ISSN 1322-0330

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 1 April 2014

Subject Page

FS SIMPSON
SPEAKER

NJ LAURIE
CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT

LJ OSMOND
CHIEF HANSARD REPORTER

TUESDAY, 1 APRIL 2014

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

ABSENCE OF SPEAKER

The Clerk informed the House that Madam Speaker will be unavoidably absent this sitting week due to her attendance at a leadership study program in the United States. The Deputy Speaker Dr Mark Robinson will take the chair as Acting Speaker. The honourable member from Kallangur has been nominated by Mr Acting Speaker as Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Dr Mark Robinson, Cleveland) read prayers and took the chair.

For the sitting week, the Acting Speaker acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable F. Simpson MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of assent: 28 March 2014

> "A Bill for An Act to amend the Childrens Court Act 1992, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and the Youth Justice Act 1992 for particular purposes, and to make minor or consequential amendments of other legislation as stated in schedule 1 for purposes related to those purposes"
>
> "A Bill for An Act to amend the Chicken Meat Industry Committee Act 1976 for particular purposes"
>
> "A Bill for An Act to 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"

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

28 March 2014

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 28 March 2014, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to bills on 28 March 2014 [4784].

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Intimidation of Members

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.32 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. This is an extremely serious matter; namely, the intimidation of members of the opposition in the performance of their duties as members of the House. Section 37 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 provides that conduct that amounts, or is intended or likely to amount, to an improper interference with the free performance by a member of the member's duty as a member may be treated as contempt. Standing order 266 provides examples of contempt, one of which is intimidating a member acting in the discharge of the member's duty.

Outside the recent Community Cabinet meeting at the Gold Coast, members of the opposition were openly and blatantly filmed by officers of the Queensland Police Service when listening to the concerns of local residents about a proposed quarry development and meeting with teachers. The filming of the shadow health minister and me meeting with these Queenslanders clearly amounts to intimidation.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a very serious matter.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting. Order, members! The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: One effect of such conduct can be to dissuade people from talking publicly with members of parliament, thus interfering with the ability of MPs to freely perform their duties. Mr Acting Speaker, I shall be writing to you requesting that this matter be referred to the Ethics Committee, and I will also be writing to the Police Commissioner.

ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Absence of Speaker

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise the House that Speaker Simpson is currently participating in a US leadership study program at no cost to the taxpayer which will assist her in representing and engaging with disconnected or disadvantaged sectors of the community, both in her role as local member and as Speaker. The US visit program includes meetings with key organisers for the Asia-Pacific and Australian interests in the US State Department. This includes contacts with those responsible for the relationship with Papua New Guinea with whom the Queensland Parliament has a twinning agreement signed last year by Speaker Simpson.

Auditor-General

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General a report titled *Report to parliament No. 15 for 2013-14—Environmental regulation of the resources and waste industries.* I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 15: 2013-14—Environmental regulation of the resources and waste industries [4785].

Information Commissioner, Report

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Information Commissioner a report titled *Privacy in complaint handling systems—A review of how privacy obligations in the Information Privacy Act 2009 Queensland have been incorporated in Queensland government agencies' complaint handling systems*. I table the report for the information of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Office of the Information Commissioner: Report No. 6 of 2013-14: Privacy in complaint handling systems: A review of how privacy obligations in the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) have been incorporated in Queensland government agencies' complaint handling systems [4786].

Sharples, Mr R

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to advise that senior parliamentary attendant Mr Ron Sharples commences preretirement leave on 28 April 2014 and will officially retire from the Parliamentary Service at the end of his leave on 31 December 2014.

Ron commenced employment with the Parliamentary Service on 18 February 1985 and will have completed almost 30 years of service when he retires in December. I am sure that all honourable members will join with me in wishing Ron all the best in his retirement.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

PETITIONS

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

Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, Mining Applications

From 81 petitioners, requesting the House to reverse the decision on the proposed mining ban in the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve and broker an outcome for all Queenslanders [4787].

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—

Flinders Highway

Mr Katter, from 144 petitioners, requesting the House to address the poor and unsatisfactory condition of the Flinders Highway [4788].

Nursery Road Early Childhood Development Program, Funding

Mr Kaye, from 381 petitioners, requesting the House to allocate sufficient funding to the Nursery Road Early Childhood Development Program to provide the same number of administration, teaching and teacher aide hours per child in 2014 as was provided in 2013 [4789].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

21 March 2014—

4737 Response from the Treasurer and Minister for Trade (Mr Nicholls) to an ePetition (2201-13) sponsored by Mrs Miller, from 140 petitioners, requesting the House to request the Federal Government to direct the Australian Tax Office to withdraw this proposed GST ruling 2013/D2 and to amend section 195-1 of the GST Law to include "mobile home estate" in the definition of "commercial residential premises"

4738 Response from the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Dr McVeigh) to a paper petition (2225-14) and an ePetition (2193-13) sponsored by Mr Holswich, from 742 and 1, 845 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to close all waters to commercial fishing activities on the main island of Moreton Island and adjacent tidal flats for a distance of 200 metres from the low water mark

4739 Overseas Travel Report: Report on an overseas visit by the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing to Wellington, New Zealand, 26-28 February 2014

4740 Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 42—Subordinate legislation tabled on 19 November 2013

24 March 2014—

4741 Building Services Authority—Final Report 1 July-30 November 2013

25 March 2014—

4742 Letter, dated 19 March 2014, from the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to the Speaker, regarding a report tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament on 19 March 2014 regarding the treaty between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Defence and Security Cooperation (Perth, 18 January 2013)

4743 Letter, dated 19 March 2014, from the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to the Speaker, enclosing the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, Report No. 137

4744 Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia—Joint Standing Committee on Treaties: Report No. 137: Treaty referred on 15 January 2014—Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (Abu Dhabi, 31 July 2012)

4745 State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 36—Water Supply Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

4746 State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 36—Water Supply Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry

4747 Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 39—Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

4748 Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 39—Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry

4749 Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 39—Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014—documents tabled at the public hearing held on 5 March 2014

4750 Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 38—Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014

26 March 2014—

4751 Proposal under sections 32 and 70E of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a br ief explanation—Gadgarra Forest Reserve, Springbrook National Park, and Hays Inlet Conservation Park 2: Annexures A, B and C

27 March 2014—

4752 Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Determination 4/2014

4753 Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal: Building a new remuneration structure for Members of the Queensland Parliament—Part 2, Determination 3/2014, 27 March 2014

4754 Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal: Building a new remuneration structure for Members of the Queensland Parliament—Part 2, Determination 3/2014, 27 March 2014: Addendum

4755 Response from the Premier (Mr Newman) to an ePetition (2182-13) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 20,167 petitioners, requesting the House to address the issue of daylight saving in Queensland and t o propose a pl an that can be t rialled and then implemented to adequately address the reasonable request of the majority of residents in SEQ to have daylight saving for their region

28 March 2014—

4756 Report, pursuant to section 76R of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, titled Caval Ridge Mine Project declared to be a prescribed project by the Deputy Premier and M inister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, 17 September 2013

31 March 2014—

4757 Queensland Theatre Company—Annual Report 2012-13

4758 Response from the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts (Mr Walker) to an ePetition (2205-13) sponsored by Ms Trad, from 1,084 petitioners, requesting the House to reinstate the funding for the Queensland Youth Orchestra, providing continuity and certainty for the organisation

4759 Letter, dated 26 March 2014, from the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to the Speaker, regarding a report tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament on 26 M arch 2014 regarding treaties tabled on 11 a nd 12 December 2013, 20 January 2014 and referred on 15 January 2014

4760 Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia—Joint Standing Committee on Treaties: Report No. 138: Treaties tabled on 11 and 12 December 2013, 20 January 2014 and referred on 15 January 2014

4761 Townsville Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4762 Brisbane Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4763 Queensland University of Technology—Annual Report 2013

4764 Creative Industries Precinct Pty Ltd t/as QUT Creative Enterprise Australia—Financial Statements—2013

4765 QUTBluebox Pty Ltd—Statutory Report—2013

4766 Board of Trustees Brisbane Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4767 University of the Sunshine Coast—Annual Report 2013

4768 Ipswich Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4769 Board of Trustees of the Rockhampton Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4770 Skills Queensland—Final Annual Report 2013

4771 Queensland College of Teachers—Annual Report 2013

4772 Rockhampton Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4773 Ipswich Girls' Grammar School and Ipswich Junior Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4774 Toowoomba Grammar School—Annual Report 2013

4775 University of Southern Queensland—Annual Report 2013

4776 Griffith University—Annual Report 2013

4777 Central Queensland University—Annual Report 2013

4778 James Cook University—Annual Report 2013—Volume 1

4779 James Cook University—Annual Report 2013—Volume 2

4780 JCU Enterprises Pty Ltd and Controlled Entities—Annual Report 2013

4781 University of Queensland—Annual Report 2013

4782 University of Queensland—Financial Statements 2013—Volume 1

4783 University of Queensland—Financial Statements 2013—Volume 2

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

4790 Transport Legislation and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 26

4791 Transport Legislation and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 26, explanatory notes

Collections Act 1966—

4792 Collections Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 27

4793 Collections Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 27, explanatory notes

Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013—

4794 Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2014, No. 28

4795 Health Practitioner Registration and O ther Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2014, No. 28, explanatory notes

Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, Private Health Facilities Act 1999—

4796 Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 29

4797 Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 29, explanatory notes

Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013—

4798 Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 30

4799 Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 30, explanatory notes

Nature Conservation (Protected Plants) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013—

4800 Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 31

4801 Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 31, explanatory notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

4802 Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 32

4803 Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 32, explanatory notes

4804 Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 32, regulatory impact statement

Land, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013—

4805 Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 33

4806 Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 33, explanatory notes

Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2013—

4807 Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 34

4808 Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 34, explanatory notes

Environmental Protection Act 1994, Fisheries Act 1994, Forestry Act 1959, Marine Parks Act 2004, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Recreation Areas Management Act 2006—

4809 Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 35

4810 Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 35, explanatory notes

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following Report was tabled by the Clerk—

4811 Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013

Amendments made to Bill*

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

Regional Planning Interests Act 2013

Insert—

Regional Planning Interests Act 2014

Clause 46 (Additional advice or comment about assessment application)—

Page 32, line 1, '(a)'—

Omit, insert—

(i)

Page 32, line 2, '(b)'—

Omit, insert—

(ii)

Clause 111 (Insertion of new s 212A)—

Page 64, line 17, 'authority'—

Amendment no. 96 moved in consideration in detail omitted 'authority' and inserted 'development approval' in several places. On page 56, line 5 of the original Bill referred to in the amendment, the word 'authority' appeared twice. The amendment did not specify which 'authority' was to be amended. The amendments made throughout the Bill were to amend the word 'authority' in relation to a 'regional interests authority'. It was clear that the intention of the House was to amend the second occurring 'authority'. Therefore, the first occurring 'authority' in relation to an 'environmental authority' was not amended.

* The page and line number references relate to the Bill, after amendments made in consideration in detail unless stated otherwise.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Parer, Hon. WR, AM, Motion to Take Note

Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.39 am): Mr Acting Speaker, I have been greatly saddened by the recent passing of a wonderful Queenslander, the Hon. Warwick Raymond Parer AM. As many honourable members will know, Warwick was a senator for Queensland in the Commonwealth parliament from 1984 to 2000 and served as Minister for Resources and Energy in the Howard government from 1996 to 1998.

Warwick was born in Papua New Guinea in 1936 and was educated at Nudgee College and the University of Melbourne. He enjoyed a long and successful business career in the resources sector, becoming one of Australia's most highly regarded mining industry executives. In fact, Warwick was a giant in the coal industry here in Queensland. He played a pivotal role in the development of the industry in this state and negotiated many export coal deals that have provided significant employment and wealth for our state.

Mr Acting Speaker, it has been remarked that when Warwick entered the Senate in 1984 he was probably one of the most significant business people ever to join the Australian parliament. It was quite appropriate then that following the election of the Howard government in 1996 John Howard would select Warwick to be Minister for Resources and Energy.

After leaving the Senate in 2000, Warwick continued to serve the community. At the time of his passing he had been serving passionately as chairman of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation and as chairman of the board of Stanwell Corporation. From 2006 to 2008 Warwick had also been president of the Queensland Liberal Party. It was during this time that Warwick worked closely with the National Party to map out the amalgamation which led to the LNP being formed.

Warwick was honoured in 2005 by being made a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the parliament and for his contribution to expanding export opportunities for the mining industry as well as for energy market reform. Warwick passed away on 15 March and a state funeral to celebrate his life was held at Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish in Coorparoo on 21 March 2014. He was indeed a wonderful family man and a true pillar of the community. Queensland will be the poorer for the loss of his guidance and vision. On behalf of the Queensland government, I place on record our thanks for the years of service that Warwick gave to the community of Queensland and indeed Australia. I extend my sympathy and that of this House to Warwick's wife, Kathy, to the entire family—and it is a large and extended family, and we saw that at the celebration service—and to all of his friends. I move—

1. That the House takes note of the statement; and
2. That the House acknowledges agreement by observing a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, Motion to Take Note

Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.41 am): The disappearance and ongoing search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 has captured global attention. From latest reports, it now appears that the plane went down in the southern Indian Ocean, presumably, and tragically, taking the lives of all 239 passengers and crew. At this most difficult of times, I want to extend my sympathy and that of this House to the families and friends of the passengers and crew of flight MH370. In particular, I express my condolences to the families and friends of the two Queensland couples aboard that flight—Rodney and Mary Burrows and Robert and Catherine Lawton. Our thoughts are very much with you at this time. Investigations and exploration for the aircraft are ongoing. The latest satellite images have revealed potential debris from the aircraft in a remote part of the Indian Ocean,

roughly 2,500 kilometres south-west of Perth. I want to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of all nations involved in the search and recovery efforts and in particular those Australians who are taking a leading role in this cooperative international search operation. We can only hope that the results of the search provide further insight into this tragic event. I move—

1. That the House takes note of this statement; and

2. That the House acknowledges agreement by observing one minute's silence as a mark of respect for the passengers and crew of flight MH370.

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.42 am): I join the Premier in offering the heartfelt condolences of the parliamentary Labor Party to the families and victims on board Malaysia Airlines flight MH370. It is now over a week since those families were informed by Malaysia Airlines that it was unlikely that anyone had survived the incident. Of the six Australians on board this tragic flight, four of them—the Lawtons and the Burrows—called Brisbane's west home. It is hard to comprehend the grief being felt by these families, especially given the nature of the tragedy and the fact that at this point their final resting place remains unknown. In a time of unbearable loss, I have no doubt that the local community will rally and be a source of strength to those families. As members of the House would be aware, the focus of the search remains some 2,000 kilometres off the Western Australian coast. The word 'remote' barely does justice to this stretch of ocean and underscores the logistical difficulties being faced by those undertaking the search operations. Both Australian and international officers have worked tirelessly and I commend their efforts to the House.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

Dam Optimisation

Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.44 am): During the devastating 2011 floods, 22,000 homes and nearly 7,500 businesses in Brisbane and Ipswich were inundated. The emotional and economic toll of this tragic event is still impacting many families today. This government is determined to protect the property and livelihoods of Queenslanders and better manage our dams to avoid a repeat of 2011. The Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry recommended a detailed study for optimising the operations of Wivenhoe and Somerset dams and the North Pine Dam to improve flood mitigation. Minister McArdle has led the completion of this complex study and the government has identified a preferred option that can be implemented within 12 months to better safeguard Brisbane from future major rain events. The study assessed 32 ways of balancing water supply security, flood mitigation and safeguarding the dams for very rare but extremely large potential floods. All major historic floods, including 1893, have been modelled as well as about 5,000 other simulated rainfall events to inform future decision making about flood mitigation.

It is important to recognise that our water supply takes only a 37 per cent share of Wivenhoe Dam's total capacity. When this 37 per cent share is full, the dam is often described as being at 100 per cent. The preferred option, called Urban 3, allocates five per cent more dam space to protect houses and buildings from damage during larger floods. This additional dam capacity is achieved by allowing earlier releases of water, as dam operators will not have to keep six rural bridges open during flood events. This strategy is designed to avoid a mass release of water as occurred during the 2011 flood event. It is designed to save businesses and homes from a repeat of the heartbreak suffered in 2011.

To assist the public to understand the draft report, a discussion paper has been developed and information on how to provide feedback and comment on the report will be available on the department's website. The Department of Energy and Water Supply will also undertake public consultation meetings throughout Brisbane, Ipswich and Somerset. Those dates will be announced at a later time. At the completion of the three-month consultation period, the report will be updated and the government will be in the position to make a final decision for the improved operation of Wivenhoe and Somerset dams.

