement—Mr Walter Sofronoff is one of the most eminent barristers in Australia. The way in which the operation works in Queensland is a little different from that of other jurisdictions. The Solicitor-General in Queensland, whilst maintaining a private practice, is the Solicitor-General and he is paid a fee for that. The reasons for the Solicitor-General resigning are completely a matter for the Solicitor-General. It is not for me, it is not for members of this House, it is not for the opposition leader; it is completely a matter for the Solicitor-General. I suggest that if the opposition leader wants to know why the Solicitor-General resigned then she should ask him. His phone number is available on the Bar Association website.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. There are too many exchanges between my left and my right.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Although they have one of the most overresourced oppositions, if they want 40c from Treasury to make a phone call to the Solicitor-General's office I am sure that the Treasurer will put up his hand, happy to oblige that request. Again, I want to thank Walter Sofronoff QC. He has been the Solicitor-General in this state for nine years. He was appointed, of course, by the previous government but he has been a great Solicitor-General providing both advice and strategic advice dealing with the important matters of ridding the state of Queensland of criminal gangs. In fact, if we look at the RICO legislation and our antigang legislation, which is based on the RICO legislation, I thank the Solicitor-General for the advice that he has given with respect to those laws, because those laws are revolutionary in Australia. No other jurisdiction has them. So on behalf of the government I reiterate my previous comments and thank Walter Sofronoff QC, the Solicitor-General, for the tremendous service that he has given to the people of Queensland.

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the resignation of two breast cancer surgeons as a result of the minister's contract crisis, and I ask: how many patients were on the schedule for surgery from those doctors this week?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for the question. I just counsel the honourable Leader of the Opposition for jumping to such conclusions, because if people resign from Queensland Health for any particular reason they have an obligation to provide three months notice. When they provide three months notice, that provides us with the perfect opportunity to address anything that happens around that and to make sure that we are able to backfill those positions and that we are able to bring in additional resources to assist in that way. The other thing that I will say to the honourable Leader of the Opposition is that there are some people at the moment who are proposing to give notice of resignation. If they give notice of resignation, that can be around for years and years; it is never triggered until the time it is formally provided and then it triggers three months so that we are able to backfill and make sure that patients are properly dealt with. I can assure the honourable Leader of the Opposition that we will continue in this case and others to ensure that those patients are not disadvantaged.

Indeed, as we have already indicated by our record to date, we are doing far more in the area of elective surgery, in urgent, non-urgent and also semi-urgent cases to address the concerns of patients in this state. So there will be no disadvantage. In Queensland, for the last full year of the previous government there were around 7,700 FTE public health doctors. As at the end of the financial year 2013, there were 8,300 FTE public health doctors in Queensland—a growth of 600 in FTE. So we are continually appointing more and more doctors in Queensland Health and we will continue to do that. I have already indicated to the honourable Leader of the Opposition my assurances around that.

I would also like to indicate to the House today that there is no reason for people to claim resignation as a valid reason for not wanting to continue their service with Queensland Health. There are a number of issues that were outstanding. Those issues have been addressed by our addendum to our contract, which is very clearly around the agreed solutions document, which Queensland Health was able to work through on Monday with—

Ms Palaszczuk: Why don't you table it?

Mr SPRINGBORG: The member should just settle down. She is showing more interest in Health now than she did over the previous 10 or 15 years. It is a great pity that she did not do it when there were fake Tahitian princes and payroll systems blowing up and people dying in the back of ambulances because of bypass and all of those sorts of things.

All of the issues have been addressed and I will table that. Not only that, I also table a letter that I sent to Dr Steve Hambleton, outlining proposed changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act as well.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Contract Addendum: Contract implementation arrangements for Senior Medical Officers and Visiting Medical Officers' [4681].

Tabled paper: Department of Health document, undated, titled 'SMO and VMO Contracts—Solutions' [4682].

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from the Minister for Health, Hon. Lawrence Springborg, to the President of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Steve Hambleton, regarding senior medical staff contracts [4683].

(Time expired)

Gold Coast, Front-line Services

Mr MOLHOEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, what work is the government undertaking to provide better government services for the people of my electorate and to improve services on the Gold Coast more generally?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. We are determined to deliver the best possible services to all residents of the Gold Coast and particularly, of course, the honourable member's electorate and other electorates on the coast. That commitment, that focus, is in stark contrast to those opposite who for years neglected all sorts of front-line services on the Gold Coast. Where will I start? Where was the home of the criminal motorcycle gangs? Answer: the Gold Coast. Did those opposite do anything about it? No, they did not. What about the hospital down there? How many years did it take for them to get on and deliver the new world-class hospital that has just been delivered in the last year or so? Queensland Health was plagued with failures, like the \$1.2 billion health payroll system that did not pay people, did not pay them on time or paid them incorrectly. What about the fake Tahitian prince? That was \$16 million down the river.

Today Queensland Health is a much different organisation and the Gold Coast is reaping the benefits from improvements in front-line services. Those opposite were asking about front-line services before. They were back on their same scare campaign. Remember, honourable members, they ran a sad, shameful breast cancer scare campaign almost two years ago. They are at it again this afternoon.

I can confirm for the honourable member who asked the question that 92 per cent of category 1 and 91 per cent of category 2 patients, the most urgent elective surgery patients at the Gold Coast Hospital, are getting their operations within the benchmark times now compared to 89 per cent of category 1 and 78 per cent of category 2 patients two years ago. That sounds like an improvement to me. At the emergency department of the Gold Coast Hospital just 61 per cent of patients were being seen within the four-hour benchmark in March 2012. It is now 71 per cent. Even the honourable member for Mulgrave could understand that improvement. We have seen inroads into the Gold Coast long wait dental waiting list. At the end of March 2013 there were just 4,407 patients on the list. Now there is just one person. Again the member for Mulgrave might be able to understand that statistic.

But it is not just in health. The Gold Coast police head count increased by 106 officers from 681 to 787 between April 2012 and March 2014. That is helping to reduce crime. We know that armed robberies are down 42 per cent. Those opposite want to throw out those laws that empower our police to deal with criminal gangs. Gold Coast schools received an extra \$28.3 million from the school maintenance fund and the Great Results Guarantee. This year the new Pimpama State Secondary College opened to 300 year 7 and 8 Gold Coast students and a new primary school is under construction.

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Mr MULHERIN: My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister commit to making changes to the Industrial Relations Act that medical specialists have insisted upon to resolve the medical crisis?

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Health, but I do note that this is crossing over into another portfolio.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I suppose the honourable member has again jumped from his slumber. He has probably missed that over the last little while that he has been the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I would love to be so multitalented as to be able to have that particular portfolio, but obviously the Attorney-General has that portfolio and is doing an exceptionally good job in that particular area. I look forward to a follow-up question to the honourable minister responsible for that.

Madam SPEAKER: I apologise, minister, I have accidentally switched off your microphone.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Would you like to me to start again? I am more than happy to do it in case Sleepy Mulherin still has to catch up. I am sure the honourable member for Mackay would be very delighted by the fact that since the Newman government has been elected we have invested an additional \$35 million, a 13.5 per cent increase, into the Mackay Hospital and Health Service. Despite the fact that the Commonwealth government ruthlessly ripped millions of dollars out of that particular hospital and health service it continues to do exceptionally well under the stewardship of the chairman, Col Meng, and the CE, Kerry McGovern. They are meeting their particular benchmarks when it comes to elective surgery and other areas of surgery exceptionally well. I am sure the honourable member is delighted about that.

I have always said, in relation to the issue of the medical contracts, that we would be able to provide an environment of ensuring that we have a more accountable and robust way of providing appropriate remuneration for highly paid Queensland public health clinicians. That is what we have been able to do. There were always going to be some issues as we transitioned to the direct relationship between doctors and their employers—that is, the hospital and health boards—with regard to the processes which were needed to oversight dispute resolution, dismissal and those sorts of things. There has been an opportunity to perfectly align them in a consistent way by the addendum to the contract which we have actually put out to doctors today on the agreed solutions which we actually spoke about with doctors' representatives on Monday. It concerns me that some who are participating in that were not back to us early enough today with regard to that so what we have done is send out to doctors directly the agreed solutions criteria and they will have a chance to see that and read it in context. In the last week or so as we have moved around the state there has been a growing level of comfort that the issues which have been raised can be appropriately addressed.

I have indicated that we have made those particular changes through addendum and that we are happy to make a change to the Hospital and Health Boards Act which restricts the power that either the Public Service Commissioner or the Director-General has had for 15 years to change unilaterally an employment instrument. That will no longer be the case.

Investment, Front-Line Services

Mr RUTHENBERG: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer outline the choices that Queenslanders face so that the government can continue to invest in the front-line services this state needs and are there any alternative views?

Mr NICHOLLS: Heigh-ho, heigh-ho and off to work we go. Another day in parliament and not another question from those opposite, notwithstanding their best efforts. We are now at 141 days since I have been asked a question by those opposite.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am sorry, Attorney, that you have had even fewer than those. But at 141 days, another day, another \$10.8 million in Labor interest on the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt that we are heading towards. That is another \$10.8 million that could have been spent on delivering front-line services. As I have said on a number of occasions and again today, the state is on the cusp of a period of economic growth, but we are also facing big challenges. The government wants to continue to invest in the front-line services that this growing state needs. We have already increased funding to key front-line areas like health, education and law and order and we are achieving real results, but the \$4 billion annual interest bill, as we head towards Labor's \$80 billion debt, is stretching our ability to invest in services. Our government has been open with the people of Queensland about the choices that we as a state face: they are to massively increase taxes, fees and charges, to reduce services or to investigate the sale or lease of mature government businesses.

I can say from my early round tables across Queensland that there has not been much support for massively increasing taxes, as has been suggested by the union heavyweight, Mr John Battams. Mr Battams's only solution to the debt problem is to massively increase property and payroll taxes. In December last year Mr Battams was out arguing for a jobs-destroying increase in payroll tax. Indeed, Mr Battams was out again last week arguing for increased land taxes. Here is what he said—

Queensland has property taxes much less than other states. These reduced taxes only benefit millionaires and billionaires, not ordinary Queenslanders.

That was Mr Battams on ABC Radio on 12 March. Mr Battams should at least get some credit for coming up with an idea because it is more than the most well resourced opposition in Queensland has been able to do in the last two years. They have come up with no solutions to date. The time has now come for the opposition to outline what its plan is. Is its plan the union movement plan? Is the union movement simply flying a kite for the Labor Party and is this the ALP's secret plan to increase land taxes and payroll taxes? We need to know—the people of Queensland need to know—if the opposition leader supports those tax hikes that have been suggested by the person she stands beside at rallies around the place. The people of Queensland deserve to know if the shadow Treasurer agrees with Mr Battams's comments that lower land taxes in Queensland only benefit millionaires and billionaires and not ordinary people who rent or have an investment property.

(Time expired)

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Burns Unit

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister confirm that patient services at the burns unit at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital have been reduced as a result of the government's dispute with medical specialists?

Madam SPEAKER: Before I call the minister, I can hear too many conversations from down the back.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Bundamba for her question. Indeed, it is an amazing honour. I received two questions in one year and now two questions in two days. I am sure that in such a case, there will be a union rule that will say she needs some form of extended break—an RDO or the equivalent for a week or a month. I am absolutely unaware of any circumstances where patient safety has been compromised in any way by the circumstances alleged by the honourable member opposite. I can indicate that if anyone were to resign as part of this, they are required to give three months notice to make sure that their patients are not left in limbo. Indeed, as I said before, we have had a significant increase in doctor numbers in Queensland Health since the election of the Newman government. There were roughly 7,700 in the previous full year of the government of those opposite, and 8,300 under our first year in government. That is quite significant. Also, there are record numbers of interns, there are more residents than ever before and so on. Therefore, I do not accept the proposition that has been put forward.

On average, around 200 doctors leave the employ of Queensland Health each and every year, whether under the government of those opposite or under ours. Doctors come and go. Like a lot of things that they say, this contention is wrong. If anyone resigns, they are required to give three months notice so that we can ensure that we address the issues of handover and appropriate and proper care for patients. This government and the doctors, who may or may not be involved in what they allege, have concern for patient care. Doctors may choose to leave Queensland Health for whatever reason. Under our government and that of those opposite, that involves about 200 doctors each year, but we are recruiting more. We will not leave any patient wanting. There is no way that we will do that. Indeed, doctors are committed to their patients and they will not do it as well, because they know that there needs to be a continuity of care plan. If a doctor resigns, they cannot leave straight away under the requirements of the laws that currently exist, which were put in place by honourable members opposite. I simply say this: there is no reason for any doctor to leave as a consequence of these current discussions, because the guarantees and reassurances that they want are actually contained in the addendum and the other supporting—

(Time expired)

Foster and Kinship Carers

Mrs OSTAPOVITCH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister outline what steps the government is taking to improve front-line services in the child protection system, particularly with respect to foster carers?

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for the question and I thank her for her very keen interest in promoting the great work of our carers, particularly last week during Foster and Kinship Carer Week, which we celebrated right across the state. When it comes to our most vulnerable children, you cannot get more front line than our foster and kinship carers. Those carers are at the very heart of an effective child protection system and this government is getting on with the job of supporting, recruiting and retaining those quite wonderful Queenslanders. I am pleased to inform the House that between July 2012 and September 2013 we have seen an increase of 312 carers across

the state. That is an increase per month of nearly 21 carers who are opening their hearts and their homes to those children. To put that into context, that is about double the rate of carers added in the three years from July 2009 to June 2012, when only 11 carers per month were being recruited.

That has not happened by accident. We have been taking a grassroots approach. We have been working to spread the message that the attraction of being a carer is that you can make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable young Queenslanders. Unlike those opposite, we are not simply relying on glitzy advertising campaigns. We are doing the hard work to attract the right people to the front line. We have also made it easier to become a foster carer through a more streamlined recruitment process. This compares to the very convoluted processes that existed under the previous Labor government led by those opposite.

Yesterday in the House, I acknowledged foster and kinship carers, some of whom were in the gallery at the time. The assistant minister and I had the privilege of sharing a cup of coffee with them afterwards because, unlike those opposite, we genuinely want to listen to them because they are providing such a great front-line service. When you consider the front-line job that they do, those carers should be heard and we are listening. At the end of the day, we all want the same result: we want to achieve the very best outcomes for those who cannot safely live at home with their families. We are supporting all carers and not just new carers. Recently, we announced that we will be extending the carer business card to foster and kinship carers and that has been very well received. This government is delivering on our commitment to revitalise front-line services, particularly in child protection. I will continue to update the House about the great work that our foster and kinship carers are doing.

Herberton Range National Park

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for National Parks. I table an article from the *Atherton Tablelander*, which contains reference to a promise by the previous LNP shadow minister for the environment that he would not lock up state forests, including forests converting to national parks.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Atherton Tablelander*, dated Tuesday, 5 April 2011, titled 'Trail trials' [\[4684\]](#).

Will the minister advise when the logging tracks in the Carrington section of the Herberton Range National Park will be opened for the use of the Tablelands forest user groups?

Mr DICKSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. The Newman government is all about opening up our national parks for ecotourism facilities. We are happy to look at any proposition that is sensible and that will not impact on the beauty and pristine nature of our national parks throughout Queensland. We have 12½ million hectares of protected land throughout Queensland. We take very seriously our responsibility to it. We are unlike some people who wish to go out there and do silly things in national parks and we are unlike the opposition that really did not look after our national parks. They let them become degraded, they did not care for them and they did not maintain them in the way that we are doing right now. We demonstrate what we do through actions, not words.

At the moment, we are going on the great pig hunt to protect our endangered turtle species up and down the east coast of Queensland. We are spending millions of dollars in a joint venture with the federal government to deliver positive outcomes for our state. There will be \$3.5 million from the Queensland government and \$3.5 million from the federal government, at a spend rate of \$4 million straight up this financial year. As all members would be aware, up and down the east coast up to 90 per cent of our nesting turtle populations are being decimated. We are taking action. We are delivering outcomes, unlike those opposite who sat on their hands and did nothing for the environment. They are the great pretenders when it comes to trying to look after the environment. As I have said on numerous occasions, our government is sincere.

I will talk about a matter that has just happened today in Queensland. We have made a great announcement down at the David Fleay Wildlife Park, where a platypus has been saved by our side of politics. About 10 weeks ago, a platypus weighing just over 100 grams was found. Today, I can proudly announce that Wally, a great representative of the David Fleay Wildlife Park, weighs 550 grams and has been saved by our parks and wildlife rangers. He will be a great representative of the David Fleay Wildlife Park. Dr Fleay would be extremely proud of the LNP government for delivering another positive outcome for the environment. That is what our side of politics is about. We will never stop caring.

As members would have heard from the ministerial statement that I made a moment ago, Nature Play provides a great opportunity for young children to become involved in our environment. Children are going to get out there, they are going to look at our national parks and they are going to

protect them into the future, just as our side of politics is doing. Let us not forget what Labor did. It was out there pretending to look after national parks, but it had management plans for only 17 per cent. They were going to spend \$60 million over 30 years, which was never going to be achieved. However, our side of politics continues to move forward and continues to protect national parks. We are not the pretenders; we are the real deal and we will continue to move forward into the future. After this sitting I am very happy to talk to the member for Dalrymple about any proposition he would like to put forward.

Public Transport

Mr KAYE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please advise the House how the Newman government is improving front-line services for public transport passengers?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Greenslopes, a great advocate for public transport, for his question. Tomorrow marks the two-month anniversary of the introduction of our new train timetables and the introduction of 1,000 additional weekly services on our train system.

Ms Trad: A great Labor initiative.

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane. She says it is a great Labor initiative. They had 14 years in office—they could've, they would've, they should've, but they didn't. That is the reality. They had 14 years in office and they still could not deliver that. We have delivered 1,000 additional weekly services. Tomorrow is the two-month anniversary of that.

I have some good news. I can now confirm and inform the House that we are seeing 27,000 additional passenger trips per week in the last two months compared to the same period last year. That is 27,000 additional passenger trips per week compared to the same period last year. The delivery of front-line services and the delivery of public transport services is the result of good management by the LNP government.

That is what we have done in our time in office compared to Labor's time in office. Let us not forget that while we are delivering extra services we have maintained reliability. It is 10 percentage points higher than what we were seeing under Labor. It is a 10-year high when it comes to rail reliability as opposed to the three-year low under the now Leader of the Opposition when she was transport minister. We have introduced extra services and we are seeing 27,000 additional passenger trips per week at the moment. Let us not forget that in terms of affordability we cut Labor's fare increases. We cut the Leader of the Opposition's planned 15 per cent fare increases.

The other week we introduced a change in our policies in terms of boom gates. There was a boom gate strike at Newmarket on Monday. Previously that boom gate would have been down for an hour and services would have been delayed for an hour. Under our new policy, when the lights are working and it is safe to do so we move trains through. That delay was 10 minutes compared to an hour.

Our reliability has been maintained. We have introduced additional services. We cut Labor's planned fare increases. Extra passenger services are now underway. This is what we continue to deliver as a government as opposed to the appalling record of Labor under the appalling record of the now Leader of the Opposition when she was transport minister. They failed to deliver anything but 15 per cent fare increases. I can confirm that we will not be going back to the bad old days of Labor and 15 per cent fare increases year after year after year after year.

(Time expired)

Oakey Creek, Irrigation

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Does the minister think it is viable for irrigators on Oakey Creek to lose 40 per cent of their part A licence and 60 per cent of their part B licence? Will the minister review this situation?

Madam SPEAKER: I will allow the member to rephrase the question. You are not allowed to put the question as an opinion. I will give you another chance. I remind members to be careful with the standing orders relating to questions. I call the member for Condamine.

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. It is certainly not viable for irrigators on Oakey Creek to lose 40 per cent of their part A licence and 60 per cent of their part B licence. Can the minister review this situation?

Mr CRIPPS: I thank the member for the question. I can advise the member that I am well aware of the scenario he is talking about. In fact, I have had the pleasure of visiting the irrigators on that particular watercourse and discussing with them their arrangements with respect to taking water

from the Oakey and Gowrie Creek system. They have been taking water from that watercourse for the purposes of irrigated agriculture for some time. In recent times they have run into some difficulties with respect to accessing a volume of water that they have previously relied upon because of changed arrangements to the supply of water to that system.

The part of the question and the part of this scenario that the member for Condamine has failed to advise the House about is that a certain level of flow in that particular watercourse is provided for by releases from the Toowoomba Regional Council's water treatment plant.

Mr Seeney: Eighty per cent.

Mr CRIPPS: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. A very significant proportion of the flow in that watercourse system has been provided by periodic releases by the Toowoomba Regional Council from their water treatment plant.

For the information of the House, the situation is that the Toowoomba Regional Council, and it is totally within their remit, have had the opportunity to enter into commercial arrangements with a customer to secure a supply of water from the Oakey-Gowrie Creek system on a commercial basis. They have entered into those arrangements. That is entirely within their remit. They probably have an obligation to the ratepayers of Toowoomba Regional Council to maximise the revenue that they are able to recover from their water treatment facilities.

In respect of the water resource planning arrangements and the resource operations planning arrangements that the member particularly referred to, I can assure him that in planning for the amendments to the resource operations plan that relate to that watercourse and the system, I am leaving provisions in the review process to incorporate the rules that are used by the water users in that system pending the outcome of a current court case that is on foot between the irrigators and the Toowoomba Regional Council about the water resources in that particular system. I am accommodating that because I am sympathetic to their position. But the arrangements for the release of the water that the member is referring to into the Oakey-Gowrie Creek system is not under my control and is subject to current court action.

Government Services, One-Stop Shop

Mr RICKUSS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. How will the one-stop shop—a great initiative by this government—outlet service pilot in the Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim area help deliver front-line services to Queenslanders?

Mr WALKER: I thank the honourable member for his question. It was certainly good to be with him in Gatton to discuss with the people of Gatton the pilot that the government proposes in the Scenic Rim and Lockyer Valley areas. Only a few weeks earlier I was with the member for Beaudesert in his electorate to look at how we should structure this pilot and to hear exactly what it is that people want from the government in designing the one-stop shop for government services. The purpose of this, if I can inform members once again, is to ensure that those who deal with the Queensland government do so in ways that best suit them—hopefully with one click, one telephone call or one attendance at a counter.

It was good to hear from the focus group that we had in Gatton. I sat at one of the tables for the first session. The member for Lockyer rather threateningly roamed the room, going from table to table listening to what was said. A lot of the points that came up were I know of particular interest to that community. It is a transport hub and we had some transport operators there who explained to us the difficulties they often have getting registration done quickly and getting transport inquiries attended to in an appropriate way. There was a great article in the *Gatton Star* about this. I might table that just to show the particular concerns that the transport industry have there.

Tabled paper: Article in the *Gatton Star*, dated Wednesday, 19 March 2014, titled 'Taking one-stop shop, Lockyer chosen to give input into government services' [[4685](#)].

The ordinary people of Gatton who attended that seminar and that feedback session certainly told us that what they wanted and what they needed was a situation where if they make an inquiry of government they do not have to repeat what they want a number of times, that they can get through to someone quickly without having to repeat their request, that they can speak to someone who knows what it is that they want and who can give them an appropriate answer, that there is access not only online but by phone and, where necessary, personal access as well.

The reason we have picked this pilot area—it is an area that covers Gatton, Laidley, Boonah, Beaudesert and Mount Tamborine—is that it covers a range of suburban, urban and rural areas of Queensland and gives us a feel for how we might provide this service right around Queensland. So

the government goes to the people of Queensland in relation to this program wanting to hear what they want, keen to react to what it is that they have to say and wanting to ensure that the way we structure the architecture of the one-stop shop adequately deals with the needs of people throughout Queensland.

We are not going out there with our own idea of how this should be done. We are listening. We will tailor a pilot to the people of the Scenic Rim and the Lockyer Valley. We will play that pilot out to see how it works. That will enable us to have a great platform to ensure that we get right throughout Queensland the one-stop shop exactly the way the people of Queensland need it, to continue to provide a service to the people of this great state.

Aurizon, Job Cuts

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The Aurizon CEO recently had a 34 per cent pay increase to \$6.1 million, while the company announced 60 job cuts along the Great Northern line to improve efficiencies. In the light of this, will the minister exercise his power as safety regulator to stop the planned introduction of driver sleeper wagons unnecessarily threatening safety while costing jobs on this line?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Mount Isa for the question. I just want to remind the member why we have Aurizon as a private company. It was because Labor, without a mandate, without any reference to the public, went out and sold off QR National. Who was part of the cabinet that made that decision? The current Leader of the Opposition was part of that cabinet. Despite this move by Labor, we see over and over again in this parliament the members of the Katter party backing Labor on every initiative.

Mr Newman: The northern branch.

Mr EMERSON: I take that interjection from the Premier. It is without doubt the northern branch of the Labor Party. That is what we see and that is a sad thing. I suspect that the member for Dalrymple and the member for Mount Isa and the member for Condamine go back to their own local areas and say what a great job they are doing in parliament and how they are taking it up. But do they tell them that they continue to back Labor over and over again, that they kowtow to Labor, that they constantly support Labor on every initiative? That is the reality. So when the member for Mount Isa gets up here and talks about Aurizon, which is now a private company—these are commercial decisions for that company—do they tell their electorates that they keep backing Labor, the party who sold off QR National? Do they tell them that they keep supporting Labor?

Have a look at that northern line and see what we have done. We have invested more than \$40 million in that northern line since coming to office. We have seen the tonnage increase by more than five per cent from 2013 compared to 2012. Across the whole network we continue to frame and look at getting more and more freight on to rail. We have released our Moving Freight strategy, looking at the demands over the next 10 years. We have spent \$67 million on passing loops on lines and deepening tunnels to get more and more freight on lines. Of course we have asked the parliamentary transport committee to look at how we can get more and more freight on to rail.

But all we get from members of the Katter party is them supporting Labor on every initiative. In every vote we see they back Labor over and over again. I think their constituents need to know that they are actually de facto members of the Labor Party. They are the north-west branch of the Labor Party. If they wanted to get up there and make a difference to Queensland, they need to start backing the LNP with its initiatives that back rail, rather than supporting the ALP, which sold off QR National without any mandate from the public.

Great Barrier Reef

Mr MALONE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Can the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection please outline the Newman government's protection of the Great Barrier Reef for now and for future generations?

Mr POWELL: I thank the honourable member for Mirani for his question, and I certainly can. It was only a fortnight ago that I stood in this very spot and spoke about the launch of the Newman government's Reef Facts website and those across the chamber scoffed. It is unfortunate that we have seen this concerted campaign by a misinformed group of individuals who choose to peddle extreme and alarmist and hysterical deceit.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr POWELL: I take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane. I must pause here because the member for South Brisbane really needs to reflect and have a look at what the former member for South Brisbane was saying about some of the things that the Newman government are tackling now—in particular, Abbot Point. It was back on 8 October 2009 that the then member for South Brisbane, the then Premier and minister for the arts, the Hon. Anna Bligh, lauded a new multicargo facility for Abbot Point. What were we going to see? We were going to see 12 shipping berths, a tug harbour and a dredged access channel, swing basin and berth pockets. Do you know what? That was going to require—and it is here in the press release—25 million cubic metres of dredge spoil. Do you know what they were going to do with that? They were going to create another island in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

On top of that multicargo facility—and, again, perhaps the member for South Brisbane should go back and have a chat to the former member for South Brisbane—on 1 December 2011 the Premier and the Treasurer at that time ‘announced plans for a “super-expansion” of the Port of Abbot Point, following overwhelming demand from the private sector for development of the port’. On top of those 12 berths, they were going to expand from four to nine terminals which would have seen the current capacity of 50 million tonnes per annum leap to 400 million tonnes per annum and add another 13 million cubic metres of dredge spoil. It is interesting that there is now silence from those opposite.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Members, there is too much interjecting.

Mr POWELL: What is more ironic is that at the time of those announcements there was silence from the extreme green groups as well—nothing, absolutely nothing. What it goes to show is that what we are seeing here in Queensland, what we are seeing in Australia, what we are seeing internationally, is nothing other than a scare campaign by a pseudo group acting on behalf of their political apparatchik, funding their election campaigns not only in this state but elsewhere. What we have been doing is delivering for the reef. We have been protecting the reef like no government before it. We are addressing every one of the recommendations that UNESCO has made; we are working particularly with our farmers—we are working with them, not against them; and we will make sure the reef is protected well into the future.

Floods, Front-Line Services

Mr HOBBS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. Risks to business and communities from repeated flooding and exorbitant insurance premiums serve as an impost on the delivery of front-line services. Can you please advise the House what the government is doing to mitigate these risks?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can I commend the member not just for his advocacy for his electorate but for his ability to jump quickly. What a fantastic question from a fantastic member. The question asks: what impact does repeated flooding have on front-line services? Well I can tell you that it has a massive impact because, when you are forced to pick up the pieces and go in and clean your communities and when you are forced to do repair jobs on roads, you are not building the infrastructure and you are not serving the community in the way that you normally should be.

That is why we owe it to our communities to do better. Insurance is regulated by the federal government; we know that. Along with the members for Cairns, Hinchinbrook, Barron River, Thuringowa and Townsville, we have put forward our suggestion to the federal government that we believe could bear some fruit in that area. But we are not prepared as a state to just throw our hands up in the air and say, ‘This is not our issue; too bad so sad,’ because insurance is a huge issue for the people we represent. We are not the type of government that says, ‘Sorry, that is a federal matter. It is a waste of money to put things, for example, into the Bruce Highway.’ That is not what this government does. It looks for solutions.

We believe we have found a solution through better infrastructure delivery. That is where our role comes in. We believe that if we can build things like levee banks, retention basins and backflow devices we can make a difference. It is never easy. Members might ask: why now? Why are we talking about these things only now? It is because it is never easy to do things like this, because radical green groups will jump up and down and tell you that there are huge environmental issues that come with building levee banks. Those on the other side of the levee bank will tell you why it has such a huge impact. As a result, we have seen governments—local governments, state governments and federal governments—without the ticker to do anything.

I have seen enough heartache in the last year or so to know that there is a better way. I am not prepared to sit by and allow this to continue because it has an impact on the economy, social services and the morale of the communities across this state. In working with the member for Warrego, we have come up with a concept that we believe will bear fruit in two of the communities he represents. Levees will be finished in both Roma and St George in the upcoming weeks. We have taken a different twist on the mystery shopper. We are going into those communities. Through the member's electorate office we have chosen a few people who will be our test case. They will be our mystery shoppers.

When we spoke about building these levees, the insurance industry said to us, 'Expect premiums to fall by up to 80 per cent.' That is what they said, and we will hold them to account. They need to know that we are watching. The communities of Queensland need to know that, if your council is prepared to back an idea, this parliament will stand by you. We will not leave you vulnerable. We will build the kind of infrastructure that governments once had the ticker to build.

Premier, Trade Visit

Dr DOUGLAS: My question is to the Premier. The Premier has facilitated agreements between a Queensland company, GRT, and Pearls, an Indian company, on his trade visit to India. Pearls has been stated in the Indian financial press to be an elaborate Ponzi scheme and GRT director Adam Adams is a known associate of fugitive criminal Peter Foster and a co-director of collapsed scam company SensaSlim—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. The preamble is way above the accepted amount for a question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will resume his seat. I ask the member for Gaven to now put his question.

Dr DOUGLAS: I ask: can the Premier please explain why he and his government are actively facilitating business with these companies?

Mr NEWMAN: The assertions in the question are erroneous and fallacious, and have already been in the media. I might move to another gambit by the Palmer party today, and that is doing a little media stunt with members of a criminal motorcycle gang—people who have been involved with events on the Gold Coast. What was the little media stunt? The media stunt was to say that they were summoning the Premier to appear at a court hearing. I heard the name of the lawyer involved. It was an interesting name: Zali Burrows. I thought, 'Zali Burrows; I have heard of that name.' Indeed, I have heard of that name. Zali Burrows is a lawyer from Sydney. I thought, 'That is interesting. Why is a lawyer from Sydney in Brisbane working for criminal motorcycle gang members?' Then I found this: Zali Burrows, the candidate for Blaxland in the federal election for the Palmer United Party. I table the document.

Tabled paper: Palmer United flyer titled 'Why you should Vote for Zali Burrows' [\[4686\]](#).

For the avoidance of doubt, if it is claimed that she is not still a member, I table a printout from their website today.

Tabled paper: Palmer United Party Website profile of Zali Burrows [\[4687\]](#).

There seems to be more to this than just the serving of a summons today. We have this conflict. On the one hand, we have the member for Gaven, who used to stand up in this place—and it is a matter of record—saying there are problems with organised crime on the Gold Coast. If he does not remember, if he has had one of those moments, he should look at *Hansard* to see what he said in relation to a former government's lame attempt to try to deal with—sorry, I correct myself; it was not that particular piece of legislation. It was another piece of legislation. But he was speaking to the legislation and he was saying how terrible criminal activity was on the Gold Coast and how the government needed to be tough in cracking down on them and needed to go after the proceeds of crime.

That is what he was saying then. These days he is assailed by these laws we have brought in. Once upon a time he said that we needed to deal with bikies. We have a member of the Palmer United Party today working with the bikies as their legal representative. What will happen next? For the avoidance of doubt, I table some advice from the senior deputy crown solicitor that says this was a stunt.