With the release of the Wivenhoe and Somerset Dam optimisation studies and the North Pine Dam optimisation study, the 2011 floods are now one of the most studied flood events in the world, and it is difficult to recall another Australian flood event that has been studied and analysed more. This is about learning from the past and it is about preparing for the future, which this government is totally committed to doing.

Integrated Resort Developments

Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.47 am): The Queensland government's commitment to develop new integrated resort developments across the state enters another exciting phase today. Yesterday, 31 March, was the deadline for expressions of interest from investors that seek to create world-class resorts at the Queen's Wharf site here in Brisbane's CBD and up to two other regional centres across the state. It has been pleasing to see both national and international consortia officially register their expressions of interest and pay their $100,000 non-refundable application fee.

As I have informed this House before, we set this fee because we are determined to attract only serious contenders that share our vision to create world-class quality resorts that benefit all Queenslanders for generations to come. The Queensland government is committed in this process to establishing developments that will be drawcards for both international and domestic visitors and provide employment for thousands of Queenslanders. This process will also be a much needed boost to the state's construction industry and indeed the state's tourism industry.

Today, I can announce that 12 consortia have officially entered expressions of interest to develop these new integrated resorts. Six parties have expressed interest in developing the Queen's Wharf precinct in Brisbane and another six parties have expressed interest in delivering integrated resort developments in various sites across regional Queensland.

In relation to the Queen's Wharf development in Brisbane, the entities that have expressed interest are, firstly, Crown Resorts Pty Ltd and Echo Entertainment Group Pty Ltd, neither of which would come as a surprise. There is then the Far East Consortium and Chow Tai Fook joint venture. There is Lend Lease and there is also SKYCITY Entertainment Group Pty Ltd and Greenland Investment Pty Ltd. They are the six entities that have expressed interest in building an integrated resort development at Queen's Wharf.

The IRD proponents for the proposals in regional Queensland are, firstly, Aquis at the Great Barrier Reef Pty Ltd, which propose a resort at Yorkeys Knob north of Cairns; China-Australia Entrepreneurs Consortium Pty Ltd, which propose a development at Airlie Beach; Fullshare International Australia Pty Ltd, which propose a development 26 kilometres south of Proserpine; GKI Resort Pty Ltd, which propose a development on Great Keppel Island; Eastern Success Group Pty Ltd, which propose a development at Nerang on the Gold Coast; and ASF Consortium Pty Ltd, which propose a development on the Broadwater on the Gold Coast.

From this list and under the close eye of the probity adviser, Len Scanlan, my department will now prepare a final short list which will be invited to move to the final stage of the process. Short listed parties will be asked to provide a fully fledged proposal for evaluation during the second half of 2014.

While this process has a way to run, it is clear that many share the Queensland government's vision to create world-class resort facilities that will provide thousands of jobs for Queenslanders and be an economic boost for regional Queensland.

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.51 am): I wish to update the House on the introduction of individual senior doctors' contracts. This is the linchpin of the government's efforts to implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General's reports into doctors' private practice arrangements. Every member of this parliament has voted to support those recommendations. On page 1 of his second report, the Auditor-General wrote that the existing private practice arrangements—

> ... create inherent conflicts of personal and public interest for an SMO: first, between their public patients and those electing private treatment, because hospitals and SMOs share in and may be motivated by the revenue generated; and, second, between the SMO's public employment and his or her private sector interests.

Negotiations with the representatives of senior and visiting medical officers to produce an agreed form for the contracts began in August last year and ended with a draft contract framework. Last month, we sat down again to address specific key areas of doctors' concerns. The talks ended when the government undertook to issue an addendum that binds the contract to our concessions. These are to be lifetime contracts and now I list the government's agreed concessions.

Legislation this week will ensure that the director-general cannot unilaterally change a doctor's contract and conditions, except to provide a benefit or an increase in the doctor's remuneration. The addendum requires that any variation to the contract that is not provided for in the contract cannot result in a disadvantage to the doctor. A Contract Advisory Committee, with medical officer representatives, will be formed to guide the director-general as perpetual contracts evolve over time to suit emerging health issues.

Medical officers are able to revert to the current MOCA 3 conditions, albeit without private practice arrangements or access to the QIRC, with one month's notice prior to 30 June 2015. Transfer requirements are limited within the HHS, but an expression of interest process is now included. Doctors can access dispute resolution if dissatisfied. To resolve disputes fairly, independent arbitration with binding outcomes is provided through a QIRC deputy president or by consultation through another appropriately qualified person and the outcome of that is binding.

Overtime and re-call can be paid as worked rather than annualised. Shift provisions are now consistent with the current hours of work in MOCA 3. The principle of no financial disadvantage will be a critical component of a review after 12 months.

An expression of interest process will lead to agreement regarding rosters where any part of the shift falls between 6 pm and 7 am and dispute resolution processes are available. Where part-time doctors are required to work extra hours, overtime applies.

Services are required to have a fatigue management policy. The 10-hour fatigue break will be contained in rostering rules and fatigue policies. Working-up provisions now provide that higher duties can be paid in line with operational requirements.

KPIs have to be developed by agreement. The linkage of tier 3 to KPIs is extended from 12 months to two years and doctors may have access to a disputes process.

A doctor's intellectual property made independent of employment cannot be claimed by Queensland Health. Work performed in a doctor's private practice is not subject to the IP clause and current common law principles apply.

Where termination is contemplated, doctors can address concerns prior to a decision. The independent appeals process I detailed earlier applies if a doctor believes that a termination is harsh, unjust or unreasonable.

Requiring a doctor to use professional development leave is restricted to accord with the performance process. Doctors can use leave balances to access professional development leave outside of core hours by agreement.

In reaction to this, I want to outline what the AMA federal president said on 4BC radio yesterday. Dr Steve Hambleton said—

> ... you can't be transferred without a discussion with you, you can't have your roster changed without agreement with you. There is a dispute resolution process, there is a limitation on the ability of the director-general to change your contract clauses. These are new things that have come in in the last couple of weeks, and that's what we're trying to get the message out about now.

The professional medical bodies have taken a more factual, constructive and solutions based approach to the current discussions around doctors' contracts. The actions of the visiting medical officers committee, the AMAQ initially and now the Federal President of the AMA, Dr Steve Hambleton, stands in stark contrast to the adversarial, destructive and dishonourable approach taken by the interstate-led unions to this issue. I ask simply that doctors look at the offer that the government has made and discuss their own individual contracts with their HHS and actually take notice of the wise advice and insight of people such as Dr Steve Hambleton.

Great Start Grant

Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.57 am): The government came to office promising to build a four-pillar economy in Queensland to encourage jobs growth and build prosperity. One of those vital pillars, of course, is the construction industry. To kick-start construction in 2012, the Queensland government introduced the $15,000 Great Start Grant for first home buyers seeking to purchase a new home.

I am pleased to inform the House that more than 5,000 Queensland families have now received a Great Start Grant to help get them into the housing market. As at 25 March, 5,263 grants worth $78.9 million have been approved and paid to Queensland families. A further 493 grants have been approved and will be paid as soon as the trigger point in construction is reached.

The payment of these grants represents hundreds of millions of dollars worth of construction being undertaken in Queensland and, importantly, it represents thousands of jobs. Almost half the grants have been paid in the greater Brisbane area and more than 10 per cent have gone towards homes in the Gold Coast region. There has also been a significant interest from North Queensland, with almost 20 per cent of the Great Start Grants paid to residents living north of Mackay.

The construction industry is a jobs-intensive industry, the biggest employer of the four pillars of our economy and second only to the resources sector in economic output. The effects of the grant are being seen with the continued growth in trend dwelling approvals as more families enter the market.

Developers are reporting that the grant is having a positive effect. As an example, Stockland reports that first home buyers represented almost half of their net deposits in Queensland in the December quarter, signalling a return to confidence among buyers.

The Great Start Grant is yet another way that the Queensland government is ensuring that we remain a great state with great opportunity.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.59 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House has no further confidence in the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to perform the duties of his office.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Ms PALASZCZUK (10.00 am): My question is to the Premier. I note that 152 days have passed since the opposition first raised concerns about individual contracts for specialist doctors. Will the Premier amend the Industrial Relations Act as requested by doctors to help bring an end to this dispute and ensure similar disputes may be avoided with senior nurses, school principals and senior police, prison and emergency services officers?

Mr NEWMAN: The short answer is no, we will not be amending the IR legislation. In relation to the progress of this current matter, I think the Minister for Health very comprehensively demonstrated to the House for its information how the government has been determined to compromise, to listen to the concerns of doctors and to work productively with their representatives to achieve an outcome that is right for the doctors but, most importantly, is right for the health system in this state and, of course, for patients. That is what we are trying to achieve here, because over the years since the infamous 'Pineapple agreement' I am afraid we have seen some things develop within the system in relation to the employment of doctors that need to be addressed. Why do we need to address them? Because the Auditor-General has said that we need to address them. The Auditor-General has looked at only a sample of matters involving doctors employed as senior medical officers within Queensland Health and has said that there is a need for better controls to make sure that taxpayers and patients get what they are paying for. That is what the minister is endeavouring to do. The government is supporting the minister as he does that.

I was interested to hear what the minister said about the many concessions that have been made. To put it in layman's terms, if we go back about a fortnight, the minister had a meeting with Dr Steve Hambleton, the national President of the AMA. Dr Hambleton said, 'Look, we have six things that we need you to address.' The minister went away from that meeting, returned and said, 'Here are my solutions.' Dr Hambleton, as I understand it, said, 'That's fantastic. We've got another two that we want to put up.' The minister went away and came back with solutions. At that point Dr Hambleton acknowledged—and I think it is fair to say he has acknowledged on the public record—that the minister delivered a compromise solution that he, Dr Hambleton, and the AMA were happy with on every single one of those eight issues. It could not be fairer than that.

This government has been prepared to compromise the entire way through to give doctors, patients and taxpayers what they need. But an interstate organisation, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation, ASMOF, has another agenda. It is a left-wing union agenda, not a patient

agenda. It has been an agenda to try to throw the system into turmoil, scare patients and compromise our health system to pursue their political ends. We are not going to allow them to do that. I urge people to look at what the AMA, who is now behind the minister, is saying.

Townsville Hospital, Paediatric Intensive Care Physician

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Minister for Health. How long will it take for the paediatric intensive care physician who resigned at the Townsville Hospital last week because of unfair work contracts to be replaced considering the nationwide shortage of specialists in this field?

Mr SPRINGBORG: The opposition is absolutely delighting in this because they want to see nothing but chaos and dysfunction in the Queensland health system. When they were in government we saw nothing but chaos and dysfunction in the Queensland health system. We saw nothing but fake Tahitian princes paying themselves some $16 million for doing absolutely nothing, doctors and nurses not being paid at all under a $1.25 billion payroll bungle, situations of ambulance bypass where patients were dying in the back of ambulances because the systems were so dysfunctional, rampant ambulance ramping around the state, secret hospital waiting lists, a growing outpatients' waiting list and people waiting for up to 13 years for routine dental services.

Those issues are matters of the past. It was always going to be difficult as we go to a new way of employing our most senior and well-respected medical officers that would create some issues of concern. But I suppose it is probably a little bit of a surprise to all of us, but should not be, the way the chaotic environment and the misery that those opposite are hoping to inflict on the system by creating this issue of crisis, or perceived crisis, with interstate union officials.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. The question was clearly about the paediatric intensive care physician and this minister is failing to answer.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The minister still has time on the clock. I call the Minister for Health.

Mr SPRINGBORG: What we see here is an opposition delighting in this and interstate union bosses with no skin in the game who would not have tendered their resignation. They have no skin in the game and are delighting in this. In the words of Tony Sara, 'Drag this out. It has months to go.' Doctors and patients are the ones who are concerned about that.

If I can turn specifically to the issue of the paediatric intensive care service in Townsville, let us go back before the state election; the Labor Party said we did not need one. They actually fought against it. They said there was no need for a paediatric intensive care service in Townsville. They said that those children in need could come to Brisbane to have their services. We established that service that did not previously exist under the Labor Party. Those opposite fought against it. We delivered it. Those children and their families in North Queensland are able to have that service delivered locally. I simply make this point: if people reasonably and rationally look at what is on offer, including that person who the Leader of the Opposition refers to, and look at what Steve Hambleton said, there is no need for anyone to take action.

Safe Night Out Strategy

Mr BERRY: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please provide an update on the current response to the government's Safe Night Out Strategy and how this strategy will benefit the constituents in my electorate of Ipswich?

Mr NEWMAN: I am delighted to answer the honourable member's question. On 23 March the government released Australia's most comprehensive package to deal with alcohol and drug fuelled violence in our entertainment night spots. We want to restore responsible behaviour and make sure that Queensland night life is the safest of any night life around Australia. But I stress one thing: we are into people being able to have a good night out. Those opposite are the ones who want to shut the young down. Those opposite want to shut down the young of this state and those who come here for a great holiday. They want to shut the whole thing down. We do not believe that that is the way go. It is another Labor backflip, by the way. When those opposite were in government they supported the trading hours as they are; the moment they are in opposition they read a poll or they see what someone is doing interstate and what do they do? That is right, another backflip.

The draft strategy consists of a number of initiatives. Firstly, tougher penalties for bad behaviour. For example, coward punches will be dealt with by a new offence of striking causing death. There is also the establishment of 15 safe night out precincts, one of which will be in the member's electorate.

Local management is the key to this: the implementation of mandatory ID scanners for after midnight trading, rest and recovery services and, of course, high visibility policing, enhanced police banning orders and enhanced liquor licensing administration and enforcement. The point is that we are going to try the hardest of any Australian state to change the culture and the behaviour. Unlike the Labor Party, we are going to punish the people who indulge in antisocial, violent and aggressive behaviour. The Labor Party, which has been carrying on about civil liberties in recent times, wants to impinge on the civil liberties of all young people who are enjoying a great night out. What we should be doing is going after the troublemakers, the people who cause the problems, rather than punishing the many for the sins of the few.

We have been consulting quite extensively on this and the consultation will continue for another three weeks. We urge Queenslanders to have their say, because we want to get this right. We are unlike the Labor Party, which came out and said, 'We're going to have a Newcastle strategy', and then do members know what they did? They visited Newcastle! They said, 'We'll have a Newcastle strategy. It's great what's going into Newcastle and now we are going to visit Newcastle and see how it's going'. Consultation goes till 21 April. This government is listening and consulting. We are going to get this right. We are determined to have the safest entertainment nightspots in the whole nation through a comprehensive and well-considered plan.

Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Last week on ABC Radio, Cairns and Hinterland HHS chair, Bob Norman, said he was 'not at liberty to reveal the board's contingency plan for mass doctor resignations'. He restated this position in the *Cairns Post* today. I table that article.

Tabled paper: Articles from the *Cairns Post,* dated 1 April 2014, titled 'Replacement plan a joke, say medics: We're Not Fools Bob' and 'Medicos' quit deadline pushed back' [4812].

If Mr Norman is not at liberty to tell the people of Far North Queensland his plan, will the minister commit to making public this contingency plan?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Mulgrave for his question. I know the honourable member for Mulgrave will be absolutely delighted by the fact that since the election of the Newman government there has been an increase in budget to his local hospital and health board by some $50 million or eight per cent. I heard absolutely nothing from the honourable member for Mulgrave last year when his mate Wayne Swan, as well as Tanya Plibersek and Julia Gillard, came along and slashed around $6 million off the bottom line of the Cairns district health service. He sat absolutely impotent, mute and oblivious to the situation. If he was not oblivious, certainly he did not move around it.

I commend the fantastic work of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service under the stewardship of Bob Norman, the board and Julie Hartley-Jones. I commend them for the great work that they are doing. They have turned around the circumstances there. Now it is a very sustainable health service. Its latest elective surgery results are quite extraordinary. In discussions with the Newman government, the service has been able to deliver a new PET scanner that will ensure a state-of-the-art service is run out of that hospital redevelopment. That was not promised by the Labor Party opposite. Another thing that was not promised by—

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr PITT: Under relevance, standing order 118(b), I ask the minister to answer the question.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The minister still has time on the clock. I am listening to him addressing the topic.