Tabled paper: Email from the Senior Deputy Crown Solicitor regarding summons purportedly served at the Executive Building on 19 March 2014 [\[4688\]](#).

This supposed summons was not properly filled out. The documentation was not properly completed. Arguably, it was not properly served. Also, it was signed by a commissioner for declarations when it needed to be signed by a justice of the peace.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I take the interjections from those opposite because we know now that if the Labor Party is elected to govern in this state criminal gangs will go 'yippee' and they will be on their way.

(Time expired)

Firearms

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. As a consistent supporter of the responsible ownership and use of firearms, I ask: will the minister give an undertaking to stop the discrimination against disabled sportspeople by allowing the legal use of category C .22 calibre firearms to compete in state, national and international sporting competitions?

Mr DEMPSEY: It is a good question. I thank the member for the question and commend her not just for her strong interest in the firearm issue but also for her advocacy for people with disabilities in the state. One of the first things we did as a government was introduce some of the strongest laws to target illegal firearm offenders and reduce red tape for legitimate firearm users. We held one of the largest firearm amnesties in Australia, with over 18,000 unregistered firearms processed during the three months of the amnesty. We created an online portal for weapons licence applications, freeing up officers at police stations to focus on keeping our streets safe as well as serving their communities. We have also introduced a system to ensure that incomplete applications are recognised before being assessed.

In relation to the important issue that the member for Gladstone has raised, I will certainly be referring that matter to my weapons advisory panel for special consideration. I am advised that the legislation in its current form does not permit shooters to possess and use semiautomatic rifles—a category C weapon—for sports or target shooting. Sporting shooters are also required to have a valid membership of an approved club that participates in shooting competitions.

It is for these reasons that I can assure the member that my advisory panel will consider the matter thoroughly. The Queensland Police Service considers a number of factors including a person's physical and mental fitness when assessing an application for the issue of a licence. Each case is assessed and determined on the merits of the application. In Queensland we currently have licence holders with significant physical disabilities including quadriplegics and the visually impaired who actively participate in sports and target shooting at ranges. This is done with appropriate supervision and assistance, and it is always the case that the QPS will work with individuals to help them participate.

One of the challenges for the Queensland government is to ensure that we continue to meet the changing needs of the community. The Newman government is always seeking to revitalise front-line services and is unapologetic in focusing on great outcomes for customers. Customer service is a main part of this government and is one of the ways that we continue to make Queensland a great state with great opportunities.

Cocoa Pod Borer, Eradication

Mr YOUNG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Can the minister update the House on how the Queensland government has worked to eradicate the cocoa pod borer from Far North Queensland?

Dr McVEIGH: I thank the member for the question because this story is truly a great news story not just for North Queensland but for farm industries state-wide. It is a great news story that proves that the Newman government's front-line staff—in this case, Biosecurity staff—are well and truly up to the job. As a result of the efforts of Biosecurity staff, cocoa pod borers have been successfully eradicated from Far North Queensland following a two-year eradication program. Members may well ask, 'What is a cocoa pod borer?' Cocoa pod borers, I am pleased to inform the House, destroy cocoa beans, and why is that important? Cocoa beans are the main ingredient for chocolate.

A government member: Cocoa pops.

Dr McVEIGH: Cocoa pops included. This of course causes yield losses of up to 90 per cent. In rambutan—another emerging tropical fruit crop from Far North Queensland that my good friend and colleague the member for Hinchinbrook is so keen on—we find that the cocoa pod borer bores into leaves, stems and occasionally the fruit making it unmarketable. The pest is widespread throughout

South-East Asia and the Pacific, and experience shows it can be very, very difficult to control or eradicate once established. Australia is the only country to have eradicated cocoa pod borer through a national eradication program. It was detected in our case in a plantation near Cairns and it has since been subject to that national, cost-shared eradication program that I referred to. Removing pests such as the cocoa pod borer will assist us greatly in achieving our goal of doubling agricultural production by 2040.

Unlike the previous Labor government, the LNP government takes biosecurity threats to our agricultural industries very, very seriously. One could be mistaken for thinking that the former minister must have been asleep at the wheel. Cocoa pod and rambutan are emerging industries, and this pest would likely limit any expansion if it were to become established here in Queensland. Eradication was achieved by disrupting the life cycle of the pest through the removal of cocoa pods, the use of insecticides, ongoing surveillance and trapping, and wider surveys of other cocoa and rambutan plantations in the region. I most sincerely thank the local growers who participated in the program and helped us to eradicate the pest. The success of this program is a timely reminder that growers still need to remain vigilant and regularly check for this pest by splitting open the pods and looking for signs of damage. If producers see any unusual signs, please report them immediately to Biosecurity Queensland.

Madam SPEAKER: The time for questions has finished.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: Before I call the Clerk to read the next order of the day, I acknowledge the schools visiting today: Good News Lutheran School from the electorate of Mount Ommaney, Keebra Park State High School from the electorate of Southport and Mudgeeraba State School from the electorate of Mudgeeraba.

CRIME AND MISCONDUCT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.33 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, the Public Service Act 2008 and the Public Service Regulation 2008 for particular purposes, and to make minor and consequential amendments to the legislation mentioned in schedule 2. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[4689\]](#).

Tabled paper: Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[4690\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. In 2013 two significant landmark reports regarding the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the CMC, were released—the report of the review by the Independent Advisory Panel, constituted by the Hon. Ian Callinan AC and Professor Nicholas Aroney, of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 and related matters, and the report of the inquiry by the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee into the CMC's release and destruction of Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry documents. On 3 July 2013 the government tabled its response to the recommendations in both reports. The government response indicated that an implementation panel—comprising the Director-General, Department of Justice and Attorney-General as panel chair, the Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Commission Chief Executive of the Public Service Commission and the Acting Chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission—had been established to oversee and direct the consideration and implementation of the accepted recommendations in the government response.

This bill is the product of much of the panel's work and seeks to implement government accepted recommendations to the Callinan-Aroney and Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee reports. The bill when enacted will, together with administrative changes at the Crime and Misconduct Commission and across the public service, lead to improvements in:

- public confidence in the CMC;
- timeliness of the investigation of complaints;
- operational and corporate governance structures within the CMC;

- the current culture within the CMC;
- CMC internal complaints management systems for misconduct matters;
- internal processes and practices in the CMC; and
- the management of personal conduct and work performance of Queensland public service employees.

The bill's policy objectives include:

- reforming the upper governance structure of the CMC;
- changing the definition of 'official misconduct'—which the bill renames as 'corrupt conduct'—which, with other amendments, will raise the threshold for matters within the CMC's jurisdiction;
- renaming the CMC's 'misconduct function' to 'corruption function', with consequential amendments;
- improving the CMC's complaints management system to refocus the CMC's corruption activities on more serious cases of corruption and reduce the number of complaints the CMC deals with and investigates;
- removing the CMC's responsibility for the 'prevention' of corruption in units of public administration;
- ensuring the CMC's research function is more focussed and relevant to its functions;
- strengthening the transparency and accountability of the CMC;
- clarifying the disciplinary action that may be taken by the CMC in relation to conduct of CMC officers;
- making transitional arrangements to continue the current acting chairperson's appointment and certain other appointments, and providing transitional arrangements for the ending of other appointments;
- implementing recent recommendations of public reports about the CMC's investigation of alleged official misconduct at the University of Queensland; and
- improving the management of personal conduct and work performance of Queensland public service employees.

The bill renames the CMC as the Crime and Corruption Commission. This is consistent with its realignment to focus on corruption and corrupt conduct. The structure of the commission has been the subject of much consideration and debate. That consideration and debate has obviously had significant regard to the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee's recommendation No. 19 that the Crime and Misconduct Act be amended to cause structural separation of the chairperson and chief executive officer and the circumstances leading up to the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee inquiry and report last year.

We have also examined the various governance structures for similar bodies around Australia, each with their own particular nuances and variations. The government welcomes suggestions and comments about the upper governance structure as reflected in the bill—by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee when it considers the bill, by individuals and organisations who no doubt will make submissions to the parliamentary committee, and by commentators generally. In addition, and because the government is genuinely committed to making sure the upper governance structure works, the bill inserts a new provision which allows the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee to conduct periodic reviews of the structure of the commission.

Under the bill the commission will consist of Governor in Council appointed commissioners who are: a full-time legally qualified chairman, a legally qualified part-time deputy chairman, two part-time (ordinary) commissioners and a full-time chief executive officer. Although the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee is to be consulted about commissioner appointments, the bill removes the current requirement for the PCMC's bipartisan support for these appointments. The commissioners, as the commission, will provide strategic direction and leadership for the performance of the commission's functions and the exercise of the commission's powers by the chairman, chief executive officer and commission staff.

The chairman is responsible for the proper performance of the functions and exercise of the powers delegated to the chairman under the act. The chairman is to report to the commission on the performance of the commission's functions but is not bound by any direction of the commission in the performance of functions or exercise of powers in an investigation, hearing, operation or other proceeding.

The CEO is pivotal to the effective management of the commission. The CEO is responsible to the commission for the administration of the commission; and is to perform the functions and exercise the powers delegated to, or conferred on, the CEO under the act or specifically delegated to the CEO by the chairman. The CEO will be responsible for matters such as the employment, management and discipline of commission staff, the management of the commission's documents, including the Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry documents, and the preparation and compliance with the commission's budget. The CEO is subject to the chairman's direction in respect of functions or a power delegated to the CEO by the chairman and is otherwise subject to the commission's direction in respect of performing a function or exercising a power under the act.

As I indicated earlier, the government genuinely welcomes suggestions and comments on the commission's upper governance structure, as reflected during the consideration of the bill by the committee. We have looked at other jurisdictions, and all jurisdictions in Australia, when we are dealing with corruption watchdogs, deal with these governance structures differently. The Callinan and Aroney report found that the definition of 'official misconduct' has a wider application when compared with the definitions contained in other interstate anticorruption legislation; and that the threshold for what constitutes official misconduct, should be narrowed. To address this, the bill changes the definition of 'official misconduct' to a new concept of 'corrupt conduct' that is intended, with other amendments, to raise the threshold for conduct that is subject to the CMC's jurisdiction.

The new definition also includes a list of types of offences or behaviours which are not conclusive of corrupt conduct, but could be corrupt conduct if the preconditions in the definition are met. To understand the full extent of the changes effected by the new definition of 'corrupt conduct', new sections 14 and 15 being inserted by the bill must be considered with other amendments to reduce the number of matters referred to, and investigated by, the CMC. These include amendments: raising the threshold of when public officials are to notify the Crime and Corruption Commission of suspected corrupt conduct from 'suspicion' to 'reasonable suspicion'; expanding the use of the section 40 directions issued by the CCC to agencies to ensure only the more serious corrupt conduct matters are referred to the CCC—as is currently the case, these directions will be developed in consultation with agencies and the Public Service Commission—requiring complaints to be in the form of a statutory declaration unless the commission decides that exceptional circumstances exist which warrant a waiver of this requirement; requiring the CCC to investigate only the more serious cases of corrupt conduct; making it easier for the CCC to dismiss or take no action on a complaint; and removing barriers that hinder prosecuting complainants of non-genuine complaints.

The government's goal is for Queensland's Public Service to be the most responsive and respected public service in the nation. To achieve better outcomes for Queenslanders, it is important that Public Service managers are empowered and that staff under their management or supervision have a clear understanding of the Public Service work performance and personal conduct principles. These longstanding principles recognise that Public Service employment involves public trust. They state that Public Service employment must be directed towards matters such as achieving excellence in service delivery; ensuring the effective, efficient and appropriate use of public resources; and carrying out duties impartially and with integrity. Both the Callinan and Aroney report and the Commission of Audit recommended reforms to refocus responsibility for conduct in public sector agencies to line managers and, ultimately, CEOs to be dealt with promptly.

The bill amends section 26 of the Public Service Act 2008 to make it clear that Public Service managers must take all reasonable steps to ensure each Public Service employee under their management is aware of these important work performance and personal conduct principles. In line with the accepted recommendations, the Public Service Commission has also developed a new conduct management model for the Queensland Public Service, the Conduct and Performance Excellence—CaPE—Service. CaPE's purpose is to promote and support excellence in the management of personal conduct and work performance in the Queensland public sector. It will: provide specialist advice and support to agencies, upon request, on the management of conduct and performance; set, and strategically monitor, benchmarks and standards for agencies' handling of these matters; and review individual cases as required, with the aim of building capability.

The CaPE Service closely aligns to the Public Service Commission's main statutory functions which include: enhancing the Public Service's human resource management and capability; enhancing and promoting an ethical culture and ethical decision making across the Public Service; and enhancing the Public Service's leadership and management capabilities in relation to disciplinary matters. CaPE will contribute to the development of capability within agencies to ensure they have a high standard of human resource and managerial skill. It will also work closely with the Crime and Corruption Commission to ensure matters are addressed effectively within the appropriate jurisdiction.

The bill also includes amendments to promote accountability and transparency of the commission's decision making and activities by: requiring parliamentary committee meetings with the CCC to be generally held in public, with appropriate exceptions where the parliamentary committee considers the nature of the information being discussed needs protection or may jeopardise ongoing investigations; and enlarging the powers of the Parliamentary Commissioner by allowing him or her to investigate complaints on his or her own initiative; removing the requirement for the bipartisan approval by the parliamentary committee for the Parliamentary Commissioner to hold hearings; and allowing reports of the Parliamentary Commissioner to be used by the CCC in disciplinary matters.

The bill also addresses unrelated amendments arising from the CMC's investigation into allegations of official misconduct at the University of Queensland. Section 38 of the Crime and Misconduct Act currently obliges a public official, that is the head of a unit of public administration, to notify the CMC about official misconduct. The bill includes an amendment that requires agencies to develop a policy that sets out how the agency will manage a complaint that involves a public official of that agency and that such policy is to be developed in consultation with the CCC. This is in response to issues raised by the CMC in their September 2013 report, *An examination of suspected official misconduct at the University of Queensland*.

The bill also includes an amendment to section 58 of the Crime and Misconduct Act to allow the CCC to investigate a decision-making body of an agency when a judicial officer is a member of that decision-making body. This amendment is in response to issues raised by the parliamentary committee in their September 2013 Report No. 92: *Complaint about the CMC investigation into the University of Queensland* about the abovementioned CMC investigation into the University of Queensland.

The bill refocuses responsibility of conduct in public sector agencies to line managers and, ultimately, CEOs; and, most importantly, paves the way for the Crime and Corruption Commission to focus on major crime and serious corruption; and to become a highly efficient and effective major crime-fighting and serious corrupt conduct investigating organisation for the 21st century. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.46 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

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

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.47 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 30 April 2014.

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.48 pm): The opposition will be opposing this urgency motion because, once again, a bill is being referred to a committee for a period of around one month. What we have heard today put forward by this Attorney-General in relation to the changes to the CMC is just over one month to examine the bill when most other bills are referred to a committee for a longer period of time. We need experts to look at this bill in detail. The question for Queenslanders today is: do you trust this Attorney-General? Let me answer that question. No, they do not, because everything this Attorney-General touches turns into an unmitigated disaster.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has deliberately misled the House. I will be writing to Madam Speaker to put this matter before her regarding the correct timing, which is clearly from 19 March to 30 April.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. Could you resume your seat please? I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have just over one month to examine this bill in detail. I will correct the record: just over one month.

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You said it so quickly. You will not listen! Mr Deputy Speaker, we have just over one month and I imagine that the Easter school holidays are during this period as well. Just one month! They just want to rush through these major changes, once again abusing the committee system that has been set up in this House.

But should we be surprised by this urgency motion today? Absolutely not. Of course we are not! We understand exactly what this government wants to do: they want to nobble the CMC. They want to weaken the CMC—

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Leader of the Opposition, could you resume your seat, please. Attorney-General what is your point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, my point of order is that the opposition leader is debating the bill which we have just introduced to the House and is not debating the time line of 30 April 2014.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, the motion relates to the reporting date for the committee in their review of the bill. I would ask that you refer strictly to that motion in your comments today.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. Once again we are seeing this government rush through perhaps the most substantial changes to the Crime and Misconduct Commission that the state has ever seen here in Queensland. This is something that cannot be rushed. This is something that needs due consideration. There are drastic changes contained in this bill, and this is a bill not one or two pages, or five or six pages, or 20 or 30 pages. No, this bill is over 170 pages of complex law and complex changes to the CMC!

We know the Liberal National Party has never liked the CMC in this state. We know the matters that have gone to the CMC over the recent two years. I am not going to go into those details today.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, could you keep your comments to the motion, please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will stick to the urgency matter before the House. We need due consideration. What does that mean? It means time so that different people and organisations such as the Law Society and the Bar Association can come along to have their say and put forward their points of view, and perhaps we can canvass with the broader community what they think about the proposals put forward by this Attorney-General.

This government does not like to use the committee system to give due consideration to examination of bills in this House. Just over one month to consider some of the most complex changes that we have ever seen in this state is not enough consideration. There is time here, and they have been sitting on these reports for a number of months now. If the government want to get this right, they need to give the committee due time to process it.

I would also like to know if the PCMC has been consulted in relation to these particular bills and the proposals that are going forward. The Attorney-General has just said that there are going to be changes which mean that there is not going to be bipartisan support for the appointment of commissioners. He said that in his speech very clearly—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, could you resume your seat, please. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr STEVENS: The Leader of the Opposition is deliberately debating the motion currently without—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the House, please resume your seat. I was just about to mention to the Leader of the Opposition: could you please restrict your comments to the motion before the House relating to the time frame for the reporting of the committee.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sure, Mr Deputy Speaker. Just over one month is not enough time to consider this legislation. It is not enough time, and the opposition will be opposing this urgency motion. I urge other members of this House to give due consideration to this fact as well. You cannot make a comprehensive overhaul of the public independent crime watchdog without giving it due consideration.

We knew something was up this morning when the Attorney-General released his plans to the *Courier-Mail*, as he likes to do, stating that there was going to be this massive overhaul in just over one month. We need to know exactly how many times the committee will be meeting. We need to get a process in place, because there is not enough time for Queenslanders right across the state to give this matter due consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the only question that Queenslanders need to ask themselves is do they trust this incompetent Attorney-General who rushes bills through the House and who will not let the committee have enough time to decide? That is the sole question that Queenslanders have to ask. Mr Deputy Speaker, I can answer that question and that answer is clearly: no, they do not.

Today we will be opposing this bill lock, stock and barrel going to the committee system as a matter of urgency. We will be opposing the motion because you are not giving enough time to Queenslanders and this House. You are treating this place, this House, like your own personal plaything—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!! Leader of the Opposition, I have asked you twice to keep your comments to the motion—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!—and continue to be relevant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Premier said he was going to listen, and if they were going to listen to what the Premier said they would give Queenslanders time to consult about these important changes.

We will be opposing the urgency. There is no need whatsoever for this urgency. You cannot trust anything this government does. They have a secret hidden agenda, and we know what it is: it is to weaken the CMC in this state! You have had form on it over the years. You cannot wait to do it and we are going to oppose the urgency motion!

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.57 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, we have just heard the most irrational rant from the Leader of the Opposition based on totally incorrect and deliberately false information. I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition that today is 19 March. If she looks up there at the little screen, it says '19 March'.

Thirty days hath September, April, June and November. All the rest have 31 ...

There are 12 days left in March and we have 30 days in April. That makes 42 days. If we divide 42 by seven, you get six weeks. You jump up and you say 'four weeks' deliberately to give effect to your ridiculous objection, which is based on just trying to scare the community about the changes to the CMC that have been mooted for ages. The Attorney-General has stood in this House and said that they are coming.

The legal affairs committee, under the great generalship of Mr Ian Berry, the member for Ipswich, is not crying about the time that it has to deal with this matter. There are no urgency issues with this bill, as you claim again. Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker: if it was urgent, the bill would be through this week.

This is not an urgent bill. It is a bill that will be well considered by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. Everyone will have an opportunity to have input to that committee, as they should. Opposition members and non-government members who are on that committee will have every opportunity to have input into this very important bill for Queensland. It is an absolute furphy—an absolute red herring—to say that six weeks is not long enough. It might be a hurried time for the Labor Party, but for normal people, and those who are not Sleepy, Dopey and Grumpy, it would be plenty of time for them to deal with this bill. The legal affairs committee has six weeks to deal with this bill and this is a motion that should be agreed to by this House.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (4.00 pm): I rise to support the opposition leader's position in relation to the motion before the House. In relation to the motion before the House, nothing could crystallise the arrogance and the absolute drunken state that the Newman government is in over its massive majority. Nothing could demonstrate more clearly to Queenslanders that this is a government that is drunk on power and completely and utterly arrogant, not caring—

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Members, order! I ask the member for South Brisbane to stick to the motion.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am speaking to the motion. I am speaking to the referral of this amendment bill to the legal affairs committee and I am speaking to the fact that this committee is being given a little over a month in which to consider these complex changes. If we think about how long the Fitzgerald inquiry took, it took a number of years. It took a number of years and it came to a number of recommendations to set up an integrity and corruption watchdog in Queensland that would serve this state well. And what happened? It has served this state well and the raft of changes that this government is putting to Queenslanders is quite significant. It will change the way in which the CMC functions. It will change—

Government members interjected.

Ms TRAD: I know those opposite do not like to hear about the CMC, but Queenslanders want to hear about the CMC. They want to know how the CMC is going to be administered—

Madam SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, I asked you to stick to the motion that is before the House. This is not about debating the issues which potentially are in this legislation.

Ms TRAD: Madam Speaker, I understand that, but Queenslanders will want to have a say on this bill, and the allotted time that this arrogant government has given to the parliamentary committee to conduct significant public consultation over this bill is woefully inadequate. It is woefully inadequate. These are significant law changes, as the Leader of the Opposition has outlined, and a number of organisations need time—legal organisations, local government organisations, general members of the public—in which to consider this bill. I contend that the amount of time that this government has given the committee in which to investigate and inquire and seek public consultation around the bill is inadequate and it fundamentally reflects the fact that this is a government that is completely and utterly drunk on its own power and it is incapable of acting in any way other than sheer arrogance.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.03 pm): I rise to oppose the urgency motion being put in the parliament today—

Government members interjected.

Mrs MILLER:—I rise to oppose the motion today. I basically just wanted to echo the issues that have already been raised this afternoon by the Leader of the Opposition and my colleague the member for South Brisbane. What we have here before this parliament is a bill that is 173 pages long. What we also have here is a situation where this government—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I take that interjection from—

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, just pause. I remind members that there is a motion before the House and that if this starts to get repetitious in respect of the issues that are being canvassed you are not doing the House any favours. The opportunity is to debate the actual motion before the House. I call the member for Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much for your guidance, Madam Speaker. I took the interjection from the member opposite, the Leader of the House, where he said—very sarcastically—that I must be a slow reader. He said that he could read a whole bill overnight. That is what he said. The point is that the people of Queensland need to be able to be given the opportunity to be able to understand the bill. They need to be given the opportunity to provide submissions to any committee. The point about all of this, as the member for South Brisbane has pointed out, is that the Fitzgerald inquiry, as I understand it, started in 1987 and it took two years for Fitzgerald to come up with his report. This government is trying to institutionalise corruption in this state in spite of what it may have in this bill.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, you have been given—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members! There is a motion before the House with regard to the reporting time frame of a bill.

Mrs MILLER: That is right.

Madam SPEAKER: And you are straying from the motion. If you want to debate the legislation, the opportunity will be in the debate on the legislation. I remind you of the motion that is before the House or else I will take the call from the next person who wishes to speak.

Mrs MILLER: Madam Speaker, there is simply not enough time between now and 30 April for all of the citizens in Queensland and all of the particular groups—not only the legal firms in Queensland but also local government, all of the departments, every particular public administration entity which is a unit of public administration, the academics, the universities—to be able to respond to this particular amendment bill within that period of time.

In conclusion—Madam Speaker, I am trying to be quick—it is my view that Mike Ahern, who stood in this parliament and stood outside this parliament and said that the Fitzgerald inquiry recommendations would be implemented lock, stock and barrel, would be ashamed of you—ashamed of each and every one of you!

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order. This is not relevant to the motion.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Education. Member, I did provide you with the opportunity to address the motion and I asked you to stick to the motion. I will now call the Minister for Energy and Water Supply.

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (4.07 pm): I move—

That the question be now put.

Ms Trad: Arrogance!

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr McARDLE: Reality.

Opposition members: Arrogance!

Mr McARDLE: Reality.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn members on my left under 253A. Member for Bundamba, I was talking. I have a point of order that has been raised by the Minister for Energy and Water Supply with regard to putting the motion. Under the standing orders it is the chair—the Speaker's—prerogative to decide whether there has been sufficient debate. I had indicated to the member for Gladstone that I would take her call. I intend to take her call and then we will consider the motion, though I would ask the member for Gladstone to please stick to the motion and not to canvass issues which have already been canvassed.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.08 pm): Thank you, Madam Speaker. In rising to oppose the time frame that is being proposed, I am conscious that under normal circumstances one could say six weeks is adequate—maybe not generous but adequate. These are complex matters and they are heightened in their sensitivity because of previous events. I believe on the basis of that heightened sensitivity, the complex nature of the proposals and the fact that there would be a much wider range of people who would be wishing to participate in the consultation process and give valid, well-thought-out and well-articulated submissions to the committee that that time period is too short.

I am also cognisant of the workload—not as a member of that committee but in dealing with legislation that has come before this House that they have dealt with—and that they, too, would have some constraints on their ability to deal with this complex matter in a timely manner. Therefore, I will be opposing the motion in terms of the six-week time frame because of the complexity, sensitivity and importance of the matter before the parliament.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Attorney-General to close the debate. I remind the Attorney-General and other members that we are debating the motion before the House and not the legislation.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.10 pm): The motion that I moved says that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee will consider this bill and report to the House by 30 April. As the honourable Leader of the House has pointed out, 30 April is some 42 days away. We believe that six weeks is sufficient. The reason I believe that is that this issue did not spring up on us this week. We set up the Callinan-Aroney inquiry who—guess what?—called for public submissions in relation to the CMC. So we had the Callinan-Aroney inquiry and then the PCMC of this parliament also had a public inquiry in relation to issues and also made recommendations with respect to the CMC. Then we had the former Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Mick Keelty, conduct an inquiry—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, he is not speaking to the motion. He is now talking about the bill and the history of how the bill came to be.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! I simply remind the Attorney-General to stick to the motion.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you. There has been sufficient time for the community to have a say on this important matter. As I indicated, in relation to the six weeks given to the parliamentary committee—and obviously those opposite were not listening during the first reading—I said that we are encouraging people to come to the committee and have a say. We have been receiving submissions on these sorts of things for over two years. I have full confidence in the chair of the parliamentary committee, Mr Ian Berry, to be able to deal with these matters within a six-week time frame. These are important matters. People have made submissions. The feedback that we received from submissions over the past two years have formulated what we have in the House today; hence why we think six weeks. As a matter of fact, we have talked about flip-flopping from the opposition leader—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Deputy Speaker, he is not referring to the motion and I would ask him to speak to the motion.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am responding to the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. I am listening carefully to the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows what I going to say. That is why she does not want to hear it. I refer to an article titled 'Qld Government puts off CMC changes until next year', which states—

Opposition Leader Anastacia Palaszczuk has questioned the delay.

'The Government is dragging its feet,' she said.

Then the opposition leader said—

'That came down in April—it was so urgent that they're postponing it until next year.'

I table a copy of those comments by the Leader of the Opposition.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 13 November 2013, from Jodi Staunton-Smith, incorporating ABC online article titled, 'Qld Government puts off CMC changes until next year' [4691].

So on the one hand we are dragging our feet—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting. The Attorney-General is speaking to the issue of timing and it is relevant to the motion.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you. When these issues were debated about a year ago, the opposition said that the LNP was going to trash the CMC. Then we had all of these reviews. The opposition leader then comes out and says that because we have delayed the bill we are now dragging our feet. We introduce a bill and we put a six-week time line on it.

I want to correct a factually incorrect statement made by those members opposite. They are saying that this is an urgent motion. It is not an urgent motion pursuant to the standing orders. Every bill—

Ms Palaszczuk: Then give it more time.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: Most bills that go to a committee have a time frame on them for the proper order and proper administration of the House and the other bills before the House. On most occasions, that is the case. There is a time put on the consideration so that guidance is given to the committee in terms of its other matters. We have taken into consideration the other matters that the committee has before it. That is why we have chosen the six weeks—because we think that is an appropriate time.

The opposition leader, the member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane are saying that they are going to oppose this urgency motion. Maybe they can oppose a motion on a different day of the week, because this motion that we are debating is not an urgency motion. This motion puts an extensive six-week time period on an inquiry into a bill before the House. In relation to the committee process under the Labor government, I reckon a lot of the committees that the minister and I served on would have given anything to have six weeks to consider some of the bills that we had before us.

Mr Langbroek: There was no committee system.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. Up until the dying days of the former government, there was no committee system. Time after time the former government would move motions to guillotine after moving motions of urgency. This motion is not an urgency motion. This just puts a six-week time line on it.

Mr Langbroek: When they merged the CJC and the Crime Commission into the CMC, there was no committee system at that time.

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely. I take the interjection from the honourable education minister. When the former government merged the CJC and the Crime Commission, there was no committee system. It was just done.

Of course, we know that the member for South Brisbane all but on a daily basis quotes Fitzgerald in this House—plays scary music, the bad days before Fitzgerald. The opposition, when in government, split the CMC. That was in direct contrast to what Fitzgerald recommended. So if the member for South Brisbane is going to come in here and quote Fitzgerald I suggest that she get it out and read it again, because she is obviously misquoting Fitzgerald and does not understand Fitzgerald.

This motion provides a six-week consultation period. I was very open in my introductory speech when I introduced the bill into the House. We are calling on Queenslanders, we are calling on academics, we are calling on the commentariat to come in and have a say—tell us if we have it right, tell us if we have not, tell us what they think about it. We believe that six weeks is sufficient time for that to occur.

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

AYES, 68:

LNP, 66—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Woodforth, Young.

KAP, 2—Hopper, Katter.

NOES, 12:

ALP, 8—Byrne, D'Ath, Miller, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Scott, Trad.

PUP, 2—Douglas, Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Cunningham, Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.23 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, the Forestry Act 1959, the Land Act 1994, the Land Title Act 1994, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 and the Water Act 2000 for particular purposes and to amend particular subordinate legislation under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Water Act 2000 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes and I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled papers: Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [[4692](#)].

Tabled papers: Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [[4693](#)].

I am pleased to present the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This landmark bill is the first step in addressing long-standing issues with Queensland's state land tenure system and providing greater security of tenure and certainty for our leasehold landholders. The Newman government is committed to growing a four-pillar economy. This bill will help achieve that goal by driving investment in our agriculture and tourism industries and, in turn, encouraging job creation. After decades of being ignored by Labor, rural landholders have a government that is prepared to introduce reforms that create a clearer future for these two economic pillars.

In addition to security of tenure, this suite of reforms will also reduce red tape and streamline administrative processes for those individuals and businesses that hold over 6,500 of our primary production and offshore island tourism leases. This will be achieved through four key initiatives in this bill: a more affordable rural leasehold land rent and purchase price regime; the introduction of rolling leases for particular offshore island leases and primary production leases, with the exception of those on Land Act reserves; a more streamlined approach for converting leasehold land to freehold land; and removing restrictions on who can hold rural leasehold land.

This bill proposes to move the existing provisions relating to purchase price and land rent from the Land Act into a regulation. To support this, the bill omits the relevant provisions and inserts a regulation-making power. The relocation of these provisions removes operational matters from the primary legislation as part of the government's reforms to modernise and streamline legislation in line with contemporary and principle based drafting practices.

In moving the detail of financial matters to the regulation, the government is presently considering changes to rural rent rates and rural freeholding purchase price methodologies. Once the government's consideration of these matters has been finalised, I will provide further information to the parliament about proposed amendments to regulation to assist it in considering the implications and effect of the land tenure reform initiatives in this bill.

This bill will amend the land rental hardship provisions in the Land Act to remove the interest payable on rents deferred after 1 July 2014. It also removes duplication with the Financial Accountability Act 2009 relating to forgiveness of rent payment provisions. In response to the current drought crisis in Queensland, with the largest area of land ever recorded as drought declared in this state, my department is preparing regulatory amendments that will allow areas or types of leases to be proclaimed as subject to hardship with automatic deferral of all rental payments. These amendments will reduce costs and red tape for struggling landholders and allow the government to quickly respond in tough times. These amendments will be in place by 1 July 2014.

The centrepiece of the initiatives in this bill are new rolling term lease extensions for rural and off-shore tourism leases which deliver significant red-tape reductions thanks to a quicker, more simplified lease renewal process. An eligible lease will be rolled over by extending the lease generally by a term equal to the original term of the individual lease. For example, a lease which was originally issued for 30 years, but has over the decades had extensions, will have its term extended by the original term of 30 years. This is the maximum period a lease can be extended without affecting native title rights and interests. A lessee will be able to apply for an extension at any time in the last 20 years of the term of the lease, or at an earlier time if the minister is satisfied that special circumstances exist. This means that a lessee with a 30-year original term lease may apply for an extension after the first 10 years of the lease has passed. The lessee will then be entitled to the residual balance of the current lease, 20 years, plus an additional 30 years from the extension—that is, they will have tenure security for the following 50 years. There will be no restrictions on the number of times a lease can be extended and there will be minimal requirements to renew the lease. For example, the existing requirement for rural lessees to enter into a land management agreement in order to renew the lease will be removed.

The new provision for rolling leases contained in the bill delivers increased certainty of tenure and a much swifter process than the complicated, bureaucratic lease renewal process that was imposed on leaseholders by the previous government. The Newman government believes that Queensland's lessees are generally good managers of their land who do not need government regulation to manage land responsibly. Land management agreements will instead be used as a tool to remedy the rare instances of poor land management—the exceptions to the rule.

This bill will also streamline the process for rural lessees to convert pastoral term leases directly to freehold title by removing the need to convert to a perpetual lease first. This removes red tape and provides cost savings to both lessees and the government. Importantly, I would like to stress at this point that the Newman government is committed to ensuring native title rights and interests are protected and that any changes made to leases still need to ensure that they appropriately address any native title considerations as per the provisions of the Commonwealth Native Title Act. The bill also proposes to repeal outdated restrictions on who is eligible to hold rural leases. These reforms will promote further business growth in Queensland by allowing corporations to hold pastoral leases, bringing the legislation into line with modern business practices. The repeal of these provisions will also allow Aboriginal and family owned corporations to hold pastoral leases, ensuring that they remain competitive in an increasingly global industry and market. Repealing restrictions to permit individuals to hold multiple pastoral holdings will also increase opportunities for landholders to ensure the viability of their rural enterprises.

The bill will also allow for simpler provisions to reserve the state's interest in timber on leasehold land when being converted to freehold. Rather than continuing to create cumbersome forest entitlement areas that remove portions of land from properties where the timber was required by the state—having a Swiss-cheese-like effect on the freehold property—this bill enables the state to record on title its continued ownership of timber resources using forest consent agreements that will bind successors in title as a profit a prendre, thus allowing all of the lease to be converted to freehold. To support these amendments, the Forestry Act 1959 will also be amended.

To support the agriculture and tourism pillars of the economy, the bill will allow all lessees to amalgamate term and perpetual leases if they have adjoining properties issued for the same purpose. This will streamline tenure arrangements, providing lessees with further opportunities to reduce their business costs and again reflect the modern business environment in these industries. While the bill certainly provides for greater tenure security for island tourism leases, the bill also makes clear that freeholding of Queensland's iconic islands is restricted to protect their special values for the benefit of the tourism industry in the long term and for the benefit of the people of Queensland. These amendments support the Newman government's commitment to double agricultural production by 2040 and to build the tourism industry.

Along with implementing the first phase of state land tenure reforms, the bill will amend a number of other pieces of legislation. The Acquisition of Land Act 1967 currently provides for the purposes for which land may be taken by the state or another constructing authority. The bill will amend the Acquisition of Land Act to remove doubt about the powers of the state or constructing authorities to acquire land, and the purposes for which land may be acquired, namely for public and environmental purposes.

The amendments to the Land Title Act 1994 will strengthen provisions allowing a more streamlined method of creating necessary easements for particular high-density developments, including making it possible to register easements prior to construction so long as the adjoining lots have development approval allowing such construction. The bill will also correct minor errors and inconsistencies in the Land Title Act.

The bill amends the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993, together with supporting amendments to the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, by providing another way in which non-native title rights and interests can be acquired where native title rights and interests are being compulsorily acquired to assist in meeting requirements under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993.

Amendments to the Water Act 2000 and subordinate legislation under the Water Act 2000 and Sustainable Planning Act 2009 will correct minor drafting errors relating to statutory rights to take water and streamline approval processes for subartesian water licences. These amendments will result in improved outcomes for water resources and more equitable management arrangements between different types of water users and reduce the regulatory burden for subartesian water users.

Additional amendments to the Water Act 2000 are also required to provide certainty for the thousands of current water licence holders in Queensland by removing any doubt about the validity of water licensing decisions that relate to existing water licences. This follows a review of historical administrative decisions made under the Water Act which found that many water licence decisions were potentially deficient in considering one or more of the decision-making criteria prescribed by the act. Unfortunately, this review has cast doubt on the legal validity of water licensing decisions made under the Water Act. The validation of licences will not apply to any decisions that are currently the subject of review or court processes initiated within six months of the decision.

Finally, the bill amends resource legislation to do two things: firstly, to give certainty to decisions made regarding later work programs and later development plans under the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 and Petroleum Act 1923 and decisions made regarding later development plans under the Mineral Resources Act 1989; secondly, the amendment will provide greater flexibility to petroleum leaseholders in relation to applying for an extension to the production commencement day. Currently, only certain leaseholders can apply and must apply a year before the commencement day. The amendment will allow more petroleum leaseholders to apply to change the production commencement day and allow a regulation to prescribe a shorter application time frame. This will mean leaseholders will have more flexibility to schedule production to meet their contractual needs. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.36 pm):
I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

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

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.36 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136, the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee report to the House on the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 13 May 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CHICKEN MEAT INDUSTRY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 11 February (see p. 53).

Second Reading

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (4.37 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The government is committed to the removal of unnecessary legislation and red tape. The government's overall target for removing red tape is a reduction of 20 per cent by 2018. The repeal of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976 will assist in meeting this target. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014 provides for the repeal of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976, which has become unnecessary legislation. This act provides for the stabilisation of the chicken meat industry in Queensland, achieved primarily through a framework for collective bargaining negotiations between chicken meat growers and chicken meat processors. The act provides a specific authorisation for collective negotiations without which such activities could be considered to be illegal under the Commonwealth's Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The Queensland Chicken Growers Association, in conjunction with major chicken meat processors, has now obtained an authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to collectively negotiate agreements. As such, the repeal of this act has the support of the industry. The functions of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee provided for in the act are either no longer required or can be provided through other non-statutory mechanisms.

The bill firstly amends the act to provide for transitional matters required for the dissolution of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee. In particular, the transitional arrangements facilitate the orderly transfer of the assets and liabilities of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee to a non-statutory industry body. Once the transitional matters have been satisfied, the act will be repealed in its entirety.

The abolition of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee in Queensland continues the trend of state governments removing themselves from the commercial activities of the industry itself. A dispute resolution process was a key element of the act. However, during the 10-year period from 2002-03 to 2012-13, the Chicken Meat Industry Committee annual reports state that no disputes relating to agreements or proposed agreements were dealt with by the committee.

Whilst there are no disputes currently before the committee, the bill provides for the unlikely event should a dispute arise before the committee is abolished. I have been advised by the Chicken Meat Industry Committee that the industry intends to insert dispute resolution clauses similar to the provisions in the act in grower and processor supply agreements.

I again commend the chicken meat industry for deciding to step outside of the state legislative framework and take full responsibility for its own future. The bill also provides certainty for the industry post repeal of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976 by recognising all pre-existing supply agreements until terminated or otherwise ended.

I reiterate my acknowledgement of the members of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee, such as Gary Sampson, for their commitment to their industry and, as I said previously, their courage in seeking alternative arrangements that mean legislation is no longer required. I acknowledge the efforts of my department in working through the issues contained in this bill with the Chicken Meat Industry Committee.

I would like to thank most sincerely the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its report on the bill tabled on 12 March this year. The committee recommended that the bill be passed. The government is certainly pleased to accept that recommendation. I therefore commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.41 pm): The opposition has no objections to the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014. In point of fact, this bill serves much the same function as the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Bill I introduced in late 2011 and which lapsed at the 2012 election. I acknowledge that this bill goes further than the 2011 bill and will result in a complete repeal of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976. It would have been inappropriate to take that step in 2011, but in the intervening years circumstances have changed to allow the full repeal of the act.

I will briefly step the House through a time line of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act, with a particular focus on the actions I took as the responsible minister. The act was legislated in 1976 in response to concerns that chicken processors were abusing their market power. The original legislation gave the Chicken Meat Industry Committee broad powers, including direct market intervention. That sort of intervention would never have been approved by either side of politics today, but in the days of the Bjelke-Petersen government it was pretty normal.

After the introduction of the national competition policy by the Keating government in the mid-1990s, the act was reviewed and the provisions allowing for direct market activity were removed. An explicit provision was added to the legislation to allow the committee to collectively bargain on behalf of chicken growers. Under national competition policy, any restriction on competition must be reviewed every decade and assessed according to a public benefit test.

As minister, I directed the department to undertake a review of the act in 2010. This review found there was sufficient public benefit for collective bargaining to continue in the industry. This review would not have necessitated any changes to the act. However, an earlier government process had recommended the dissolution of the committee.

The Webbe-Weller review was announced in July 2008 and completed its report in March 2009. It had a wide remit to examine 459 government boards and statutory bodies to determine if their functions were still relevant and recommend changes to improve the efficiency of the Public Service. It should be noted that this review was part of a major overhaul of the Public Service to improve its operation, including the creation of the Public Service Commissioner and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Members of the current government often accuse Labor of failing to reform the public sector, of allowing it to grow out of control with redundant bodies still exercising power. A look at history shows that nothing could be further from the truth.

The Webbe-Weller review and associated changes show that Labor was active in reforming the public sector. There is a world of difference between the public sector reforms carried out under Labor and the changes made under the LNP. Labor had a considered process, specifically designed to bolster public sector efficiency with a fair and equitable voluntary redundancy scheme. The plan was to make the Public Service work better.

The Newman government's plan was simply to fire thousands of employees. There was no plan to reform the sector to improve efficiency. There was no analysis of workforce capacity and future hiring needs. There was no plan to create a modern public sector.

Turning back to the Webbe-Weller review, it recommended changes to 334 government bodies or statutory bodies and the full-scale abolition of 188. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee was one of those 188 bodies the review recommended for abolition. Specifically the reviewers stated—

Where no strong Public Interest Case has been made for the continuance of a body, the Department can either outsource the function or expect industry to provide the service itself.

They further stated—

In relation to the Chicken Meat Industry Committee, if it is deemed the function is still needed, it can be undertaken by an industry funded non-statutory body.

As minister, I was presented with recommendations from two reviews. The Webbe-Weller review recommended the committee be abolished and if the functions were still necessary they should be undertaken by an industry body. The review of the act, in accordance with national competition policy, suggested that collective bargaining was still desirable. I directed the department to draft legislation allowing for the abolition of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee, but retaining the statutory authorisation for collective bargaining which would be fulfilled by a non-government organisation. That seemed to me the appropriate course of action in response to these two reviews.

As I have already stated, I introduced that bill in 2011. It was referred to the environment, agriculture, resources and energy committee for consideration. It did not report back to the House prior to the 2012 election. At the time there was some disquiet from within the chicken meat industry regarding the abolition of the committee. The Queensland Chicken Growers Association disagreed with the recommendations of the Webbe-Weller review and preferred that the committee be retained as the statutory body.

Since I introduced the bill in 2011, circumstances have changed allowing not only for the abolition of the committee but also for the wholesale repeal of the act, including the collective bargaining provisions. The Queensland Chicken Growers Association has received an authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to allow it to bargain collectively. Therefore, it is no longer necessary for the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act to remain on the statute books. I would like to congratulate the Queensland Chicken Growers Association for taking this initiative to obtain an authorisation from the ACCC.

I concur with the minister and acknowledge the work that Mr Gary Sampson has undertaken in bringing this bill to fruition. I would also like to congratulate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its consideration of the bill and the work they have done in tabling their report in this House.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.48 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill. I did notice the previous speaker was crowing about the success of this bill and some of the work that he had done. I do not think he was scratching around. I must highlight that this is a government that delivers the golden egg. It actually got on with the job and got this done.

As I have mentioned before, Gary Samson is a friend of mine. I think he is in the member for Beaudesert's electorate at Jimboomba. He has had poultry farms down there for a long time. Gary has been involved with QFF. I rang him up and personally talked to him just to make sure that we are on the right track and he assured me that we were and that the industry is heading that way. He has been a delegate with the QFF for a long time on a lot of these issues.

The chicken meat industry is a fairly large industry—40 per cent is in New South Wales, 20 per cent is in Queensland and 20 per cent is in Victoria. As we all know, we all eat a lot of chicken, so it is a large industry. There are roughly 100-odd players—

Mr Stevens: You little Steggler, you.

Mr RICKUSS: Yes, that is right. I take that interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr Langbroek: It was the member for Mermaid Beach. I look better than that!

Mr RICKUSS: The member for Mermaid Beach feels that he is a little Steggler down there at Mermaid Beach. It is an important reform. I have a couple of large operations in my electorate. One of the Benfers from Golden Cockerel lives in my electorate. They are a very big operation. In some of the drought years they were even thinking about bringing ship loads of grain in from Canada, and those sorts of things. So it is a large operation. Most of the community would know of Inghams and Steggles. It is an important industry.

I would like to congratulate the minister for making sure this legislation went through. I would also like to congratulate the industry for working well. I have not heard a lot of complaints. I do at times deal with members of the industry in my electorate. Fertiliser, which comes out of the chicken sheds, is also a great product that is used on a lot of farms around the area. It is great to see this industry continuing to prosper. Its growth is in the vicinity of five per cent annually and it is going to continue to grow. Without trying to hatch any more issues around this, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.51 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to a bill that has definitely nothing 'Chicken Little' about it. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014 is an important step in removing unnecessary regulation on this important industry. Currently, Queensland's chicken meat industry employs about 4,000 people and produces about 120 million

birds annually. More importantly, it is estimated that in 2012-13 the industry contributed \$630 million in gross value of production to Queensland's economy, not to mention the flow-on industries such as feed suppliers that would be part of this industry.

Including the corporate and large family companies that make up this company, chicken meat is farmed, as the previous speaker just said, on about 120 sites. But by no means the food output from this small concentration of businesses is truly amazing. The direct and indirect costs on the industry are low. However, any impediments on a growth industry should be removed. So for this industry to grow even more, it needs to be working well and it needs to be looking after itself, which it has done for many years.

The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill will abolish the Chicken Meat Industry Committee, as has been said. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee, the Queensland Chicken Growers Association and the major chicken meat processors support the abolition of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee. So there is general consensus that this bill should be passed through the parliament.

An important element of this bill is for the Chicken Meat Industry Committee to decide to dissolve itself, to decide which industry body its assets and liabilities will be transferred to and to forward that advice to the minister. This bill is not about government telling an industry what to do but an industry letting government know where it wants to place itself. I commend the chicken meat industry for supporting this bill and taking full responsibility for their future collective negotiation arrangements.

The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014 supports the needs of a growing Queensland industry. As we know, agriculture is one of this government's four pillars that it wants to develop in order to recover the economy and get rid of the black cloud of Labor debt that hangs over this state. Over the last five years the industry has grown on average five per cent per annum. This impressive growth occurred in a commercial environment where there were no disputes regarding agreements and proposed agreements were dealt with by the chicken meat industry. This is another reason there is such support for and confidence in adopting this bill. The government's vision for agriculture is to double Queensland's agricultural production by 2040, as I have said. The chicken meat industry is clearly an important part of this vision, with five per cent growth.

In wrapping up, this is just another sign of the maturity of the chicken meat industry and another reason for the government to remove statutory arrangements that are no longer required. I support the amendments to the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (4.54 pm): I rise today to support this government's ongoing commitment to the reduction of regulatory burden on business in this state. The minister has really spiced this bill up. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014 is an important step in removing unnecessary regulation on this important industry.

This bill will remove redundant chicken meat industry stabilisation measures from the statutes. These industry stabilisation measures have effectively been duplicated as the Queensland Chicken Growers Association has obtained an authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for its current and future members to collectively bargain with processors. The authorisation for collective bargaining also allows for resolution of disputes which may arise from time to time under chicken meat growing contracts to be dealt with under the collective arrangements. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission authorisation provides the same protection from potential prosecution under the Commonwealth's Competition and Consumer Act 2010 as the authorisation provided in the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014 will also remove the state from the commercial arrangements of chicken meat industry businesses.

Under the previous government, the CMIC Act was reviewed in 2010 and 2011 with a subsequent proposal being developed whereby the functions of the CMIC would have been transferred to an industry owned corporation while retaining the statutory authorisation to collectively negotiate. This proposal did not have the full support of the chicken meat processors who considered that such a framework would be unnecessarily burdensome.

The chicken meat industry is well aware of the government's policy to reduce regulatory burden. The Queensland Chicken Growers Association decided to obtain their own collective negotiation arrangements by seeking, in conjunction with the major processors, an authorisation for their current and future members from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for collective bargaining. The ACCC has issued an authorisation for collective bargaining for current and

future members of the Queensland Chicken Growers Association and the three major chicken meat processors Inghams, Baiada Poultry—which was Steggles—and Golden Cockerel. Under this collective bargaining arrangement, contract growers would need to be members of the Queensland Chicken Growers Association. For contract chicken growers not wishing to join the Queensland Chicken Growers Association, they can negotiate individually or could form their own collective and seek an authorisation from the ACCC.

Currently, Queensland's chicken meat industry employs about 4,000 people and produces approximately 120 million chickens annually. It is estimated that in 2012-13 the industry contributed \$630 million in gross value of production to the Queensland economy. The government's vision for agriculture is to double Queensland's agricultural production by 2040. The chicken meat industry is clearly an important part of this vision.

Through this bill the government is meeting the wishes and needs of the chicken meat industry by removing itself from industry arrangements and decisions. While I have no chicken growers in the seat of Barron River, my near neighbours on the Tablelands do have some—

Mr Kempton interjected.

Mr TROUT:—in the seat of Cook and in the seat of Dalrymple up in the north. This industry is a great employer up there and a great contributor to our economy. I am sure that those producers are liking the reduction in red tape. I support the amendments in the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.58 pm): I rise to support the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014. I have to say that I do have chicken farms in my electorate—and I am quite proud of that because I am a big supporter of the chicken and likewise the egg—and I acknowledge their contribution.

Mr Cox: What came first?

Mr KNUTH: I do not know. Has anyone come up with a theory yet?

The policy objectives of this bill are to abolish the Chicken Meat Industry Committee and remove the legislative framework for collective bargaining that is provided under the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976. The act provides a legislative framework, which includes the establishment of the committee, for the stabilisation of the chicken meat industry in Queensland. The stabilisation is given effect through collective bargaining negotiations between chicken meat growers and chicken meat processors that is specifically authorised for the purposes of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The ACCC has granted an authorisation to the Queensland Chicken Growers Association to enter into collective bargaining negotiations, which effectively negates the need for a legislative framework under the CMIC Act.

This is very important. There is no greater form of negotiations than collective bargaining. I am sure that chicken meat processors and chicken meat growers will negotiate to ensure they get the best outcomes and the best prices, and likewise chicken meat processors get the best chicken meat at an affordable price across-the-board to utilise for consumers. Collective bargaining for farmers is something that I believe in very much. It is an old Country Party policy. It is one of the reasons why the Country Party formed in the early 19th century.

I know from being a member of the committee that virtually nothing controversial was raised. As far as I know, there was also very little by way of argument in the submissions. There was no need for a public hearing as there was universal support across-the-board. That is so important to us all.

I want to finish on this note. I was brought up in Collinsville. In the 1960s and early 1970s there was what we called chicken week. Every Friday we would get a chook. Everyone would race into the co-op and get their chicken. At that time we lived a lot on black duck, the odd squatter and sometimes turkey. I can recall when driving to Townsville my father saying, 'Boys, what is that? Kentucky Fried.' We had never seen or heard it before. When we first tasted Kentucky Fried we thought, my goodness, this is the best thing. It was like all our Christmases at once. Every time we went to Townsville all we thought of was Kentucky Fried Chicken. I commend this good bill to the House.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (5.02 pm): I rise to speak to the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014. I will leave all the funnies to the others. I will just do it straight.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs MADDERN: No.

Mr Crisafulli: You'll do an egg-cellent job.

Mrs MADDERN: Thank you, my friends. This bill honours the commitment of our LNP government to reduce red tape. The existing legislation is considered redundant, as an alternative framework to achieve the objectives of the legislation has been put into place. The objective of the existing legislation was to implement a collective bargaining and dispute resolution process between growers and processors of the chicken meat industry. It was implemented as the result of market failure through an imbalance of bargaining power between the processors and the growers and the resultant disputes as a consequence of that imbalance.

The chicken meat industry has changed somewhat in its format over recent years with many processors also being involved in growing chickens in what is becoming a vertically integrated industry. Departmental advice given in a public briefing stated that—

... during the period between 2002-03 and 2012-13, the Chicken Meat Industry Committee annual report states that no disputes relating to agreements or proposed agreements were dealt with by the committee.

This is indicative of the fact that the chicken meat industry has matured and has less need for the current legislation. The industry stabilisation measures of the existing legislation have effectively been duplicated as the Queensland Chicken Growers Association has obtained an authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for its current and future members to collectively bargain with processors. Individuals who are not members of the Queensland Chicken Growers Association may still negotiate on their own behalf.

The ACCC authorisation for collective bargaining also allows for resolution of contractual disputes between growers and processors which may arise from time to time. Given the ACCC authorisation, the abolition of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee as proposed under this bill is likely to have little impact on the workings of the chicken meat industry in Queensland.

I note that there were only two written submissions to the parliamentary committee's inquiry and both supported the bill. One of these submissions was from the Chicken Meat Industry Committee supporting its own dissolution. An important element of this bill is for the Chicken Meat Industry Committee to dissolve itself, decide which industry body its assets and liabilities will be transferred to, and provide this advice to the minister along with the date of the proposed transfer of assets.

In answering a question of the parliamentary committee at a public briefing, departmental staff advised that assets and liabilities of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee would need to be transferred to an eligible entity. An eligible entity is one where the constitution or rules direct that the entity must be promoting the interests of the chicken meat industry in Queensland. A precedent was set during the sugar industry deregulation where assets of the cane protection and productivity boards were transferred to entities whose objectives were the promotion or development of the sugar industry. Departmental advice was that there are entities in the chicken meat industry which would meet the requirements for the transfer of assets.

I commend the chicken meat industry for supporting this bill and taking full responsibility for their future collective negotiating and dispute settlement arrangements. I commend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for this red-tape reduction initiative, and I support the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.06 pm): I rise in the House today to support the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014. I thank the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. John McVeigh, for bringing this sensible bill before the House. Again I have the opportunity to stand in this great House and compliment a minister on practical, common-sense legislative changes that not only reduce red tape and regulation but also support businesses getting on with what they do best, which is doing business and increasing the economy of Queensland.

I also thank my colleague the member for Lockyer, who is the chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, for reviewing the bill. I note the committee recommends that the bill be passed and that the changes in this bill have the full support of the chicken meat industry. This is an industry which I am extremely keen to support because so many of Queensland's chicken meat growers are based in the great electorate of Nanango. In fact, 10 chicken farms are located in the southern part of the Nanango electorate within the Somerset region, with two more going through the process of being approved and being built very soon. Not only is this a very important industry for Queensland as a whole; it is extremely important to the viability of the Nanango electorate.

I had the opportunity to visit a chicken meat farm recently—the Browns' farm near Coominya—and it was fascinating. This is a new farm that has been built to modern standards. I congratulate this family on everything they are doing to support the industry. It was amazing to see the good welfare of the chickens, how they cool their sheds and how often the hay that the chickens nestle in gets

removed. It was a really great opportunity. I encourage the Minister for Agriculture to accept the invitation to visit one of the chicken meat farms based in the southern part of my electorate which produce so much for the industry which employs some 4,000 people and produces approximately 120 million birds each year. This great industry for the agricultural sector of our economy produces approximately \$630 million in gross value of production to Queensland's economy. This is really important, because this is what our government is all about. It is about increasing the viability of the state by growing our four pillars. Agriculture is a very important pillar of the Queensland economy.

The chicken industry has grown an average of about five per cent per annum over the past five years. What our government is doing is quite simply something that those opposite in the Labor Party should have done many, many years ago. There was a review that happened I believe twice through the previous Labor government, but how typical is it that nothing came of that? Our government has—

Dr McVeigh: They were just too chicken.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: They were too chicken—I will take that interjection from the honourable minister. It appears that they were too chicken, yet this is a bill that has been supported by the Labor Party, it has been supported by the industry and it is common sense. I really am proud to be a part of this government and I am proud to be able to stand up here and support a minister on just simple, common-sense legislation. I encourage more common-sense actions, and the repeal of some of these nonsensical pieces of legislation will go towards our goal of reducing red tape by 20 per cent. All of the ministers are working extremely hard to reach that admirable goal. I am extremely proud that, once again, our government has listened to the people of Queensland. We have listened to the industry and we have made changes that the industry actually supports. This is a government—

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am not taking interjections. This is a can-do government that is growing the economy of Queensland to create more jobs and to create industries in the wonderful regions like the Somerset and the northern part of the Nanango electorate as well. Maybe there are people out there who could build another chicken farm, or maybe we could have another processing plant within the electorate of Nanango. I think this is a great idea and I am quite sure the constituents in the Nanango electorate would be happy to support that idea. Our electorate comes so close to the urban areas of South-East Queensland, so that affects the transport issues that need to be considered when looking at developing an industry like this. The Nanango electorate is an ideal spot. I think that is a great idea and I think it is one I am going to work on because the Somerset is ideally placed with transport, with wonderful land and with great access to water.

Mr Krause interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am not taking that interjection from the member for Beaudesert; I think the Nanango electorate would be a perfect spot. I will wrap up by saying that this is another example of our government delivering on the promise of building a strong, four-pillar economy and providing job security and opportunities for this great state. I support the amendments in the bill because the ultimate repeal of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976 will remove government red tape and assist this industry to grow even further.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (5.13 pm): I am glad to be able to speak in furious agreement with everyone else here about the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014. I endorse many of the comments of the member for Nanango, except her comments in relation to the best chicken-growing area in South-East Queensland being the Burnett. It is obviously the Beaudesert electorate. We have a very strong and growing chicken meat industry in my electorate around Beaudesert and in the Scenic Rim council area and also in the rural parts of Logan City around Jimboomba, South Maclean, North Maclean and other areas both in my electorate and in the member for Logan's electorate.

This is a growing industry which contributes, according to the Scenic Rim's own figures, \$46 million a year to the local economy. When you consider that other speakers have said that the entire industry is worth around \$600 million a year for the state of Queensland, you can see that \$46 million a year in the Scenic Rim is quite a significant amount for the 38,000 people who live there. Some of the measures the government has already taken to reform regulation for the industry are quite positive—in particular, the referral of ERA powers to DAFF and other measures to assist the development of the industry—and I know they are most welcome.

People do not think there is a great benefit derived from the poultry industry, because there is not a great deal of employment in those large chicken sheds where the chooks grow before they are taken off by the large trucks that come and get them, but the amount of produce that is bought to service those chickens, the service industries that service those sheds—

Mr Costigan: The knock-on effect.

Mr KRAUSE: Exactly. I will take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. The knock-on effect of the industry around the regions where they are developed is quite significant. That is why the benefit for the Scenic Rim is \$46 million out of a total Queensland industry of \$600 million. In recent times we have seen a new one being built in Rosevale just near the border with Ipswich and the border with the member for Lockyer's electorate as well. I know there are other industries planned, and we need to get the planning right for this industry as well. This bill is part of reforming the regulation of the industry.

The bill removes redundant chicken meat industry stabilisation measures. The key industry stabilisation measures are access to collective negotiating and a dispute resolution process. These measures in this act have been duplicated, as we have heard, because the Queensland Chicken Growers Association now has an authorisation from the ACCC to engage in collective bargaining. By putting in place the measures in this bill, we are removing that duplication and recognising the reality of the industry situation here in Queensland today.

I must mention though that we need to get the planning right, and when I say that I mean in a town planning sense as well. There are many places where it is not appropriate to have chicken farms, but there are many, many good positions for chicken farms in my electorate because not a lot of people live there and the area is removed from large, built-up areas but is very close to the capital city and the large population centres of this state. That is an important factor for the industry because they cannot transport their stock very long distances due to the nature of transport and the effect it has on the birds whilst they are in transit. We need to find appropriate places for the farms to be built and also ensure that planning measures are put into effect so that other incompatible development does not occur where those chicken farms are and where they might be in the future. Having said all of that, this is a good bill. It is great to see the removal of inappropriate legislation from the statute books. I thank the minister for bringing this to the House.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.18 pm): The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014 is an important step in removing unnecessary regulation on this important industry, an industry that as we have already heard from honourable members employs around 4,000 people in Queensland—some of whom also happen to work in the state's Far North. At present the industry produces around 120 million birds annually. It is estimated that in 2012-13 the industry contributed \$630 million in gross value of production to Queensland's economy. I am very sure that industry leaders—people such as Jodie Redcliffe from the Queensland Chicken Growers Association—are very proud of that number. I actually spoke to Ms Redcliffe earlier this week when she was in Washington DC as part of her trip around the United States, all thanks to a Nuffield Scholarship which has allowed her to check out chicken meat sites in places like Alabama while also tapping into the American farm bureau.

Jodie is certainly one of those great women in agriculture in Queensland—something that I know is close to the heart of the minister himself, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, who has, in the past and he will continue to do so, recognised these wonderful ladies who make a wonderful and significant contribution to our primary industries sector right across the length and breadth of this great state. I congratulate Jodie Redcliffe on winning that scholarship and commend her on her work as President of the Queensland Chicken Growers Association, which is supporting these reforms which are in keeping with the times—in laymen's terms—something that is certainly long overdue. Chicken is the most preferred meat in the country. I certainly know a good chicken when I see it like the chicken 'parmy' that I had only last weekend at Subway in Proserpine. It is a terrific business I might add, owned and operated by the Turner family. I congratulate them on that business venture.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: Judging by the interjections from the Minister for Local Government, he must have passed through the same establishment in his travels up and down the Bruce Highway. I can assure honourable members that Subway Proserpine is not the only place where one can get a good chicken feed in my electorate. It can also be had in places like O'Duinns, the Prince of Wales, the Metropole, the GC in Proserpine—they are up there with the best of them—not to mention my local RSL at Proserpine of which I happen to be a very proud member. Chicken is certainly a highly valued source of food by consumers due to its comparatively low cost and consistent quality. Perhaps that is why the Chooks won last year's NRL premiership. For the tri-colours it was 'finger lickin' good'.

Seriously, we are talking about a very strong and viable industry in Queensland. Excluding those farming operations of the four large corporate and family companies, there are about 80 contract chicken-growing businesses across the state running 90 farms from, as I said earlier, the far north of our state to the south-eastern corner. If we include the corporate and large family companies, that is Inghams, Baiada Poultry, Darwalla Milling Company and Woodlands Enterprises, chicken meat is farmed on 120 sites in Queensland and that is something of which we should all be proud. Put simply, the food output from this small concentration of businesses is quite remarkable. Jodie Redcliffe and her members should be chuffed about how this industry pumps out those impressive numbers.

At the moment the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976 requires that all supply agreements between growers and processors be registered with the Chicken Meat Industry Committee. In addition, an annual fee is payable on each registered supply agreement. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee, as a statutory authority, is subject to the government's reporting and financial performance. The direct and indirect costs on the industry are low. However, as all honourable members on the government side would be aware, any impediments on a growth industry should be removed, and we make no apology for that.

In conclusion, I support these amendments in the bill because the ultimate repeal of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976 will indeed remove government tape from the industry's commercial arrangements. As I said in my maiden speech, I would take a cane knife to cut through the red tape in this place. I must say that nothing—absolutely nothing—has changed since then. I do support the bill. I commend the minister for his excellent work. I also acknowledge the work of my colleagues on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee under the chairmanship of the member for Lockyer who, it goes without saying, is certainly no chicken when it comes to standing up for his community.

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (5.23 pm), in reply: Firstly, I thank all members who have contributed to discussion on this particular bill. As I have outlined, the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Amendment Bill 2014 continues the trends of state governments removing themselves from the commercial activities of industry. The Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976 requires that all supply agreements between growers and processors be registered with the Chicken Meat Industry Committee. In addition, an annual fee is payable on each registered supply agreement. The direct and indirect costs on the industry are low, however any impediments on a growth industry should be removed wherever possible, hence, the development of this bill over some time.

I might just comment on some of the contributions that have been made in the discussion. The deputy opposition leader began by tracing the history of the involvement of officers of my department working with industry on the development of this bill. He referred to a suggestion about the overhaul of the Public Service under the Labor Party, which was an interesting parallel to draw out of this particular discussion. If we consider Public Service involvement in this bill, there has most definitely been a focus on removing red tape, as I have said. It is interesting that the deputy opposition leader again attempts to rewrite history—at least to an extent. If we look at reform of the Public Service, a concept that he raised in this discussion, I can confirm that as incoming Minister for Agriculture, I encountered a plethora of policy, administration and particularly PR staff in the departmental activities that I attempted to take over even though there was no department of agriculture under the former Labor government. I remain a touch confused by some of those contributions.

In particular, the member should remember the Premier's very clear statement to this House on a number of occasions that when we wake up in the morning we focus on two things: supercharging the economy and having the best Public Service in Australia. Finally, I draw a contrast between the deputy opposition leader's reference to an apparent preference to intervene in industry with that of our government whose approach it is to reduce red tape and to work with local government. In the case of the chicken industry this has been from an environmental regulation perspective, and the Minister for Environment and I have worked on this. In other words, we try to ensure we are helping rather than hindering industry.