Mr SPRINGBORG: They do not like to hear the facts of what we have done and what we have been able to achieve. They fought against the PET scanner for Cairns. They actually fought against us providing an extra $15 million to put additional specialists into Cairns as part of the transition towards tier 1, and so on. It should be of no surprise to anyone that, when you are looking at an organisation that makes up 27 per cent of the state's budget in its own right—that is, Queensland Health—there will always be contingencies around a number of issues, whether they be epidemics or pandemics, whether they be industrial disputation or whether it be a major potential natural disaster, such as we saw with the evacuation of that entire hospital at the time of Cyclone Yasi.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Again the honourable member for Mulgrave is reflecting on and basking in the delight of potential chaos. He is joining with the motivation of the unions that have a very vested interest in making sure that there is a climate of crisis, because if they actually build those sorts of things they have a reason for being. Our assurance to the patients of Queensland is that we will always make sure that they will be looked after in the circumstances that the unions—

(Time expired)

1 William Street and Queen's Wharf

Mr TROUT: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier outline the progress that is being made at 1 William Street and the Queen's Wharf precinct, and compare that to when the former Labor government was in power?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Barron River for the question, because what is happening at 1 William Street is symbolic of what is happening right across Queensland, including regional Queensland, as we start to get Queensland back on track after nearly two decades of Labor inertia. What is happening at 1 William Street would never have happened under a Labor government. We took a dusty carpark site that had stood vacant for the best part of 20 years and now it is a very busy building site that is providing many jobs for many people.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SEENEY: They do not like it. The Labor Party members in this House sit opposite us green with envy because they could never have done this sort of development. They could never have provided those jobs for those people. We have always said that 1 William Street is the first stage of a major development in the Brisbane CBD. It is the sort of development that for the next decade will provide jobs for building workers, and another example is the Queen's Wharf development that I spoke about this morning. It is very gratifying to see a site that for 20 years under Labor stood abandoned and vacant and now, after two years of an LNP government coming to power, is a dynamic building site that is already showing promise of the sort of building that it is going to be.

That is happening right across regional Queensland. I say to the member for Barron River that what is happening at 1 William Street is happening throughout Brisbane and it is also happening in Cairns and Townsville. It is happening across Queensland as we repeal the restrictive planning laws that Labor put in place and as we review the processes for approval of such projects to ensure that businesses can invest, that we can have the economic growth to provide the jobs that the Labor Party always talks about but never provides, and that we can have the opportunities for private investment capital to join with government initiatives to provide the outcomes that we want for the people of Queensland. 1 William Street is a great example of the private sector joining with government to provide the sort of infrastructure that Queenslanders will need into the future.

I look forward to the next 12 months, because I am confident that in 12 months time what we are seeing at William Street will also be happening in relation to the integrated resort developments that I know the people who live in Cairns and North Queensland badly want to see in their areas. That is the sort of thing that our government has done and that their government could never do.

(Time expired)

Regional Public Hospitals, Staffing

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Minister for Health. How many positions for senior staff specialists and senior medical officers in regional public hospitals are currently vacant and how many are currently advertised?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I think the honourable member for Bundamba is probably due for long service leave. After not saying anything for 12 months, finally she has got herself—

An honourable member interjected.

A government member: Preselection time.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Maybe it is. If she wants to ask detailed questions, she knows what to do. She can put it on notice. We do know that when we started there were around 7,700 full-time equivalent medical officers in Queensland. The most recent figure is 8,300, which is a significant increase.

Mr Newman: It's gone up.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, it has gone on up. I know they do not like that.

Mr Newman: There are more doctors.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That is exactly right. There are more doctors. It actually stands in stark contrast to the perception of crisis that they want to continue to create out there. We now have a more highly functioning health system in Queensland than we did at the time the Labor Party was in office.

Mr Newman: It functions.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It actually functions which is fundamentally an improvement. It now actually functions at amongst the highest level in the country. We have the shortest elective surgery waiting list and the most improved hospitals when it comes to emergency department performance. We are certainly streets ahead of the other states when it comes to performance and rollout in reducing our state's dental long waits.

What I would like to do is pose a question to the honourable member for Bundamba as well.

Mrs Miller: You can't answer the one I asked you.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I have given her an invitation. If she wants a fulsome response to that she knows what to do. I think that maybe it is not the member for Brisbane south who is actually lurching up on the—

Ms Trad: South Brisbane.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Sorry, South Brisbane. I think that maybe it is not the member for South Brisbane who is actually lurching up on the member for Inala given that the member for Bundamba has been appointed the spokeswoman for virtually everything in the opposition. Basically, if they want some cannon fodder they throw her out there. Who is likely to go out and make all sorts of interesting comments on a range of things? They push the member for Bundamba out. Maybe it is going to be a two- or three-way race to the top in that regard.

I simply ask the member for Bundamba: is Mr Luke Forsyth who was actually mentioned in her maiden speech as one of the people who was most supportive of her campaign the same Luke Forysth who has actually been providing advice to ASMOF as their solicitor?

Mrs Miller: Yes, he is.

Mr SPRINGBORG: He is; as their solicitor and also laundered through the Queensland Nurses Union. So in sitting in on those discussions that I had with the doctors the other day no conflict of interest was actually enunciated by Mr Forsyth. Is it any wonder that they turned down my invitation to be involved in actually putting together the terms for the addendum!

(Time expired)

Queensland Economy

Mr COX: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer update the House on the community feedback he has received through his ongoing listening tour and the choices Queenslander's face to unlock this state's economic potential in the future? Are there any alternative views?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the honourable member for the question. The member is acutely aware of the choices Queenslanders face as we deal with the $80 billion worth of Labor debt—that $80 billion in debt we were bequeathed by those opposite and their predecessors. We can compare the member's interest in solving this problem with that of those opposite. Another day goes by and not another question is asked about this. It is now 154 days since I was last asked a question by the opposition in this place.

I notice the Leader of the Opposition is keeping a tally on days herself when she asked the health minister a question. I wonder whether she is actually keeping a tally on her own shadow Treasury spokesman who has not asked a question about the economy in 154 days. I wonder if anyone is keeping a tally on the questions being asked over there.

In that period of time just under $1.7 billion in interest has been paid out by the people of Queensland because of the failures of the Labor government. In the 10 days since we last met here, another $108 million has been added to the interest bill. That is part of the $4 billion a year in interest that goes out the door as a result of the $80 billion worth of Labor debt.

As the member pointed out, I am currently travelling the state and talking to community leaders and others about the choices we face as we look to pay down that $80 billion worth of Labor debt. Last week I was in Townsville, Gladstone and Bundaberg. I met community representatives at those forums. Those community representatives, unlike those opposite, do understand the need to reduce that $80 billion worth of Labor debt. They also understand that the government has limited options in doing this: massively increasing fees, taxes and charges; reducing services; or the possible sale or lease of some mature government businesses. It is fair to say that there was not a great deal of support for massively increasing fees, taxes and charges, as has been suggested by Mr John Battams, who believes of course that only millionaires and billionaires pay property taxes and who last year wanted to increase payroll tax—another job-destroying tax.

Other representatives understood that, in a growing state like Queensland, simply a holding pace or a reduction in services was not feasible. Community leaders were also given the chance to tell us about the infrastructure needs of their region that need to be faced. Unlike those opposite, community leaders across the state understand the problem and want to be part of the solution for all Queenslanders.

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Mr MULHERIN: My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the minister, his staff or his departmental representatives met with executives from medical labour hire company Vanguard Health to discuss business opportunities arising from the introduction of individual work contracts for senior medical specialists in public hospitals?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Mackay for his question. Again, I would like to remind the honourable member for Mackay about the fantastic work being done by the local hospital and health board in his area under the leadership of Col Meng and Kerry McGovern. They have seen some $35 million extra since the Newman government was elected. Some 13½ per cent in additional funding has actually gone into that area. We have seen some quite extraordinary improvements in that particular hospital and health service. I think that goes to the heart of the transformation that we are actually seeing with regard to the way that hospital and health services are operating in Queensland.

The short answer for me is no, not that I can remember. I am not aware if any of my staff has. I would not be surprised if within the broad remit of an entire department of some 80,000-odd staff if there had not been those particular discussions. As I understand it, the hospital and health board in Central Queensland only recently met with and discussed issues around how they may be able to ensure continuity of service at the Yeppoon Hospital.

No-one should actually be surprised about that because there is a precedent for this. We could look at what happened with regard to Caboolture ED which went kaput under the nose of the member for Bundamba when she was the loyal assistant to Gordon Nuttall and provided him with a lot of advice on ethics. She actually came in here to clear him of a criminal charge only a year or so after that. In a case where they were unable to actually run a functioning emergency department they brought in an external contractor to do that. So indeed there is a precedent if there were to be involvement and were to be engagement. No-one needs to be concerned about that.

Mr Newman: Is this an own goal question?

Mr SPRINGBORG: People can actually judge that. Maybe it is an own goal. It is not unusual to actually outsource certain things. In the last year of the Labor government about $900 million worth of health services, including front-line health services, were outsourced. That trend, which had been increasing dramatically under the Labor Party—I hate to say it, Treasurer and Premier—did actually dip a little. We actually took the foot off a little there. But we have always said we are committed to that. It is around $1 billion. We do contract out with the likes of the Mater Health Services, St Vincent's, Blue Care, the Royal Flying Doctor Service—they are scary of course, they are very scary; they have been scaring us with regard to outsourcing for some 80 years—and CareFlight, another scary organisation. Many of these organisations provide great services to Queensland's public patients, free.

(Time expired)

Children in Care

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I call the member for Mount Coot-tha and welcome her back to the House.

Mrs RICE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister please update the House on work being undertaken by this government to improve the lives of children in care?

Ms DAVIS: Can I add my welcome to the member for Mount Coot-tha and offer my congratulations on the birth of your precious little one, Imogen.

On coming into office in 2012 this government immediately set up the commission of inquiry to review the child protection system here in Queensland. Commissioner Carmody confirmed what we had already suspected, and our government is now committed to building a new child and family support system over the next 10 years. We are developing a plan that puts greater focus on supporting at-risk families early to provide a safe and secure home for children. Our plan is about engaging services to support families rather than have them on a child safety officer's case load. Our plan is to strengthen early intervention services to improve the tertiary child protection system and to provide better outcomes for children already in statutory care—in other words, a well thought out and sustainable plan. In fact, in his report, Commissioner Carmody said—

I have no doubt at all that if the Forde and CMC recommendations about the importance of early intervention had been heeded and the provisions of the Child Protection Act 1999 faithfully adhered to, the child protection resources of the department would have been able to meet both the family support and child safety service demands more effectively and more efficiently than they currently do.

What did those opposite do with the Forde and CMC recommendations when they were in government? They attempted to implement them but they consistently fell short. In fact, after the CMC inquiry, the then department of communities was tasked with leading reforms around extending early intervention for families. I expect that the Leader of the Opposition would well know this because I am advised that the Leader of the Opposition was the senior policy adviser for the then minister for communities.

The former Labor government failed to implement the recommendations of their inquiries that were intended and specifically focused around early intervention. So the former Labor government sat back and watched record numbers of reports of children needing to come into care, record numbers of reports of harm flooding the system and record numbers of funding going into a system that was overburdened and unsustainable. By contrast, this government has a plan to improve the lives of children in care, and we will look forward to implementing recommendations of Commissioner Carmody.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. Some specialist doctors working in our public health system have told me that they will not sign the proposed contracts, and I ask: will the government remove the end of April deadline to sign or resign and allow a further reasonable time for negotiations between the parties to continue?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for Nicklin for his question. The direct answer is no, we will not be changing that deadline. But I do remind honourable members—and maybe the member has not heard this—that the Minister for Health actually has made another concession in this area in relation to notice periods to take the pressure off the people as well. It is just again a sign of a minister that has been working over time to try to put reasonable compromises on the table to meet the concerns of doctors and surgeons, those specialists.

I can only reiterate that we are determined to find a solution, and we have been working productively over the last two weeks with the AMA's Dr Steve Hambleton. He has said publicly as recently as on radio 4BC yesterday that the minister has been working in such a productive way with him. I think it is fair to say that, if Dr Hambleton were talking to doctors across the state, he would demonstrate or communicate to them that the minister has been true to his word—that he has put compromises on the table, that he has wanted to solve the dispute, that he is someone who wants a better health system, that he is someone who wants to do better for our patients and also taxpayers. I think Dr Hambleton has very clearly said that now.

The trouble the minister is facing, of course, is that we have a very, very concerted campaign from a union, the Together union, but also from another union, ASMOF, who clearly, as we have seen from the emails that have been revealed, do not want to find a solution. ASMOF have made many inflammatory comments. They have made disparaging comments about a member in this place who is highly respected and is a health professional. I do not know whether that has been noticed by people. They have made some quite disparaging comments about him. We have just heard the admission of the member for Bundamba that the gentleman who was referred to before has been working with ASMOF as well. How can you have negotiations in good faith when the individual concerned did not disclose what he has been doing behind the scenes?

There are two sides to an argument. In any argument there are two sides. In this case we have the government's position but we have a number of different positions now on the medical side of the argument. On the doctors' side we have the AMA, who faithfully want a solution, and we have ASMOF and the Together union and the Australian Labor Party with their friends and advisers who do not want a solution, who just want to have demonstrations and protests like what we will probably see this afternoon. They do not want a solution, whereas we want a better deal for patients and taxpayers and doctors.

Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Pathology Services

Mr KAYE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the secret 2008 memorandum of understanding entered into by the Labor Party with the support of the unions to outsource pathology services at the new Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, and I ask: can the minister provide any updates on this policy?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Greenslopes for his question. I just want to confirm to the House in relation to the question I had previously by an opposition member that I have had no meetings—I have met with Vanguard, but I have had no meetings in relation to anything to do with contingency plans in the time that I have been minister.

I think it is very, very interesting if we look at this because we do know that for some time there have been discussions with the Queensland Children's Health Services—otherwise known as the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital as we move towards it—about which services are going to be outsourced and which services are going to be provided in-house. I refer to a memorandum of understanding between the previous Labor government and Mater Health Services in December 2008, supported by the likes of the Together union, where they say—

> Queensland Health agrees that subject to the proposal demonstrating value for money in the provision of ... pathology services], Queensland Health will enter into a commercial agreement with Mater ...

They also had a similar arrangement with regard to the outsourcing of non-TGA licensed pharmaceuticals and also with regard to the planning of other services including kitchen services. The kitchen services were going to be outsourced to a private provider.

What I can say is that categorically the board of Queensland Children's Health Services, which are responsible for running Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, have ruled out absolutely the outsourcing of pathology services at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, and they will be making a statement around that later on today. So Labor's secret outsourcing deal has been ruled out by the Queensland Children's Health Services.

Ms TRAD: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Ms TRAD: I ask that the minister table the document he is referring to?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am more than happy to, Mr Acting Speaker, once I am finished with it. But it will put me at a distinct disadvantage if I table it now because I might have some things that I need to refer to. I have some scribbles down here about the secret Labor union deal. If you want to publish that, you can do that as well. The Queensland Children's Health Services will certainly be making a statement later on today about how they intend to follow through with the rest of this with regard to the outsourcing of non-clinical services, soft and hard facilities maintenance, which will ensure that there will be a realisation of some $4 million that can be invested back into front-line health services for children around Queensland.

There is a huge difference between this side and that side. We actually say what we are going to do. They will do a secret deal behind closed doors with Mater and also with the Together union, and the Together union, which protests now, gave them money for their 2009 campaign.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, referring to Memorandum of Understanding with the Mater Hospital [4813].

(Time expired)

Mount Isa Electorate, Road Infrastructure

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Many of the western shires in the electorate have been hit by a rural crisis in suffering cutbacks in capital roadworks and roads—a major source of revenue. To address this, will the minister consider projects such as an inland highway through Hughenden to stimulate the economy in these rural towns?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Mount Isa for the question.

Mr Newman: Choices.

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the Premier, because this is exactly what the Premier and the Treasurer have been talking about. This is about choices. The Treasurer has been travelling through Queensland talking about the challenges we face—$80 billion of Labor debt and $450,000 an hour to pay the interest on Labor's debt. There are choices we face. They are not easy choices but they are choices we have to make. The reality is we can have more taxes and fewer services or we can look at assets in terms of recycling assets and paying down that debt but also delivering for communities across Queensland the projects they are calling out for.

I hear what the member for Mount Isa is talking about there. Communities do want these projects, but the problem we face is that we are stuck with this $80 billion of Labor debt—the debt borne by Labor which his party continuously backs in this parliament. The reality is that that $80 billion of debt is not going to disappear. We are stuck with it. We have done all we can. We are bringing the budget back into surplus. As we know, Labor's own budget papers forecast $85 billion worth of debt. We have done the work that we can but we have to make choices. I applaud the work that the Treasurer has done in talking to communities and outlining the choices we have. Communities do want roads and public transport infrastructure. They want football stadiums. They want those important pieces of infrastructure for their communities, but we have to be able to pay for them, and that is what we have been talking about to the community.

In terms of roads, I point out to the member for Mount Isa that under QTRIP we are spending $2 billion more at the moment than what Labor was planning to—$10 billion compared to $8 billion in the two years of the QTRIP. We are doing more but we want to be able to do more, and that is why we are going through the choices campaign. That is what we are aiming for.

Mr Newman: What is his position?