The chair of the committee, the member for Lockyer, made various comments about the contributions both in the committee process and in the discussion here today. The member for Thuringowa in particular updated some of the industry statistics in relation to the importance of the industry which I suspect the deputy opposition leader had some difficulty recalling. Of course, the member for Barron River and other members made contributions in relation to the statistics about the industry, the numbers of chickens being produced and of course what that means to local economies.

The member for Dalrymple referred to collective bargaining and the strength of such approaches. The point that I think he missed quite significantly is that this bill is all about collective bargaining, yes, that is driven and managed by industry, getting government out of the way. He also expressed his confusion—and I use essentially his words—about which came first: the chicken or the egg. It is clear to me that he remains confused about that and many other things.

The member for Nanango I think is in a unique position as Assistant Minister for Finance, Administration and Regulatory Reform as well as the member for the magnificent agricultural electorate of Nanango to know exactly what reducing red tape for industry is all about and what helping rather than hindering industry is all about, in this case in relation to the chicken meat industry. I certainly welcome her invitation to visit processors in her electorate.

The member for Whitsunday made quite obvious and passionate references to food outlets in his own electorate. In doing that he is referring to those who are typical of operations right throughout the chicken meat supply chain that satisfy so many of us, quite frankly, as consumers.

As I said, I thank all members for their contributions. As we have said during this discussion, the Chicken Meat Industry Committee, Queensland Chicken Growers Association and the major chicken meat processors certainly support the abolition of the Chicken Meat Industry Committee. Industry stabilisation measures have effectively been duplicated as the Queensland Chicken Growers Association has obtained an authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for its current and future members to collectively bargain with processors. Contract chicken growers who do not wish to join Queensland Chicken Growers Association can certainly negotiate individually or they could form their own collective and seek an authorisation from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. In other words, as leaders of industry they are free to determine their own path forward.

Over the last five years the industry has grown on average five per cent per annum. This impressive growth occurred in a commercial environment where no disputes regarding agreements and proposed agreements were dealt with by the Chicken Meat Industry Committee. There are no disputes currently before the committee. In the unlikely event, as I have said, that a dispute should arise before the committee is abolished, this bill seeks to provide an effective means for referring such disputes.

Again I thank industry for its leadership and foresight in the development of this bill. I acknowledge the tremendous efforts of officers of my department over some years, and I certainly 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 8, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (5.31 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (5.31 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.

**COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION (FUNDING RED TAPE REDUCTION)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Resumed from 11 February (see p. 50)

Second Reading

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (5.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Health and Community Services Committee for its prompt and thorough consideration of the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. This bill is part of a broader set of reforms that my department is leading to cut red tape. This will deliver better results for Queenslanders because organisations will be able to focus on what they do best: delivering front-line services. Before I begin I would like to thank the organisations that took the time to make submissions to the committee and assist them in their consideration of the bill.

Introducing the proposed changes will make it easier for those organisations to do business with the department, freeing up time and resources that they can better use to deliver services to customers. I would hope that those opposite will support the government in freeing up community organisations to focus on their core front-line services. In fact, the former government had considered funding legislation reforms of a similar nature to this bill, so I look forward to the opposition's support of this bill.

In 2011 the former Labor government introduced the One Funding System for Better Services Bill 2011 into parliament. That bill lapsed in 2012 when the state election was called. The bill before the House today has a number of important differences that reinforce the government's commitment to reducing red tape. The previous bill would have created a whole new act. Instead, this bill amends and streamlines legislation already used to administer government funding. The previous bill would have applied to all Queensland government funding unless a specific exemption applied. This bill allows ministers to consider whether the powers in the bill are needed for particular funding. The previous bill would have set up a compulsory process for applying for funding and entering into government funding contracts. The current bill is different, as it removes legislative provisions dealing with funding processes and allows these to be managed administratively, streamlining funding applications and their administration. This bill is another demonstration of where this government gets on with the job and makes things easy, while those opposite could only makes things more complicated.

The Health and Community Services Committee report was tabled on 12 March 2014, and I now table the government's response to that report.

Tabled paper: Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 42—Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014, government response [\[4694\]](#).

The committee made three recommendations, and I will now speak a little more about each of these recommendations to inform the House. The first recommendation was that the bill be passed, and I thank the committee for this support. The bill noted that stakeholders supported the policy intent of the bill to reduce red tape. As PeakCare, the peak body for child safety services in Queensland, pointed out, reducing unnecessary red tape is the top priority for both this government and the NGO sector so that we can get on with the important task of delivering better services for Queensland. We estimate that the bill will cut red-tape costs for funded organisations delivering funded services by about \$2.6 million per year. This money can then be better used to deliver for Queenslanders. The Queensland Council of Social Service said in its recent Opportunities for Red Tape Reduction report—commissioned by my department—less red tape increases an organisation's capacity for service delivery, strategic planning and innovation. This in turn helps both government and NGOs to revitalise our front-line services.

As one manager puts it, with less red tape 'we could provide more service user focused supports, and as Manager, I could be more strategic and creative and less administrative.' That is what this bill is all about. It cuts red tape for funded organisations, enabling them to focus on delivering services while at the same time preserving essential safeguards that allow government to ensure the safety of service users and ensure taxpayers' money is being used properly and effectively. Through simpler processes like the one set out in this bill and building stronger partnerships with service providers, we are driving better outcomes for Queenslanders.

The committee's second recommendation was that I inform the House of the arrangements that will be implemented once section 134 of the Disabilities Services Act 2006 is repealed to ensure that there are adequate mechanisms to prevent an immediate risk of harm to a person with a disability because of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding vulnerable clients and service users with a disability is extremely important. This government is committed to ensuring that effective mechanisms are in place to enable quick and decisive action when concerns arise that people using a funded service are being harmed. As a public advocate noted, the bill preserves many of the safeguards that are currently in the Disability Services Act 2006. These include a range of investigative and remedial powers that empower government to take quick and effective action to safeguard service users and require service staff to undergo criminal history screening.

In addition, if a person suffers harm or there is serious risk of harm, the government can take immediate action by using its investigative, remedial and enforcement powers under the bill. Specially appointed officers will have strong powers to investigate cases of suspected harm. These include being able to enter and search places in accordance with the legislation. These officers will be able to enter places with the occupier's informed consent or with a court issued warrant. In such cases a court will be able to issue a warrant where it is necessary for officers to enter a place to protect a person from harm or to check compliance with the Disability Services Act 2006.

This will enable my department to seek a warrant where, for example, there is evidence that a person with a disability is being neglected or abused. A warrant could also be sought if there was evidence that a service is using restrictive practices on a client or clients without necessary approvals. Once entry has been gained, the legislation will provide the department with a range of powers to protect clients and ensure essential services continue to be delivered.

It is important to note that police can enter a place without either consent or a warrant in emergencies or other urgent circumstances, such as when a person has been seriously injured or where there is clear evidence they are about to be harmed. The Disability Services Act 2006 currently allows officers to enter places without consent or a warrant but only when they reasonably suspect there is immediate risk of harm to a person and where attempts have been made to enter without using force. Quite rightly, this creates a high threshold for entry. In practice, the evidence required to meet this threshold is likely to be similar to that needed to obtain a warrant.

To date, my department has never used this special power and the requirement of a court ordered warrant ensures an additional check on the use of this power. As the Public Advocate noted in her submission, it can be difficult to uncover abuse of vulnerable people, and people with a disability may have difficulty making a complaint. Staff in my department actively watch out for abuse in a number of ways. As well as investigations by authorised officers, observations occur through on-site audits of service providers and visits by contract managers. The department also encourages family members and service staff to raise any concerns about the quality of services with the department. Importantly, community visitors, independently engaged through the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, also regularly visit residential disability services. Allegations of harm are reported to them by the department as well as to other statutory agencies like the Office of the Adult Guardian. If the Adult Guardian considers there are reasonable grounds for suspecting there is an immediate risk of harm to an adult with impaired capacity because of neglect, exploitation or abuse, the Adult Guardian may apply for a warrant to enter the place and remove the adult. This safeguard already exists under the current Guardianship and Administration Act 2000. As part of preparing for the implementation of the bill, my department will work with the Queensland Police Service and the Office of the Adult Guardian to ensure clear protocols are in place should urgent action be needed to protect people with a disability. These protocols will be in place from the commencement date of the bill, which is scheduled for 1 July 2014. Relevant staff will be made aware of the arrangements so they know when and how to use them.

The submission from the Public Advocate also raised a number of broader issues. While the committee commented on these issues, no specific recommendations were made in relation to them. I want to touch on them briefly because, like the committee, I think that they are important. This is an important policy area to get right. To ensure that people with a disability receive high-quality and safe services, we need effective and efficient regulation and oversight. One of the issues raised by the Public Advocate was whether removing legislated service standards and the requirement for organisations to be preapproved as eligible for funding will reduce safeguards, and the simple answer to this is no. Under the current legislation, I am able to, as minister, make service standards and accompanying compliance processes to hold service providers to these standards. Currently, if an organisation does not meet the service standards, my department may terminate the organisation's

service agreement. This will still be the case under the bill. Service standards and service provider assessment processes are vitally important. However, to include these in legislation would make them less flexible and unable to evolve to changes in best practice. What is more effective is for funded organisations to be continually aware of the safety of service users in their everyday work.

To enable funded entities to deliver their services efficiently and with appropriate safeguards, the department has recently rolled out a new quality assurance framework, the Human Services Quality Framework. The Human Services Quality Framework consolidates four existing sets of departmental standards into one streamlined set of standards. These cover all aspects of service delivery—for example, management, service access, responding to the individual need and safety. All funded services must meet the standards. Organisations delivering services to vulnerable clients such as people with a disability have their performance regularly assessed by independent auditors. The new framework has removed the duplications and different quality standards that previously applied. Instead of being audited separately against a number of different but similar standards, organisations now undergo one common audit for their services. This reduces costs and unnecessary red tape and frees up staff to deliver more services. A user guide has also been developed to help funded organisations apply the standards. This guide translates each standard into detailed requirements for each service, including disability services. In designing the system we have ensured that the requirements of the current legislated standards are fully translated into the Human Services Quality Framework. The changes in this bill support the government's implementation of the new framework and help service providers deliver the highest quality services.

In removing the requirement for organisations to be preapproved before they can apply for funding, safeguards for people with disabilities will be preserved. My department will continue to assess the suitability of organisations as part of the simplified funding process. This simplified funding process will further cut red tape for both government and NGOs. As the committee noted in its report, QCOS, PeakCare and the Queensland Law Society all supported the removal of the preapproval process. In particular, the committee noted that the Queensland Law Society submission suggested that this may improve access to funding opportunities for small organisations and potentially reduce paperwork for large providers. I was pleased to see that the committee agreed that matters could be more appropriately dealt with within service agreements or contracts and through other administrative arrangements.

The other issue raised by the Public Advocate that I wanted to speak about was the impact of removing the requirement for disability service providers to keep and implement a policy about preventing abuse, neglect and exploitation. The bill removes current requirements for disability service providers to keep and implement certain policies and procedures or face investigative and remedial action. Instead, government will be able to use its investigative and remedial powers in specific circumstances. Importantly, these include where a funded organisation harms a person or if there is a very serious risk of harm to a person. The result of this is that government will be able to act whenever a person is harmed rather than having to prove that a service provider has failed to comply with its abuse, neglect or exploitation policy. At the same time, service providers will still be required to maintain processes to prevent and minimise harm under the Human Services Quality Framework, ensuring that everyone is working to the same standards and removing the need to develop and maintain policies which unnecessarily duplicate the standards. My department will continue to work with consumer and provider representatives, as well as the Public Advocate and the Adult Guardian, to strengthen capabilities to safeguard people with disability.

The committee's third recommendation was that the bill be amended to require a minister who makes a funding declaration to table a statement in the Legislative Assembly about the declaration. I share the committee's commitment to ensuring public confidence in government processes. Parliamentary oversight allows public scrutiny of decisions made by ministers. This is why this government has accepted the recommendation in principle. The bill already includes a requirement that all declarations be published on government websites. It also requires chief executives to maintain and put on their department's website a list of all of the declared funding they administer. In addition, where the declaration covers funding that has already been paid to organisations, departments must write to all affected organisations within one month. However, the government proposes to further fulfil the intent of the committee's recommendation. I will make a statement to parliament on commencement of the bill about the programs and other funding that I have declared. The nature of the operation of this bill means that there will be a number of declarations on the commencement but that they may be less frequent over time. I will assess the need to make future

statements to parliament as further declarations are made. I respect that this is in the interests of public accountability to keep the parliament informed. When making a statement of the kind contemplated by the committee will assist in providing that accountability, I undertake to do so.

Before I finish I want to touch on two final matters that the committee commented on without making any specific recommendations. Firstly, I want to acknowledge the committee's considered comment that the removal of a funded entity's right to seek an external review by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal is justified when balanced against the objectives of the legislation and the retention of internal departmental reviews. The review provisions only relate to two very specific decisions under the legislation—appointing an interim manager and ceasing or suspending funding following a compliance notice or process. An important objective of the bill is to enable government to take quick and effective action to ensure publicly funded services are delivered safely and to protect public funds. At the same time, an appropriate and effective review process will be retained. This bill takes a balanced approach and I thank the committee for its comment.

The second issue relates to engagement with funded entities in the child protection system. The committee asked that I ensure that my department engage with those entities. I want to take this opportunity to assure the House that this has and will continue to occur. I place enormous value on the work that our child safety providers play in supporting vulnerable children and their families. I know that these organisations are facing significant changes following the government's response to the Child Protection Commission of Inquiry final report. We want to do everything we can to enable them to participate proactively in this reform agenda.

One of the things that we can do is to make the various parts of these reforms as clear as possible. Therefore, as part of implementing the bill departmental staff will engage with funded entities in the child protection system to ensure that they understand the intent of the changes in the bill and how they interact with other requirements about reporting suspected harm of a child. Once again, I thank the Health and Community Services Committee for its consideration of the bill and its valuable feedback. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (5.49 pm): It is a privilege to rise as the shadow minister for disability services to make a contribution to the debate on the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014, which is before the House today. At the outset, I would like to put on the record that the Labor opposition will not oppose the bill, but it has some concerns about aspects of the bill that I will address today.

As honourable members would know, this bill was introduced into this House by the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, the Hon. Tracy Davis MP, on 11 February 2014 and it was sent to the Health and Community Services Committee for public consultation and scrutiny, with the committee's report being tabled on Wednesday, 12 March 2014. The committee has recommended in recommendation No. 1 that the bill be passed. We on this side of the chamber support that recommendation, albeit with reservations that I will outline.

That brings me to the bill before the House today. As previously mentioned, this bill was introduced by the current Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services on 11 February this year and proposes a raft of changes that will reduce duplication and inconsistency in the current legislation that has been added over the years with the goal to ultimately reduce red tape while maintaining adequate safeguards. As the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services stated in its briefing material to the parliamentary committee, this bill—

... streamlines the current laws while preserving essential safeguards that protect tax payer's money, the delivery of essential community services and service users.

The department continues by stating—

Under the Bill, the *Community Services Act 2007* will provide a simpler and shared legislative base for funding across the Department, and other agencies that decide to use it. This will reduce red tape costs for funded organisations and support and enable the streamlining of funding contracts and other administrative reforms.

As honourable members are aware, this bill will make changes and amendments to the *Community Services Act 2007* and the *Disability Services Act 2006* and will completely repeal the *Family Services Act 1987*. The bill sets about removing duplications in the funding arrangements, including in the monitoring and enforcement provisions that are located in both the *Disability Services Act 2006* and the *Community Services Act 2007*.

As the minister stated in her introductory speech—

This bill will deliver reforms that slash red tape and reduce the cost of doing business for funded organisations. This will enable them to focus more of their valuable resources on services and products that make a real difference in people's lives.

I could not agree more with those words. As the minister is fully aware, and as has been noted, this bill is not solely the work of the LNP government. In fact, many of the elements contained within the bill that is before us today have already been before this House in a previous session of this parliament. I refer to the One Funding System for Better Services Bill, which was introduced by the former Labor minister for community services and housing and minister for women on 6 September 2011. As the then minister stated in her introductory speech, that bill, if passed, was going to deliver on the following three key objectives—

... it will provide, for the first time, consistent legal powers for safeguarding the delivery of crucial products and services that are delivered with funding provided by the Queensland government and for ensuring the proper use of these public funds; it will simplify existing funding laws and reduce red tape for entities that are currently funded under multiple acts; and it will help to improve the transparency of government's funding decisions.

The then minister went on to state—

I am pleased to be bringing to parliament a bill that will reduce red tape for this sector and free up resources for direct service delivery.

As members can see, both sides of this House agree that work needs to occur in this space to ensure that our front-line support staff and organisations are properly resourced and funded and that there is a proper framework as we move forward to meet the challenges of tomorrow. However, although the Labor opposition agrees with the overall holistic approach and objective of the bill, it believes that the minister and the Newman LNP government have gone too far with some elements of the bill by proposing to amend the legislation beyond that which had already been drafted in the One Funding System for Better Services Bill. Unfortunately, that bill was never debated as it lapsed due to the March 2012 election. These detrimental additional amendments have been introduced by those opposite, who came to office preaching that they would revitalise front-line services but they have actually taken a wrecking ball to front-line services. Public submissions made by key bodies such as the Queensland Council of Social Service, PeakCare Queensland Inc., Meals on Wheels Queensland, the Office of the Public Advocate and the Queensland Law Society during the parliamentary committee's investigation into this bill all raise genuine and serious concerns about the detrimental impact on the non-government sector of aspects of this bill. I take this opportunity to thank the key bodies that took the time to make submissions to the parliamentary committee to ensure that we as legislators are fully informed of the issues that matter as we debate this legislation today.

As I have mentioned previously, the bill before us today stems from a previous Labor bill, the One Funding System for Better Services Bill, which lapsed in 2012, which at that time prevented the parliamentary committee reporting its findings back to this House. However, since then we have had a newly formed parliamentary committee, the Health and Community Services Committee, analyse the current bill with a variety of stakeholders making submissions and raising valid points of concern. It should be noted that some of those points of concern relate to issues that were dealt with in the previous bill, but unfortunately the government of the day was unable to make amendments or address those concerns as the bill lapsed. More importantly, these submissions and the concerns that the stakeholders have raised show the failure of the LNP government and the minister to address their concerns as we would have done. As members would know, those opposite came to office nearly two years ago, which has provided the minister with ample time to undertake consultation, which she indeed has, as she stated in her introductory speech—

Key human services peak bodies have been consulted about the proposals in the bill. These included the Queensland Council of Social Service, the Local Government Association of Queensland, National Disability Services and PeakCare.

The minister went on to state—

Their input and feedback was extremely valuable in helping to shape the bill and was very much appreciated.

Therefore, it is disappointing that the issues that were raised by QCOSS and PeakCare, which made public submissions to this bill and which most likely raised the same issues with the minister during her consultation work, were ignored by the minister in the legislation that we are debating today.

With those comments in mind, I would like to turn to the new objective of the legislation, which will be inserted once this bill is passed. Although the new objective is similar to the objective that would have been inserted under the One Funding System for Better Services Bill, the context and climate that we now find ourselves in under the Newman LNP government is vastly different. This is a government that is cold at heart. This is a government that puts dollars and cents above Queenslanders and, in particular, those vulnerable Queenslanders who need assistance. This is a government that rips money out of the department's grants funding for the non-government sector and expects them to find efficiencies and savings while maintaining an acceptable level of service to

their clients and the community. We only have to look at the situation that unfolded in my electorate of Redcliffe at the Regional Community Association Moreton Bay to know that those opposite are failing the community at every turn.

For the benefit of the House, I will read to members the current objective of the Community Services Act, which states—

The main object of this Act is to help build sustainable communities by facilitating access by Queenslanders to community services.

Government members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: Maybe those opposite should be listening to the community stakeholders. I compare that objective to the new objective, which is—

... to safeguard funding for the delivery of products or services to the community that—

- (a) contribute to Queensland's economic, social and environmental wellbeing; and
- (b) enhance the quality of life of individuals, groups and communities.

Although that objective may appear similar in nature to the objective proposed under the One Funding System for Better Services Bill, we have to read this new objective in the context of the brave new world in which we live under the regime of the Newman LNP government. We know that those opposite want to flog off everything that they can. From government buildings in the Brisbane CBD to government services, this government is determined to outsource what it can to save a buck which, in the long run, will have a detrimental effect on the Queensland community.

I would like to turn now to an area of the bill that we do agree with. This bill omits part 3 of the Community Services Act that compels and requires an entity in the non-government sector to apply for an approval and be placed on the approved service provider list before it is eligible to apply for funding through the different funding areas of the department. The removal of this procedure will allow for a one-step funding process, which will enable a funding agency to submit one application and thus reduce the red-tape burden. As the minister stated in her introductory speech—

The bill removes the need for organisations to become 'approved service providers' before they can apply for funding. Instead, organisations will only need to make one application for the funding itself. During this process, departments will confirm the organisation's bona fides, governance arrangements and capability to manage the funds and deliver the required services.

This approach, which the former Labor government had also embarked on, has been supported by the sector. In particular, the Queensland Council of Social Service stated in its submission to the committee dated 27 February 2014—

In particular, we support removing the requirement of organisations to undergo an Approved Providers application process before applying for government funding. This removes a duplicative process and reduces red tape for community service organisations.

The Queensland Law Society on the same issue stated that one of the positive aspects of the bill was the removal of—

... requirements under the Community Services Act 2007 and Disability Services Act 2006 for entities to become approved service providers before being able to apply for funding. We suggest this may improve access to funding opportunities for small organisations and potentially reduce paperwork for larger providers.

I note, however, that the Public Advocate had some reservations in relation to the removal of the preapproval process when read in conjunction with other aspects of the bill that removed other safeguards. While we agree with the Public Advocate that some of the aspects of the bill may be detrimental, which I will address shortly, we believe that the removal of the preapproval process is a positive step forward ensuring that our hardworking and vital front-line non-government organisations are not burdened by excessive red tape and can get on with the job of looking after some of the most vulnerable Queenslanders.

I now turn my attention to omissions being made in the Disability Services Act 2006, in particular clause 59 of this bill which will omit parts 11 and 12 of the Disability Services Act. As the minister would be aware, the committee received many submissions from key stakeholders, one of which was the Public Advocate. The Public Advocate raised numerous concerns, one in particular regarding section 134 of the current Disability Services Act 2006 which deals with the power to enter a place in certain circumstances without a warrant. The Public Advocate stated in her submission—

This section will be removed with the omission of Part 11 from the *Disability Services Act 2006*, but it is not proposed to replicate this provision in either that Act or the amended *Community Services Act 2007*.

The Public Advocate further stated—

It is well known and understood that the abuse of vulnerable people, including many people with disability, is difficult to uncover. People with disability themselves may find it difficult to complain, or not know that they have a right to. It may be difficult to gather the evidence needed to support the application for a warrant or an immediate police response.

It is therefore prudent, one might have thought, to maintain this provision in the act to ensure that vulnerable people were protected. While I am only new to this House, during my first sitting week this House passed the Fair Trading Inspectors Bill 2013 on 6 March 2014 which to my knowledge inserted provisions into statute that allowed fair trading inspectors and other authorised officers to conduct searches without a warrant if the circumstances arose. So I ask the minister: why is it that powers have been given on one hand to fair trading inspectors to undertake searches without a warrant, if the circumstance arise, under approximately 14 pieces of legislation, but on the other, the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, the person who is charged with the sole responsibility for ensuring that vulnerable members of our community are protected, is removing the ability for authorised officers to undertake searches of service providers if they suspect a breach is occurring? I question why this has been excluded by the minister and ask the minister to outline in detail what safeguards will be in place to protect Queenslanders.

Government members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: I understand that the minister did just provide a government response to the committee report. That response was provided at the start of the second reading speech. I will take into account the comments made by the minister, but the comments specifically made by the stakeholders to the committee were that they believed that those provisions should have remained in legislation.

I would like to turn now to the issue of ministerial declarations. Clause 7 of this bill, as the committee report outlines, enables the Community Services Act to be applied to any minister who administers a department which provides funding, thus allowing any department to use the one legislation which reduces duplication across the statute books. This means that a minister will be allowed to make a declaration, which will be made public, in relation to what organisation was funded, for what purpose and the total amount of funding for a particular period.

The Queensland Council of Social Service has raised concerns with this approach, stating that the legislation may have unintended consequences for organisations if the underpinning legislative requirements of their current contracts are markedly different from those in the new bill. This is a valid point, with QCOSS citing an example of a dispute resolution process which is located in its existing service agreements and, should there be a different dispute resolution process located in statute, which one would be enforced. I note that the explanatory notes to the bill, which was extracted into the committee's report, states—

Applying the amended Act will not impose additional obligations on funded organisations; rather it will provide funding departments with additional powers to safeguard service users and public funds where a funded organisation seriously fails to meet its obligations

While I understand that this is the intention, I ask the minister to please explain in detail how this bill will affect current service providers with current service agreements. Will the minister assure the parliament today that this legislation will not have retrospective consequences for existing service providers?

The committee's report raised the issue of what is referred to as a Henry VIII clause which, as the committee's report explains, is a clause which enables an act to be expressly or impliedly amended by subordinate legislation or executive action. The bill, in particular proposed sections 10 and 12, which are inserted into the legislation by clause 8, allows and enables a decision of the executive arm of government, in particular the current Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, to determine when legislation will be imposed, for example when a declaration will be made to allow funding to be provided to an organisation. While the bill requires a minister who makes a decision by declaration to provide funding to an organisation to place the declaration on a government website to ensure that public confidence is maintained and to allow the parliament the ability to scrutinise the minister's declarations, we support the committee's recommendation that the minister be compelled to table a statement in the Legislative Assembly about any declarations that he or she makes. This will ensure that we as parliamentarians, and the parliament as the peak legislative arm of this state, are in a position to analyse and scrutinise how public funds are disbursed.

Before I leave the topic of ministerial declarations, I would like to touch on an issue raised by the Queensland Law Society in its submission which was not covered by the committee in its report. The Queensland Law Society comments on the proposed section 12(3) which outlines a range of factors which the minister may consider when making a declaration of the funding to which this legislation applies. The Queensland Law Society state—

Given the considerable power that has been provided to the minister in making these declarations (also noting that funding declarations can be made before or after funding has been provided), it may be prudent to ensure the minister 'must' consider the list of stated considerations in proposed s 12(3).

I therefore ask the minister to outline her view on whether a minister must take the items listed in section 12(3) into consideration before making a funding declaration, considering that it is public funds which are being dispensed. I also pick up the point that in the government's response they have said that they will table in the parliament on the first occasion in relation to declarations, but will then consider whether they will from time to time continue to do so. We ask that they pick up the recommendation of the committee in full, which is to continue to put before the parliament any declarations approved.

Mr Ruthenberg: There is an undertaking to give it in parliament.

Ms D'ATH: To make it clear, the minister's response that was just tabled says the minister will consider making further statements to parliament from time to time about other declarations. There was not a guarantee beyond the initial proposal to fulfil the intent by making a statement on commencement of the bill. After that point it would be considered from time to time. We ask that there be a commitment that it will be done into the future.

Ms Davis: It's already on the website. The information is there.

Ms D'ATH: I remind the minister that it is the committee's recommendation that we are asking for the minister and the government to adopt. I now turn my attention to clause 8 of the bill, which omits and replaces parts 2-6 of the current Community Services Act 2007. In particular, clause 8 inserts a new section 16 which will act as a prerequisite for action to take place when a serious concern is alleged. In particular, this new section sets out four provisions which will be used as trigger points for action when a serious concern is alleged. They include when the funding received by the funded entity is improperly used; the funded entity significantly fails to deliver a funded product or service; an act done or omission made by the funded entity in providing a funded product or service results in harm to an individual; and if the funded entity received the funding to deliver disability services to which the Disability Services Act 2006 applies and the funded entity contravenes provisions of the Disability Services Act 2006.

It has been submitted by the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Council of Social Service and PeakCare that this section acting as a prerequisite is subjective in nature and open to interpretation. The Queensland Law Society stated—

... these concepts (for example, 'harm to an individual' and 'significant failure') have the potential to be extremely wide, and we note that they appear to be subjective.

It went on to state—

We note in particular that s4(3)(k) of the Legislation Standards Act 1992 in relation to fundamental legislative principles provides that legislation should be 'unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way.'

The Queensland Council of Social Service stated—

While legislation should be flexible with some room for interpretation, the current definition is subjective and risks being applied inconsistently.

These are valid points raised by key stakeholders and show that the parliamentary committee system, by seeking the views of key stakeholders, works effectively. I ask the minister to outline in detail how this section will work in practice within her department and what safeguards or guidelines will be put in place to ensure that the trigger points for serious concern are used in an appropriate manner to ensure that vulnerable Queenslanders are protected.

The Queensland Law Society also raised concerns with section 17 of the bill, which states—

... a chief executive may obtain a written report from an authorised officer appointed by the chief executive about whether a serious concern exists for funding received by the funding entity.

The Queensland Law Society stated—

The current drafted threshold is 'may', the Society suggests that in the interests of transparent and informed decision-making this is made '... must, unless there is a risk of imminent misappropriation of funds or harm to an individual, obtain a written report...'

While the opposition understands that the purpose of the bill is to provide a mechanism for quick and decisive action to occur if an alleged serious concern exists, we ask the minister what administrative arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the chief executive only embarks on actions regarding a serious concern if it is lawful and appropriate. Once an alleged serious concern is alleged, the chief executive may, under proposed section 129 of the bill, require the service provider to produce documents or information relating to their funded products or service or, if an interim manager is appointed, they are charged with a broad range of powers to obtain and elicit information, which has raised some concerns with stakeholders regarding confidentiality of information.

The Queensland Law Society has raised concerns that community legal centres, which may draw funding under the act, may be subject to this legislation and is fearful of client information being exposed. The Queensland Council of Social Service has also raised concerns regarding the protection of client and staff confidential information. It states—

We recommend that additional protections are introduced to the legislation to ensure delicate information is treated appropriately.

We ask that those on the government side take more heed of what the stakeholders are actually saying to the committees. While we understand that information is required to form the basis of any investigation into an alleged serious concern and that legal privilege would not be waived, it is important that information is used wisely and within the confines of the law. We ask the minister what internal administrative processes will the minister's department put in place to ensure that confidential information remains as such and will only be used for the relevant circumstance for which it is permitted.

I would like to turn now to the issue of external reviews, or reviews to the tribunal as they are called, which basically means to QCAT, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This is a prime example of how this bill has gone further than the previous bill that lapsed, as it strips away the right to an external merits based review to QCAT. The Queensland Council of Social Service has summed the issue up well in its submission. It stated—

While government's ability to take swift and decisive action to protect state resources and the safety of service users is critical, it must be balanced with fair and transparent mechanisms for funded organisations to appeal decisions which affect their funding arrangements and other related contractual obligations. An external appeal process is an important avenue for organisations to seek impartial reviews of such decisions and without one there is a risk of perceived bias and inconsistent application by government agencies, impacting on the outcomes of reviews.

PeakCare submitted—

The option to pursue an external review process is integral to transparency and fairness for the simple reason that the aggrieved party views the mechanism as independent of the original decision-maker.

While the opposition notes and agrees with the intent of the bill to allow the government the ability to take swift and decisive action to protect the resources and safety of service users, we believe that adequate appeal mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that natural justice is maintained. It should be noted that, under the lapsed One Funding System for Better Services Bill 2011, the external review process to QCAT was maintained, as Labor values due process and transparency, unlike those opposite.

While the minister may argue that funded organisations still have the right to seek a judicial review via the court system, this approach will severely limit the number of external reviews undertaken, as court is a costly exercise and one that our funded non-government organisations should not have to bear and cannot afford. As the Queensland Law Society stated—

Whilst we note that internal review and judicial review avenues are still available, we note that having a review avenue to QCAT can be accessible for small organisations, given its cost effectiveness.

This bill also removes the appeal rights for a stay of a decision while the department is reviewing the decision. We on this side of the chamber believe in fairness. We on this side of the chamber believe that there needs to be a balance between provisions that allow the government to take swift and decisive action to protect the resources and safety of service users and those that protect and provide due process to the service provider. It is unfortunate that the minister's legislation in this particular instance does not achieve that balance and we will not be supporting any move to strip away the external appeal rights to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Before I conclude I would like to touch on the issue of contestability. During her introductory speech, the minister raised the issue of contestability, stating—

This is part of the Queensland government's commitment to revitalising front-line services and putting customers first, including providing Queenslanders with more choice by strengthening contestability. We are also committed to ensuring better value for taxpayers' money in line with the reports of the Commission of Audit and Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, both of which recommended maximising returns on government investment and improving procurement processes.

Government members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: I note that those on the other side of the chamber are commenting on their own minister's comments. We all know that contestability is the government's fancy catchword for outsourcing government services. Even Queensland's SMOs, our senior medical officers, are now raising their concerns about contestability being code for outsourcing. It is happening right across the government. The minister, along with the Treasurer, who is the chairperson of the Social Services Cabinet Committee, have released a draft consultation document entitled 'Social Services Investment

Framework', which basically charts the way forward for contestability in this state or, as we call it, outsourcing. The document even contains a 'contestability lifecycle' and a 'whole-of-government priorities and the social services investment framework', which under the heading 'Government priorities' has as the final destination 'Becoming an enabler', 'Ensuring the best access, quality and timeliness of services irrespective of who provides those services'.

However, it is not all about the money or, as the minister puts it, 'maximising returns on government investment and improving procurement processes'. As PeakCare Queensland submitted on the topic of contestability—

A disproportionate focus on efficiency and economies of scale could mean that choice of provider, culturally competent services, quality, or client outcomes are sacrificed.

That is something the minister should take note of to ensure that services that are currently being provided by both the government and the non-government sector do not suffer. People should be put ahead of money and profit any day.

As I draw to a close, I take this opportunity to thank the Queensland Parliament's Health and Community Services Committee, of which my colleague the shadow minister for health and member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller, is the deputy chairperson. Like all committees in this place, this committee has an important role to play and I thank the members of the committee for taking the time to review and investigate the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014, which we are debating today. However, it would be remiss of me to think that the members of parliament on the committee do all the work. My thanks are extended also to the hardworking secretariat, led by the committee's research director, Ms Sue Cawcutt, and also Mr Peter Rogers, the research director of the Technical Scrutiny Secretariat, for their assistance in scrutinising the bill. The parliamentary committee process is valuable, as it allows members of the public and key stakeholders to provide their firsthand knowledge and experience to the committee to assist, shape and form legislation that will ultimately have an impact on them, their industry or sector. I look forward to working with the Health and Community Services Committee in my capacity as the shadow minister for disability services into the future.

In conclusion, the Labor opposition will be supporting this bill with our reservations and observations noted. This bill, as previously stated, stems from the former Labor government bill which unfortunately lapsed due to the 2012 state election. However, this bill has added elements which, as I have outlined, we and key stakeholders do not agree with.

It is unfortunate that the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has taken nearly two years to reintroduce this bill. If those opposite truly wanted to reduce red tape and the burden on the non-government sector they would have introduced this bill earlier. I unfortunately have seen firsthand the fallout of what can happen to a funded organisation when things go sour.

Government members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: Those on the other side might actually want to listen to this. We only have to look at the actions of the disgraced former member for Redcliffe and former LNP member to know what can happen to a community organisation like RCAMB and the wider community, to know that we not only need strong laws in place to safeguard and protect the state's funds and the individuals involved but also a government that has the ability to act quickly and decisively with the appropriate tools available to them, which unfortunately was not the case in that situation.

Ms Davis interjected.

Ms D'ATH: And we are still waiting for the report. As the newly appointed shadow minister for disability services, I affirm my commitment to all Queenslanders who encounter disability, whether they themselves have a disability or they are a parent, family member or friend of a person with a disability. I am also committed to supporting the individuals who work within the disability sector or have an interest in disability services. As I said in my maiden speech in this chamber—

There is not one person in this parliament who could disagree with the statement that we are not doing enough to support people with a disability and their family and carers.

I look forward to working with the sector to ensure that more is achieved. The Labor Party has a proud tradition of supporting the non-government sector, in particular the communities and disability sectors. We will continue to stand up for the rights of individuals, in particular marginalised members of our community, and ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to protect their interests now and into the future. With those remarks and our reservations noted, I commend the bill to the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Before I call the next speaker, I acknowledge in the gallery this evening Councillor William Owen-Jones who represents division 2 in the Gold Coast City Council and is chair of the finance committee. I call the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games.

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (6.21 pm): Can I add my welcome to the councillor and guests in the House this evening. I rise to contribute to the debate on the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill introduced into the House by the honourable member for Aspley on 11 February 2014 and referred to the Health and Community Services Committee. They tabled their report on 12 March with three recommendations.

The main objective of this bill is to streamline current laws surrounding community organisations while preserving essential safeguards that protect taxpayers' money, the delivery of essential community services and service users. As it currently exists, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services administers its funding—some \$1.5 billion in 2012-13—under three separate acts. Consistent with this government's approach to legislative reform over the past two years, this bill seeks to remove this duplication and unnecessary legislative requirement by centralising and condensing regulation into one piece of legislation. As the Minister for Small Business in this government, I have to say it is a very welcome move.

This will make a series of improvements to the sector, including: providing a common legislative base for funding across the department; removing barriers to having one contract per organisation for the department; cutting red-tape costs for funded organisations by about \$2.6 million—very impressive; removing more than 60 pages of statute; and contributing to the department's 23 per cent regulatory reduction target.

In the past some organisations were required to complete multiple funding applications and have multiple versions of the same policies to receive funding from the department. This bill eradicates this onerous requirement and ensures that groups will only need to make one single application to the department for funding. It is important to remember that many of these organisations rely on volunteers with limited time and resources. As a government we should be doing everything we can to make the process easier and more accessible for them. Of course, there needs to be adequate safeguards in place, which the minister has comprehensively addressed in her speech.

Unlike the Labor member for Redcliffe, who just spent 30 minutes speaking in this House without mentioning any of the fantastic organisations in her electorate, I wish to share with the House some of the great work that is being carried out by local community organisations that receive funding from the minister's department in the electorate of Currumbin. Of particular note, I would like to commend the Palm Beach Neighbourhood Centre which, under the capable hands of coordinator Samantha Way, offers countless services to the people of the southern Gold Coast. Just to name a few, there is: child, youth and parent counselling; financial counselling; community meeting rooms and internet; parenting workshops; and legal information. The centre is a treasured community hub for our residents who sometimes just need a little guidance and a helping hand to get their lives back on track. I am sure they join me in thanking the minister for her generous funding.

Another is the widely enjoyed southern Gold Coast 60 and Better Program that is providing invaluable social interaction for our elderly citizens. They promote an active and social lifestyle and encourage members to become involved in health-enhancing activities. Throughout the year they put on a number of events and have groups that meet weekly, including a walking group, line dancing and computer tuition. Being a compassionate government, we recognise the importance of providing support to these groups who offer our seniors social connectivity, company and entertainment they might not otherwise be able to access.

The department also provides funding to an organisation I have been a strong supporter and advocate of for a number of years now, the Blair Athol Accommodation and Support Program. Blair Athol offers various services to assist people suffering from homelessness. Under the amazing leadership of director Liz Fritz, this centre offers in some cases life-saving and often life-changing support to vulnerable members of our community. Social inclusion activities include: crisis intervention, counselling and emotional support; training on budgeting and financial management; practical assistance; hygiene; and advocacy.

Groups and organisations like these are the fabric of our community. The Newman government, under the careful and caring watch of the Minister for Communities, the Hon. Tracy Davis, are committed to continually improving the services offered to vulnerable Queenslanders.

I understand the minister and her department have been considered and deliberated on these reforms for some time. It is never an easy task to undertake regulatory reform, especially when it pertains to sensitive situations such as funding for community services as is the case here. This bill delivers essential reforms to the sector whilst preserving legal safeguards for essential services.

I really hope we hear from opposition speakers a little about some of the wonderful organisations that they have in their electorates instead of just bleating about the negatives. It is organisations in each of our electorates that are part of the reason we stand as MPs and part of the reason we want to represent those in the community who often do not have a voice for themselves. I commend the work of the minister and her department in terms of what they have been doing to make life not only better for the people in Currumbin but for those in all of Queensland.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (6.27 pm): I wondered where the shadow minister was going with her speech. I thought the first 50 words or so—perhaps the naming of the legislation—were accurate, but from then on it was just verbose, monotonous, political grandstanding on a subject that she obviously has no understanding of. I will raise a few points about what the honourable member for Redcliffe said. She talked about the committee's consultation. She would note in the report, if she bothered to read it—perhaps one of her doe-eyed staff members wrote the speech for her—that we actually wrote to 28 stakeholder groups and we received five submissions. We invited those 28 stakeholders to attend the public hearing and none of them wanted to participate in the public hearing. I find it strange that the opposition say that they are supporting the legislation but she carried on like that this evening.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr HATHAWAY: Perhaps I am a little naive, Attorney-General, but sometimes I would like to think that this House can undertake the function that it has been tasked with by the people of Queensland.

I note that the committee's report was adopted unanimously. There were no reservations and no objections then. If they had that many issues with the report why the hell did they not bring them up at that point? I will change my focus because I am getting a little bit hot under the collar. I rise today as a proud member of the Health and Community Services Committee to speak to the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill so proudly introduced by the honourable minister.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hathaway, adjourned.

MOTION

Order of Business

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (6.30 pm): I move—

That government business order of the day No. 2 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Correction to Answer to Question; Foster and Kinship Carers

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (7.30 pm), by leave: Today in question time I answered a question in which I stated—

... between July 2012 and September 2013, we have seen an increase of 312 carers across the state. That is an increase per month of nearly 21 more carers ...

That statement was incorrect. The correct statement is that between July 2012 and September 2013 we have seen an increase of 292 carers across the state. That is an increase per month of nearly 20 carers.

REGIONAL PLANNING INTERESTS BILL**PROTECTION OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND AND OTHER LAND FROM
COAL SEAM GAS MINING BILL**

Regional Planning Interests Bill resumed from 20 November 2013 (see p. 4023) and Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill resumed from 7 June 2013 (see p. 2199).

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

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

That the Regional Planning Interests Bill be now read a second time.

The bill before the House tonight is an incredibly significant bill for regional Queensland. It is hard to think of a more important bill for the people who I and other regional members in this House represent. It rates right up there, I would suggest, with the vegetation management legislation, which was also a very significant bill that was passed through this House, because over the last decade there have been two issues that have burnt regional Queensland by their sheer injustice. The first issue was the vegetation management legislation that was the result of an action that the former government took out of sheer ignorance and gross stupidity. The second issue of the land access conflicts that this bill tonight sets out to resolve came about because the former government was too incompetent to do anything. So both of those issues have been burning issues across regional Queensland for the best part of the last decade. They both resulted from Labor failures. They both resulted from the gross failure of the previous Labor government to understand regional Queensland.

Mr Cripps: And their indifference.

Mr SEENEY: And their indifference to regional Queensland. If there were two issues that indicated then, that indicate now and that will indicate forever Labor's complete inability to represent the interests of country towns and country people it would be these two issues: the vegetation management legislation that they introduced and their total lack of capacity or desire to introduce any sort of regional planning legislation.

Tonight the debate, I suggest, will centre a lot around the resources industry and a lot around the coal seam gas industry in particular. But this bill is about so much more than that. This bill is about a regional planning process that is designed to deal with not just those issues but any other such issues which cause land use conflict across regional Queensland. But it is at the beginning of this debate fair to acknowledge that the incentive for the bill before the House tonight has been the development of the coal seam gas industry in particular and the expansion of the resources industry into areas of more intensely settled and more intensely farmed areas across Central Queensland and the Darling Downs.

That resource industry expansion happened without any planning. It happened at a time when there was a resource industry boom, when the coal price was at record highs. So every potential coal project was suddenly touted as if it were going to become a mine, and there were quite ridiculous suggestions put forward about where some of those mines were going to be developed. Names such as Gowrie Junction come to mind and the proposition there that caused protests in that local community, and Felton and Haystack Road—these names became known to everybody in regional Queensland as those proposals were put forward by companies hoping to cash in on that coal industry boom.

Equally the coal seam gas industry expanded at an explosive rate. There was a real rush to develop that industry. There was a race to develop the industry and it brought change to regional Queensland at a pace that was unprecedented and I think will never be surpassed. It brought change that the former Labor government completely failed to deal with. The Labor government took a hands-off approach. They stood back and they watched this happen intent on ensuring that the state received the royalties and the economic benefits but it was not prepared to do anything, not prepared to fulfil its role as a government.

There is no doubt that the resources industry is incredibly important for Queensland. There is no doubt that the coal industry and the coal seam gas industry have in the past and are at the present time and will in the future make enormous contributions to the economy of Queensland and to the lives of every Queenslanders. You would have to be blinded by prejudice not to see the value of the

resource industry in Queensland. But on our side of politics we have always said, and we have always said in regional Queensland, that this development should not be a free-for-all. It should not be a free-for-all. It should be controlled, it should be measured and the community themselves should have a say in how these developments happen. The landholders who are impacted need to have a say in how these developments happen. The balance between agriculture and the resources industry is one that we have to achieve to ensure that those two great industries are able to continue to make the economic contribution that they have.

It has not been that way over the last 10 years. I think it is important tonight to acknowledge the impacts that have been imposed upon country people and country towns across regional Queensland, acknowledge the distress that has been caused over the last decade by this unprecedented, uncontrolled change that the Labor government refused to deal with—distress caused to a whole range of people who suddenly found their lifestyle completely disrupted and communities that suddenly found the culture of their community turned upside down. The enormous and fundamental change that came to areas of regional Queensland caused an enormous degree of distress. But I am proud of the fact that regional Queensland in the main handled that great challenge of change and they have dealt with that great challenge of change.

Tonight with this legislation in the parliament I think we put in place the sorts of planning mechanisms that should have been in place 10 years ago to manage and control the change. The legislation that we bring to the House tonight is not about banning anything. It is about enabling two great industries to play the roles that every Queenslanders wants them to play in the Queensland economy—

Mr Rickuss: They historically have.

Mr SEENEY:—as they historically have, and to do it in a way that does not impact unduly on regional Queensland, that does not impact on the lifestyle that is so dear to country people, and to do it in a way that is balanced and controlled.

I want to congratulate the landholders who have dealt with the CSG industry in particular. They dealt with the enormous change that was inflicted on regional Queensland when there were so many things that were unknown. There were so many uncertainties. There were so many risks. There were so many things that were unproven, and landholders had to deal with it. They were often told they had no choice. They were often told that somehow they did not have the right to have any degree of control over what happened on their land. It was little wonder they were distressed, angry and reacted badly to that situation, but in the main I think landholders have taken charge of the situation. They have taken control of their own destiny, to a great extent, over that decade. The tools that we will put in place tonight will enable them to continue on that path of taking control.

We also need to congratulate local government leaders and a whole range of people across regional Queensland who came to the fore as community leaders to deal with this change. They were not all local government leaders. There is a range of people whom I could list tonight who played a significant role in ensuring that regional Queensland could deal with that fundamental and explosive change. There is one person who I cannot but name tonight and that is Ray Brown, the Mayor of the Western Downs Regional Council. His council area was ground zero for these developments. His council area was ground zero for the fundamental change that a lot of regional Queensland was trying to deal with. The leadership role that he took—as did many others; he is not the only one—stands out as an example of local government leaders who came to the fore for their communities and their regions.

As I said at the beginning, this Regional Planning Interests Bill is about a lot more than coal seam gas. It is about a lot more than the resources industry generally. But it is certainly worthwhile reflecting on the decade of distress and very real anger across regional Queensland that has brought us to this point tonight. For me, it has been a long and somehow trying journey to get to this point. We were in opposition when these developments began in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Being powerless in opposition to bring about the changes that we knew regional Queensland needed was not a pleasant place to be. To sit in this chamber and try to explain to the Labor members who sat here who both did not know and did not care about the impacts on regional Queensland was not a pleasant experience for any of us who represented regional Queensland. There are many members in this House tonight who played a role in that and some who are no longer in this House. It has been a long time getting to this point where we can hopefully pass tonight a piece of legislation that will go a long way to putting in place the controls and the balances that should have been there from the very beginning.

This piece of legislation has been a long time in its formation, and it needed to be because it introduced new concepts. It introduced to regional Queensland a system of regional planning very similar to the planning processes that have been used across urban communities for a long time to control land use conflicts. But it required an enormous amount of consultation. We conducted that consultation knowing full well that we had to take a long time doing so.

The first round of consultation put together the regional plans. The regional plans for the Darling Downs and Central Queensland have been done, and the regional plan for Cape York is in its final processes. Those community plans are based on community consultation. The communities in those regions were afforded an opportunity to express their aspirations, to express their vision, to express their view about where their regions should be headed and to join that community input with an expression of the state interest to produce a new generation of regional plans that provide the overarching guidance for the regional planning process that this bill gives statutory effect to.

An important part of that consultation was the committee process in this parliament. I want to pay a special compliment to the committee led by the member for Gympie, David Gibson. As members in this House know, I was one of the architects of the committee system and I think everybody had a different idea of how the committee system should work. But I think the way the committee system worked in this instance is the way that it should work in the parliament. The bill that we were introducing was going to have an effect on a range of stakeholders, all of whom had different opinions and views. In fact, I would go so far as to say all of the stakeholders had entrenched positions in a somewhat combative environment, but the important role the committee played was to enable all of those people to have a forum to put forward their views. Not once but twice they had an opportunity to put forward their views.

It was very instructive because the stakeholders were always going to know a lot more about how the proposed legislation was going to work than the people who were charged with the responsibility of writing the legislation. So it was with the Vegetation Management Act, which I referred to earlier. When the Labor Party introduced that legislation into this parliament, it did not have a clue about the impact it would have on rural landholders. It did not understand the detail of the issue and it scarcely understood the concepts involved.

In this particular case, the committee system of the parliament has played an enormously valuable role. First of all, it enabled those stakeholders to put forward their views, but it also enabled those of us who were putting together the legislation to hear from the stakeholders firsthand about the detail of the legislation, how it would work and how it would affect each of them from their particular perspective. I think what we have ended up with is much better legislation because of the efforts of the committee and the other consultation we have undertaken. I congratulate the member for Gympie and his committee once again. I will deal in some detail with the report later on.

I would also like to thank and congratulate the submitters. There was a range of stakeholders who made submissions to the committee. As I said, most of them had entrenched positions. But the point that we made to them from the very beginning was that to get the sort of outcome that we have in the parliament tonight required compromise from everybody. It required everybody to compromise. It required everybody to share the visions that were outlined by the regions in the regional plans. In the main, the submitters entered into that process in an admirable way.

I make particular mention of the peak industry bodies. APPEA, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, for those who are not familiar with it, represents the coal seam gas companies. We have been able to work with APPEA to ensure that, if not all of their desires, all of their concerns have been expressed in one way or another. I also make particular note of AMEC, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies. Bernie Hogan and his organisation I think entered into this process in a very even-handed and admirable way. I particularly pay tribute to the agricultural groups AgForce and QFF which had a huge challenge to bring along their membership that had been disaffected and distressed for so long. Both QFF and AgForce have done an exceptional job.

I have also been disappointed by the role that has been played by other peak industry groups which really should have known better. Anyone who does not know what I am talking about should get the submissions that were put forward by the Queensland Resources Council—the QRC—and read the nonsense and the rubbish they submitted on behalf of their members. I would say to the members of the QRC very sincerely tonight that their interests were not served by the QRC in this process, and that is something that those member companies have to deal with. The members of the QRC certainly had a right to expect a more professional approach than what was demonstrated. Anyone who doubts that should have a look at the submissions that were put forward. In the main, and with that exception, I congratulate all of the submitters who participated in the committee process.

Let me get to the details of the bill and an examination of what this bill does. It takes those regional plans that I spoke about—and they have been completed for the Darling Downs and Central Queensland and they will soon be completed for Cape York, and then after that they will be rolled out across the rest of regional Queensland—and uses them as a reference point for a land use planning process at property level. It uses those regional plans as an overarching document to put in place a planning system that is very similar to the urban planning system that most people in urban areas are very familiar and very comfortable with. It puts that planning system in place for exactly the same reasons that there has been a planning system in urban areas for many years. It is about ensuring that we do not have inappropriate development in inappropriate areas. It is about ensuring that we address the land use conflict issues before they arise, before they enrage communities and before they cause the distress that we have seen across regional Queensland over the last decades.

The planning process that we will put in place for regional Queensland uses the same principles, the same concepts and the same processes that the urban planning process has used for many years—they are tried and tested. It uses prescribed areas. It prescribes areas in the regional plans and then seeks to control what is considered to be inappropriate development in those areas. It does not ban development but it controls development, and that is the approach that should have been taken across regional Queensland for the last decade.

I do not think the people in regional Queensland want the resources industry banned. They do not want the coal seam gas industry banned but they want it controlled. They want to know that it will develop in a balanced way, that it will not displace the traditional agricultural industries and that there will be an opportunity for the communities themselves to have an input into those controls. That is what this planning system does, and it does it in exactly the same way that urban planning systems have done for many, many years. It uses the same processes. It requires the same applications for approvals—approvals that are very similar. In the urban planning systems, they are known as development applications; in this planning process, they will be known as regional interest development applications. This is a deliberate move, and it will be achieved by an amendment I will move tonight to change the name of that approval in the bill to reinforce the fact that we are using planning concepts and planning principles that are tried and tested and very familiar to people in urban areas. It uses the same models of notifiable applications that Minister Walker is very familiar with—where smaller applications are dealt with by an expedited process, larger applications are notifiable, the same submission processes apply and the same appeals processes apply. As much as possible, we have mirrored this planning process to the one that is well and truly tried and tested.

This bill also replaces a couple of pieces of legislation. It absorbs the strategic cropping land legislation—a more convoluted, contorted, complex piece of legislation I doubt has ever passed this parliament. It imports into a regulation that I will table later tonight the essential elements of that strategic cropping land legislation to maintain the protections that are currently available, albeit in a much simpler form and in a much clearer and transparent process.

This bill also replaces the wild rivers legislation. We have said that we will repeal the wild rivers declarations one at a time as the regional plans are rolled out. There has never been a more corrupt or prostituted piece of legislation in this place than the wild rivers legislation. It was used as a political bargaining point by the Labor Party as it traded for Greens preferences at each election. After each election, we came back into this place and the first bill the House considered was an extension of the wild rivers legislation to fulfil the preference deal. For those of us who have a respect for this parliament and for the laws that are made in this parliamentary process, it will be a great day when we can finally get rid of that corrupted piece of legislation. The planning processes that we put in place tonight will ensure that the special areas are protected, that the protection levels are maintained, that they are done in a creditable way and that they are done in a way that has some integrity.

While this bill replaces those two pieces of legislation, it is also important to note what it does not replace. It does not replace the land access laws. It does not affect the compensation regulatory regime that applies to landholders. It does not affect any of the other approvals processes under any of the other acts—whether it is the Coordinator-General or the DNRM legislation that my ministerial colleague Minister Cripps is responsible for, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection processes that my other ministerial colleague is responsible for, or indeed the local government planning processes that the member for Mundingburra is responsible for. All of those approval processes stay the same.

What it does do is introduce a framework bill and it gives the regional plan statutory effect. It does that by identifying areas of regional interest. It identifies priority agricultural areas, priority living areas, strategic cropping areas and strategic environmental areas. They are the four areas of regional

interest. It requires that for regulated development, which is resource development and other development regulated by regulation, a planning approval called a regional interest development approval is required. As I said, it is like a DA in urban planning. What that does, importantly, is that it provides an exemption for a circumstance where a proposition has the agreement of the landholder. So where a landholder comes to an agreement with a proponent who wants to establish something on their land, then they are entitled to an exemption. They are entitled to come to that arrangement themselves. They are entitled, as the owner of that land, to come to an arrangement voluntarily of their own free will and accord with a proponent, and the state does not need to be involved in that. It provides, I would suggest, the greatest incentive for negotiation that we have seen in any of the regulation that has been built around the resources industry. It provides an incentive for the resources industry to negotiate with landholders, and it puts landholders in a much more powerful position. It ensures that some of the horrendous practices that we saw in the early days of the last decade and probably have not seen much of lately, thankfully—those practices that revolved around the Land Court 40-day rule—can no longer be used to leverage landholders.

For those members who are not familiar with that, I can tell them that it was a proposition that somehow the resources company had a right to go on to somebody's land. If an agreement could not be reached within 40 days they would send it off to the Land Court and proceed anyway. It was used as leverage. This particular piece of legislation will ensure that that leverage is no longer available. It will ensure that landholders have access to the Planning and Environment Court in exactly the same way as urban landholders have had for many, many years.

At this point I would like to table the regulation for which we will now enter into a consultation period. This is a draft regulation, an exposure draft, and I have given a number of assurances that I would table it tonight. Can I say we very deliberately did not make this regulation available before now because we wanted the debate to be about the broad concepts, the broad principles of regional planning, of a controlled planning system that ensured the agricultural industry, the resources industry, rural communities and strategic environmental areas could develop in the way that we wanted—in a very planned and measured way. I table that draft regulation tonight.

Tabled paper: Regional Planning Interests Act 2014, Sustainable Planning Act 2009: Regional Planning Interests Regulation 2014, exposure draft [\[4695\]](#).

We will enter into a consultation period which will extend for 60 days—for two months—to allow the stakeholders who have been part of the drafting of this legislation to make comment and to discuss the various parts of that regulation. It will be treated in this House as significant subordinate legislation. I would hope that the committee headed by the member for Gympie will have an opportunity to consider it as well as significant subordinate legislation.

As I said, it contains a number of sections that have been imported from the strategic cropping land legislation. Most importantly, it contains more detailed assessment criteria for the areas of state interest in the bill. As I indicated, the primary assessment document should always be the regional plan as an expression of the regional community's vision and the state interests that are involved in that particular region. The regulation also contains those more detailed criteria. It sets out the assessment process, which can be either a property assessment process or a regional assessment process. It sets out the assessment agencies that will be involved in assessing any planning applications that are considered under the bill.

It is fair to say that there is a different focus on those criteria for the different areas of regional interests. In the prime agricultural area, which is the area that has attracted—I would suggest without any fear of contradiction—the most concern, the focus of the assessment criteria is on ensuring that both the agricultural industry and the resource industry can co-exist as much as possible without displacing the industry that we believe should have the priority in those areas, and that is the agricultural industry. That is why, of course, it is called a priority agricultural area. The assessment process has that focus on co-existence because that is the outcome that has been identified in the regional plan. It has that focus on co-existence within both the priority agricultural area and the strategic cropping area. The strategic cropping area is not mapped in the regional plan, but it is imported from the strategic cropping land legislation, and the same map is used in this draft regulation.

There will be an opportunity over the next two months to consider whether those elements of the strategic cropping land legislation that have been imported are appropriate going forward and whether or not under this new planning regime we need to consider if those elements are set at their right levels. There needs to be a discussion about that. There are certainly a couple of areas that are worthy of discussion in regard to the strategic cropping area. The trigger map that was used by the former government was always a blunt instrument. It is what we have imported as a regulation. Also,

the soil criteria that are used to determine where strategic cropping land actually exists within that strategic cropping area are open for discussion, I would suggest. There has always been the proposition put by a range of agricultural peak industry bodies that the regulatory environment should extend beyond cropping land, and I have some sympathy for that argument. I have some sympathy for the suggestion that the best of our grazing land should also be part of the area that is regulated. Remembering that with the passage of this bill we will not be banning activity—we will be regulating activity, controlling activity—then there is very little reason in my view why we cannot consider the extension of that area of control to include some of the better grazing land in Queensland. That would involve, I would suggest, a consideration of whether or not those soil criteria are appropriate or whether they need to be expanded.

Equally, the criteria that are set out in the draft regulation for priority agricultural areas are something that we need to discuss over the next two months, and they are there in the draft for all honourable members to read. Those criteria require that, before a regional interest development application is granted in such an area, a proponent would need to avoid the priority agricultural land use, which in summary is cultivation. They would need to stay off the cultivation. If it is not possible for them to stay off the cultivation, if there are no alternatives, they would need to minimise their footprint on the cultivation. If they have to minimise their footprint on the cultivation, they would have to do it in a way that does not restrict or constrain normal farm operations. Even after all of that they would be limited to a two per cent impact on their priority agricultural land use—two per cent in terms of area impacted and productive capacity impacted. That is the proposition that is in the assessment criteria that is in the regulation that has just been tabled. I would invite, too, some discussion about those elements over the next couple of months. We will be offering an opportunity, just as I am sure the member for Gympie and his committee will be offering an opportunity, to consider those issues or to consider how they might be modified or added to.

The other area that is important to mention is the strategic environmental areas. The strategic environmental areas are about ensuring that environmental attributes are managed in these areas of regional interest that are designated as strategic environmental areas. They will primarily be—at the moment at least—areas on Cape York that were previously protected, for want of a better word, by the wild rivers legislation. We will use the strategic environmental area declarations to ensure that the areas that need to be protected are protected. The consultation that we have entered into already has demonstrated that there will be a need to have strategic environmental areas that are protection areas—so they will be SEAs, protected—and other areas will be SEAs that are managed. So we will have two types of strategic environmental areas: SEAs, protected and SEAs, managed. We have already made it very clear as a government that one of the first SEAs, protected that we will declare will be the Steve Irwin reserve. We will ensure that that special area is protected, that the land use in that area that we are all familiar with will be protected.

I look forward to the finalisation of the Cape York Regional Plan because it certainly has generated some discussion as the draft has been released, and we will bring that to finalisation in the coming months. There is no doubt that the majority of the decisions that need to be made about Cape York are ensuring that we do protect those special environmental areas but that we also allow for the economic development opportunities that the Indigenous communities on Cape York need so badly and were denied for so many years by the previous government.

The other provision in the bill in relation to SEAs that is worth mentioning is the provision that allows SEAs to be declared by regulation. Part of the draft regulation that I have just tabled is declaring the Channel Country as a SEA. It declares the Channel Country area—which also had a wild rivers declaration—as a strategic environmental area, and it will provide an opportunity for the controlled development of that area. That regulation suggests that resource activity in that area is not banned, but it is controlled in a way that ensures that its environmental attributes are protected.

Equally, the long-running debate about broadacre cultivation and irrigated cultivation in the Channel Country can be addressed through this mechanism because broadacre cultivation will be a regulated activity under that SEA declaration. It will not ban cultivation or irrigation, but it will allow us to control it to the sorts of appropriate levels that Minister Cripps and I have spoken about for some time. It gives us a mechanism to do more than just speak about it; it gives us a mechanism to put the necessary controls in place. That will once again be done in close consultation with the communities that are involved.

I turn now to the committee's recommendations and I formally table the official response from the government to the recommendations that were made by the committee.

Tabled paper: State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 35—Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013, government response [[4696](#)].

The committee made 22 recommendations, and we as a government, and I as a minister, support them all.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr SEENEY: We support every one of the recommendations that have been made by the committee. There is an extensive list of amendments that have been circulated and that I will move at the appropriate time in the consideration of this bill. That extensive list of amendments is about ensuring that every one of those recommendations is addressed. Many of those amendments were issues that we had identified from reading the submissions and listening to the evidence, if you like, that proponents had given to the committee. We have also extended those amendments to ensure that we address every one of the recommendations that the committee made.

I think foremost amongst those was in relation to section 24, which was the definition of a pre-existing activity. I think that is the definition that has caused a deal of debate and controversy, but everyone who has been involved in the regional planning process from the start should know—and did know—that the intention was always to ensure that there was no retrospectivity in this bill and that anything that was legal yesterday before this parliament considered this bill would still be legal once this bill had passed through the parliament and become law. That was an agreed position right from the very beginning, and there was never any doubt that that would be the case. We have taken extensive advice and made significant amendments to section 24 to give comfort to a range of proponents—especially in the resources industry—and that concept became reality in this bill. I think there can be no doubt now that there is an absolute guarantee from our government that there is nothing retrospective in this bill.

The other point that is worth noting at this stage is that even though there is an extensive list of amendments, none of the fundamental principles of the bill are changed from when it was introduced into the parliament. None of the fundamental elements of the bill are changed. The amendments are all in response to the application of the detail—the operational issues that were quite rightly raised by stakeholders in the opportunities that we deliberately gave them to do just that. The amendments are about addressing that detail and operational issues that impact on stakeholders in the way that they have identified needed to be done, and I think that is a very admirable way for us as a parliament to approach the legislative process. I look forward to considering those amendments at the appropriate time, but it is important to note again that none of them change the fundamentals of the bill and none of them change any of the philosophies that were incorporated into the bill in response to the regional planning process.

It is worth noting that tonight we will debate this bill in a cognate debate with a bill that has been introduced by the member for Condamine, and it gives us a good opportunity to compare and contrast the two. In particular I would say to the resources industry that it gives them a very good opportunity to compare and contrast what might have been in Queensland—to look at the bill that the member for Condamine has introduced, to understand the philosophies behind it in the address that he made to this parliament when he introduced it, and to understand where Queensland could have been. We could have been where New South Wales is today: with no gas industry. We could have been in a situation where the hysteria and fear campaigns that were whipped up by people such as the member for Condamine were able to dominate the debate. But can I say that that would have been easy for those of us who represent regional Queensland. It is easy for people who want to score cheap political points to run around feeding those scare campaigns, but it is not in the long-term interest of the people who we represent. It is not in the long-term interest of regional Queensland, nor is it in the long-term interest of the state as a whole. The approach that the member for Condamine has taken is essentially the easy way out. It is the gutless way. It is the way of someone who does not have the character or the spine to address the difficult issues: to find the balance between competing viewpoints; to put in place something that serves everybody rather than just the loudest voices.

I would say very deliberately and very clearly to the resources industry especially and to every Queensland who has an interest in the Queensland economy: look closely at the bill that the member for Condamine has introduced into this House and that we will debate tonight to understand where we could have been and to understand the effort that has been put in by so many people to ensure that we have not ended up in the position where the New South Wales economy is—a position that would have seen the \$60 billion that is being invested across south-west Queensland at the moment not even come to Queensland. Towns like Miles, Taroom, Dalby and Chinchilla could have remained the receding, failing and declining communities that they were rather than the bustling, vibrant communities that they are now. It would have seen us in the position where thousands of young Queenslanders who have good-paying jobs in regional Queensland would not have had those jobs. Thousands and thousands of landholders have come to terms with the change that was

imposed upon them and turned it to their own very strong economic advantage to underwrite their families' futures for generations to come. They would not have had the chance to do that if the gutless, spineless approach of the member for Condamine and his type had held sway in the debate. Tonight is about considering the government's position, but it is also about considering where we might have been and where we can never be, because the economy of Queensland would suffer enormously and every Queenslander would suffer.