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the Premier. We do not hear the member for Mount Isa's position. He wants more to be built but he wants fewer taxes and more services. He never has any solution to pay for it. It is the voodoo economics of the Katter party: we want more, we promise more but we have no solution at all as to how to pay for it. That is the reality. They are so close to Labor: let's wrack up more debt. Instead, we are having a conversation, as the Treasurer has been doing, and the choice is with Queenslanders.

Building Industry

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Can the minister inform the House how he is progressing with the state government's 10-point action plan to transform Queensland's building and construction industry regulator, which is already helping to drive confidence and growth in our great state?

Mr MANDER: I thank the honourable member for Moggill for his question. The government has identified the building and construction industry as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. It is therefore very important that we have a regulator that both consumers and building contractors have confidence in. I want to congratulate the member for Moggill on his role as the former minister for initiating a parliamentary inquiry into the former Building Services Authority. We were continually getting feedback from the community that that confidence was lessening. That parliamentary inquiry undertook extensive consultation with stakeholders and came up with 41 recommendations.

I put together an expert panel of people to look at those 41 recommendations to work out what the government's response should be. From that we came up with a 10-point action plan that we believe will restore confidence and make sure there is an appropriate balance between the interests of consumers and building contractors. The first thing we did was replace the Building Services Authority with a new organisation—the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. It is a new organisation with a new culture and new leadership. For the first time we have put in a corporate governance board—a board that has the appropriate qualifications and that has the authority to develop strategies for the future and make decisions rather than being referred to others. This board now has that authority. The first thing the board has done is implement a new commissioner—a man named Mr Steve Griffin. He is a person who is appropriately qualified and who already in his first couple of months on the job is giving me great confidence that the board has picked the right person.

One of the aims of these reforms is to minimise the number of disputes and address them far quicker than we have in the past. We have introduced an internal review panel so that decisions can now be reviewed if people are unhappy with them. We have introduced a rapid dispute adjudication service so we can get to those disputes far quicker than we have in the past to stop them from going to QCAT. That will take a lot of angst out of the system. We will improve consumer education. People who are involved in the most important decision in their lives need to make sure they are notified and educated on what they are getting themselves into. We are bringing in professional development for builders so they are up to date with the latest practices. We are looking at the role of private certifiers to hold them accountable as well. I am very confident that the reforms we are bringing in will restore confidence back to the building regulator.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Mr JUDGE: My question is to the Premier. The health minister has stated today that he trusts AMA president Steve Hambleton, and I ask: why, then, is the government taking the AMA to the Federal Court regarding their role in informing their members about proposed doctor contracts?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Yeerongpilly for his question. Firstly, I am not quite sure that is what the minister said in this place. I could be mistaken. I did not hear him say what was just purported or presented to the House as a quote. I do not think he said that. I do not think that is what was said. I think the minister has been demonstrating that in the last couple of weeks if there is a person who has been trying to be reasonable about these matters and work productively with the government it has been Dr Hambleton. In relation to that legal action, it was important to get some ground rules into this debate. We cannot allow material that is clearly wrong and misleading to continue to be out there. That is why that action was taken—I stress quite reluctantly—but it is important that falsehoods should not stand. We know the Labor Party and their fellow travellers like ASMOF and the Together union are very good at putting out misleading and downright false information.

Mr Judge: Are you saying that about Dr Hambleton?

Mr NEWMAN: I am answering the question, Mr Acting Speaker, and I believe I am answering the question to the best of my ability—that is, we will not allow people to tell doctors and surgeons completely erroneous and false information. Again, if somebody has been working productively to solve the matter I believe it is Dr Hambleton and the AMA. If there are people who are working to try to create mayhem, it is the Australian Labor Party. We have now demonstrated this morning from their own admission a direct contact between the Australian Labor Party and their friends and advisers ASMOF and the Together union. It all plugs together. I say to Queenslanders—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections. The Premier has the call.

Mr NEWMAN: Who were the people who presided over a health system in crisis when they were in government? That is right, the Australian Labor Party. Who were the people who outsourced service providers into Caboolture? That was the Australian Labor Party and the parliamentary secretary Jo-Ann Miller at the time. We have turned the health system around in the last two years. It is not the dysfunctional mess that Anna Bligh said it was when she was the Premier. But those opposite would like to continue the dysfunction—

Mr JUDGE: Mr Acting Speaker—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: If the Premier could take his seat. Stop the clock. You have a point of order?

Mr JUDGE: I rise to a point of order. Relevance—why is the government taking the AMA to court?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The Premier has the call.

Mr NEWMAN: Over the last two years we have turned the system around. The minister has demonstrated that. The minister has made it very clear that he is working with the AMA to sort these problems out, and Dr Hambleton has said that that is, indeed, the case.

Cultural Diversity

Mr LATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier. Can the minister outline how Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds are being included in the provision of government services and programs as part of setting the environment for a more prosperous and tolerant society in which all Queenslanders can participate fully?

Mr ELMES: I thank the member for Waterford. Not only do I recognise his passion in this area, but there is a number of government members in and around the city of Logan who are absolutely devoted to improving the lot of refugees and newly arrived migrants.

Job creation and improving economic participation for Indigenous Queenslanders and people from culturally diverse backgrounds is a priority for my portfolio. Queensland is the stronger economically for the contribution made by migrants and refugees over the past century and a half. In my experience they always have a strong desire to succeed, having come to a land of opportunity from deprivation and often persecution. I have seen firsthand at places like Moorooka where migrants and refugees have started small businesses that all they have needed was some support at the beginning, and many will be able to get on with a new program launched earlier this year. The Economic Participation Grants Program will provide a total of $250,000 for projects to help migrants and refugees find employment or become involved in business ventures. These grants are part of the government strategy to create pathways to employment and business ownership for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Up to $40,000 will be available for projects where a community group partners with a local council, and up to $20,000 will be available for a community group undertaking a project on its own.

The program is structured to encourage councils to work with local multicultural groups to develop programs which address specific local needs and opportunities. A good example—and I mentioned this during the last sitting week—is the assistance in action which occurred recently when I signed an MOU with Stanbroke Pastoral Company to provide employment for up to 50 refugees, and that will grow to 500 over time. I expect this MOU to be a prototype for other industries and locations across the state to support the economic pillars of tourism, agriculture, resources and construction.

This is an example of how the government is delivering on its new cultural diversity policy with private sector partnerships generating job opportunities and providing an economic boost. Employment and economic participation are also the focus of this government's approach to reversing years of historic disadvantage in the state's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. There has been no lack of money committed over the years to Indigenous affairs from all levels of government. What was missing was determination to see the funding return a dividend of a more cohesive community where people had jobs and economic opportunity. Employment, sustainable enterprise and land tenure reform to provide improved solutions for home ownership are high on my list—

(Time expired)

Yeppoon Hospital

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the health minister. Can the minister confirm that all six senior medical staff at Yeppoon Hospital have had their positions outsourced to Vanguard Health?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am very happy to take that question on notice and come back to the honourable member. I would also like to say that I know the honourable member would be quite excited about the fantastic work that Charles Ware and the team are doing in the Central Queensland

Hospital and Health Service. It has received some $31 million additional since the election of the Newman government and about seven per cent more money now goes into that area. It is unfortunate that the honourable member felt so constrained and curtailed when his mates his fellow travellers in the Labor Party, Wayne Swan, Julia Gillard and Tanya Plibersek, ripped $4.8 million out of that service a couple of years ago and then the health service had to adapt. Notwithstanding that, we are talking about an extremely high-performing hospital and health service. Within the higher urgency categories of surgery, it is one that now has virtually no long waits. It is performing at the highest level right across that particular region, and extraordinary credit goes to them for what they are doing with regards to that.

The other thing which needs to be considered is that there has been an extraordinary turnaround with that hospital and health service from when the Labor Party was in power—the last full 12 months of their iteration in government in Queensland—and what we have seen in our first full year. There has been a $50 million turnaround in financial sustainability in that hospital and health service. It is providing additional services, more services and on t ime as a consequence of that. I understand that, prior to us coming to government, that hospital and health service had a legacy debt of some $30 million. During the first full year of operation of that board they were able to accrue $19 million in savings as a consequence of what they did and did exceptionally well. They have invested that not only in additional services, including significantly expanding the intensive care unit at the Rockhampton Base Hospital, but also in other areas of service in the Central Queensland area.

There is probably a little bit of embarrassment—maybe not necessarily for this honourable member, but his predecessor—about how you can undertake a br and-new hospital redevelopment and leave a helipad off the top of it when there was a helipad previous to the redevelopment.

Mr PITT: I rise to a p oint of order. I wish to confirm that the minister is, indeed, taking this question on notice under 113(3). I am just asking that to be confirmed.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The minister has commented—he is answering the question.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Be patient. It is coming your way. Be patient. You will have it; there is no doubt about that. The real question here is how can you be so appalling at planning—unless you are in the Labor Party—that you undertake a redevelopment for a hospital costing multiple hundreds of millions of dollars and leave a helipad off the top? I would like to commend the hospital and health board—

(Time expired)

Great Barrier Reef, Reef Facts

Mrs MENKENS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Could the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection please update the House on the success of the Reef Facts campaign?

Mr POWELL: I thank the honourable member for her question. I think more so than many members in this House—and certainly more so than many Queenslanders—the member for Burdekin appreciates the importance of protecting the Great Barrier Reef not just because it is the natural iconic wonder that it is, but also because it provides so many jobs and so much investment in her local area, whether it be Bowen, Townsville or the neighbouring electorate of Whitsundays around the tourism industry and around the commercial and recreational fishing industries as well. The member for Burdekin also appreciates that, alongside that precious environment, responsible economic growth can proceed—responsible economic growth that protects the environment, whether it be the Abbot Point development or the horticultural and cane industries in the electorate of Burdekin that are fed by the mighty Burdekin and Don rivers in the member's electorate. The member appreciates that we have to get the balance right.

Those on t his side of the House know that the Newman government is putting the time and effort into what is needed to protect this precious reef—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr POWELL:—not for one hour on a Saturday evening, but for every hour of every day of every week of every month of every year. The Newman government is working with scientists and with industry, not against them, to make real and measurable differences for the reef, and these are the facts—the Reef Facts. As promised at the last election, the Newman government is being upfront and transparent with Queenslanders.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The member for South Brisbane will cease interjecting.

Mr POWELL: Contrary to those opposite, when we are presented with a challenge that is perhaps difficult we do not put it in the bottom drawer; we address it and we release it to the public because we believe Queenslanders deserve the truth and they deserve the facts. The member asked about the success of the Reef Facts campaign. It has been over a month since I launched the Reef Facts website, www.reeffacts.qld.gov.au, and I am pleased to inform the House that in only one month Reef Facts has reached more than 75,000 people across Australia, Queensland and throughout the world. Those people are now seeing how the Newman government has had to combat the mistruths about the Great Barrier Reef for the last two years.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr POWELL: Again I hear the member for South Brisbane, who conveniently was not around when their government proposed 38 million cubic metres of dredging at Abbot Point, nine coal terminals, 12 multiberth facilities—all of which are gone under this government. Where were the Greens that so supported their campaign? They were absolutely and utterly silent as well! Queenslanders deserve the truth, and they are getting that through the Reef Facts website—

(Time expired)

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Visitors to Public Gallery

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before we move on, I want to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of a group from the Kawana electorate: the Kawana Island Retirement Village. Welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.01 am): Today we again saw the health minister running for cover. He is not prepared to answer detailed questions from the opposition about the doctors crisis engulfing the state. In fact, the hypocrisy of the government was that they actually dared to say that it was the opposition that was creating this chaos, when nothing is further from the truth. This is a crisis of the health minister's own making that has been ongoing for over 150 days. The government could have solved this problem at any time. The health minister's lack of leadership and failure to take responsibility for what is happening in the health system beggars belief.

One clear question that I put to the health minister today was how long it would take for the paediatric intensive care physician to be replaced in Townsville, and we heard the government say that the former Labor government did not support this. I have very clear evidence that the Bligh government was going to deliver the paediatric intensive care unit in Townsville, and I table this statement because it shows that this health minister may have misled the House.

Tabled paper: Media release, undated, titled 'Bligh Government to deliver PICU for Townsville' [4814].

This is a very serious allegation, and once again they are not taking it seriously at all.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Mundingburra will not listen, but I am glad that he is here because a poll was commissioned in his electorate about this health crisis, so let us see what the poll had to say.

Ms Trad: What did it say?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The poll asked the question—

Thinking about the Queensland public health system, do you believe that it has gotten better over the last two years, or gotten worse over the last two years, or stayed about the same?

In the seat of Mundingburra the response was: better, 15.3 per cent; worse, 55.6 per cent. But let us go further. Question 4 said—

The Queensland State government is trying to force doctors in our hospitals on to individual work contracts, saying it is more efficient. The doctors say these contracts would be dangerous and that if they're introduced they will be forced to leave our public hospitals.

Do you support the government forcing doctors on to individual contracts?

Support for the government in the seat of Mundingburra, 15 per cent; opposed, 68.4 per cent. These polls are also reflected in the seat of Ashgrove, where 62.1 per cent did not support the government forcing doctors on to individual contracts. The member for Cairns is over there, so let us see what they are saying in Cairns. In Cairns 15.3 per cent supported the government forcing doctors on to individual contracts while 74.6 per cent were opposed. These polls are pretty telling about whether or not Queenslanders support this government's action on forcing doctors on to individual contracts. The member for Ipswich West is sitting here in the chamber. In his electorate 65.9 per cent opposed this government's move to force doctors on to individual contracts and only 15 per cent supported it. These polls reflect what Queenslanders are thinking, and this government is refusing to listen to them. But we will move on.

Today the member for Mulgrave asked very clearly about the board's contingency plans for mass doctor resignations and whether or not the minister would reveal these contingency plans because the chair has refused. What did the minister say? He said nothing. What are the contingency plans? This is clearly a crisis in our public health system which is of the government's own making. They are refusing to listen to Queenslanders, and we only have to go back to the Redcliffe by-election where the Premier said that he will listen to Queenslanders. Do we see any evidence of this government and this Premier listening to Queenslanders? Absolutely not!

I would have thought that over the last week the members here—including the members for Mundingburra, Cairns and Ipswich West—would have been out there speaking to their constituents. People have been phoning and writing to my office about this health issue, and they want to know what the government is doing to fix this mess. Another question that was clearly put to the Premier today about resolving the crisis was, 'Will you amend the Industrial Relations Act?' The Premier categorically said 'No.' Interest groups and the doctors want that act to be amended, and this government is obviously failing to listen. They do not like to hear it, but if they will not listen in this place and they will not listen to their constituents, then maybe they will listen at the next election because maybe then they will hear the message loud and clear, 'You have taken Queensland backwards!' We only have to look at the track record of this government over the last two years. Before the election, the Premier said that the Public Service had nothing to fear.

I refer to an article that has just appeared on the *Courier-Mail* website that the Public Service Commission workforce profile shows that the public sector has shrunk by 15,414 people since the LNP won power in Queensland, and that is a disgrace.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is a disgrace. Let me further add that the article states—

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Those opposite do not want to hear it, but people out there are not happy. It states—

Although the cuts have slowed, another 761 people were axed in the December quarter—

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Acting Speaker, I am sorry, but I do not want to shout.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would actually like to deliver my MPI in peace.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has the call. Members will cease interjecting.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They can laugh now, because they will not be laughing after the next election. The article states—

Although the cuts have slowed, another 761 people were axed in the December quarter—or just over nine a day.

Nine people a day are losing their jobs under this government. It is absolutely disgraceful and those opposite should hang their heads in shame.

Before closing, I want to talk about this government's track record. Let us talk about it and let us be open and let us be frank about it. It sacked workers. It is at war with the doctors. It is at war with the judiciary. It is at war with unions. It is at war with firefighters. It is at war with ambulance officers. When will this government grow up and realise that when you are elected to be a government of the day you are to govern in the best interests of this state and you are to govern in the best interests of all of the people right across Queensland? You are becoming a national embarrassment. This LNP government is a national embarrassment. You are becoming a laughing-stock right throughout Australia. You are picking fights left, right and centre. You are picking fights with yourselves. When is it going to end? The only way it can end is to get rid of this Premier. The only way it can end is to get rid of this Premier, get some decency back in government and let us get Queensland back to its rightful place where people are valued, where there is dignity and where people's jobs are valued as well.

Putney, Most Reverend Michael

Hon. DF CRISAFULLI (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (11.11 am): It is not often I rise in this place and wish I had no need to. Today is such an occasion, as I stand to inform the House of the passing of the Most Reverend Michael Putney, Bishop of Townsville, and one of North Queensland's greatest leaders. He was also the much loved uncle of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, John McVeigh, and we extend our sympathy to his wife, Anita, and family at this time. My city's love for Bishop Putney is shown by the need to stream his funeral and vigil live on YouTube for those who are unable to attend—a first for the Catholic Church. Often in death people are lionised as superhuman, but there is no need to embellish Michael Putney. His life and how he lived it is testament enough. Few people seek so little for themselves and deliver so much for others.

Father Michael Putney was ordained as an auxiliary bishop of Brisbane in 1995 before he became the fifth Bishop of Townville in January 2001. Very soon after his arrival, we knew we not only had among us a true man of God but a leader without peer. He had a close affinity with the north and all of its people—whatever their race or religion. His ability to adapt to any situation was remarkable. The Bishop's demeanour and conversation was very different when speaking to a group of clergymen than it was when speaking with the likes of some of the north's colourful characters. Larger-than-life businessman Brad Webb springs to mind. Bishop Putney relished the informal, and we loved him for it. There was no challenge that overwhelmed him, including accepting his own mortality. I went to see him when I knew he had terminal cancer. He spent about two minutes entertaining me with his diagnosis before he asked if it was okay if we did not talk about what he saw as the secondary issue behind the list of things he wanted to achieve for the community before he went.

His passion was education, and the expansion of Catholic education in particular. The irony was not lost on me that on the day his death was announced on the front page of the *Townsville Bulletin*—and I must commend the paper for its coverage—the page 5 lead discussed the fall in state school enrolments in the north over recent years while Catholic schools have flourished. This was not by happy circumstance but a result driven by a man who empowered people like Cathy Day and Ross Homer to open schools where populations increased and close them when numbers stagnated, which contrasts with a generation of a lack of proper planning and vision from the state system in our region. While personal gratification was never his motivation, our city must find ways to ensure his legacy is never forgotten. The opening of a secondary school at Southern Cross Catholic School, where my daughters are educated, is just one example of the potential for infrastructure to be named in his honour and I call on my region to begin a conversation on how the legacy of this great man must be properly remembered and never forgotten.

Bishop Putney had a special affinity with the first Australians and was a powerful force for reconciliation. But it is his efforts building bridges across the faith divide that set him apart. As chairman of the National Council of Churches, he travelled the globe promoting peace. His friendship with two other great northern leaders, Anglican Bishop Bill Ray and Uniting Church Minister Bruce

Cornish, was something very special. I know both of them join other members of Townsville's combined churches in thanking God for the gift that he was to all of us. Personally, I thank God for giving us a bishop who loved a glass of wine, and I am not just talking about the blood of Christ. I have some great memories discussing the state of the state shared over a red.

While Townsville still comes to terms with Bishop Putney's sudden passing, we have known for months he was ailing and time was limited. Judging by our shock at his death, none of us could accept the finality of his condition. Townville's Vicar General, Mick Lowcock, said that his sudden passing was in step with how the Bishop lived. 'He was a man of action,' Father Lowcock said. 'When he saw something that needed to be done, he would work out how to do it.' Bishop Putney was a man of great faith who believed kindness was the most effective way to relieve every man's suffering. His journey here on earth was infused with Christ's message to 'love one another as I have loved you'. Vale, Bishop Michael Putney. Your loss leaves one of the nation's greatest regional cities in mourning. The effect your life has had on Townsville will be felt long after our sadness eases.

Barron River Electorate, Neighbourhood Watch

Mr TROUT (Barron River—LNP) (11.16 am): At a time when Neighbourhood Watch is relaunching throughout the state, my electorate is experiencing an unprecedented growth in interest in forming branches. Opportunistic petty crime by juveniles is on the increase. Police in Cairns remain frustrated by the lack of responsibility shown by residents who express surprise that their home or vehicle has been infiltrated despite the fact that doors and windows are left open or keys left in easily accessible or obvious hiding places. Too often in attending meetings designed to introduce the concept to a new suburb, I hear residents complain, 'I've never had to lock my house. This was a safe suburb.' On one such occasion a resident insisted that she should not have to lock her property and she did not intend to. The police officer in attendance patiently reminded her that we have moved into the 21st century and petty crime is a fact of life. The best way to cope with change is to adapt to it, and in this instance of course adapting means being more security conscious.

Neighbourhood Watch enables people to take back the streets. It empowers communities to make a difference to their own security but also serves to facilitate a positive connection between community and police. Community cohesion is becoming increasingly important as technology takes us in front of a computer to communicate rather than outside playing sport, attending community meetings, taking part in local activities for kids or attending youth clubs, Boy Scouts or Girl Guides or being involved in sports. But that is another issue for another day. Email and social media have taken day-to-day communication into our living rooms and isolated us somewhat from our communities. Neighbourhood Watch not only reduces fear and crime; it also helps bring neighbours together. There is also the opportunity to address needs specific to the neighbourhood such as child safety or looking in on the elderly.

Last year Palm Cove resident Mark Ellwood sowed the seeds for a Neighbourhood Watch branch that has proven a shining example of building communities. Mark, a highly organised individual with a solid relevant background in security as a result of many years in the Police Service, organised a venue and refreshments and used all available contacts to pull together a formidable sized crowd of people from both his own suburb and neighbouring Clifton Beach. Strong leadership, tight meetings, guest speakers, great camaraderie and regular provision of refreshments has taken this branch from strength to strength. Shortly after commencing, numbers from both northern beach suburbs grew to the extent that Clifton Beach formed its own breakaway group, which is now sizeable in its own right. Mark reckons it is the best thing he has seen in crime prevention in 45 years. The assistance of the public in solving crime through Neighbourhood Watch is invaluable and Mark's comment on that is that without intelligence the police have nothing.

Of course, members know what type of intelligence I am referring to. It is about having many pairs of eyes out on the street and being vigilant and reporting back to police. One police patrol a day is enhanced by constant attentiveness by residents with a vested interest in their own safety and security.

Since the 2012 election, in my electorate the existing Neighbourhood Watch branches of Trinity Beach, Trinity Park and Canopy's Edge have since been joined by new initiatives at Palm Cove, Clifton Beach, Yorkeys Knob and Brinsmead, with Kewarra Beach looking to join the growing trend towards safer communities.

A branch was set up at Redlynch—a major growth area in my electorate—but unfortunately our wonderful coordinator was unable to continue. The difficult part is finding someone to start the process rolling. Many people want to become involved but do not wish to take on what they perceive to be the onerous administrative tasks involved. Then, like many community groups, the committee members or one or two key volunteers become disillusioned. Too many Neighbourhood Watch volunteers feel that what they do is not appreciated and that no-one would care very much if they stopped giving their time and went back to watching TV.

Social media has allowed us to build online communities. We only have to look at the Facebook pages created in local communities and how they assist in warning other residents of issues such as break-ins and advising them of lost and found items and animals, items to give away and community notices and meetings. People get to know their fellow residents by commenting online. Today, it is not necessary to be an organisation to be organised.

So Queensland Neighbourhood Watch is concentrating its effort on creating a credible online presence for the movement dedicated to building safe, secure and confident communities—confidence built on knowledge and collaboration. I refer to a recent comment on the Queensland Neighbourhood Watch website relating to the relaunch, which states—

So often we in the community see something and tend to say 'Somebody should do something about that.

This initiative makes it much more accessible for community members to report criminal activity. For those communities finding it hard to encourage physical attendance at meetings, E-Watch brings Neighbourhood Watch into the 21st century and in the comfort of everyone's safe and secure homes.

Infrastructure Planning and Charging Framework

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.21 am): Before the election the LNP said that it was—

... committed to work together with industry and local government to continue to explore ways to reduce infrastructure costs, while at the same time providing flexibility and the ability for councils to cover their costs.

However, in July last year the Newman government released a discussion paper on the infrastructure planning and charging framework review that proposed shifting costs from developers onto councils. Following the release of that discussion paper, the Deputy Premier made a number of claims about local government gold plating community infrastructure.

By last year's parliamentary estimates hearing the Deputy Premier was already positioning himself against his election promise to allow local governments to recover infrastructure costs on new developments. Alarm bells sounded when the Deputy Premier failed to provide any assurance that ratepayers and local governments would not be worse off from any revision to the scope of essential infrastructure for which developers contributions are required.

Since that time, the Local Government Association of Queensland has spoken with 96 per cent of Queensland local governments opposing changes proposed by the Newman government. The Local Government Association of Queensland estimates that, under the list of essential infrastructure that is included in this discussion paper, ratepayers will be charged up to an extra $409 each year to effectively subsidise property developers. It is curious that the Newman government has failed to release any independent modelling or any Queensland Treasury Corporation analysis to challenge the LGAQ's figures. In the absence of such analysis, it can only be assumed that the LGAQ's estimates are not far off the mark.

If the LGAQ figures are correct, the Newman government's proposed changes are equivalent to placing a tax of up to $409 per year on Queensland families in order to increase the profit margins of property developers. The LGAQ council chair, Councillor Margaret de Wit, has made it clear that if developers charges are lowered it will be ratepayers who will pick up the tab for the essential community infrastructure, saying—

We can't shoulder any more of the funding burden without hurting our ratepayers, reducing our capacity to fund other infrastructure or some measure of all of these outcomes.

Some mayors have already spoken out on behalf of their local communities against these proposed changes. Disappointingly, despite opposition from the Brisbane City Council to taking on more developer costs, Lord Mayor Graham Quirk is not one of them. I suspect we will hear much of the same silence from the Premier when Prime Minister Abbott's Commission of Audit axe gang starts stripping away more front-line services from Queenslanders.

Meanwhile, our mayors have taken a public stand to defend their communities. Logan City Council Mayor Pam Parker has said—

Personally I find it reprehensible that any government would choose to financially support developers over struggling families.

Any reduction in charges for developers would have a direct impact on our ratepayers.

Similarly, Ipswich City Council Mayor Paul Pisasale said—

You can't have a system where the ratepayers and pensioners of the city are subsidising the development. It just means the developers make more profit.

There is one party that is making a pretty sizeable profit at the moment and that is the Liberal National Party. In just the first half of last year, property developers donated nearly $225,000 to the LNP. I hope that the Deputy Premier is looking beyond these hefty financial contributions to the LNP and is genuinely listening to the concerns of local governments and ratepayers, as his party promised to prior to the 2012 election.

After the Newman government's increase to taxes of $1,000 a year for the average family of four, in addition to a record electricity price hike this year of $268 on average, Queenslanders simply cannot afford another cost-of-living impost of up to $409 a year and nor can Queenslanders afford to be short-changed on the delivery of infrastructure that most people would say is essential—infrastructure such as stormwater drainage, arterial roads and green space. The Newman government's discussion paper states that by reducing the list of infrastructure developers can be charged for they will show a reduction in infrastructure costs for a developer regardless—

(Time expired)

Queensland Economy

Mr MINNIKIN (Chatsworth—LNP) (11.26 am): I rise to speak about the future of our great state and the journey that we must embark upon to move forward our state's economy. Just shy of two years ago I stood in this hallowed chamber and gave my maiden speech to the Queensland parliament. In that speech, one of the key messages that I touched upon was the importance of responsibility: responsibility to ourselves, our community and, most importantly, to our children and future generations. As politicians we are the guardians of our state for a finite period of time. Therefore, we are tasked with making judicious decisions to ensure the security and wellbeing of our state well into the future. As such, we must govern for the future, rather than dwell on the past. In the immortal words of Spanish philosopher George Santayana—

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

Unfortunately, both our state and our nation's political history are littered with examples of the financial illiteracy of various Labor governments. Time and time again we have witnessed Labor governments ride into government in times of financial security and growth only to, over the course of their time in office, squander the government surplus and accrue a staggering amount of debt. But, to paraphrase the words of the late, great Baroness Margaret Thatcher, the problem is that you eventually run out of other people's money.

The former state Labor government took this spending spree to an unprecedented level, decimating our state's finances and overspending to the point at which it had to take out loans to cover its operational expenses. As a career businessman prior to entering politics, I find the concept of borrowing money to pay staff and to rent office space utterly absurd and economically reckless.

As a direct result of the former government's fiscal irresponsibility, an ominous $80 billion black cloud of debt now hangs over the head of our state, representing the largest per capita debt of any mainland state in Australia. As it can be difficult to conceive what such a large figure means in concrete terms, here are the facts. By the time I have finished delivering my speech Queensland will have accrued over $37,000 in interest. That figure compounds to approximately $450,000 in interest each and every hour. To put Queensland's debt into perspective, we need to repay the cost of an average family home each hour—assuming that it was owned outright—to stop the debt level rising without even making a dent in the $80 billion loan.

So what does that mean to the Chatsworth community that I am proud to represent? It means that every year $4 billion of taxpayers' hard-earned money must be spent on interest payments alone. Sadly, that means that we cannot build the equivalent of 20 new primary schools, 10 350-bed hospitals or 220 kilometres of a new four-lane highway. I am certain the residents of the Chatsworth

electorate would rather that interest bill be spent on an upgrade to the city bound section of Old Cleveland Road to alleviate peak hour bus congestion or an improvement to the amenity of Gumdale State School, just to name a couple of projects.

We believe that Queenslanders deserve better. We believe that it is not good enough that hard earned taxpayer dollars are being squandered on interest payments rather than building infrastructure and investing further in front-line services. Already we have proven ourselves to be a fiscally responsible government and we are making great strides towards building Queensland's financial security. We have increased state economic growth to 4.1 per cent, far exceeding the national average of 1.9 per cent. We have also gone from the highest unemployment rate in the country to the second lowest through our commitment to reducing red tape and creating jobs. Most importantly, we have managed to stop the existing debt from increasing further, which has been no mean feat. If we had not made significant policy changes our state's debt could have escalated further.

However, despite our best efforts the debt cloud still looms large over our heads, amounting to almost $15,000 for every man, woman and child in our great state compared to around $8,300 in other mainland states. That is why we are asking Queenslanders to join the discussion about how we can best pay down our state's debt. The reality is there is no magic bullet. Despite asking for a fourth solution, the practical reality is that there are three potential solutions to get Queensland fully back on its feet financially. The first is to increase taxes, the second is to decrease services and the third is the long-term lease or sale of select state government businesses. I appreciate that Queenslanders will hold strong views regarding all of the options on the table, and rightly so. This is why we have affirmed time and time again that we will not be moving forward with any of these strategies without having an open and honest conversation with the people of Queensland first and taking into account their personal views and priorities for our state's finances. Why? Because unlike the former Bligh Labor government we understand that these decisions affect each and every Queenslander and therefore these decisions belong to us all.

The Newman government will not show contempt for Queenslanders by divesting any government owned businesses without a clear mandate. I encourage all Chatsworth constituents and Queenslanders in general to contribute to this important discussion over the coming months and put forward their suggestions as to how we can effectively and responsibly pay down the debt we have inherited from the former Labor government and to ensure Queensland's financial security well into the future. Our kids deserve no less.

Sale of Public Assets

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.31 am): The nation's laziest, most negative, tricky Treasurer has been forging ahead with his series of closed-door lectures on asset sales. When the Treasurer met with community representatives in Gladstone on Wednesday last week the message back to him was clear.

Government members interjected.

Mr PITT: Wait for it. The Treasurer was told to 'hold steady' and to show some patience in managing the state's finances. He was told not to sell the Gladstone port and to think of the long-term returns from the port for the taxpayer. The Treasurer is clearly not listening. Two days later he met with his federal Liberal counterpart to hatch a sham deal for the asset sale sell-off of the century, a deal that would see Queensland lose profitable assets and tax equivalent payments in exchange for the federal government funding infrastructure it is obligated to fund under the Federation anyway. Only this Treasurer could put together a deal that results in a lose-lose-lose outcome for Queensland taxpayers.

Nevertheless, the reason for the Treasurer's excitement is clearly because it fulfils a long-held goal of his, one he articulated in this parliament in 2006 when he said he wanted to sell 'the poles and wires'—to sell the lot. He does not seem to mention that in his closed-door asset sales meetings, does he? Although how would we know? In his media statement on Friday the Treasurer said he is going to sell assets to (a) pay down debt; (b) build new infrastructure and (c) fund services. It sounds a lot like this Treasurer wants to have his cake, eat it and have seconds and thirds at taxpayers' expense. I know this Treasurer has previously said that mathematics was not his best subject at school, but he must know that he cannot provide recurrent services funding from a one-off asset sales sugar hit. This from a Treasurer who paid Peter Costello $2 million to tell him he needed to sell $25 billion in assets and use all of the proceeds to pay down debt.

Will his asset sales pay down debt or will they be used to bribe the people of Townsville with a new football stadium as he told them last week? And what about this debt that the Treasurer said needed to be paid down? For the record, Labor did not rack up or leave $80 billion of debt, nor did Labor ever incur an interest bill of $450,000 per hour. To say otherwise is a blatant deception designed at hiding the increase in debt under the Newman government of $14.6 billion over two years, or $830,000 per hour; a deception also designed to hide the fact that this Treasurer had no plan for Queensland finances or the economy before the 2012 state election.