It has been a long process to get to this point. It has been a long process for the people of regional Queensland. It has been a decade of distress for many country people. It has been a decade of distress for many country communities, but it is not over yet by a long shot. I would not suggest for a moment that the passage of this bill is going to solve every problem that has built up over the last decade. Of course it is not, but it is the first step in that direction. It is the step that should have been taken by the former Labor government. It is a step that should have been taken by any government that was worth its salt, and the Labor government at the time clearly was not. It is 10 years overdue. The consideration of this bill in this House tonight is a decade too late, but it is better that it is here now and that we start to address some of those issues and address some of that built-up resentment in regional Queensland.

It does provide security for all, and not just rural landholders. I have said many times to the resources industry that this planning process provides security for it as well. It provides security to the resources industry. It enables it to achieve that social licence which it must have to operate. It enables the resources industry to know that it can spend its exploration dollars in places where it does have an opportunity to develop the projects that that exploration may find. It is not hard to look across some of those areas that have been contentious over the last decade and will be mapped as areas of regional interest tonight to see the extent to which exploration companies have wasted their money—wasted their money despite the fact that from opposition I and other LNP members have said, 'Do so at your own risk; understand that we are going to address this problem when we come to government.' I stood over there one night and said, 'Whenever we come to government—whether it is the next election, the election after that or some time in the future—somebody will come into this parliament and solve this problem, and I hope it's me.' I am honoured tonight that I have had the opportunity to address this issue and we have done it in a way that I believe is fair and just, a way that provides security not just to rural landholders and security and confidence to rural communities but security to the resources industry.

We have always supported the resources industry and we always will, but we will always make the point that it is not a free-for-all for the resources industry in Queensland. The resources industry needs to respect and understand the rural communities and the rural environment in which it operates. Unfortunately, much of the resentment and the distress that has been caused over the last decade is because in the heat of the resources boom—in the fervour of the development of the CSG industry—that respect was not there to the extent that it should have been. But it was the government's role to ensure that that was done. It is the government's role to ensure that those planning processes were put in place, and they simply were not. So we conceived the idea of this regional planning concept in opposition. We conceived the idea amongst the frustration of watching our constituents impacted in a way that distressed us as regional representatives. We conceived the idea in opposition and over the last two years in government we have developed that idea in close consultation with our constituents into a reality. That is something that I do not think any of us get an opportunity to do too many times—to start with an idea and develop the new concepts and the new principles around it that ensure that that idea becomes a reality that will work.

Honourable members, I look forward to the debate tonight. I look forward to the discussion on the detail of the bill. I look forward to the opportunity for all members to compare and contrast the government's bill with the bill that has been introduced by the member for Condamine. In that respect, I would recommend to members as essential reading not just the report that was produced by the committee headed by the member for Gympie, because that report is certainly worthy of reading, but also the report that was produced by the committee headed by the member for Lockyer, because that committee considered the bill that the member for Condamine introduced into this House and I commend it to every members' reading and congratulate the member for Lockyer and his committee on so succinctly summing up the absurdity, so succinctly summing up the—I have run out of adjectives trying to describe the member for Condamine's bill. I thank that committee for so succinctly summing up the stupidity of the proposition that was put.

That is why it is valuable to debate these two bills in a cognate debate, because it allows all honourable members to compare and contrast. It allows the resources industry to compare and contrast. It allows rural communities and country people who have taken advantage of the

opportunities that have been presented to them to compare and contrast what we have now and what we will have in the future and what we would have had had the views and the approaches that are encapsulated within the bill introduced by the member for Condamine dominated in that debate that has gone on now for the best part of a decade. I look forward to the consideration of the bill and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (8.25 pm): Good speech, Jeff! I move—

That the Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill be now read a second time.

We certainly heard some quotes from the Deputy Premier in his speech and in my speech I will address some of those issues. I have never seen someone stand in this chamber with tongue in cheek and pull the wool over the people of Queensland's eyes like I have just seen. In his speech he stated how my bill will affect Taroom and how my bill will affect Miles. Taroom and Miles are nowhere near the protected land outlined in my bill. The Deputy Premier has not even looked at the map, just like Mr Bird from his department who advised the committee led by the member for Lockyer that there were 500 wells in the area. This map proves that there are about four wells—four current wells. The rest are just exploration wells. All of the wells are out of the mapped area. That is the sort of deception we are hearing in this chamber tonight. I thank the Deputy Premier that he has made this a cognate debate so the people of Queensland can see the deception being put before the House by the Deputy Premier.

This started years ago—absolutely years ago. In 2000-01 Arrow Energy was very active around Dalby. It was starting up this new mining that was coal seam gas which no-one knew anything about. As I have stated many times before, I went out and saw some of the first wells put down by Arrow Energy. Some of the first evaporation ponds were running Honda motors with the gas coming out of the ground and spraying the water through polyethylene pipes on top of those ponds with little holes drilled in the polyethylene pipe to allow the water to evaporate. All of the trees were white and all of the ground was white from the salt and the poison from the water. That is how it started. There is no doubt that, thanks to both governments, the industry has cleaned itself up. There is no doubt that the industry has cleaned itself up. However, there are parts of country that this industry cannot possibly co-exist with. The legislation that the Deputy Premier is putting forward tonight simply does not address these concerns. Do you think a farmer is going to be able to prove the two per cent ruling? What you are going to do with this legislation tonight is drill—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): The member will speak through the chair.

Mr HOPPER: What the Deputy Premier will do with this legislation tonight is drill the Cecil Plains area—drill the area between Cecil Plains and Toowoomba. The Armstrongs and the Claphams are going to have to welcome coal seam gas under this legislation being passed by the Deputy Premier tonight. I see him get up and walk out because he cannot face the deception that is being put before the House tonight with this bill.

That is exactly what is going to happen. Under the LNP, that country will be drilled. For years I fought with the Labor government on this very same issue. I had many deputations with ministers, I attended many meetings, made many speeches and attended many rallies. Now, it looks like we have to fight with the LNP. There is very little difference.

The Deputy Premier has put before this House cover-up legislation. Many election promises have been broken. Deputy Premier, if you want your staff to laugh, I will ask them to leave the chamber. I will tell you that right now. I will ask the Deputy Speaker to remove your staff if you are going to stand there laughing with them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Condamine—

Mr HOPPER: That is fair enough.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Condamine will take his seat. I have already asked the member for Condamine to speak through the chair. It does not help the member for Condamine to be threatening people in the chamber. I will not stand for it. The member for Condamine has the call and is duly warned.

Mr HOPPER: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you. As I said, the department misled the committee at the hearing. The people who the committee dragged in on the Deputy Premier's behalf also misled the committee. They sat there in fear and trembling talking about co-existence. These people had a combined 100 years of knowledge of the soil industry in Queensland and they had to say that it could co-exist with coal seam gas. I sat there and watched with my very own eyes these poor men saying exactly what they did not believe in.

I must commend the chair on how he chaired the meeting that day. It was very well done and I say to the member for Lockyer that I mean that from the bottom of my heart. However, from reading the committee's report I thought it was a report on a private member's bill. It is amazing to read how many times Katter's Australian Party is mentioned in the report. I just threw the report straight out window.

We now have the opportunity to talk about this bill in this House. We have coal seam gas contracts with China. I recognise the importance of coal seam gas to the economy of Queensland. If members look closely at this map, where in the future are companies going to drill to help the economy of Queensland? It can only be on prime agricultural land because of Arrow Energy's tenure, which comes out around Cecil Plains. I table that map, because 75 per cent of the gas in that tenure is under prime agricultural land.

Tabled paper: Map from Google Earth, dated 14 October 2012, titled 'Coal Seam Gas Wells 'Excluded Area': Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill 2013' [\[4697\]](#).

For those people to survive on that tenure they must drill that land. The Deputy Premier knows that. That is why there are loopholes in the legislation that the Deputy Premier has put before this House tonight.

I have talked about sovereign risk. There will be very little sovereign risk involved in this legislation. There are no established coal seam gas wells in the mapped area. There is no money coming out so a company cannot sue the government. For a company to sue the government, it has to have its industry taken away from it. Fundamentally, this bill is intended to protect prime agricultural land from coal seam gas exploration and drilling to ensure the sustainability of the agricultural industry and food security for Queenslanders now and into the future. Importantly, the designated areas described in this bill are identified as the richest agricultural areas in Australia. Are we going to see coal seam gas exploration coming on to that land and destroying it forever for 30 years of wealth?

The current Liberal National Party government and the former Labor government have both failed to protect our agricultural land, which is defined and mapped in my bill. This bill is intended, without discretion, to unreservedly protect the defined agricultural land. The bill also refers to all the rest of the agricultural land in Queensland. So under this legislation all prime agricultural land that the Deputy Premier has identified will also be protected. There is an urgent need for a firm stance against the coal seam gas industry in these areas—and I repeat: in these areas. If members looked closely at these areas they would see that this legislation will not affect the wealth of Queensland.

The establishment of science to guarantee risk mitigation of Queensland's prime agricultural land is defined in this bill. For the purposes of absolute clarity, that is why I am putting forward this bill. It is not the easy way out; it is the sensible way out. Importantly, this bill is intended to contribute to the food security of all Queenslanders. The bill seeks to provide representation for primary producers in rural and regional Queensland who have been silenced and who have been dismissed by present and past governments. That is a serious concern.

In 2010 it was revealed that employees of the Queensland government were not given enough time or basic information to assess two Queensland projects worth \$38 billion. This information was exposed through documents obtained under right to information laws, which showed that the approval processes were rushed through and arguably put commercial considerations ahead of the environment. This is just one of the key reasons for this legislation that is before the House tonight.

I would now like to address what the Deputy Premier has just introduced into this House. It appears that it has become commonplace that the LNP introduces policies that are not finalised before they enter the committee process. The Deputy Premier bragged about setting up the committee system. He said he was the driving force behind the implementation of this committee system. The Deputy Premier is very proud of this committee system, yet he uses the committee system to not present the full story to this House. Therefore, the committee process creates uncertainty among the committee members and the stakeholders. The uncertainty that I am referring to is referenced through the majority of the submissions that went to that committee and the committee's report. The main point of concern, which has heightened that uncertainty among stakeholders, is the Deputy Premier's underhanded approach of not submitting a fully developed policy to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. That policy should have included the regulation that was tabled tonight so that the committee could scrutinise it. But the committee could not. That regulation governs this very legislation. The Deputy Premier stated that he was going to table it, and he did so tonight. According to the majority of stakeholders, it is difficult to assess the implications of this bill. It has created uncertainty for landholders, it has created uncertainty for local government, it has created uncertainty for business operators and it has created uncertainty for industry. During the committee process a number of stakeholders requested an

opportunity to review the proposed regulations before the bill was passed. Some called for a regulatory impact statement to be prepared. The bill was introduced on 20 November 2013 as framework legislation. It appears that the Deputy Premier had plenty of time to introduce those regulations to the committee so that they could be placed under scrutiny. This is the committee system that was set up by the Deputy Premier, yet his own legislation could not go before a committee because the committee would see the truth of what Queenslanders will have to face under this legislation.

The bill proposes to manage land use conflicts particularly between resource projects and existing agricultural land uses whilst integrating the policy objectives of the Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011 by identifying strategic cropping land as areas of regional importance. The Deputy Premier would have the stakeholders and the members of this House believe that this bill will manage the impact of resource activities and other regulated activities on areas of the state that contribute or are likely to contribute to Queensland's economic, social and environmental prosperity. Unfortunately, the reality is that the majority of stakeholders are uncertain about the necessary application of this bill.

This is reflected in the stakeholders' comments on the purpose of the bill which was summarised as follows: the stated purposes and objectives of the bill are ambiguous and do not reflect the provisions of the bill; the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee was concerned the purposes of the bill conflict with other key environmental protection policies and laws.

Mr Cox interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Thuringowa, I cannot quite hear your comments. You will get your opportunity. Member for Condamine, please continue.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. Springsure landholders stated that the bill sets out broad and generalised purposes and achievements about regional planning and regional interests. They see the failure to state the preservation of highly suitable cropping land as a purpose of the bill as undermining the bill's objective to manage co-existence of resource and regulated activities. The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, AMEC, believes that not including the exploration and mining industry under the purpose of the bill conflicts with section 3(1) as its exclusion would be to the detriment of Queensland's economic prosperity.

We heard the Deputy Premier talk about my bill being to the detriment of the economic prosperity of the state. I urge him to look at his own bill. The Queensland Resources Council raised concerns about the use of the term 'co-existence' as a purpose of this bill. This is only a snapshot of the concerns that stakeholders have raised. Their concerns should be taken into consideration by the Deputy Premier. I ask the Deputy Premier to consider and clarify his position on one of the concerns raised by several submitters which relates to the concept of co-existence. I acknowledge that the Deputy Premier did state that the overall objective of the bill is for the landholder and a resource proponent to come to an agreement without the need for government intervention. That is the situation we want in 100 per cent of cases. It appears that the department and the Deputy Premier have only presented the best example, but there is no solid definition of co-existence within this bill. It therefore cements uncertainty amongst the stakeholders.

The stakeholders put forward their own definitions of co-existence, what co-existence should involve or what their position was on co-existence. They stated it was an equal exchange of views; an equal capacity to influence decisions; where the landholder is no worse off than he was before the resource industry came onto his property; and there is a mutually beneficial agreement that helps both the farmer and the resource company. At present AgForce does not see that the bill offers that. The stakeholders feel that the definition of co-existence is a feel-good, sort of airy-fairy notion that when tested in reality is extremely rare. In some instances it may be possible for coal seam mining to exist with large-scale grazing. We have seen that in the west. We have seen some farmers benefiting from the industry. But co-existence is not possible in the more densely settled areas because it compromises quality of life and the integrity of the farm and its functioning. That is exactly what will happen to the farmers at Cecil Plains under this legislation.

The message from landholders across our region is they do not want to have the upper hand; they just want to have an equal say. What a great statement. They did not have that before, they do not have it now and they will not have it in the future. They just want to redress the balance so that at least when there is a conflict of use they have some say in the matter and are not being dictated to and there is an equal bargaining position. That is a pretty small ask from landholders.

There appears to be a genuine frustration and uncertainty from submitters in the way the bill has been written. The Deputy Premier has failed to create a clear and precise policy which gives certainty to the stakeholders that I am talking about. One of the frustrated submitters was the QCoal

Group which stated the term 'co-existence' in the bill is misleading because the bill's objective is to preserve agricultural land and only permit mining in limited areas. QCoal Group argued that a practical process for assessing the benefits of various land uses and the determining co-existence requirements must be included in the bill. It is not. It is far from it.

In the department's response to concerns that co-existence is not defined in the bill, it advised—

Government members interjected.

Mr HOPPER: This is what the department advised, so listen to what the department advised. The department advised—

The concept or philosophy of co-existence permeates through the provisions of this bill. It is reflected through the purpose of the bill, the recognition and definition of the areas of regional interest, and the establishment of a process that requires resource activities and other regulated activities to make an application supported by information that demonstrates how the proposal achieves the requirements of the relevant assessments.

The committee considered that the department's response does not adequately address the submitters' concerns. There is no way in the world that farmers are protected under this legislation. Under my legislation it is black and white and they are protected.

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.46 pm): When the Deputy Premier made his speech introducing the bill there was little in it that I objected to in terms of what he was describing as the contents of this bill: to deliver a legislative framework for a statutory regional planning process. I am a big supporter of the concept of statutory regional planning. However, I did take objection to the Deputy Premier seeking to turn this bill into a political issue. The Deputy Premier, when introducing this bill, made baseless aspersions about Labor being a captive of the green movement. This is the same Deputy Premier who carries on with a wild conspiracy that Labor was somehow part of some evil plan to dump dredge spoil all over the Great Barrier Reef to develop Abbot Point. This conspiracy has been shown to be nothing but hollow political rhetoric. Documents obtained under right to information detail that the previous Labor government was working on options to dispose of dredge spoil from Abbot Point on land. Apparently in the Deputy Premier's mind Labor is both beholden to the Greens and part of some pro mining conspiracy. If we were a captive of the Greens and a captive of the member for Condamine there would not be a CSG industry. It is time for the Deputy Premier to cease with these petty diatribes that everything Labor does is bad and everything that he does is good. It is reminiscent of his criticism against the Urban Land Development Authority which he then renamed Economic Development Queensland and provided with compulsory acquisition powers.

There are some matters, such as the strength of the parliamentary committee system, that I and the Deputy Premier agree on, even though he may not appreciate me agreeing with him on this issue. I would like to congratulate the Deputy Premier for turning up to the committee and taking questions from committee members. It showed respect for the work that the committee has done under the able chairing of the member for Gympie. I hope that the Deputy Premier has set an example for other ministers. I acknowledge the member for Hinchinbrook. I hope that he comes along to the committee to explain the bill that he introduced today into parliament. It will be a great step for the committee system.

I acknowledge the work of the chair of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, the member for Gympie, and other members of the committee, as well as the parliamentary staff who worked on the report to this bill. We are blessed with the staff that we have supporting our committee. The committee's report is a product of a lot of hard work, taking into account the varying concerns set out in 99 submissions to this bill. I endorse the 16 points of clarification made by the committee and the 22 recommendations, with a few qualifications as set out in my statement of reservation. I acknowledge that, in his response to the committee report, the Deputy Premier has accepted all of the recommendations and most of the points of clarification.

While I welcome the fact that the Deputy Premier tabled the draft regulations during his second reading speech, still this does not provide adequate time for proper consultation and consideration in the context of this legislation. I acknowledge that the draft regulations will be available for consultation for 60 days and after they go back through the cabinet process and are tabled in this parliament there are another 30 days. All up, there are close on three months.

Of the 97 publicly available submissions made to the committee, 47 raise concerns about the consideration of and debate on the framework legislation without being provided with access to the regulations that will determine how it will apply in practice. In raising this concern, I am not attempting to score political points; I am merely speaking on behalf of nearly half the public submissions made to the committee. As the Queensland Law Society stated in its submission—

... at this stage it is difficult to foresee how the broad principles explained by the Deputy Premier are proposed to be implemented until the detail of the draft Regulation is available. In particular, the Regulation will contain the criteria against which applications will be assessed, including Priority Agricultural Area (PAA) Coexistence Criteria.

The groups raising these concerns were diverse. They ranged from the agricultural sector including AgForce, the Queensland Farmers Federation and Cotton Australia, environmental groups including the Mackay Conservation Group, the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee and the Environmental Defenders Office, local governments such as the Toowoomba Regional Council, the property sector including the Planning Institute of Australia to, finally, the resources sector including the Queensland Resources Council, QCoal and Santos. I note that tonight the Premier gave the Queensland Resources Council a belt. I am pleased that the Deputy Premier has addressed the issues it raised through the committee process. In its submission, Cotton Australia stated—

As there is no Regulation or more detailed Explanatory Note available for comment, we are precluded from making more meaningful and detailed comment on the efficacy of the operation of the Bill. We would urge the Government to release the Regulation for comment prior to the finalisation of the Bill.

Likewise, AgForce stated—

The lack of access to the supporting regulations to this Bill makes providing an informed submission on the Bill very difficult.

The Queensland Farmers Federation stated—

The absence of the Regulations has made it difficult to evaluate the potential effectiveness of the Bill on protecting the regional interests from resource activities and other regulated activities and to provide informed comment on the Bill.

Coming from a different perspective, in its submission the Queensland Exploration Council stated—

The Committee should insist on an opportunity to scrutinise the Regulation and associated policies before commenting on the Bill.

Similarly, Samgris Resources stated—

... the full implications of the Bill remain difficult to assess while regulations are not yet available.

In its submission, the Planning Institute of Australia stated—

... strongly requests that if the Bill is to progress ... then the proposed Regulation needs to be made available for review and that the Bill should not pass parliament until such time as consultation has been carried out on the Regulation.

The opposition supports these positions, which are probably best summarised by the Queensland Resources Council's submission, which stated—

... as drafted, the Bill grants such extensive powers to as-yet-unseen regulations that QRC suggests the Committee recommends a comprehensive review of these regulations, prior to the resumption of debate on the Bill into the house, in order to fully understand the consequences of the Bill.

While I welcome the Deputy Premier tabling draft regulations during the second reading debate, this simply does not provide enough time for the opposition to review and consult on these regulations for the purpose of debating this bill. As such, the opposition reserves its right to publicly oppose, after the passage of the bill, any part of this bill that enlivens powers in these regulations that are not in the interests of landholders, environmental protection and regional communities or, conversely, imposes unreasonable demands and red tape on the resource sector.

The opposition also has reservations about the framework for priority living areas in this bill. While I support providing local government and local communities with a greater say in mining development, this framework does not mandate any minimum distance between population areas and mining operations. It is the opposition's view that there needs to be some form of minimum distance requirement for the purpose of protecting public health and safety, and also to prevent repeats of the subsidence issues seen at Collinsville. The previous government policy of mandating urban restricted areas or buffers from resource projects of two kilometres around a population of 1,000 or more was always intended to be an interim measure. Nonetheless, at least it set a minimum distance. While neither policy may be the exact answer, I still believe that we need to provide some form of state-wide safeguard against allowing mining operations to encroach on residential areas where public health and safety could be placed at risk.

It is conceivable that the pressure of wanting a project to succeed under the weight of sovereign risk arguments put forward by mining proponents could lead to local government and communities approving projects that ultimately may not be in their long-term interests. The opposition is also concerned as to whether this bill, when combined with the accompanying regulations, provides

the same level of legislative protection for strategic land as under the previous government's Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011. While the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee has not been afforded the opportunity to review the regulations, the committee did pick up on some significant issues with this bill as introduced into parliament. For example, in the bill as introduced small-scale mining activity could have been permitted on strategic cropping land with the repeal of the Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011. Amendments during consideration in detail will address this unintended consequence of legislative drafting. This is another example of why it should have been a better process for the committee to have considered the regulations prior to this debate.

From reviewing the submissions to the committee, this bill as introduced would also have the potential to shut down parts of the existing gas network, including the Roma to Brisbane pipeline, and sections of the electricity infrastructure network. Submissions also indicated that this bill as introduced would have required ongoing additional approvals for resource activity work plans at existing mines. The exemption for resource activity work plans also did not apply to the LNG industry, as those plans are not recognised for the purpose of petroleum pipeline licences and petroleum facility licences. This led to an initial submission from the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, which stated—

Passage of the Bill in its current form would therefore see the halting of a large section of Queensland's petroleum industry until approval under the Bill can be obtained ... This would have a hugely detrimental effect on Queensland's petroleum industry, with a commensurate knock-on effect to the State economy.

The Deputy Premier has since advised the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee that this bill is not intended to have retrospective effect and that the amendments to be moved during consideration in detail will address these issues. He made that quite clear when he fronted the committee. This is yet another example of the value of the committee process and is a reason the opposition welcomes further committee consideration of the regulations accompanying this bill.

The opposition also remains unconvinced by the advice that making amendments to existing legislation would have been too significant a task to give effect to the regional planning process. I suspect that the decision to have a regional planning interests act is as much about making a point of repealing the Labor government's successful legislation—the Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011—as it is about anything else. For this Deputy Premier, whether it be strategic cropping land or urban development areas, there is a compulsion to destroy and rename any good Labor initiative. While this might work as a political strategy for a while, it is not a good long-term strategy in the best interests of Queenslanders. By introducing a new act, this bill will add to the red-tape burden in Queensland.

The submission from the Association of Mining Exploration Companies states—

The Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013 introduces another layer of approval through the 'regional interest authority' (RIA) and therefore increasing red tape and assessment timeframes.

To conclude, the tabling of the draft regulations during this debate provides insufficient time for the opposition to properly review and consult on these regulations to inform a proper debate on the framework legislation. I believe it is a disservice to this parliament that this framework legislation could not be properly consulted on and debated due to the absence of the regulations that guide how it will work in practice. I also think circulating 110 amendments at 7.30 at night for the opposition and crossbench members, who may want to comment on the amendments, perusal is another disservice to this parliament. The bill that was introduced contains 101 clauses and there are 110 amendments.

While the opposition supports the principles of a statutory regional planning process, we reserve the right to oppose any part of this bill in the future that provides power to regulations that are not in the interests of landholders, environmental protection and regional communities or, conversely, imposes unreasonable demands and red tape on the resource sector.

The member for Condamine's bill—the Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill—which we are debating cognately with the government bill, will not be supported by the opposition. One thing we can say about the member for Condamine is that he was consistent in his opposition to the CSG industry when he was a member of the LNP. Whilst the Deputy Premier and I might have differences of opinion, I can say that when members who were members of the LNP—like the member for Condamine and others within their ranks—went weak-kneed the Deputy Premier, as the then opposition leader, supported the Labor government in establishing the CSG industry which will see a significant royalty stream flow to the Queensland Treasury coffers in the near future. If we did not act at the time to develop that industry we probably would not have had that industry here in Queensland.

We have seen what has happened in New South Wales and, to an extent, in Victoria. Queensland now has that industry. A lot of people do not realise that it was a brand-new industry. It had not been done anywhere in the world. From my time in government, I thank the Deputy Premier for the support, whilst at times critical, he gave the then government in establishing that industry. I think the Deputy Premier could see the benefits that would come his way on attaining office of having this industry. With those few words, as I said, we will reserve our right to oppose parts of this bill after reviewing the regulations.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (9.04 pm): I rise to inform the House of opinions around the Regional Planning Interests Bill and the Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill. It is an interesting debate we are having tonight. I am absolutely astounded by some of the ridiculous statements that the member for Darling Downs makes.

Mr HOPPER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr RICKUSS: Sorry, the member for Condamine. Ray Brown is the Darling Downs mayor. They had to have someone represent them out there and he has done a pretty good job, I must admit. I imagine Patty Weir will do a good job as the member for Condamine very shortly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Lockyer, could you stop for a moment. Things are a little loud at the moment. I am hoping that we might quieten down so we can hear you.

Mr RICKUSS: Would you like me to speak louder? I am more than happy to speak a bit louder.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We do not need you to do that. Member for Lockyer, please continue.

Mr RICKUSS: The Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill 2013 is a piece of sophistry that the member introduced purely for political gain. There is no logic to it at all. He is going to let coalmining continue but stop coal seam gas mining. There is no logic to that at all. Unfortunately this member cannot make the hard decisions. That is why he is still in opposition. He had a chance to be in government, but to be in government requires hard work. He could not execute the hard work that was required, unfortunately.

The bill is actually quite illogical. It involves voodoo economics. It does not make any sense. The member mentioned people like Ian Hayllor, John Cotter, Ray Brown and Pat Weir. All of those people I have mentioned visited the committee when we went out and had a look at coal seam gas. The member for Condamine was nowhere to be seen.

Mr HOPPER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find those comments offensive because the committee did not invite me. It wrote to me but did not invite me. I could not go. He is misleading the House.

Mr RICKUSS: We did invite him.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, sit down for a moment. A point of order has been made. I do not particularly enjoy having to listen and having you talking at the same time. To be fair, he has made the objection. Do you withdraw those comments?

Mr RICKUSS: I withdraw those comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Lockyer

Mr RICKUSS: We had meetings in the Dalby area. People like Ian Hayllor, John Cotter, Pat Weir and Ray Brown came and met with us.

Government members interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: He is a farmer from Oakey. He is a very intelligent bloke. I am sure that he has some political acumen that will come to the fore at the next election. I just cannot believe what this government has done. If we read the recommendations of the committee that inquired into the Regional Planning Interests Bill we see that there are 22 recommendations. The committee has worked extremely hard. I congratulate the member for Gympie on his chairmanship of that committee. It worked extremely hard. I do not know whether the member for Condamine actually made a submission to the Regional Planning Interests Bill inquiry but it worked extremely hard and put a lot of effort into it.

The Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill, which is the bill our committee examined, was not really thought through. There was no logic to it. The fact that \$20 billion has been spent by local Queensland based firms seems to have been forgotten—\$20 billion. The department advised the committee—

As of May 2013, the three projects have spent \$30.9 billion, of which \$20.5 billion has been spent on local Queensland based firms.

That is big dollars. The whole industry is worth \$63 billion—63 billion! These are the sorts of figures we are talking about. Officers of the department also told the committee—

The basis for these plans is to provide policy responses to resolve the region's most important issues affecting its economy and livability of its towns.

They were talking about the regional plan framework. They continued—

The plan specifically provides direction to resolve competing state interests relating to the agriculture and resource sectors and to enable the growth potential of the region's towns.

That is the sort of thing we are talking about here. In talking about co-existence, that has happened forever. Mining and farming have co-existed since time immemorial. That has gone on forever. There has always been mining and farming together. The Roma gas fields have been there forever, and the Moonie oil fields have as well. Mining and agriculture have gone on forever.

Mr Costigan: And coal too.

Mr RICKUSS: Yes, cattle and coal—they have gone on forever. They are not new industries. The report states—

The committee notes the importance of the CSG industry to the State's economy and in generating employment opportunities in regional communities.

Royalties for the Regions is another great initiative from this government. Royalties for the Regions—where does it come from?

Mr Knuth interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Member for Dalrymple, he is not taking interjections. I notice that you are on the speaking list. You will have your turn. I call the member for Lockyer.

Mr RICKUSS: Quite an array of people came to speak to the committee. When it comes to some of the provisions in the bill, the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel stated—

Legislation should not ordinarily make a person responsible for actions or omissions over which the person may have no control.

Yet this was the sort of thing that was in this bill. We had people come before the committee like Dr Tina Hunter. She was one of the most impressive witnesses I have ever seen appear before a committee. She is the Director of the Centre for International Minerals and Energy Law at the University of Queensland's TC Beirne School of Law. She commented on this provision in her evidence at the committee's public hearing. She is also a geologist, if I remember rightly.

Miss Barton: She's also a librarian.

Mr RICKUSS: She is also a librarian?

Miss Barton: She was one of my lecturers.

Mr RICKUSS: I take that interjection. She commented—

The first thing is the issue of sovereign risk. Sovereign risk has been defined in many ways. It can also be defined in terms of fiscal risk.

She went on to say—

... it can create some nervousness within those who are wanting to invest.

That is what this is about. She also referred to 'the moving ball in relation to the framework for the legislation'. We have to stop changing direction all the time. This is what we have to do. We have to have certainty.

At the public briefing the committee questioned the member for Condamine on the no-compensation clause. The member for Condamine stated—

I have said no compensation is allowed under this legislation. They have to pack up and go.

This is just fairy land stuff.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, you have had your chance and I understand you are speaking again. So just give him a go.

Mr RICKUSS: He went on to say—

... we have to face it. Sometimes government has to take steps as a protection mechanism for the people of Queensland.

This is something that an African junta would put in place. This is the sort of thing that this member is trying to bring in—something that Idi Amin or some halfwit like that would try to put in place, and we are getting this sort of thing brought into this parliament! We are a responsible First World government and we are getting that sort of thing brought in here. Dr Tina Hunter said—

The second issue then becomes the actual legal consequences of taking back the petroleum leases. Most of you will have seen the movie *The Castle*.

They're dreaming! They've got to be dreaming! That is exactly right. That is what the member for Condamine is doing.

Dr Flegg: 'Tell him he's dreaming.'

Mr RICKUSS: Tell them they're dreaming. That is right. That is what the member for Condamine is doing. He is off in fantasy land dreaming again.

Dr Tina Hunter is an eminent person in law and geology and she is telling them they are dreaming. She put it a bit more nicely than to tell him he is dreaming. She just highlighted *The Castle* as a classic example of compensation. He says we do not have to give compensation. What planet is the member for Condamine on? Beam him up, Scotty, please! Save us. Beam him up. Beam him into another universe. The committee noted that the deficiencies of the bill include—

- the absence of any discussion of using existing legislative frameworks to address the concerns on which the Bill is premised—namely impacts on the agricultural industry and food security
- the lack of credible assessments of the administrative costs to government of implementing the Bill ...

It is going to cost nothing to implement the bill. The report states—

The committee believes it is evident that the Member for Condamine has not considered the Government's substantial framework for managing the CSG industry ...

That is the classic response. I repeat—

The committee believes it is evident that the Member for Condamine has not considered the Government's substantial framework for managing the CSG industry ...

That is what we are debating here tonight—the Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013 and the 22 recommendations made by the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. This is the framework we have put in place. It is actually hard work being in government, and we are working hard to make sure that we achieve those sorts of things. We are not delusional. We are not off with the fairies. When we get bills presented to us like this one, where they want to stop all coal seam gas, shut the industry down, with no compensation—the type of stupidity that is coming from over there where they are just trying to save their hides—it is that real Katterism of not actually doing the hard work, not turning up to meetings and parliament half the time. It is not doing the hard work. It is not doing the hard yards.