When community representatives in Gladstone told the Treasurer to show some patience—to 'hold steady'—he kept saying, 'What's your solution?' Like the Premier, the health minister and the rest of the LNP, the Treasurer is not willing to listen to views that do not mirror his own. The Treasurer likes quoting ABC Radio's Steve Austin, not myself, when he spins my comments in the media regarding Labor's view on the way forward for Queensland. I can assure the Treasurer that voters will see Labor's full fiscal and economic plan prior to the next state election.

What did the Newman government take to the 2012 state election in the LNP Economic Blueprint for Queensland? Aside from telling Queenslanders that they would pay down debt without selling off assets, what was the debt repayment plan in this document? It was set out as the fourth fiscal principle to 'put in place a plan to regain the AAA credit rating to reduce the cost of borrowing'. That is right, the Treasurer took nothing more than a plan to have a plan on debt repayment to the last election. The hypocrisy is truly staggering. It is little wonder that Queensland's newest LNP senator describes this Treasurer as 'very, very lazy'. He is a Treasurer who is so lazy that he does not even bother coming up with his own spin for his asset sales lecture tour. Instead, this lazy Treasurer has a PR firm on the books that charges $20,000 a month, the same team of private sector spin doctors who, according to Queensland Treasury, wordsmithed the modelling outlining a $121 billion debt scare scenario, a scare scenario that contrasts with the outlook of ratings agency Standard & Poor's in December last year which said that they expect debt to plateau and slowly decline as capital expenditure is increasingly funded from operating surpluses rather than debt.

This Newman government never lets facts get in the way of a good story. They are happy to cut the ribbons at the projects funded by their increase in debt, but then falsely blame Labor for borrowing the money. At the last election this Treasurer said he had a plan to pay down debt without asset sales, not a plan to weaken the budget's operating position into the future by engaging in a mass sell-off of profitable assets. Queenslanders sent all politicians a message at the last election. They want public assets to stay in public hands. Labor heard that message loud and clear. The choice for Queenslanders is now clear. The LNP will sell off Queensland's assets, Labor will not. It is that simple.

Safe Management of Asbestos

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (11.36 am): I bring to the attention of members the launch of the state-wide strategic plan for the safe management of asbestos in Queensland 2014-19, a five-year plan. The launch, which will be hosted by the Attorney-General, is in the Premier's Hall tomorrow morning commencing at 7.30 for an 8 am start and concluding at nine o'clock.

Members, there is a cost associated with the safe removal and handling of asbestos. The cost in dollar terms is quite significant. It is also measurable. But the cost of not safely removing and handling asbestos is incalculable. The human lives lost from asbestos exposure is incredibly high and frighteningly appears on the increase. As at 13 March 2014 there was a total of 14 more people diagnosed with mesothelioma in Queensland this year alone and over the previous four years, from 2010 to 2013, there were a total of 246 people diagnosed with mesothelioma. My own mother suffered from this terrible disease, finally succumbing to it in the mid-1990s. There are others who also suffer from asbestos related diseases. In fact, based on statistical information from the Asbestos Related Disease Support Society Queensland Inc., more than 550 people were diagnosed with various diseases over the last four or so years. They are mesothelioma, pleural plaque, asbestosis and lung cancer. In fact, this Friday, 4 April, is the first anniversary of my own father's passing as a result of asbestosis.

Much is being done through research in Queensland, supported by the Queensland government, and around Australia in an attempt to find a cure and better treatment for those suffering from mesothelioma and other related diseases. I bring to the attention of the House that the Asbestos Related Disease Support Society Queensland Inc. does a great deal for sufferers and their families. I note from the society's magazine that in the year 2013 the society funded research projects at the

Griffith University Gold Coast and the Queensland Mesothelioma Project at the Greenslopes Hospital. One of the main roles of the society, as outlined by Helen Colbert in the society's summer newsletter, is to create a greater public awareness of the dangers of asbestos-containing materials and the many places asbestos-containing materials can be found. Educating the community to the dangers of asbestos exposure and how easily exposure to asbestos can occur through incorrect identification and handling is a high priority.

With this in mind, I draw the attention of members to the DVD entitled *Losing Breath—the Adam Sager Story*, which was launched in December 2013. The DVD tells the story of Adam who was unknowingly exposed to asbestos fibres during his family's home renovation when he was 20 months old. Helen Colbert states that Adam's mum, Julie, urges do-it-yourself home renovators and tradies to play it safe with asbestos and be aware of the risks of exposing themselves and others to it. The DVD tells the story of a 20-month-old child. Julie Sager asks us to do what we need to do to keep ourselves and our families safe, to view the DVD *Losing Breath—the Adam Sager Story* and to visit the state government website www.deir.qld.gov.au/asbestos/. I remind members that tomorrow morning the state-wide strategic plan for the safe management of asbestos in Queensland 2014-19 will be launched by the Attorney-General, commencing at 7.30 for an eight o'clock start, in the Premier's Hall.

Gladstone, Gas Training Facility

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (11.41 am): For everybody, education is a lifelong journey. Last year, it was proposed that a gas training facility be constructed at the TAFE in Gladstone. It was much looked forward to. It was a $16.6 million project, predominantly funded by the federal government. However, with the change of government and the financial position that the federal government found, it said that the training facility could not proceed. Ironically, that funding withdrawal was made a day before the Australian Productivity Commission released a report that outlined a skills shortage in the energy sector. It predicted that that sector would need 70,000 people in those jobs and, as at February of this year, there were only 30,000. The need for that training centre was clearly demonstrated and certainly Gladstone is the place for it, given the LNG on our doorstep.

There is an opportunity for the gas training centre to proceed. As has been discussed and announced in this chamber, the TAFE and the university are to merge in Gladstone. The proposed gas training centre was to be built at the TAFE site and there was some toing and froing about whether it should be on the TAFE site or the university site. Certainly this government preferred the TAFE site. The university's engineering centre, the PELM centre, has not been in use in the recent past. It has exactly the same floor space, 2,000 square metres, as was required for the gas training centre at TAFE. I believe the university and TAFE have been in discussions with the LNG industry and others to investigate the very real probability of the gas training centre being established using the already constructed PELM centre. There is water, power and gas already on site. It does provide the opportunity for the training that is greatly needed, not only for my electorate but for all of Australia. Queensland is the emerging gas centre for this country and Gladstone is the centre where it is going to be produced. I believe it is an exciting opportunity to use the empty facility and to use it for something that we greatly need.

In the time that is left to me, I would like to place on the record my appreciation to the Assistant Minister for Public Transport and member for Chatsworth for his visit to my electorate last week. He came to look at Maritime Safety Queensland's new centre. It is on the fifth floor of the new building that is beside the entertainment centre in Gladstone. It has a full visual of the harbour, which is a great asset to harbour management and traffic management. It has state-of-the-art electronic telemetry for managing the ships in the harbour. For everybody who works there and has the responsibility for the safe passage of vessels, certainly the new centre is a real bonus.

I also place on the record the appreciation of the community for the Treasurer's visit on Wednesday to discuss the proposal by the government to sell or long-term lease the port. I would have to say that those in attendance did not support the long-term lease because of the intrinsic link between the Gladstone Port and the community, but I also have to say that those in attendance understand the need for better management of our economy and our funds. Everyone there looks forward to the opportunity to work with the Treasurer to build a strong Queensland.

Queensland Disability Conference

Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (11.46 am): The Queensland Disability Conference was held last week and it was a huge success. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of listening to and speaking with delegates and presenters, and sharing the positivity about shaping a better future for Queenslanders with a disability. It was the largest disability conference ever held by a Queensland government, with over 550 delegates in attendance. In fact, interest was so strong that registration sold out a month in advance of the event. The conference provided a forum for people living with a disability, their families and carers and the sector to come together to discuss Queensland's transition to the NDIS. Delegates learnt first-hand about our state's plans to implement the NDIS, as well as learning some of the lessons from and challenges faced by some of the trial sites and to hear from some individuals who are already self-directing their funding, such as 14-year-old Siobhan Daley, a high-school student who is participating in the Hunter trial. I was lucky enough to have a conversation with Siobhan and her mum about their experiences and their aspirations.

In Queensland, we want people living with a disability to have greater choice and control over the specialist individualised funding and supports that they need, which is what the NDIS is all about. The conference sessions and workshops explored what is required for all of us in Queensland to get ready to transition to the NDIS. I must say that the enthusiasm of the participants was absolutely fantastic. All the participants agreed that everybody has a role to play in implementing the NDIS: individuals, families and carers, service providers, government, mainstream services, researchers, business, industry and, of course, the private sector. I was very pleased to see delegates from all of those areas in attendance at the conference.

It was also pleasing to introduce Senator Mitch Fifield, the Assistant Minister for Social Services and the person responsible for driving the implementation of the NDIS in the Australian government, to provide a short video update to the conference. The CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency, David Bowen, made a keynote address on day 1, at which time he outlined the important role that the scheme will play in improving inclusion for people with a disability. I also thank my cabinet colleague the Minister for Education, Training and Employment for his address at the conference and his commitment to helping Queenslanders with a disability, not just through the education system but also in his role as National Disability Champion Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

One of the highlights was the Queensland Disability Awards presentation on day 2. Hearing about the efforts and achievements of the award winners was truly inspirational. Congratulations to all of the award winners and to everybody who was nominated for an award.

It was also my pleasure to have an unofficial lesson from Brett Casey, the CEO of Deaf Services Queensland, on how to sign 'choice' and 'control'. It was a pleasure to attend the entire two days of the conference. It was enlightening to meet so many delegates who wanted to share their aspirations with me and also to attend many of the informative panel discussions.

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who took part, especially the keynote speakers and the panel members who gave very detailed information based on their wealth of experience. I would also like to thank our important sponsors, including those who sponsored awards, and the event organisers. These conferences do not happen by accident. There is a lot of work that goes into them. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my staff and the staff of the department for their efforts in putting together such a wonderful forum.

Our government is absolutely about providing the best outcomes for people with a disability and their families and carers. That is why we are committed to our election promise of revitalising front-line services. We take very seriously our preparation for the transition to the NDIS from the middle of 2016. We will be supporting people with a disability and their families and carers and consulting with them in that transition.

(Time expired)

Road Infrastructure

Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.51 am): I would like to use this opportunity to speak on strategic road infrastructure and the opportunities for North Queensland and the greater state. I would like to see a renewed push for an inland highway as an alternate and considerably faster route from Cairns to Melbourne which offers myriad benefits. This not only offers a strategic, cost-effective and

common-sense solution to congestion on the Bruce Highway but delivers the type of infrastructure that is desperately needed to drive economic activity in the state. If we can move a small fraction of the money spent on office buildings and tunnels and road upgrades in the south-east corner we could deliver some very worthwhile projects of national significance.

Flinders Shire Council and Etheridge Shire Council are both suffering badly from the poor conditions in the cattle industry and from the removal of capital works funding for roads in their areas. I use these two councils as examples. There will undoubtedly be calls sometime soon from many other like councils to get financial assistance as their current situation is not sustainable.

Rural ratepayers make up the majority of their revenue and many of these residents simply will not have the money to pay rates over the next year or so. The Cloncurry Shire Council reported that approximately 90 per cent of their revenue comes from rural ratepayers. Flinders Shire Council gets approximately 60 per cent of its revenue from roadwork activity. There are, however, no capital works planned for that shire for the next four years. Thrown into the mix is that the town has just lost 30 rail jobs and the outlook is very dire indeed.

Councils are typically the largest employer in these towns and provide the majority of work for most of the larger local contractors. Last year the Boulia Shire Council had to lay off 15 people and numbers at the school are right down, threatening the loss of another teacher, due to the lack of opportunities around roadworks and the like.

These towns will need some sort of stimulus to keep them viable. I believe that roadworks would strategically contribute to Queensland's economy should they be used as a stimulus tool. I speak not of pink batts or school sheds but roadworks. Councils can employ more people and at the same time distribute the benefits of the revenue to residents. I believe roadworks could be one of the most effective tools for many of these councils to ride through this most difficult time.

As for strategic roads, there could be no better proposition than the inland highway via the Hann Highway and the Torrens Creek-Aramac Road to save some 13 hours of driving from Cairns to Melbourne. With the appropriate upgrades, triple road trains could use that route. Triple road trains have a 90-tonne capacity as opposed to B-doubles which have a 45-tonne capacity limit for the Bruce Highway. For every triple road train that uses the inland highway we would take two B-doubles off the Bruce Highway. There would be a considerable saving in terms of traffic along that highway.

What is the cost of a project of this nature? A lot less than the $10 billion price tag to upgrade the Bruce Highway. To provide a fully bitumen sealed route from Melbourne to Cairns requires the bitumening of approximately 100 kilometres on the Hann Highway and 30 kilometres on the Torrens Creek-Aramac Road. The cost would be approximately $100 million. That is less than 15 per cent of the commitment to the new office building in Brisbane.

This has the potential to take much of the heavy traffic off the Bruce Highway and deliver a cost-effective solution to this high-profile problem. Coupled with a new logistics distribution centre near Hughenden, this could provide a strategic logistical solution to bottlenecks in Townsville port as well. This is the opportunity to kill two birds with the one stone—that is, to stimulate rural activity and deliver strategic road infrastructure that will go some way to resolving issues on the Bruce Highway.

I have to throw in at this point that it is critical that councils are given the opportunity to provide some of these works. Let me elaborate on this. One side issue to this which illustrates the problem is that currently under federal funding local councils are not allowed to use their day labour for flood damage works. This is an abject failure of government policy. I appreciate that there has been dialogue between the local government minister and the federal government and they are looking to address this issue.

I want to highlight how bad this problem is. Flinders Shire Council put out a tender for flood damage works which they costed at $7 million. They only had one response to tender which was for $23 million. It is costing government an extra $16 million to do a job the council could have done for $7 million. They need the work, but they are not allowed to do it because they cannot use their day labour for the flood damage work. I know that there has been dialogue but that really needs to be addressed. I think it is a policy failure. It is something that is really needed to stimulate these councils. I strongly urge the state government to continue dialogue with the federal government.

In conclusion, Queensland needs positive signs that the government is willing to invest in strategic infrastructure. To that end, I table an article quoting Ken Henry, the former Treasury secretary.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian Financial Review* online, dated 30 September 2013, titled 'Governments fail on infrastructure analysis: Ken Henry' [4815].

He said that our problem is not that we spend too little but that we do not spend well. It says, 'Too much tunnelling. Stop building tunnels.' We need to build roads and strategic infrastructure that contributes to the economy of this state and not vote-buying exercises in the south-east corner.

Lockyer Electorate, Rain

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (11.56 am): I rise to make a brief statement in the House today. As this is a House of debate, I cannot let some of the mendacity and sophistry that I have heard this morning go. It is mind-boggling that the member for Mackay or the member—

Government members interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I cannot let go that the member for Barron River or even the socialist—

A government member: Not Barron River.

Mr RICKUSS: Sorry, Mulgrave. I cannot let go what the members for Mulgrave and Mackay have said. If we listen to what they have said we find that they are delusional. I also mention the member for Mount Isa. Rob is a nice bloke, but he wants rail, he wants roads, he does not want to sell assets. It goes on. We have an $80 billion debt. I am sure from listening to the member for Mount Isa's speech—

Mr Krause: It's Labor's debt.

Mr RICKUSS: I forgot to mention that it is $80 billion worth of Labor debt. I am sure the member for Mount Isa is very interested in what the Treasurer, Tim Nicholls, is saying around the state and will sit there and weigh up what can be done about some of this debt.

I would also like to highlight the great rain that we had over the weekend in the Lockyer electorate, and virtually right around South-East Queensland. I think it extended into Central Queensland as well.

Mr Krause: It was soaking rain, wasn't it?

Mr RICKUSS: It was good soaking rain. Some of the recordings from my electorate were: 160 millimetres at Spring Bluff, 173 millimetres at Helidon, 125 millimetres at Flagstone, virtually 180 millimetres at Gatton, 166 millimetres at Laidley and 115 millimetres at Glenore Grove. The rainfall was very widespread. Lockyer Creek, Ma Ma Creek and Laidley Creek all rose by a metre or so. This is the sort of good soaking rain that will give a bit of security for the future. It will give us a good start. A bit of grass will grow in the paddocks, which is good. It is early enough. I think some of the areas in the member for Beaudesert's electorate got quite a downpour as well. I think it was six inches across most of the area. There is water security for Bill Gunn Dam and Lake Claredon. I think that Moogerah Dam and Maroon Dam will also get some inflows. This is important for our Fassifern and Lockyer farmers.