I commend the Deputy Premier for his Regional Planning Interests Bill, but I cannot believe the other bill that we are debating tonight.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (9.17 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise tonight to speak in this cognate debate. The pleasure exists with regard to the Regional Planning Interests Bill because that piece of legislation is a significant piece of legislation that will impact the state of Queensland and provide certainty for those in both the agriculture and resource sectors in a way that this state has never seen. I commend the Deputy Premier and his staff for bringing forward a well thought through, reasoned and logical piece of legislation that will enable this state and the various stakeholders in these important sectors of agriculture and resources to be able to manage the land use conflicts that currently exist.

The State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee had the opportunity to examine the Regional Planning Interests Bill. As has been said and as outlined in the report, this was framework legislation. We accept—and it is recorded in the various submissions and within the report itself—that there was concern with regard to it being framework legislation in that people wanted to see the regulation at the same time. But the process we have gone through and the process by which the Deputy Premier and his department has managed this has enabled the regulation to evolve and to adapt to the concerns that were raised through the committee process. I want to commend the Deputy Premier for that step, because what it has enabled and what it has highlighted is an evolution of the committee process of the parliament. It has enabled the committee process to strengthen and to become a very valuable component in addressing legislation and in assisting departments as they formulate regulation.

I think that point has been lost on the member for Condamine and on some other members. This consultation process has enabled the department to formulate regulation based on evidence received through the committee process. That shows an evolution, I believe, in the strength of the committee process, and I want to thank the Deputy Premier for that.

I particularly want to take this opportunity to thank members of the committee—both non-government members, the deputy chair and member for Mackay and the member for Mount Isa, and government members. The committee approached this task in a very mature, responsible and deliberate way to determine how the framework legislation that was presented for the committee to examine could best be consulted and improved upon. We deliberately extended the submission period so there would be ample time and, indeed, granted extensions for various submitters so we could ensure the views of as many stakeholders as possible were heard.

The committee also provided a period for supplementary submissions after the final public hearings were held. That enabled further comment and feedback to be received. I think it is rather foolish for individuals to quote from one submission that a submitter may have made two months ago, not realising that the submitter has come through that process and in discussion with the committee and in presenting evidence has been able to be comforted that the department and the government have taken their issues on board. We are now seeing amendments coming through that again highlight the value of the process and the fact that these concerns and these issues were raised.

As the Deputy Premier quite rightly said, full credit to the departmental staff but they do not live on the land. They do not work in the resource sector. Greg Chemello and his staff are very good at what they do in the planning sector. I want to commend them because they have taken that framework—a very tried and tested planning framework that works well, is mature and is well understood across the whole state of Queensland in urban areas—and they have evolved and adapted it to be effective in regional areas, as we see in this bill. I commend those departmental staff.

As the Deputy Premier quite rightly pointed out, it is those who work in the sector—farmers who are living on the land, miners, people who are involved in exploration activities—who are able to provide an additional refining process and feedback to the committee, whether it be by written submission or by verbal contribution at public hearings, that has further enabled a refining of this bill. What we have seen, I believe, over the last four months is a bill that is better now than what was originally introduced in the House. Why? Because the government of the day listened. The government of the day gave the parliamentary committee the opportunity and the time, and reflected the concerns that it heard from the various stakeholders.

As was quite rightly pointed out, not everybody got what they wanted and nor should they. There are competing interests here and we need to ensure there is a balanced approach. The balance between agriculture and mining is one that will always create tension. The committee had the opportunity to visit two landholders. I will not mention them by name, but I want to thank them for the hospitality they extended to the committee. We were able to see two separate examples. One was where coal seam gas interacts with a landholder where there was tension and concern. From my observation, that reflected more poorly upon the coal seam gas company and its internal processes, because we also went to a different property with different landholders where co-existence was clearly in practice. We were able to see the activities of a coal seam gas company and the agricultural activities of landholders working together. In fact, as we were touring we saw a dam which had been created for the coal seam gas companies as they were undertaking their exploratory wells. The coal seam gas company was saying to the landholder, 'We will be removing this for you,' and the landholder said, 'We would love to keep it.'

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr GIBSON: They were very happy with it and what it was delivering. The location of the wells was a site which was working well, discussion was occurring and co-existence was being delivered—not because it was defined in a piece of legislation but because the landholder and the company involved were able to meet, have discussions and come to an agreement that was mutually beneficial to both parties. That, to me, shows how co-existence can and should roll out across this state.

As we have heard, the Regional Planning Interests Bill provides an opportunity for industries to work together. It is not geared up to ban. It is not geared up to stop activity occurring. Rather, it is recognising a mature approach in which all parties can work together to achieve an outcome.

We need a strong agricultural sector in the state of Queensland. There is no doubt about that. We also need a strong mining and resource sector in the state of Queensland. We need them to be able to work together. What we have in this bill is an opportunity to put in a framework so there is certainty for all parties, so they understand time frames, they understand how decision processes will be made, they understand their appeal rights, and they understand what can occur. That, to me, is why this bill is far superior to anything we have seen from the Katter's Australian Party. What the Katter's Australian Party uses this parliament for is nothing more than stunts when it comes to private

members' bills. It is an abuse of the parliamentary process when they bring in a private member's bill that does not, nor could it, deliver the outcomes that it espouses for the people of Queensland. This bill is far more mature and advanced and will deliver for all of Queensland in these areas.

The tabling of the draft regulation by the Deputy Premier is indeed welcome. In fact, the appearance of the Deputy Premier before the committee was not only welcome but also set, I believe, a standard for parliamentary committees to look to. We do not expect that ministers will appear before parliamentary committees at all times, but where there is significant legislation about which there is concern I would encourage all ministers to use the parliamentary committee process and be willing to appear before it, as the Deputy Premier and his staff were. We thank him for that opportunity. What that enabled the committee and the very interested stakeholders to do was raise concerns that had been brought forward by various people and direct them directly to the responsible minister. I do not believe in my time in parliament we have ever seen that type of approach. It is one that bodes well for parliamentary democracy in Queensland.

I want to thank all those who gave their time and their energy to make a submission to the parliamentary committee. I want to thank those who made supplementary submissions and those who were able to appear before the committee. I thank those in Toowoomba who made their time available and those here in Brisbane also. As I have said, I thank Greg Chemello and his staff within the department. I genuinely want to thank them for their professional engagement with the committee. As a committee, we work with various departments. I do not mind putting on the record that the department of state development is by far the easiest to work with when it comes to soliciting information and answering the committee's concerns. From time to time I do not believe other departments and public servants understand that the committee process is separate from executive government. We are here in part representing the parliament so we work in a bipartisan way. I think all members of our committee will attest to that. When we genuinely ask questions, we are looking for genuine answers. To the departmental staff, you are a pleasure to work with and I thank you for that.

I want to put on the record our thanks to our secretariat staff because they work particularly hard. I know that all committee staff do, but we are fortunate that our committee staff are led by our very competent and capable research director, Erin Pasley. I thank our other staff involved as well. Our job as committee members is made that much easier thanks to their professionalism and their ability to address our concerns and pull that information together.

Through the process of looking at this bill, I believe we have seen a new standard for parliamentary processes whereby we not only listen to stakeholders but also address their concerns, and that is reflected in the amendments before the House tonight. In contrast, we have the Katter's Australian Party's bill—the Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill. I listened to the member for Condamine's second reading speech. I heard him speak about loopholes, but he then failed to actually identify any. I heard him speak about conspiracy theories and I was waiting for some of the clangers, but again he failed to actually address any of the real concerns. Despite his time in this parliament, he showed a pathetic lack of understanding of the parliamentary process. Regulation is not brought into the House at the same time that a bill is presented before the House. That to me just highlights the risks that we would face in Queensland if the Katter party was ever taken seriously.

I contrast the member for Condamine to the member for Mount Isa—an individual who I have great respect for, an individual who was able to work within our committee process and put forward his concerns in a statement of reservation in a measured way. The member for Condamine would have us believe that the Katter party inserted a dissenting report—his criticism was so scathing of this bill—but that is not the fact. The fact is that there was a statement of reservation which highlighted concerns—and they were legitimate concerns from the member for Mount Isa—but it misrepresents the good work that the member for Mount Isa has done when the member for Condamine comes into this House and represents his views as being the way in which the Katter's Australian Party had concerns about this legislation.

I note that the member for Condamine did not appear before the committee in its public hearings—and we did extend an invitation to him through his electorate office—nor did he seek leave to join the committee at any stage in the parliamentary process. That is exactly the same approach he took with the Gasfields Commission Bill. We extended to him an invitation to attend the hearings and he did not bother to turn up. Someone who is supposedly that concerned and who stands up in this House to make speeches and rants and raves and carries on can never be taken seriously if he is not involved in the parliamentary committee process, and the standing orders provide him with the opportunity to be involved.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr GIBSON: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer because it is hard work for all of the committee members, and if you are not up to it you cannot come into this House and complain about it afterwards. The contrast could not be greater. The Katter bill fails the test for effective legislation. The government's bill not only passes that test but passes the process in which the parliamentary committee has engaged with the broader community and presented recommendations back to the parliament and the executive has then adopted those recommendations as amendments to bring forth. No-one could ever accuse this government of not listening to the people of Queensland because this bill shows how very effectively we have done that. I commend the Regional Planning Interests Bill to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (9.34 pm): I rise tonight to support the Deputy Premier's Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013. I would like to thank the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning for bringing this common-sense bill before the House. I have the pleasure to again rise in this House to support common-sense legislation that not only supports an industry but supports the four pillars of this great economy that leads to this great state of Queensland. I think it is also pertinent that I note the involvement of the chair, Mr David Gibson, the member for Gympie, and his role in leading the committee and its recommendations in relation to this bill. As the member for Gympie has rightly said in this House, this is a great example of how the committee system should work in terms of the communication and consultation with all of the stakeholders involved in the bill. I would like to thank Mr Gibson for the wonderful speech he just gave to the House.

When the Deputy Premier spoke at great length in the House earlier this evening, he said that the bill enables us to not only compare and contrast the opportunities that the agricultural sector and the resource sector of Queensland now have but also compare and contrast the legislation that a sensible, grown-up government would put before this House as opposed to the legislation that the Katter party put before the House. The Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill should basically be named the 'Let's close down the Queensland economy bill', because, honestly, they just want to come into this House and say to the thousands upon thousands of working men and women who contribute to the coal seam gas industry and also the agricultural industry—the mums and dads who stack up that industry—that we are going to shut it all down, that we are going to stop any negotiations and that is it. That would stop the Queensland economy.

We have a brilliant economy and our projections are looking very favourable for our great state, and that is because of a common-sense, grown-up government which introduces bills such as the Regional Planning Interests Bill. We have communicated with the industries and we are getting on with business. As I like to often talk about, this bill also removes a lot of onerous red tape. The LNP government's commitment prior to coming into government was to protect prime agricultural land and restore land use commitments when there is an issue.

One of the most important aspects of the bill that I wish to touch on is the new generational regional plans that address the critical issues affecting regional Queensland. This is especially important in electorates such as mine and the Deputy Premier's where we have the rich red soils of the South Burnett. This area has a heritage of farming, grazing and cropping. Producers in my electorate produce some amazing food, be it peanuts, baked beans, high quality beef, pulses, chicken, fruit, pork, wine, grapes, peanuts, navy beans, fodder and much, much more. But we also mine an amazing coal resource and we can do that in co-existence because this bill brings before the House—and the Deputy Premier definitely talked about this in his lengthy contribution—the ability for an area such as the South Burnett to have the best of both worlds. And that is why I congratulate the Deputy Premier for this bill.

We have had the situation in the South Burnett before with a resource company where the previous government allowed a UCG plant to be built right smack bang in the middle of prime agricultural land and the rich red soils of the South Burnett. That was not common sense, and under this planning bill that would not be allowed to occur.

Again, I cannot express enough the common sense in this bill that protects great agricultural areas such as the rich red soils of the South Burnett. Where the soils are not so rich and red and where they are not producing fine pulses or other crops, we can have a coalmine that very ably feeds into the electricity market and also produces jobs—amazing jobs—for the constituents of my electorate. This is what this common-sense legislation is all about.

I have been very pleased to be involved in the development of the Darling Downs Regional Plan, the first of the regional plans to be delivered. It takes in areas of my electorate covered by the Toowoomba Regional Council and the Western Downs Regional Council. I am now also very happily

involved in the South East Queensland Regional Plan, which covers the Somerset area of my electorate. I am very much looking forward to the Deputy Premier and his department taking on one of the next regional plans, which will take in the South Burnett. My understanding is that that will be the Wide Bay plan. I am very much looking forward to working with the Deputy Premier in relation to that regional plan so I can ensure that these amazing industries, such as agriculture and resources, can continue to work hand in hand and side by side in the great electorate of Nanango.

I think it is important to note that throughout the deliberation on this bill there was wide consultation. There was input from local government, key industry groups and the wider community. As the Deputy Premier has said during the committee process, the overall objective of the bill is for the landholder and a resource proponent to come to an agreement without the need for government protection or intervention. Again, this is common-sense legislation. That is what the landholders want. They want to be on an even footing with the resource company, and so they should be. This is common sense. It is unbelievable that someone from the Katter party can come in here and seriously bring a bill before the House that is going to shut down the Queensland economy without offering an alternative. That is quite astonishing to me.

The agriculture industry in my entire electorate is a major contributor to the Queensland economy. The Darling Downs area is a region that is both internationally and domestically renowned for its productive capacity, high-quality produce and the ability to sustain a strong and diverse agricultural supply chain. It is also interesting to note that we have great companies investing in that exact area such as the Wagners, who are building an amazing airport so that we can get our agricultural products to market and resource companies such as New Hope at Acland can bring in their equipment using that airport. I think this is a wonderful initiative that will support both of those industries for our great state.

There is so much that is positive about the bill that the Deputy Premier has brought before the House and there is so much that is negative about the bill that the Katter party has brought before this House. This bill brought into the House by the Deputy Premier is right and just. As the Deputy Premier so rightfully said, the resource companies must realise this is not a free-for-all, but this bill allows equal footing for both the landholders and the resource companies, as it should. I am proud to be a member of this LNP government. I support this bill before the House.

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.43 pm): It is with much pleasure that I also rise this evening in support of the Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013. Again, this bill is a clear demonstration of how the Newman government takes a common-sense approach to land use planning across the entire state of Queensland but particularly within our specific Queensland regions. I start by warmly congratulating the Deputy Premier on this bill and on the outstanding effort that he and his team in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning have undertaken in bringing it forward. I also congratulate them on working with my department, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, as well as Minister Cripps's and Minister McVeigh's departments as we look to restore a level of balance among the vital four pillars of our economy, particularly our resources and agricultural industries, our living areas and our environmental areas. Again, it has been a pleasure to work with the Deputy Premier on the development of this bill as well as the new regional plans that underpin it.

It is those regional plans that actually epitomise what this bill is all about. Labor took a 'one size fits all' approach to managing the state, whether it was the Wild Rivers Act, the Vegetation Management Act or the Strategic Cropping Land Act. Regarding those bills, Labor took a 'one size fits all' approach to the entire state. This bill and these regional plans take a regional focus. They acknowledge that our regions are different and diverse and that in different regions the competition between conflicting land uses is different. It may be agriculture and resources, environment and resources or living areas and the resource industry and/or agriculture. What this bill allows us to do is get that balance right.

The bill introduces a framework that will see the preparation of that new generation of regional plans. As part of those regional plans, four new areas of regional interest have been identified. They include the priority agricultural areas, the strategic cropping areas, the priority living areas and, of particular interest to me, the strategic environmental areas. As I said, Queensland is a vast and contrasting state. From the cape to Coolangatta, our state has 13 diverse bioregions, each with their own characteristics, each with their own communities and each with their own opportunities for how they will contribute to the state as a whole and how as a piece of the state they contribute to the Queensland jigsaw.

The Regional Planning Interests Bill seeks to identify preferable land uses for our state's diverse communities. As Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, I am particularly pleased that the bill recognises the importance of these strategic environmental areas to our regional communities and, might I add, to their economies. One of the first of these new plans being prepared is for the Cape York area. As members of the House will know, a key priority of the Newman government has been to enable sustainable, economic development opportunities on the cape—well led by the member for Cook, Assistant Minister Kempton—balanced with the protection of environmental areas. That is why before the last election we committed to reset that balance by repealing those emotive 'one size fits all' wild river declarations on the cape and replacing them with a statutory regional plan in consultation with local communities.

The preparation of the Cape York Regional Plan together with this bill will provide local communities with greater control of their own economic future while ensuring that iconic natural areas and areas of high conservation value are appropriately protected. It provides a process to manage the impacts of resource activities on environmental areas and provides for their co-existence with other users of the land in that region. It goes without saying that Cape York is a pretty special place. We could speak at length about some of the environmental values there as well as the economic values and opportunities that are presented to the communities on the cape. I will focus briefly on some of those environmental values.

Cape York has one of the most extensive and least disturbed areas of active parabolic dunes in the world at the Shelburne Bay dune fields. The major rivers of Cape York are definitely the lifeblood of the region's rural, tourism and other industries and have contributed to the development of this region. These rivers are also an intrinsic feature of the region and significantly affect how, where and under what conditions the communities of the region go about their lives. These rivers also have significant recreational value, both in their own right and in how they contribute to the environmental value of the area. These characteristics do need to be protected, but it is these same characteristics which often provide opportunities for economic development through sensitive development of this beautiful region.

Any conflicts between mining and areas for residential development, agricultural use or special environmental areas such as Cape York must be managed in a coherent way. I stress the importance of the fact that this bill will be underpinned by these new regional plans that allow us to take a local and regional focus in consultation with communities, individuals, interest groups and industry bodies to get that balance right. This bill requires that these areas are mapped, and where there are overlaps between these areas and resource activities such as mining or coal seam gas operations, particularly in the Darling Downs and further west in the Channel Country, these operations must consider and align with the land use policies in those new generational regional plans. This bill will therefore ensure that land use conflicts are considered and resolved through a regional planning decision again taking into consideration that local knowledge.

It was with great pleasure that I stood alongside the Premier and the Deputy Premier when we declared that Queensland's first strategic environmental area would be the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve. Despite all of their green grandstanding, Labor's wild rivers legislation would have allowed mining to occur on the majority of that reserve. Under this new framework, the entire reserve will be protected. It is important to note here that it was not the Wilderness Society, the greens or the Labor Party who set aside this reserve in the first place. The John Howard federal coalition purchased this property as a tribute to Steve Irwin and the work that he did, and the LNP government here in this state will again give it the protection that it rightly deserves for that reason.

While this is just the first example, we heard from the Deputy Premier that consultation is still continuing around what the regional plan will look like for Cape York. I anticipate that there will be other strategic environmental areas in the Cape York plan but, importantly, there will be areas where economic development is actively sought and encouraged and, in essence, given the green light to proceed. Those opportunities will be extensive across the Cape and will include the resources industry, the agricultural industry, the tourism industry, community development and, obviously, property construction. It will be exciting to see that process unfolding in the coming months.

Obviously in tandem with the finalisation of that plan and the work that Minister Cripps has been doing in the Channel Country, we are undertaking the revocation of the wild rivers legislation in those areas. That has been put out for public consultation. Consistent with the legislative requirements, submissions have been received and are currently being considered by myself and the department. I make the point that the protections will not be removed until the regional plans are in place, because under this bill we will ensure that we get the balance right. We will ensure that we get

the correct balance between economic development, agriculture, the resource industry, the tourism industry and the environment. We will get that right and have them in place through a far more sensible and regionally focused piece of legislation through regional and local plans that are developed in partnership with the communities that they represent and which truly reflect the diversity of this great state that is Queensland.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (9.53 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this cognate debate on the Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013 and the Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Bill. Or, as I think the member for Nanango quite succinctly put it, the 'Let's Shut Down Queensland Bill'.

Having read the bill, the member for Condamine's introductory speech and the committee's report into this private member's bill, I fully support the statements of the chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee about this bill. Certainly the chair's forward in that report makes for some very interesting reading and sums it up quite nicely. He says, amongst other things—

Like previous KAP Bills, the Member for Condamine's Bill has more errors than detail, is illconceived, and short on substance. Frankly, I'm not sure that the honourable Member understands fully what he has proposed in this Bill. Furthermore, the member showed very little interest in responding to issues and questions raised by the committee or submitters in our consideration of the Bill.

It makes for some very interesting reading. In fact, I would probably go so far as to say that Queensland wants this bill maybe as much as the Oakey Show Society wants the member for Condamine. It is completely unwelcome and unneeded. The Katter party bill is simply grandstanding, trying to score cheap political points in what I would say is a rather bizarre manner and proves once again that the member for Condamine and his party are way out of their depth. They are unable to put forward sensible, practical and workable legislation. Maybe it is time for them to have a little lie down, sing a goodnight song with *Giggle and Hoot* and leave the hard work of legislative reform to those who are obviously more capable.

We then had the inane opening contribution about these bills from the member for Condamine earlier tonight. He was very keen to selectively quote from some of the initial submissions that were made on the Regional Planning Interests Bill. As the member for Gympie has pointed out in his contribution, the member for Condamine clearly did not actually speak to any of the submitters because by and large the submitters, including those who he was quoting directly tonight, have since indicated that their concerns have been addressed and that they have no further issues. I think the member for Condamine needs to catch up and take notice of the entire debate.

I would like to focus the rest of my contribution on the bill we have before us tonight that actually has substance—the bill that will provide security for landholders and will deliver the best economic outcomes for the whole of Queensland. It is no secret that the Regional Planning Interests Bill received a large amount of interest from many stakeholders across many industries and sectors from throughout Queensland. Before getting on to the content of the bill itself, I want to also add my comments about the parliamentary committee process and its effectiveness in reviewing bills that are before this House.

There are aspects of this bill that were obviously controversial. We had a large number of submissions raising numerous issues. Public hearings were held in Toowoomba and Brisbane, and each of the issues raised were investigated and systematically addressed by the committee, the department and the Deputy Premier. I particularly want to thank the Deputy Premier, because during the committee process he took the opportunity to appear as a witness before the committee during our final public hearings to address a number of the key issues that had been raised.

The committee process worked well in examining this bill. As we have seen here already this evening, the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee made 22 recommendations, all of which have been accepted in full or in principle by the Deputy Premier. I want to commend the all-powerful and all-wonderful secretariat of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee for their outstanding work during the committee's considerations of this bill. Under the direction of research director Erin Pasley, our secretariat has again provided our committee with strong assistance in our consideration of this bill and has again assisted in the preparation of—and put a lot of hard work into—this thorough committee report.

The Regional Planning Interests Bill is an important bill for the ongoing security of prime agricultural land and ensuring that there is not only a balance between agriculture, resource development and environmental protection, but that there are processes in place to ensure consistency across the state. This bill helps deliver on the Newman government's commitment to

protect prime agricultural land as we work towards doubling agricultural production and Queensland's food production by 2040, whilst at the same time empowering landholders in their negotiations with resource companies.

As stated in the policy objectives of this bill, this bill identifies areas of Queensland that are of regional interest; gives effect to the policies on matters of state interest stated in regional plans; manages the impact of resource activities and regulated activities in areas of regional interest; and manages the co-existence of resource activities and regulated activities with other activities in areas of regional interest. This bill provides a robust framework to meet these aims, and the assessment criteria tabled by the Deputy Premier provides an equally robust process to ensure these aims are achieved and to ensure consistency across Queensland. The bill and associated regulation and assessment criteria introduce four areas of regional interest: priority agricultural areas, strategic cropping areas, priority living areas and strategic environmental areas.

I want to speak briefly about a few of the recommendations put forward by the committee that have been accepted by the Deputy Premier. In recommendation 3 the committee recommended that the Deputy Premier consider amending the definition of a regulated activity to include it as having a widespread or irreversible impact. The committee noted that there was concern from stakeholders that the phrase 'regulated activity' was included without giving a clear indication of what those activities may involve. I thank the Deputy Premier for addressing that concern and for including a clear definition of a regulated activity in the amendments being introduced into this House tonight. For the record, the amendment states that a regulated activity for an area of regional interest is an activity likely to have a widespread and irreversible impact on the area of regional interest and one that is prescribed under a regulation for the area. I hope that that definition will provide more certainty to the stakeholders who raised concerns about this definition.

In recommendation 4 the committee recommended that the department consult with peak bodies that made submissions to the committee's inquiry to help develop a definition of co-existence or co-existence criteria relevant to each area of regional interest. Co-existence has certainly proven to be a difficult concept to define and to nail down, although I think the Deputy Premier certainly hit that nail on the head when he said during the public hearing that the best example we could have of co-existence is when a landholder and a resource company both voluntarily agree. I sincerely hope that this can be achieved more and more in the months and years to come. If we can get mutual benefit and mutual agreement between all stakeholders, then the necessity for intervention and further mediation and further processes becomes somewhat redundant. There were some submitters who believe that co-existence was not achievable at all. However, I would suggest that some of those espousing that line simply did not want co-existence but would prefer an all or nothing approach, and generally that was no resources at all—much like the unsustainable position of the bill from the member for Condamine. This is an issue that has been widely discussed prior to the introduction of this bill and I have no doubt it will continue to be a point of much debate for many years to come. But I think what we have seen tonight in the assessment criteria that have been tabled is that these criteria are very thorough and will ensure the agriculture and resource industries can co-exist to the greatest extent possible in each individual situation.

Finally, in recommendation 18 the committee recommended that the Deputy Premier amend clause 24 to clarify the intent of the exemption for pre-existing resource activities is to exempt current lawfully operating activities that were in place before an area was declared an area of regional interest. I thank the Deputy Premier again for his straightforward response tonight and to the committee on this recommendation. To reiterate his words, he stated that there was no retrospectivity in this bill and it was very well put when the Deputy Premier stated tonight that anything that was legal yesterday will still be legal once this bill is passed. I again thank the Deputy Premier for addressing the very legitimate concerns of a number of submitters and for his acceptance of this recommendation and his clarification on that recommendation as well as recommendation 19, which had a similar sentiment.

In any bill I speak on in this House I look for the benefits not only for the whole of Queensland but specifically for Pine Rivers. Whilst this bill has primary positive impacts for regional and rural Queensland, it is clear to see the flow-on benefits for my electorate. A strong agricultural sector, a strong resources sector and ensuring the preservation of strategic environmental areas will have a significant flow-on effect for Pine Rivers and particularly for the many businesses in Pine Rivers that service and support both the agriculture and resources industries across our great state. Whilst I cannot provide any support at all to the member for Condamine's heavily flawed bill, I am very pleased to be able to state my support for the Regional Planning Interests Bill.

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (10.03 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013. The Queensland government has a strong desire to build strong and prosperous regions in the state where people want to work, live and raise families. This has been demonstrated in the proactive consultation with regional Queensland in the development of the Queensland Plan. This bill is another example of how the government is getting on with the business of removing obstacles and uncertainty about competing and potentially conflicting demands on land use in regional Queensland that can hamper regional economic growth and resilience.

The bill streamlines regulation in relation to the protection of agricultural land by bringing existing high-quality soils protection and regional planning policies under one framework. The bill incorporates the protection provided under strategic cropping land laws for high-quality agricultural soils, upon which the future of intensive agricultural industries rely, and extends protection to areas of regionally significant agricultural land use, priority agricultural areas. While this bill repeals the Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011 and all other laws regarding land access and compensation, the resources industry and urban planning remain the same. To demonstrate the seriousness with which this government holds regional interests, the bill makes clear that, where any inconsistency exists between conditions of a regional interest development approval for a priority agricultural area or strategic cropping area and a condition of an environmental or resource authority, the regional interest development approval prevails. This bill also includes measures to facilitate participation in decision making and transparency in process which address a key concern of landowners and the community about not being informed in a timely way about resource activities.

In relation to regional interest development applications, applicants must give the landowner a copy of the application and, when the application is notifiable, also publish a notice about that application. Notifiable assessment applications also provide for public submissions to be made which must be considered in determining the application. Once a decision has been made, a decision notice must be given to the applicant and landowner and, where relevant, to other assessing agencies. In addition, an assessment decision must also be published on either the department's website or in a newspaper of the area. This bill requires the chief executive to seek advice about an assessment application from the independent GasFields Commission in certain circumstances. Additionally, if the chief executive's decision about an assessment application is inconsistent with advice from the GasFields Commission or from a local government in relation to a priority living area, reasons for inconsistency must be included in the decision notice. All of these provisions ensure that those directly affected by competing land use demands are engaged in the assessment process and are informed of decisions in a timely way.

The rights of affected parties are also assured under this bill, with rights of appeal against a regional interest decision to the Planning and Environment Court being made available to the applicant or the owner of the land or an affected landowner impacted by this decision. The appeal provisions differ from those in the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 in that only genuinely affected landholders—those adversely affected by an activity because of the impact on an area of regional interest—are able to appeal a regional interest decision. Costly delays in resource project planning will be minimised by excluding extraneous parties from bringing an appeal action. Effective land use planning is at the core of this bill—as opposed to Katter's Australian Party and member for Condamine's Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill, which puts at risk 30,000 jobs in Queensland and an investment of \$63 billion in the Queensland economy. The chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee in his report states that the bill being proposed by KAP's member for Condamine—

... has more errors than detail, is ill-conceived, and short on substance.

He continues that it—

... is also quite dangerous with its nonsensical proposal to scrap legally granted coal seam gas exploration and mining rights across vast areas of the State—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs FRANCE: I take that interjection; it will look at shutting down the Queensland economy. He continues—

... and to prevent affected companies, operating within the law, from seeking compensation. This would raise sovereign risk issues of mammoth proportions for the State of Queensland.

That is what the chair's foreword said. What the member for Condamine is proposing in this bill is sheer economic suicide. It would come at a great cost to the 30,000-plus workers in the coal seam gas industry and their families and the thousands of other businesses and their workers whose

fortunes are tied one way or another to this industry—as opposed to some of the feedback that we have received on the Deputy Premier’s bill before the House this evening. The Deputy Premier’s bill has been developed in consultation with all stakeholders and I commend the team who has been working on this bill and also the parliamentary committee that held the hearings and all of those stakeholders across Queensland that made submissions to the hearing and have had their issues and concerns taken into consideration and incorporated into this bill.

I refer now to some of the feedback that has been received by the stakeholders involved in CSG. APPEA, the peak body representing CSG, is confident that the cooperative spirit of working together between the gas industry and the agricultural sector has been captured in the intent of this bill and that this bill represents a step in the right direction for getting certainty for both the gas industry and agricultural sector and provides a platform for greater cooperation.

Australia Pacific LNG recognises that the Regional Planning Interests Bill affects the interests of a broad group of stakeholders. They appreciate the wide consultation undertaken by the department and the Deputy Premier and the balance that has been achieved.

Santos supports the government’s endeavours in promoting co-existence between the resource and agricultural sectors, given that co-existence is already strongly fostered by the natural gas industry. Santos appreciates the government’s commitment to the parliamentary committee process, which has allowed all stakeholders to provide feedback on the government’s co-existence framework.

QGC acknowledges the substantial work and consultation that has gone into this bill by the Deputy Premier and the parliamentary committee with a view to creating a co-existence framework for landholders, communities, the agricultural industries and the resources sector.

I commend the Deputy Premier, the parliamentary committee, the departmental team and all of those who helped shape this bill through their vital input and submissions. The Regional Planning Interests Bill provides landholders, the resource sector and regional Queensland with greater certainty for their futures. I support the Deputy Premier’s bill before the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (10.11 pm): I, too, rise to add to the cognate debate of these two bills. I would like to start by thanking those who briefed the committee, provided submissions and participated in the inquiry. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Deputy Premier and his department. As the member for Mackay said, it was a very important part of the committee process to have the minister there to answer questions, because we had lots of questions about this bill. We had received lots of feedback from various people on all sides of this bill. It was great to have the Deputy Premier there to give us that direct feedback. So I congratulate him on that.

The bill provides the ability to manage the impact of resource activities and regulated activities in areas of regional interest that contribute or are likely to contribute to Queensland’s economic, social and environmental prosperity. The Queensland government is preparing new generation regional plans that address critical issues affecting the state’s regions. These plans identify and contain land use policies that protect areas of regional interest such as priority agricultural areas, priority living areas, strategic environmental areas and the strategic cropping area.

This bill is all about balance and co-existence. These critical issues have been identified in consultation with the community. After all, over 99 submissions were formally made to the committee’s inquiry. Yesterday in parliament the Premier said that we want to—

... drive new job opportunities for Queenslanders.

...

Queensland is Australia’s engine room for economic growth and we are open for business.

The Regional Planning Interests Bill will deliver on the LNP’s commitment to protect prime agricultural land and resolve land use conflicts where they arise. The assessment process established by this bill restores the balance of power and provides certainty for rural producers and resource companies when new mining or gas developments are proposed. By ensuring the ongoing development of both the agriculture and the resource industries, the government will ensure ongoing growth in jobs and opportunities.

This bill is framework legislation with specific assessment criteria provided by way of regulation. The bill introduces a new system of regional planning across all of Queensland, with regional plans for Central Queensland and the Darling Downs already in place and the Cape York Regional Plan in draft form. The bill introduces four areas of regional interest: priority agricultural areas—and an

example of those are the Darling Downs and the Central Highlands; a strategic cropping area, which is currently identified within the Strategic Cropping Land Act and I note that that act will be repealed; priority living areas, which are areas around all towns and urban or semi-urban areas; and strategic environmental areas. Some examples of that would be the Channel Country and the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve on Cape York.