I am glad the Minister for Community Safety is in the chamber at the moment because there is another issue that still arises. I speak of the number of people who still drive into floodwaters. I have a press release from the department's website which outlines that a person was rescued at the intersection of the Boonah Fassifern Road and the Cunningham Highway near Boonah. Someone else was rescued on Coleyville Road, Coleyville near Rosewood. Someone was pulled to safety at Golf Links Drive, Gatton. How stupid are people? They have to start to realise that if it is flooded—

Mr Dempsey: Forget it.

Mr RICKUSS:—forget it, particularly at night. I take that interjection from the minister. If it is flooded, forget it, particularly at night. The cars are made out of plastic and fibreglass and a lot of fairly light material. They have four pumped up tyres that give the vehicle buoyancy. Smaller cars that drive into floodwaters just get washed off the road. Even a ute was washed off the road recently on the Downs and a helicopter rescue was needed for the people. This is just crazy. People have been drowned in the Lockyer as recently as 2013 by driving into floodwaters. Please do not drive into floodwaters when you do not need to. It is really important.

I was talking to Bill Hallas, who is one of our local stock and station agents. He was getting quite upset that he was selling stock that was underweight and people were really depressed about it all. So hopefully this rain will take a bit of pressure off a lot of farmers around Queensland. It does not rain grass but it does give you a bit of hope. The dams get full and it gives you a little bit of time to sit down and think. I think that is what the farmers and the landholders needed. If people have any

issues, please seek help—seek assistance from the department and seek assistance from community groups like beyondblue and those sorts of organisations. Please seek help if you are under pressure. Do not just self-assess and sit there mulling over it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): The time for MPIs has expired.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH BOARDS AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (12.01 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014 [4816].

Tabled paper: Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [4817].

I am pleased to introduce the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014. Workforce reform is a key strategy under the *Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland*. The introduction of individual employment contracts for senior employees, including doctors, represents a key step to rationalise and simplify the industrial relations framework within the public health system. Individual contracts ensure performance, productivity, accountability, quality, more flexible value for money and patient care. Modern high-performing service industries rely heavily on performance based contracts to deliver better, additional and enhanced services.

As part of the introduction of these contracts, consultation has been ongoing with senior doctors and their representatives. Last week I met with the chairs of the state-wide clinical networks and the committee of clinical specialists. I am taking on board their positive solutions. I have given a firm commitment to these doctors that a ministerial directive would be put in place to ensure that there could be no adverse determination by the director-general pending the passage of legislation. This legislation will ensure that a provision which currently exists and has existed for the past 15 years, and could be used to the detriment of doctors, will be removed.

The bill represents one outcome of consultations with senior doctors and their representatives. Specifically, during consultations concerns were raised that the director-general, under the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, could issue or amend a health employment directive, and the directive could prevail over conditions of individual employment contracts for senior doctors. To address these concerns, this bill proposes that senior doctors' contracts will prevail over health employment directives in the event of inconsistency between a contract and a directive, providing the certainty they desired.

Furthermore, the bill also ensures that increased remuneration or other benefits of a health employment directive will apply to senior doctors regardless of inconsistency with an individual employment contract. This allows benefits provided for by a health employment directive to flow on to employees on a high-income guarantee contract. That, of course, includes such things as pay rises where they should be able to just flow on automatically.

Additionally, the bill ensures that the conditions of a high-income guarantee contract prevail over employment regulations made under the Industrial Relations Act, section 193(2), or the Hospital and Health Boards Act, section 282. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (12.04 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.

Declared Urgent

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (12.05 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 137, the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill.

This will allow the bill to pass through its remaining stages at this week's sitting. The reason for that is that it has followed extensive consultation with senior doctors. It is a two-page amendment bill. It quite clearly keeps that particular commitment. The parliament does not sit again until the early part of May. Therefore, it is important that it has the opportunity to pass this week. Given the fact that it is a small bill, that will provide ample opportunity for members to be able to properly consider it.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.06 pm): I rise to oppose the motion put forward by the Minister for Health to again put another bill through this House at short notice. Queenslanders deserve better than a government which continues to run roughshod over our parliament. The Premier said after his historic swing against him in Redcliffe that he was going to start listening. He said that he has learnt his lessons. Since then all he has done is continue to show the arrogance of his government. This is a government that picks a fight with the Public Service. It picks a fight with the community sector. It picks a fight with the legal profession. It picks a fight with the medical profession. I am actually struggling to find any group in this state of ours where the government has not actively gone out and sought to show that it is a government that will do whatever it takes—and, sadly, that means not listening to Queenslanders.

This is a Premier who lacks the leadership to bring the community together. Actually he lacks the leadership to bring his own party together, but we can discuss that at another time. What we know is that they are using this process of putting this bill through the parliament in short order to again run roughshod over the democratic process that we have—to run roughshod over anyone who has a different point of view.

What we have here is a serious issue of the government introducing Work Choices style contracts in our state to senior health professionals. I note that the minister says senior medical officers have been consulted on this change. I would like to find out if all of them have. I wonder if ASMOF, who continue to be demonised by this Premier, support this. My guess is no. Certainly what they know and have made very clear is that they would like to see the Industrial Relations Act actually change in this state. This is a piecemeal option. This is to show, in terms of a public-facing media approach by this one-trick pony Minister for Health, that this is them apparently listening. Well, it is not. If they genuinely wanted to listen, they would give this bill—albeit I admit it is a two-paragraph bill essentially; it is very short. But at the end of the day that is not the point. We have seen time and time again in this House that they continue to push legislation through in a hurry without the opportunity for people to have any sort of scrutiny of it whatsoever.

I believe this is the 17th bill that has been declared urgent in this term of government by the LNP: seven passed on the same day they were introduced; three passed the day after they were introduced; and three passed two days later. When you start adding these things up, this is not a government that really wants to do anything in terms of listening to Queenslanders. As I said, this is a short bill and I accept that. But what we know is that this is the sort of bill you get when you make a mess of negotiations and erode whatever trust people had left in this government.

There are very good reasons why even legislation as small as this should be considered by committees and have proper scrutiny and analysis. The parliament deserves to hear what people's views are. You can understand why people might mistrust this government. This government has not had a good record when it comes to negotiating employment terms and conditions with Queensland workers. In fact, it said to public servants before the last election that they had nothing to fear. From reports today we know there is shrinkage of the Public Service in Queensland by more than 15,000 since the LNP came to office. We know that we cannot trust a word they say when it comes to dealing with contract negotiations and enterprise bargaining in this state. Forgive us, Minister for Health, if we do not sit here and accept every time you move an urgency motion before the House that we should do exactly as we are told.

When reflecting on the urgent bills that have been passed through the House, let us have a look at what the member for Caloundra said. In 2011 the member for Caloundra said that he was appalled at the notion that legislation be rushed through the House. This is an urgency motion and I continue to speak on the urgency motion.

Mr RICKUSS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! Member for Lockyer, what is your point of order?

Mr RICKUSS: Relevance. The member is straying from the relevance of this motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the Manager of Opposition Business to speak to the bill.

Mr PITT: I am not sure how much more relevant I can be when I just used the words 'urgency motion'.

Mr Rickuss: Only after I stood up.

Mr PITT: If the member for Lockyer wants to talk about irrelevance, I think he only needs to look in the mirror. This government is becoming irrelevant. As we heard from the opposition leader today, it is becoming the laughing stock of Australia. It is an embarrassment—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection. In 2011 the member for Caloundra said he was appalled at the notion that legislation could be rushed through the House. He said that scrutinising legislation was—

> … exactly what we are required to do as an opposition. An opposition is required to drill down into and to quiz and question the government on the clauses within the bill. We support the bill, but that does not mean that we do not have an obligation to drill down and ascertain the true intent of the bill and look at the various clauses and make certain they stand up to scrutiny.

The irony is that at the time the member for Caloundra made those statements he was the shadow health minister. Interestingly, we will never know whether this whole doctors crisis could have been averted if he was the health minister in Queensland when there was a change of government. He held that portfolio right up until the election. He believes in the scrutiny of legislation. It is a shame that the Minister for Health doesn't. It is a shame the Minister for Health will not also engage in proper negotiations and start again, as most people have suggested, instead of a ham-fisted approach to keep stacking on top a range of different issues that are not being addressed because there is a clear public outcry about the way they are handling, or mishandling, this doctor contracts crisis in our state. The opposition will not be supporting this urgency motion, and I do not think any other member should either.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.12 pm): I rise to speak to the motion to bring this bill forward. From what the minister has said, I note that it is a fairly short bill. It addresses the concerns of doctors in terms of their job security. I also note it will be six weeks, if my maths are right, before we sit again. Therefore, whilst I hold concerns with urgent bills in terms of our ability to get a full understanding of the matters and to have an opportunity to speak with people who may be affected, my belief in this instance is that the matters have been very publicly canvassed and the bill, albeit a very short bill, is curative in nature. We will have until Thursday to ensure that the matters of concern to doctors—at least the matters covered by this bill of concern to doctors—are adequately addressed.

Given the urgency of medical help, given the importance in my electorate of security of doctors, the tenure of doctors and the availability of doctors in our public hospitals and my value of all of the people who work in the hospitals who rely on doctors being available to give them direction, advice and help, I support the bill being passed or considered this week.

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (12.14 pm), in reply: Can I just say that there is no conspiracy in trying to rush this through the parliament? I do have enormous respect for this parliament and I am one who would very reluctantly stand in this place and suggest this particular course of action, for all the reasons the honourable member for Mulgrave outlined beforehand. We should always approach these sorts of things with a level of reluctance, but I think it is important that we address a number of issues raised by the honourable member for Mulgrave.

The real challenge that we have is the continuous shifting sands around these negotiations. The only consistency we have had was originally from the AMAQ, then from the VMOs, which has been absolutely consistent, and now from the AMAs through their federal president, Steve Hambleton, who came to me some weeks ago and said, 'We have a number of issues we could like to address in terms of reassurances and guarantees for doctors.' I said, 'That is fine; if there are genuine issues we have always said that we will deal with those issues.' We are not going back to the changes to the Industrial Relations Act because they are a matter of public policy of this government.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: And you have an ideology in opposition.

Ms Palaszczuk: A crisis of your own making.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I will put our tenure and our administration of public health and all of the things that we have done up against those opposite because the key performance matrix—

Ms Palaszczuk: What does the public think of you? Hopeless.

Mr SPRINGBORG: In which way?

Ms Palaszczuk: The public.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The member for Inala's former leader, the then Premier, said it was so dysfunctional that it should be torn apart. We did not tear Queensland Health apart. We built it up to now be the best-performing public hospital system in Queensland.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Isn't it interesting that the honourable member for Bundamba is trying to tie this in with what happened in Bundaberg where a surgeon went rogue and caused harm to patients under their watch? We are worse than that? We had people dying in the back of ambulances because of bypass. We had people waiting up to 13 years for routine dental procedures in the state and all of the outcomes which have been so adverse with regard to that. There has been very little consistency with regard to the process of discussions and negotiations.

Ms Palaszczuk: You are not up to the job.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The queen of privatisation, the honourable member for Inala, who privatised more in this state than anyone else has, who also got rid of hundreds of workers by privatising them along the way, has the audacity to stand up in here and make such an interjection.

When you go into a process of negotiation and discussion, you like to at least have consistent goalposts. If you go to Suncorp Stadium, the goal posts are in the same place when you start the game as when you finish. When you are dealing with radical unions that is never the case. Tony Sara said in his own email: we have to teach this government a lesson. He used all sorts of terms around fascism. He said that people should be terminated for their support of contracts. He actually said that this should go on for months and months and months. Reasonable doctors who want this issue addressed reasonably are saying these are the solutions and suggestions they are asking for. We entered discussions a number of weeks ago with six issues. It grew to eight issues. We had an agreed solutions document that put out solutions to those issues. One of the issues was around the director-general's powers which have existed either in their own right or with the Public Service Commissioner for the previous 13 years to be able to change an employment contract or an employment agreement without reference to the employee and in detriment to the employee. The interesting thing is that that provision existed for the entire time that those opposite were in government and they had no concern about it. Doctors have actually suggested—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The only hospital that shut down was under the auspice of the member for Bundamba when the Caboolture Hospital lost its emergency department. People who were seriously injured actually turned up to that emergency department and then had to go to Redcliffe and, as a consequence, suffered adverse outcomes leading to death.

They are 15-year-old laws. The doctors have actually asked for these to be addressed. They actually have more concerns, which are being addressed, with regards to the issue of the addendum. This is a two-page bill which seeks to reflect the fact that doctors consider that this is a matter of urgency. Even those opposite, who are very, very well resourced for an opposition, have some capability to read these amendments over the course of the next two days and to actually judge whether or not they are going to support their passage through this parliament by Thursday evening. This is not about the Industrial Relations Act. The Industrial Relations Act is a matter of government policy. If those opposite want to actually have that fight, they can fight their way at the next election. This is clearly about amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act to make it very, very clear that doctors will have their interests protected by the removal of a provision which has existed in Queensland law for 15 years—during the whole time that those opposite were in power. That provision allowed for a director-general or Public Service Commissioner to make a determination to change an employment condition which could be detrimental to the employee, in this case a high income employee, which is a doctor.

There will also be an opportunity over the next two days for Luke Forsythe, who is a good friend and campaign worker for the honourable member for Bundamba, to write all the opposition speeches that he so wishes. I have absolutely no doubt that he will do that in order to overcome—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am inviting him to write their speeches, as he no doubt will. What we see is a destructive opposition that is not interested in actually abiding by or reflecting what doctors have been asking for. They have actually asked for a curtailment of a provision which has existed in Queensland law for some 15 years. That is why this particular motion has been put to the parliament. Even the honourable Mr 'Patience' over there should be able to read this in two days and come to some form of considered opinion.

The parliament does not come back till early in May—around 6 May—which is in five to six weeks. It is absolutely important that those doctors who have asked for this, whether it be Dr Steve Hambleton, the specialist committees, the clinical networks or a whole range of other doctors—and I have spoken to hundreds of them who have said that they want some certainty in legislation. We provide this certainty. This legislation actually does that.

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

AYES, 68:

LNP, 63—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

KAP, 3—Hopper, Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Cunningham, Wellington.

NOES, 8:

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Miller, adjourned.

CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (12.29 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 for particular purposes and to make related minor and consequential amendments to the acts mentioned in schedule 1. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [4818].

Tabled paper: Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [4819].

I am pleased to introduce the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill amends the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004, CPORA, and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, PPRA, to give effect to the government's commitment to introduce more stringent monitoring of sex offenders and impose tougher conditions for offenders on the national child offender system. The bill strengthens the current reporting regime for child sex offenders by increasing the number of times convicted child sex offenders will be required to report their details to police from once each year to four times each year. Those offenders who pose a significant risk of re-offending will be required to report more frequently than the mandated reporting requirements. The number of times and the way in which these high-risk offenders will be required to report will be determined by the Police Commissioner, depending upon the level of risk an individual offender poses at any given time.

The commissioner already has the power to alert the public about registered sex offenders who are missing. This government's policy is that a sex offender who is missing for more than three months will be considered a danger to the community and regarded as deliberately evading police. The commissioner can take this into account in deciding when to release information to the public.

Child sex offenders will no longer have seven days in which to make their initial report to police after they receive a notice of their reporting obligations; rather, offenders will be required to make an initial report to police at the time of receiving a notice for their reporting obligations. However, a sense

of reasonableness must still prevail when requiring any person to attend the police station for any matter. Accordingly, if an offender cannot reasonably comply with this reporting requirement, up to seven days leeway to make an initial report is allowed for in the bill. Offenders who are not in Queensland when an initial report must be made will be required to make that report within seven days of returning to Queensland.

Seven days is a consistent theme in this bill. The time frame associated with reporting changes for personal details and plans to travel outside of Queensland has reduced from 14 days to seven days. Interstate offenders who have been in Queensland for seven consecutive days, either on holiday or for work, must report to police within seven days. There is no longer any requirement for offenders to be advised of this obligation in their home state. This government will not tolerate the migration of child sex offenders to Queensland. The types of personal information that are required to be reported to police have been extended to take into account the prolific increase in social networking sites marketing specifically to young people. In this regard, offenders will be required to report any social networking sites they are using or intend to use, including passwords used to access those sites.

Offenders will also have to report when they no longer live at a particular address. This amendment closes a gap in the legislation that only requires offenders to report a change in their residence when they take up a new residence, allowing them to avoid reporting if they move from place to place.

Reporting contact with children is limited under the current legislation to unsupervised contact; however, what constitutes 'unsupervised contact' is subjective and difficult to define. The legislation has no requirement on the offender to report the personal details of a child with whom contact occurs. The bill addresses this by requiring all child sex offenders to report any contact with a child within 24 hours of that contact occurring other than where that contact is incidental. An example may be where the offender is served by a child at McDonald's or another food outlet. This is in line with the recommendations made by the Victorian Law Reform Commission's 2011 review of Victoria's reportable offender legislation.