The bill will require any new regulated development in areas of regional interest to obtain a regional impact development approval—known as an RIDA. The bill requires all new resource industry development in an area of regional interest to obtain an RIDA. Other new development prescribed by regulation that is potentially incompatible with the area of regional interest may also require an RIDA. Development agreed to or carried out by private landowners that impacts only on their own land will be exempt from the requirement to obtain an RIDA.

An RIDA, if granted, will be an approval to have an impact on an area of regional interest and allow controls to be placed on that impact. An RIDA will allow a range of conditions or restrictions to be applied to any new development to control its impact on the area of regional interest. An RIDA will be very similar to a development approval that has been used for many years to control inappropriate urban development.

The next step was to publish the assessment criteria. I congratulate the Deputy Premier on tabling those tonight. There are some very clear points in that criteria that will flow through to regulation. That assessment criteria sets out the assessment criteria for each of the areas of regional interest. The assessment for a priority agricultural area is very straightforward. The basis of this assessment will be that the activity must not result in material impacts on a priority agricultural land use of a property. So it has to comply with a whole list of criteria that the Deputy Premier has tabled for us tonight. For instance, that activity cannot be located elsewhere on the land that is not used for a priority agricultural land use. It cannot result in the loss of more than two per cent of the land used for a priority agricultural land use and the loss of more than two per cent of the productive capacity of a priority agricultural land use. As the member for Nanango said, that is common sense.

Basically, this assessment criteria says, 'If you haven't negotiated a compensation and conduct agreement that would give you an exemption from having to have a regional interest declaration, then you have to go through the process of having a look to see where you can put those particular pieces of infrastructure that are required for a coal seam gas facility and have a look to see if you can stick it over in a corner somewhere or off the particular cropping land that might be being used or, if it is a cattle property, maybe where the cattle are not. Stick it in a corner and keep it out of the way of the farmer who is carrying on his business.' That is common sense.

The other criteria is that, if land can be found, no more than two per cent of the land can be taken. That is a very small part of somebody's land. They still have 98 per cent of it left. That allows for co-existence between the agricultural sector and the mining sector. I have to agree with the member for Nanango: it is common sense.

The committee has made 22 recommendations. One of those is that the bill be passed. There are 21 others. The Deputy Premier has told us that he will accept the majority of those with some conditions. There are also 16 points of clarification and he is going to give us some feedback on those. I will be supporting this bill tonight.

I would now like to move on to the other bill that is part of this cognate debate tonight, the Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill 2013.

Where do you start with this bill? It is absolutely ridiculous. Queensland is in a bad financial state. We cannot go cutting our own throat by bringing in this sort of legislation. I cannot impress enough on people how bad even talking about this is. This bill proposes to extinguish coal seam gas exploration and mining rights for coal seam gas companies and other businesses with connected operations without compensation or consideration of the consequences. If that is not a threat to the economic viability of this state I do not know what is. We cannot do something like that. I think if one looked up 'sovereign risk' in the dictionary there would probably be a picture of the member for Condamine under the definition.

This bill would undermine the substantial investment in CSG infrastructure that has been put in place in this state already. This bill is absolutely ridiculous and we cannot support it. It proposes to exclude CSG activities from one part of the state while ignoring the rest of the state such as the Central Highlands where there is prime agricultural land and CSG activity co-existing as we speak. In fact, what it aims to do is prohibit all coal seam gas and exploration mining activities east of the Condamine River from Chinchilla to the New South Wales border and from a longitudinal line running

directly through the Chinchilla Post Office east to the coast. I am sure that the people who operate the Chinchilla Post Office—I do not know them personally—are happy to know they will not be having a coal seam gas well in the middle of their post office or, in fact, any sort of exploration at all. That must be of great comfort to them, but it is absolutely terrifying to the mining industry in this state.

We cannot support this bill. This whole bill is premised on flawed assumptions that coal seam gas activities and prime agricultural land are incompatible and mutually exclusive. For areas where prime agricultural land has been verified as not being strategic cropping land, CSG activities would still be excluded. I will not support this bill.

The member for Condamine mentioned that the Deputy Premier had not given us a definition of co-existence. If he had bothered to read the report of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, recommendation 4 recommends to the Deputy Premier that he talks to the people who gave input to our committee about a definition of co-existence. There is plenty of evidence, if one looks, that co-existence works. It is a viable alternative and it is one that I fully support. But I will not support the bill brought before the House by the member for Condamine.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (10.23 pm): I rise to speak on the Regional Planning Interests Bill in cognate with the Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill. The Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013 sets out to address the tensions that have built up between landholders and resource companies and attempts to build on the efforts of existing acts such as the Strategic Cropping Land Act, the Sustainable Planning Act and, dare I mention it, the Wild Rivers Act. At the outset I acknowledge that this was always going to be a very difficult and challenging issue for whichever party or government that took it on. In one of his contributions the minister suggested that this act operates as an urban town plan over a rural area, and that is the way that it should act.

From the initial feedback that I experienced on the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, both sides of the argument had very strong opposition to the bill which they made loud and clear. It was very unsettling how strongly they were opposed to the way that it was initially structured. The feedback that I had from industry and landholders was that they felt they were not consulted enough by the department. To the credit of the department there was some to'ing and fro'ing and there has been some adjustment. I acknowledge that at this early stage.

In those early stages there were some very unhappy people who raised real concerns. We have heard a lot about sovereign risk tonight. Some of the comments made concerning sovereign risk in the early parts of this bill being formed were very frightening indeed. The underlying theme throughout the development of the bill has been the lack of detail that has been provided on the regulations, which has only come out tonight. It has been very limited and has made it difficult to take a position to support it without knowing how it will work. I feel that there is still an issue with it being demonstrated that the objectives of this bill could not have been achieved through other existing legislative frameworks. I see the arguments put by the minister and his department, but I am yet to be thoroughly convinced of that.

I would like to go through some aspects of the bill and some of the contributions made. Some of these aspects have been addressed, but I think they are still worth going through as they had a significant impact on how it came together. There has been much mention made of co-existence. I take exception to the comments that it should exist and it can always be reached. I think more often than not it is forced on people. There is always an implied threat from large gas companies or resource companies when approaching landholders. Despite the legislative framework that exists to try to protect them, there is always an implied threat. I think many of us here have personal friends who have that hovering over them. When there is a threat of taking an issue to the land court or taking the money and running, it is always very imposing. There is always going to be an imbalance. Perhaps that is in favour of the resource companies at the moment. Co-existence is definitely very contentious. There was no definition of co-existence in the bill which made it very difficult to comment and pass judgement on. That was evident in the submissions of QRC, AgForce and others.

I disagree with the assertion that the best example is when both parties come to agreement in that initial stage without going to court. As I have said, there are always those situations where there is an implied threat from a large resource company or there is a multinational knocking on the door exerting pressure. There are many stories of that happening. Hopefully in time there are fewer of those. I think many people are forced into mediation or there is an implied threat. I think it is very difficult from an outsider's point of view to stand back and say that there is co-existence and everything is lah-di-dah.

Mapping areas of regional interest is a very contentious issue. I am told that will be covered in the regulations. That would be the cause of much debate because many Queenslanders and people in agricultural industries would say a particular area definitely should be a quarantined priority agricultural area and called into those special strategic agricultural areas and they will miss out. In relation to ground truthing of that mapping, there was limited detail and it is therefore difficult to pass judgement.

Resource activities and regulated activities relate to the identification of areas of regional interest and the management of various resource activities. The submission from MetroCoal identified that they were particularly concerned about undefined regulated activities and that it may mean interested parties from other industry sectors may be unaware that they may ultimately be regulated by the framework and are denied the opportunity to make submissions. I understand that this issue is being partly addressed by the department. It was an issue that came through loud and strong to me.

Again, I have extreme difficulty with the bill in relation to the regulation. It is very difficult to cast judgement over something when a lot of the nuts and bolts of the framework are not there. According to the majority of stakeholders, it is difficult to assess the implications of the bill. It has created uncertainty for landowners, local government, business operators and industry. A number of stakeholders have requested an opportunity to review the regulations before the bill is passed. Certainly I would have benefited from that, because I could have interacted with them and given some good honest feedback and we could have had a robust debate here tonight, but we have been denied that opportunity. I think it waters down the purpose of the debate tonight and makes it difficult to support these things.

The QRC argued against the framework of the legislation to provide flexibility for changes in current and future policies. I found interesting the statement that they made that the powers to make decisions have been pushed into regulations. They have taken statutory powers and pushed them down to a regulatory stage so that you are in a sort of double-jeopardy situation where you are subject to some rules that you have not seen and the ability to apply those rules has been delegated down to chief executive level, shifting it from a parliamentary power to a bureaucratic one. I see that as an outstanding issue that needs to be addressed.

On the issue of alternative policy proposals, mostly it came back to the fact that people were comfortable with the existing legislation. In my opinion, the vast majority preferred to work within the existing legislation, which could be tweaked or amended rather than rebadging or bringing out something new. I am sure it would send shock waves through boardrooms to have another band of legislation to deal with in Queensland. We talk about the sovereign risk with regard to the bill of the member for Condamine. Certainly there are some issues with that here as well. That has come through loud and clear in the feedback that I have had from some very significant resource companies.

The department advised a number of alternative regulatory frameworks through which to implement the land use policies of the new generation regional plans, including the amendment of the multitude of resource acts to include an assessment process through which the regional interest can be considered as part of the granting of tenure. That cuts to the thrust of the purpose of the bill. I must say at this point—and I think I touched on this earlier—that we agree with the intent of this bill, in that cutting to those regional interests is a very important part of the process and it is a concept that we very much support.

The committee's response to have the framework integrated in the existing legislative framework to minimise red tape was acknowledged by the department, which said that doing that would require considerable amendments and could likely lead to some unintended consequences. That may be true, but I am yet to be fully convinced. The major issue that kept coming back from most of the submissions was the lack of detail. Almost without exception, submitters maintained that they are unable to appropriately critique the proposed assessment framework because of the considerable uncertainty in how it would work. That is something that everyone should be cognisant of with this bill. In the context of this debate, it makes it very difficult.

One of the most important issues that came up at the outset was the impact on existing mining operations, which I believe has been dealt with. That was a very scary proposition, indeed. It is pleasing that that issue was dealt with, because I felt that that was probably the scariest of all. Another issue that came through strongly was the exploration companies having a 12-month period to remediate, which has been extended to 24 months. That was a welcome response. Although the situation is not ideal, it goes some way to alleviating the issue.

In summary, the bill takes on a very challenging task. Aside from the other bill that I am about to speak to, it sets itself the task of taking on the broad area of Queensland where all these tensions exist. My gut feeling is that it has fallen short of properly addressing a very difficult situation. Both sides of the spectrum are unhappy with the outcome generally, although they have said they will wear it. Some people would argue that that is a good policy balance, but that is not necessarily true. It is very rich to be asking us to have faith and to deliberate and that it is all going to come out in the regulation. That is a pretty tough gig for us to deal with.

I will briefly address the other bill before the House tonight, introduced by the member for Condamine. It has attracted a lot of very simplistic arguments and criticisms. There was a lot of criticism about the KAP bills, but putting in stuff like this tells Queensland that there are areas where we can make a stand. I think some of those comments were a bit misguided when we consider the impact that they will have on Queensland. When I am shown a map of where existing activity is, there is a vast and very notable absence of activity in the area we are talking about. In the long term, yes, this will have a huge impact on the CSG industry. It is not to be treated lightly; I understand that. I have a lot of friends who work in the industry. It is a sugar hit that is propping up the economy at the moment.

However, people need to realise that there is a future beyond CSG and there is a flip side to the gas industry that a lot of commentators are talking about. At the moment there are a lot of jobs, particularly in the construction phase. There is a lot of income there now, but there is a flip side because a lot of big industry groups that use gas are taking hits from LNG and the rise to world parity price. There are some frightening statistics that suggest that, whilst it is great at the moment for the economy and it is a very big stimulus, there is a down side particularly in the long term. Part of that long-term issue is protecting our prime agricultural land. This bill fearlessly addresses that. It is a very confronting thing to do, as with the other bill we are talking about. They are confronting issues. Yes, there are big costs, but somewhere along the line we need to draw a line in the sand. That has been done fearlessly by the member for Condamine. I applaud him for that. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Map from Google Earth, dated 10 April 2013, titled 'Coal Seam Gas Wells 'Excluded Area': Protection of Prime Agricultural Land and Other Land from Coal Seam Gas Mining Bill 2013' [\[4698\]](#).

Debate, on motion of Mr Katter, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (10.37 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts



Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (10.37 pm): Tonight I attended the meeting of the senior medical officers—it is a pity that the Premier is leaving because I—

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I remind you of the established convention.

Mrs MILLER: My apologies.

Madam SPEAKER: I remind you of the established convention that we do not refer to members in respect of whether or not they are in the chamber. There are good reasons for that, which apply equally across the chamber.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Speaker. Tonight at the Brisbane exhibition centre I attended the meeting of senior medical officers and visiting medical officers. I would like to report to the House that over 1,470 doctors were in attendance and 200 more doctors were connected via web link at that particular meeting.

We also had 200 doctors meeting at the Cock & Bull tavern in Cairns. It is appropriate that they were at the Cock & Bull tavern because they said that that was what they were treated like by this government. Tonight the assistant health minister condemned the Newman government's Work Choices contracts for our public hospital doctors. The senior medical specialists in attendance gave this government's assistant health minister three standing ovations.

The cardiologists, the emergency physicians, the transplant surgeons, the neurosurgeons and the surgeons who attach severed fingers were unanimous in their condemnation of this government. The federal AMA president, Dr Steve Hambleton, said it was the worst disaster for the medical profession that he had seen in decades. Mr Scott Sullivan, a patient with motor neurone disease, a

terminal condition, spoke passionately on behalf of patients with serious illnesses. The doctors spoke with tears in their eyes about the destruction of the trust that they had built up in their hospitals. They described it as a leaking bucket of trust, punctured by this government.

It is very interesting to note that the Minister for Health did not show up. The Premier did not show up. In fact, it was noted by some who were talking to me that the Premier could spend a period of time in the USA—we all know he was there—and then come home and go to the opera. The director-general turned up. They sent the director-general and he gave a five-minute speech. He convinced absolutely no-one. The Premier is weak and gutless just like his health minister.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, that is unparliamentary language and I ask that you withdraw it.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw.

Mount Ommaney Electorate, Sporting Clubs

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (10.40 pm): I rise on a much more positive note. The stench of negativity clings over there and she is locked in it.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock! What is your point of order, member for Bundamba?

Mrs MILLER: My point of order is that the member for Mount Ommaney is making comments about me which are unparliamentary and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I was listening and you were not named personally. I call the member for Mount Ommaney.

Mrs SMITH: The sporting clubs in the Mount Ommaney electorate are thriving under the Newman government's Get into the Game policy. The Hon. Steve Dickson saw this firsthand. I had the pleasure of hosting him last week at not one, not two but three events in my electorate. It was a great pleasure on Sunday, 9 March to welcome the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, the Hon. Steve Dickson, to the Centenary Rowing Club to officially open the second level of the clubhouse. We were greeted with a rock star welcome by the members who held up their oars for us to walk through on our way to the new clubhouse. Both Minister Dickson and I were very humbled by the experience.

The Queensland government, through the Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Program provided \$297,547 towards this project. Today stands proudly a two-storey rowing and canoeing clubhouse incorporating boat storage, repair areas, coach room, amenities, activity spaces and meeting facilities. The new clubhouse has been specifically designed to mitigate future flood damage and better suit the needs of all club members.

Club member Mark Papinczac, such an impressive young man, encapsulated the feelings of everyone when he said that stage 2 of the project was a classic example of never giving up your dreams after severe weather and floods had taken their toll on the sports club. Mark said that he was pleased to have Minister Dickson there. The minister was very keen to encourage more Queenslanders to get involved in recreational sport at all levels. He said that we in government believe that participation and success begins with a strong focus on grassroots sport and recreation. This is the reason the government introduced the Get into the Game initiative.

I wholeheartedly congratulate all who were involved with this project. Not only will this new clubhouse generate renewed interest in rowing, but it will generate new membership growth and community involvement. Mr Dickson also had the opportunity to see the plans for the upgrade of the Jindalee Jags AFL Club, which shares its facilities with Centenary Netball and Centenary Little Athletics.

Finally, the minister officially opened the upgraded Jindalee Golf Club. All of these clubs have been recipients of Get in the Game program funding. Clearly, this is a government delivering a positive plan with positive results not just for those in the Mount Ommaney electorate but indeed all Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Pine Rivers Electorate, Schools

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (10.43 pm): The Newman government is delivering for Pine Rivers schools. We are getting on with the job and we are building a better education system for Pine Rivers students and families and revitalising front-line education services.

Over the past two years we have a strong record of delivery for schools within the Pine Rivers electorate. We have allocated \$1.9 million to state schools to fix maintenance backlog issues. I am actually appalled that we had to allocate that amount of money to fix those issues in our schools. I have been into classrooms where they had to actually leave the classroom when it rained because the roof leaked so badly. I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering that money to fix these critical maintenance issues in our schools.

Pine Rivers schools have received over \$893,000 this year in literacy and numeracy funding. We have received 90 e-tablets for special needs students in state schools. In 2014 Strathpine West State School has been allocated additional prep teacher aide hours. Genesis Christian College has been given \$775,000 towards their new \$3 million science centre which is currently being constructed. It will be a fantastic asset for that school.

As I have mentioned previously, we have had flashing school zone signs installed outside Holy Spirit School and Bray Park State School. These will ensure greater road safety for our students. A number of schools have benefited from community benefit fund grants, including: Lawnton State School to upgrade their hall; Dayboro State School to build a new playground; and Bray Park State School to install stage curtains and lights.

Last year at the infamous Pine Rivers Lego expo we raised \$4,000 for Bray Park State School and Lawnton State School. Bray Park High has been a successful participant in the Flying Start year 7 in high school program. We have provided \$500,000 to them to upgrade their buildings for year 7 students. We have nine fantastic schools in Pine Rivers—both state schools and private schools and an equally wonderful special school just over the border in Kallangur.

It was an honour for the member for Kallangur and I to attend a trivia night at Pine Rivers Special School last weekend. The Rotary Club of Pine Rivers Daybreak was raising funds for a new sensory garden and adventure playground for Pine Rivers Special School. There were around 250 people in attendance and they raised somewhere between \$7,000 and \$8,000 on the night for the special school. That will certainly be fantastic for the students at that school.

Our government is delivering for Pine Rivers schools and Pine Rivers students. We made a commitment to revitalise front-line services for Queensland families. That is exactly what we are doing. We value our students, we want to empower our teachers and school communities, we have a strong record of delivering for Pine Rivers schools and we will continue to build on that record in the next 12 months.

Gold Coast, Public Transport

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (10.46 pm): Brisbane is getting the BaT Tunnel. But just like in ancient cultures where bats have long been associated with darkness, witchcraft and black magic, Gold Coast bus commuters are being left in the dark over what is going to happen to their services when the light rail system starts in three months. It will take more than the transport minister's magic to get our bus service running on time because, since the new services started two months ago, late running is endemic, and probably worse than before the changes. An expensive and misconceived fare system is a concern affecting the entire network and we cannot rely on Campbell Newman's witchcraft to improve it.

As we know, large bats can give a nasty bite. That is what is happening on the Gold Coast. Just like rabid bats that sometimes become disoriented and unable to fly, our bus commuters are finding it increasingly difficult to get a bus that is running on time. When the light rail starts, there is virtually no information available on what will happen to the buses, apart from a brief diagram which has been described as very high level and not of much use for the most part.

I want to know how many buses this will free up, where are they going, will people out at Clearwater and Nerang get weekend services or buses until 5 pm and 6 pm again and, most importantly, when will the public consultation begin. Since new bus timetables started in January, significant issues have emerged which need to be raised, because I am the only MP on the Gold Coast who has gone in to 'bat' for public transport users. The other nine MPs have apparently been silenced by the LNP government, leaving disgruntled bus users all over the coast coming to my office with their complaints. Frequently commuters tell me that the limited span of hours anywhere west of the Gold Coast corridor will stifle patronage growth as people who formerly relied on buses connecting with trains or with more frequent buses no longer can.

Turning to my own electorate, the operating hours for services to Clearwater are blatantly bad and hard to defend. We need changes, such as running the Nerang to Gold Coast University Hospital route down Lawrence Drive and Brendan Drive, instead of Nerang-Broadbeach Road and Station

Street, so that it stops at the Earle Haven bus stop. Services on the Gold Coast Highway bunch up so that services like the 700, 703 and 704, which are meant to operate on an even 15-minute separation, are arriving at the same time and snapping at each other's heels. The express operating pattern on route 777, south of Broadbeach, is inadequately signed for people to understand that only certain stops are pick-up and set-down locations. The route should move back to being an all-stops route because the time-saving is not significant and the operational complexity makes it pointless.

Routes 761 and 765 now terminate at Robina Town Centre, rather than continuing to Robina Railway Station like they used to—ostensibly to reduce duplication. The list goes on and on. The minister should restore the old bus routes.

(Time expired)

Nanango Electorate, Drought Assistance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (10.49 pm): Times are tough in the Nanango electorate. I have spent the last several weeks travelling around the great electorate of Nanango looking at the devastating effects of the drought that have slowly crept in from the west and have now hit the majority of my electorate. I would like to thank the minister, Dr John McVeigh, for the drought declaration for the areas of the South Burnett, the Toowoomba Regional Council and the Western Downs Regional Council. As late as this afternoon, I had a call from a constituent unfortunately down in the Somerset region who is now looking for an individual drought declaration as well. It is really quite devastating to see the effects of drought—there is no water and no feed—and to see what this is doing to some of my local producers.

The other issue I would like to touch on is the effect the drought is having on local small businesses, not only the people who sell supplies to these regional producers but also small businesses such as the coffee shops or the food shops. Everyone is really, really struggling. What I would like to do is stand in the House tonight and recognise all the struggling producers that we have in my electorate and say that I am very proud of the support that our government has been able to provide so far, and to let them know that we are there and that if there is any help that they think they are not getting then they can contact either my office or the local Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry based in Kingaroy.

Also, it is good to note that I have met with my federal colleague the Hon. Bruce Scott, and he is doing everything he can to support the constituents of the Nanango electorate as well, as is the federal minister Warren Truss. I met with him only a week or so ago in relation to the issues that are surrounding a lot of our primary producers throughout our region. This is a time when we also need to ensure that if anyone is feeling the strain of this drought—and it is very real—whether they are feeling any form of depressive mood or just feeling really down and out in relation to their circumstances, then they should contact Lifeline or their local member.

Springwood Electorate, Collective Action

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (10.52 pm): I am delighted this evening to speak on collective action in Springwood. Research shows that across our nation up to \$38 billion is spent each year providing support for individuals who are abused in some way while they were very young. Adverse childhood experiences include mental, physical and sexual abuse which predominantly happens when mum or dad cannot cope with the demands of parenthood.

There are two major groups who are responding to these challenges in the City of Logan: firstly, in a very professional manner, Mayor Pam Parker and the Chief Executive Officer of Logan City Council, Mr Chris Rose, who are champions for the care of children in Logan, by pursuing the actions in their 'City of Choice' action plan; and, secondly, the tremendous community service organisations who have a colossal sense of goodwill towards one another as they network rather than compete. I thank them sincerely for their desire to provide excellence in service, always looking for smarter ways to deliver community support.

Research shows that many young parents are not prepared for the challenges they face while learning to care for a baby. Only 20 per cent of males do any parental training before the first baby arrives. I am glad to say this will change under collective action, because it has been verified that even a small amount of antenatal parental training goes a long, long way in helping parents cope much better with the stresses and strains that having children bring into their homes. It is true that \$1 spent preventing abuse saves \$10 to \$12 being spent later in life for consequential health services.

Collective action is a term used to describe what occurs in a city or region when the community services groups work in unison, under direction, to ensure that no age group is forgotten but provide a good balance of effort put into both preventative and responsive action. Springwood and Logan do not need more money to practice collective action. Instead, collective action can save a vast number of dollars and dramatically reduce untold suffering.

What a privilege it is to work with all involved for the good of all children in my electorate. Our responsibility at the state level is to coordinate our initiatives under the Carmody report and, in my particular case, the efforts of Logan City Council under their 'City of Choice' action plan point 5.2. I am very pleased to continue working with the ministers for health, education and communities in pursuing this vital practice in Springwood and the City of Logan.

Queensland Ambulance Service

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (10.55 pm): On Wednesday, 12 February, I had the privilege to join a crew from the Logan West Queensland Ambulance Service on their 10-hour shift responding to calls throughout the Logan electorate. This was an experience unlike any other. The opportunity to see behind the scenes of the arduous challenges facing our emergency service was a very worthwhile experience, and I am grateful for having it.

Throughout the shift, I joined Stanislaw Nurzynski and Ashley Robinson—Stan and Ash—as they responded to a variety of calls ranging from sporting injuries and possible appendicitis to patient transport. The unique nature and approach to each incident requires great skill and understanding of those whom the crews are treating. Their line of work is dynamic and unpredictable. Their professionalism and deep-seated desire to help those in need forms the backbone of a career that thrusts one into the most challenging of environments.

Our ambulance crews are the first responders to major incidents. When a patient calls out in their hour of need, it is our ambulance crews that answer that call. Their calming, reassuring and professional approach brings a great level of comfort to their patients. Speaking with each patient throughout the evening, they conveyed to me how happy they were with the level of professionalism and service provided by our 'ambos' in addition to how quickly they were admitted to hospital.

The time taken to transfer a patient from an ambulance stretcher to the emergency department is called patient off-stretcher time. Hospital performance is measured as the percentage of patients transferred off the ambulance stretcher within 30 minutes of the ambulance arriving. Logan Hospital has demonstrated a substantial improvement in this area, with 83 per cent of patients being transferred from the stretcher into the care of emergency staff within the 30-minute target. This is up from 72 per cent in 2012. Logan Hospital has also substantially redesigned its models of care in its in-patient units, largely eliminating in-patient bed block as a reason for delays in patient off-stretcher times even during the traditionally busy time of winter. This means that beds are normally available whenever the emergency department requires them. This was quite evident during the shift: patients were getting beds quickly.

Like emergency department waiting times, patient off-stretcher times should improve even further following the opening of the Logan Hospital redevelopment in August 2014. Being able to prepare for the unexpected is always a challenge. Our ambulance crews maintain a high level of readiness to be able to respond to any situation. Our community asks a great deal from our emergency services and they dutifully take up the task. This experience also demonstrated the interdepartmental collaboration within our health services sector. The immediate and attentive matter in which patients are treated upon arrival at our hospitals is a shining example of improvements that have occurred over the past two years. On behalf of all residents of Logan, I thank the staff of the Queensland Ambulance Service. Together we will keep Logan charging.

Aurizon, Job Cuts

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.58 pm): I would like to bring to the House's attention the 60 Aurizon job cuts from Charters Towers to Mount Isa. This is a massive blow and will have a negative impact on the Charters Towers, Hughenden and Cloncurry communities. Railway workers and their families are now forced to relocate to Townsville or seek employment elsewhere. The Charters Towers Railway Station has provided a wonderful service to the Great Northern railway for generations and will close. These rail families play a huge part in the social, educational and economic fabric of our community, and no doubt Charters Towers and Western Queensland towns feel gutted.

It is disappointing that the Newman government, which is the rail regulator, is washing its hands of this decision. The government keeps raving about the Queensland Plan to invest in jobs and encourage growth in rural and regional Queensland and calls itself the can-do government. Yet when there is an important decision to save jobs it dodges, weaves and hides to the point of being invisible. I expressed great sadness about the privatisation of Queensland Rail. This is an example of what privatisation does. There is no community service obligation. It is all about 'close, cut and sack'. The Labor Party privatised Queensland Rail, and the Newman government has sold the remaining 30 per cent of shares. It has five per cent of shares in the Aurizon company and is still a shareholder of the Aurizon company. When we wrote to the Premier and we questioned the minister, they were invisible and nowhere to be seen.

I know that during the next election they will come to Charters Towers and brag about how they will create jobs for us and how they will invest in rural and regional Queensland. They will say, 'Look at the Queensland Plan.' But when it comes to action they are nowhere to be seen. It is all huff and puff. We will very strongly oppose the sale of the remaining Queensland Rail asset which the Treasurer is frothing at the mouth to sell. When the Labor Party privatised the retail arm of our energy sector, the Treasurer was frothing at the mouth, begging the Labor Party to sell the generators, the lines, the transmitters and the lot. Now he is saying that he wants to sell all of our assets because he is concerned about debt. It is not about debt; it is political idealism.

We will be working hard to ensure that the Townsville and Mount Isa line is not sold. There is \$300 million of income coming back to Queensland, and the Treasurer and this LNP government is frothing at the mouth to sell it. We want to protect jobs. We will ensure that the government makes a decision to protect jobs—

(Time expired)

Indooroopilly Electorate, Projects

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.01 pm): Tonight I rise to speak about the exciting works that are underway in my electorate of Indooroopilly. I am proud to be delivering an upgrade which will increase capacity and improve safety at one of Brisbane's busiest motorways. This is another example of how a can-do government is continuing to deliver. Approximately 70,000 vehicles use this stretch of road every day and suffer through the ever-increasing congestion heading into the city. This upgrade will see the Western Freeway stretch between Indooroopilly and Toowong being widened from two to three lanes in each direction. This will increase the capacity of the Western Freeway, which means less congestion on this busy road, particularly when you include the Moggill Road interchange upgrade and Legacy Way tunnel, which is nearing completion. In particular, residents in Indooroopilly and Fig Tree Pocket will benefit from the upgrade, making the run into the city less congested and more reliable.

I have ensured that the \$55 million set aside for this upgrade will include upgraded noise barriers for residents. This means that all existing noise walls along the Western Freeway between Toowong and Indooroopilly impacted as part of these works will be upgraded to concrete barriers similar to those used for the Moggill Road interchange. This exciting upgrade is expected to be completed prior to the Legacy Way tunnel opening in 2015. It is important to note that this work will be undertaken by Transcity—the same contractor building Legacy Way. I hope this will mean there will be less disruption to motorists as a result of the two projects.

I am also very proud that this government will be improving cycling safety in my electorate by delivering a \$10 million bicycle bridge over Moggill Road at the dangerous Centenary Motorway-Western Freeway interchange. I have received a number of calls from cyclists and motorists concerned about how dangerous this intersection is, particularly given about 800 cyclists a day use the bikeway. The danger comes from having to contend with the four lanes of traffic as well as the on-ramps and off-ramps to the Western Freeway. The bridge will not only give cyclists a safer journey between the western suburbs and Brisbane city but also encourage more people to get out on their bikes.

For too long my electorate of Indooroopilly and other electorates in the western suburbs like Moggill and Mount Ommaney have languished under an all-talk, no-action Labor government. It is encouraging to see how this LNP government is getting on with its commitments to deliver better infrastructure and better planning for residents in my electorate as well as in the western suburbs of Brisbane.

Emergency Management Fire and Rescue Levy; Shave for a Cure

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (11.04 pm): I refer to the statement by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services to the House earlier today relating to the emergency management fire and rescue levy and some of the changes made for community groups and other organisations. It is an issue that I have had some correspondence with the minister about, and I welcome the announcement of those changes to the levy. Concerns have been raised in my community about the levy in that respect.

Thirty-one people each day are diagnosed with a blood cancer, whether it be acute lymphoblastic leukaemia or other forms of blood cancer. It is a little-known fact that, although 255 kids are diagnosed with a form of leukaemia in Australia every year, nearly 3,000 adults are also diagnosed with a form of blood cancer. Last Sunday afternoon I attended a shave for a cure function at Kerry Hall in my electorate. Although I did not get Shaved for a Cure, it was a great turnout, with over 100 people showing up to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation. It was organised by Hannah Martin, a young local lady who lost her father to a blood cancer several years ago and her mother, Pearl. Since that time she has taken it upon herself to support the Leukaemia Foundation.

There was a great deal of activity. People shaved their heads and painted their hair. We had an auction. There were jumping castles and activities for kids, and we raised \$3,500 for the Leukaemia Foundation of Queensland. I want to thank Brenton from Goetsch & Son who offered himself as an auctioneer for the evening. It is great to see Goetsch & Son, one of our local auctioneering firms, supporting the community at this time of such extreme drought in the Scenic Rim community. I was at Goetsch & Son's cattle sale a couple of weeks back. Hayes & Co. had a sale last week at Silverdale as well.

There is no doubt that the drought has arrived faster and with more ferocity in this part of the world than a lot of locals have ever seen before. People have told me that their dams have evaporated faster than in living memory. They have not had any significant summer rainfall. There are devastatingly low cattle prices at the beginning of this period, but they are going lower all the time. It is having an impact, as the member for Nanango said, on the small businesses of the area and generally on business confidence across the region.

We are looking to have a drought declaration for the Scenic Rim and Logan in the near future. There is plenty of groundwater after the floods of 2013, and it is hard to believe that just 13½ months ago we were in flood, but irrigators are caught in the vice-like grip of a crippling conundrum where there is no rain and excruciatingly high electricity prices for irrigation. I am working with Minister McArdle and Minister McVeigh to seek a remedy for irrigation prices.

(Time expired)

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.07 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, D'Ath, Davies, 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, Wellington, Woodforth, Young