The bill also increases the capacity for police to monitor juvenile sex offenders by removing section 210 of the Criminal Code—indecent dealing with a child under 16—as an exclusionary offence. Indecently dealing with a child differs from the remaining exclusionary provisions, which relate to the making, possession and distribution of child exploitation material, in that it requires direct physical contact with a child. While this amendment has the capacity to increase the number of juvenile offenders on the Child Protection Register, the Police Commissioner will have the power to automatically suspend any reporting obligations placed on juveniles where they do not pose a risk to children in the community.

As well as suspending the reporting obligations of juveniles, the bill would also allow the Police Commissioner to suspend reporting periods for offenders who have significant physical or cognitive impairment that prevents them from reporting; for example, advanced dementia or Alzheimer's disease. The suspension of reporting obligations is only used when the offender does not pose a risk to children and can be revoked by the Police Commissioner if it becomes evident that a risk to children exists or that the impairment no longer prevents the offender meeting his or her reporting obligations.

An automatic suspension will also apply to those offenders who are simultaneously reporting under the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003. Offenders who are required to report under the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003, while assessed as having the highest risk of reoffending, also have the most stringent reporting and prohibitive restrictions placed on any child sex offender within the community. It is therefore more relevant that those reporting obligations take precedence to those under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004. At the conclusion of the reporting order under the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003, an offender will be required to meet their remaining reporting obligations under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004.

The bill also streamlines current reporting processes and reduces red tape by allowing offender information given to the Police Commissioner by the chief executive of corrective services to be considered an initial report for the purposes of commencing a registration on the National Child Offender System. Once released, the offender will be required to report the rest of his or her personal details to police.

The bill standardises the current reporting periods under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 to five years for an initial offence, 10 years for a subsequent offence and life for any future offending, directly targeting recidivist offending. Whilst these times are slightly lower than the current periods, contemporary research indicates that sex offenders are at the greatest risk of reoffending within the first three to five years of their release into the community.

The new periods of reporting are coupled with more intensive reporting obligations and increased powers of police to investigate child sex offences and effectively manage child sex offenders in the community. In this regard, the bill introduces a new power for police to enter the residence of a reportable offender to verify that the information required to be reported under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 is correct; for example, whether an offender is having unreported contact with children. Some child sex offenders go to extraordinary lengths to establish decoy lives that can withstand scrutiny. This vital power will assist police to determine the accuracy of the information provided.

DNA provisions are enhanced under the bill. Police will be able to take DNA from any child sex offender where a DNA sample is not held under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and retain that DNA after an offender has completed a period of reporting.

The time frames for police to apply to a court for a reporting order will be extended under the bill to within six months after the time of sentencing. Currently, a reporting order must be made simultaneous to the time of sentencing. It is not always apparent to police at that time whether a person will pose an ongoing risk to children. This amendment allows police time to collect and provide the requisite information to the court. Finally, the bill will allow some reportable offences to apply to where the offender mistakenly thought the victim was a child. There is no additional penalty associated with this. However, it does allow the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 to apply to a specific group of offenders who are actively seeking to target children. The bill ensures that Queensland will certainly have the toughest reporting conditions for child sex offenders in this nation. This government is committed to making Queensland a safe state and to protecting those in our community who are most vulnerable—our children. The Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 enhances the capacity for this government to do just that. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (12.40 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 Ruthenberg): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION (FUNDING RED TAPE REDUCTION) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 19 March (see p. 732), on motion of Ms Davis—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr HATHAWAY (Townsville—LNP) (12.40 pm), continuing: I will continue from where I left off but, given that there has been such a lengthy interlude in that period—

Mr Rickuss: Just start again.

Mr HATHAWAY: I will not necessarily start again but will highlight some of the points I made in my previous iteration. First of all, I was absolutely gobsmacked by the shadow spokesperson in that during their speech they indicated that the opposition was going to support the bill but then they went

off track. It was pretty much like the urgency motion that was debated earlier today. By way of summary, words like 'verbosity', 'monotonous' and 'political grandstanding' come to mind. They also levelled accusations at the committee with regard to a lack of consultation. I reminded the House that there was consultation. There has been significant consultation on this bill and also in its previous guise in the previous parliament. From that consultation we wrote to 28 stakeholder groups and received five submissions. We also invited those same 28 stakeholder groups to come along to the public hearing, although none of them wanted to participate in the public hearing. So consultation on this bill has been lengthy, ongoing and has actually been across two parliaments. Levelling those accusations after the report has been tabled is, frankly, disingenuous. Despite the opposition indicating its support for the bill, that does not stop it from trying to make as much political mileage as it can and kick the can down the road. Having said that, I also remind the House that at no stage was there any statement of reservation or objections or indeed any negative discussion during the committee's review of the bill, so I question it carrying on like it does.

I will now turn to the actual bill. The objective of this bill is to safeguard funding for the provision of services and products to the community, to reduce red tape and to have more consistent funding arrangements across social service agencies. The Queensland government continues to significantly invest in non-government agencies and indeed, as we heard from the minister's second reading speech, in excess of about $1.5 billion goes into not-for-profit organisations, local governments and other entities to deliver child safety, disability and community services—a significant portion of this government's budget as it stands. Under the current laws, the department administers funding in service delivery across three separate acts—the Community Services Act 2007, the Disability Services Act 2006 and the Family Services Act 1987. Because that is across those three acts, these laws are obviously not as efficient as they could be and, as a result, there are increases in administration costs and red-tape costs associated with providing funding to our NGOs and local governments. As we heard from the minister's second reading speech, reducing red-tape costs will allow those NGOs to deliver services more efficiently and allow them to focus on delivering those resources and services to their clients, which of course are the most vulnerable people in our state.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has consulted with the social services sector on this legislation as well as in a number of other forums on the broader red-tape reduction agenda. During the development of the bill, confidential consultations were targeted with key peak bodies and were conducted last year in October and also again in January this year. During these consultations, participants have given broad support for simplifying and streamlining the department's funding laws, in particular noting the red-tape reductions that would be delivered. Participants also reaffirmed the workability of the proposed reforms. Indeed, we heard from the minister that two of the peak bodies consulted—the Queensland Council of Social Service, or QCOSS, and PeakCare—provided submissions to our committee on the bill and these submissions noted that reducing red tape is a high priority not only for this government but also for the social service sector. In its submission, PeakCare announced—

> Reducing administrative burden where, for example, record keeping, procurement, contract management or accountability requirements are duplicative, unnecessary, contradictory, or disproportionate to the potential harm to service users or the financial risks involved is a high priority for both government and non-government agencies.

Under the previous parliament and as preparatory work for the human services funding legislation, in 2010-11 targeted consultation was also conducted with sector representatives including the LGAQ and Local Government Managers Australia on the proposed funding legislation reforms at that time. The key legislative proposals from that legislation are similar to those in the current bill—for example, a single step funding application process and a description of the circumstances when the department may use its investigative and remedial powers. More recently, in 2013 QCOSS provided, at the department's request, additional advice on strategies to reduce red tape and improve business efficiency and that advice is outlined in QCOSS's *Opportunities for red-tape reduction* report. Through consultation with departmentally funded service providers, the report confirms that the department's current reform strategies are on the right track and will help service providers to better focus their resources on actual service delivery. The report also provides government with a number of good ideas for consideration and I welcome the minister's comments during her speech that the department is still going to engage with those ideas and look under every nook and cranny for red-tape reduction because, in the end, that means that more dollars are being spent at the right level in delivering services to clients.

This is—and I agree with the minister—a transformational change across the social services sector, and I welcome it. When this minister says that she is going to continue to look for opportunities for further red-tape reduction and converting dollars into services, I know that she will take it to task. I also recognise that the minister has indicated that this bill is estimated—and correct me if I am wrong; it has been a while since last talking about this—to return about $2.6 million in savings. What does that mean? It means $2.6 million can get delivered to clients who are most in need—the most vulnerable in our state. It is on that note that I thank the minister and her department for the briefing that they gave to the committee, the submitters to the committee and of course our excellent staff in the committee secretariat. I support the passage of this bill through the House.

Mr RUTHENBERG (Kallangur—LNP) (12.48 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill. First I acknowledge the good work of the secretariat—Ms Sue Cawcutt, our committee research director, and her team. They are very competent and we appreciate their efforts. Our committee considered this bill and I am glad to report that we have recommended that this bill be passed unanimously. Given that Labor members did not bother to turn up to the meeting considering my draft report, still it is no surprise that their statement of reservation said that they were lodging one but were not really sure why.

Only just at the last sittings after the minister spoke we heard of those reservations from the opposition, many of which the minister addressed in her report. But Labor never objected to them during the process. It seems to me that the opposition's response was simply politically motivated. I am truly disappointed that, when as a parliament we agree, the opposition simply cannot say, 'We agree.'

According to the explanatory notes, the policy objective of the bill is to—

... safeguard funding for the provision of services and products that contribute to Queensland's economic, social and environmental wellbeing and enhance the quality of life of individuals, groups and communities.

That is quite a substantial objective. In addition, the explanatory notes state that the—

... government is seeking to make its investment more effective and efficient by reducing red tape costs, simplifying regulation and having more consistent funding arrangements across social services agencies.

That is not only common sense; that is now being demanded by those people who we represent—that we spend their funds on their behalf in an efficient and effective manner. This bill will save non-government organisations that deliver services on behalf of the government into the community time, money and resources.

Prior to entering parliament, I was the CEO of a fairly large not-for-profit organisation that delivered services on behalf of various governments around Australia. This bill will be welcomed by the organisations delivering services for the Queensland government and receiving a part of the $1.5 billion that is distributed annually by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Further, this bill will mean that more of the grant money will be spent delivering front-line services instead of working on paperwork. If we couple the red-tape reductions contained in this bill with the red-tape reductions that were delivered in the Disability Services (Restrictive Practices) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, which was debated recently, it is clear that this government is well and truly keeping up with its aim of reducing red tape. I say: great work, Minister.

I turn now to the committee's report. The committee made three recommendations: firstly, that the bill be passed; secondly, that the minister provide some explanation as to the practical application of the practice to gain entry without permission to prevent an immediate risk of harm to a disabled person once section 134 of the Disability Services Act is repealed; and, thirdly, that the minister table advice in the Legislative Assembly once a funding declaration is made. I would like to address each of those recommendations individually.

The first recommendation is that the bill be passed. In the review of this bill something very usual occurred. Even with the best efforts of the committee and the secretariat, we could not find any stakeholder wanting to appear before the committee at a hearing. The consultation on this bill has been extensive. I congratulate the minister on the amount of consultation and work that was put into the preparation of this bill. That is reflected in the submissions and the fact that no-one wanted to appear at a hearing because there was little to add.

The committee's second recommendation focused on the removal of section 134 of the Disability Services Act when this bill is assented to. Section 134 provides that an authorised officer may enter a place where a funded non-government service provider provides disability services. If the place is not a home, the authorised officer may enter when it is open for business and may enter a

home without a warrant and with reasonable help and force if they reasonably suspect that, firstly, there is an immediate risk of harm to a person with a disability at the place because of abuse, neglect or exploitation; and, secondly, there is an immediate risk that evidence at the place of a misuse of funds provided to the service provider under part 7 will be destroyed or removed.

Section 134 also enables entry without a warrant to check whether a service provider has taken the steps required under a compliance notice. Although the Public Advocate acknowledged the breach of fundamental legislative principles that section 134 applies, it expressed some concern about this plan. The committee noted the concerns raised about the capacity to protect vulnerable people with a disability, particularly those who receive residential services from a funded entity. It is important that we do all we can to protect those who cannot protect themselves. In fact, that is an important measure in our society. This recommendation simply seeks the minister's assurances about the protection of people with a disability who may be at immediate risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation once the bill comes into effect.

I listened carefully to the minister's second reading speech that she gave at the last sitting and I have since had a chance to read it. I am comfortable with her extensive explanation. It is clear that this policy change is well thought through and I think it adequately addresses the Public Advocate's concern. Again, this is a difficult situation where we find rights competing with each other and trying to determine which rights take precedent under different circumstances and situations will cause concern. Having heard the minister, I believe that there is sufficient opportunity for authorities to act quickly if need be. I think the minister's explanation satisfactorily wrestles with this complex puzzle and provides adequate outcomes for the vulnerable people who we need to protect.

The third recommendation comes due to this part of the bill having the potential to be inconsistent with fundamental legislative principles. I want to reiterate that it only has the potential to be inconsistent. Nonetheless, given the potential, the committee felt it important to identify it, particularly given the potential retrospective application of the legislation and authorising changes to the application of the act by executive action. Typically, this is called the King Henry VIII clause—that is, by ministerial declaration. It is important to note that the explanatory notes acknowledge that allowing the minister to make funding declarations retrospectively may adversely affect the rights and liberties of funded entities that have already received funding that was not subject to a declaration when the funding was provided. Again, it is important to note that a ministerial declaration will not impose additional obligations on funded entities. However, it will enable the use of powers to protect clients of funded entities if there is a serious concern after the declaration has been made. This provision is about good governance and good order and ensuring that the minister can act quickly in the public interest.

The committee felt that this was a justifiable action by the government. Even so, a fundamental legislative principle in the Legislative Standards Act 1992 is that a bill should only authorise the amendment of an act by another act. A clause that enables an act to be expressly or impliedly amended by subordinate legislation or executive action is referred to as a King Henry VIII clause. There are always exceptions to rules. The use of King Henry VIII clauses is considered by convention to be acceptable in some very limited circumstances, such as to facilitate immediate executive action or to facilitate transitional actions. The explanatory notes describe the policy rationale for the provision that allows a ministerial declaration to apply the amended act as follows—

Importantly, the provisions will allow other departments that choose to use the CSA in the future to apply the Act to their existing investments. The amendments in the Bill have been designed to ensure that the CSA is capable of being used by other departments and declarations will allow departments to safeguard their existing investments.

In considering whether proposed sections 10 and 12 inserted by clause 8 have sufficient regard to the institutions of parliament, which is at the heart of recommendation 3, the committee noted that the policy intent of the bill is to provide mechanisms to protect public funding and to protect individuals who may be harmed by a service or product from funded entities. As I have noted, the committee understands that the bill would require a minister to publish a notice on the Queensland government website, to keep a list of funding that is subject to declaration and to notify affected entities. Although we were concerned about the proposed sections that enable a decision of the executive arm of government to determine when legislation is to apply, the committee considered that proposed sections 10 and 12 really are justifiable, as I have explained. I think that if this provision were able to be explained clearly to the people of Queensland they would say, 'This is a common-sense approach to the use of legislation in this particular instance.'

The committee recommended that the bill be amended to require the minister to table a statement in the Legislative Assembly when a declaration is made. That recommendation was simply to ensure public confidence and enable parliamentary scrutiny of the exercise of power by a minister to determine when the legislation will apply. I note that in her speech the minister acknowledged our concerns and also acknowledged the legislative principle. I also note her agreement in principle with the committee and her commitment to table any such declaration in the House. I welcome that and I am comfortable with her commitment. I encourage the minister to maybe consider putting in place a procedure to ensure that this commitment is not inadvertently overlooked but, given the efficient nature of this minister, I am sure that she has already given that some thought.

Overall, this is a very good bill. I say to the minister: great effort. I also ask her to please pass on our thanks to her staff and the department for their efforts. I gladly give my support to this bill.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 pm to 2.30 pm

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (2.30 pm): I rise today to speak to the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. This bill sets out to streamline the legislative process of delivering funding to non-government service providers by cutting red tape and removing duplicate legislation. The current bill serves much the same function as the One Funding System for Better Services Bill that was introduced by the former minister for community services and housing, the honourable Karen Struthers, on 6 September 2011 which lapsed at the 2012 election. What I wish to point out is that this legislation goes further than the 2011 bill by completely repealing the Family Services Act 1987, repealing parts of the Disability Services Act 2006, as well as amending the Community Services Act 2007. While the opposition acknowledges the need to streamline this legislation, it is important that we maintain safeguards that protect people in the community, particularly those most vulnerable, such as individuals with a disability.

I wish to use my time today to highlight the concerns raised by the Office of the Public Advocate in its submission to the Health and Community Services Committee regarding this bill. The Office of the Public Advocate commends the department for retaining a number of safeguards put in place by the Community Services Act 2007 and the Disability Services Act 2006, including sanctions for noncompliance with funding agreements, a complaints handling process and criminal history screening for all employees, but raises concerns about a number of safeguards that this bill removes. Bear in mind that the role of the Public Advocate is to advocate on behalf of adults with impaired decision making capacity in Queensland. This means that her submission refers only to the application of the bill in the provision of funding to organisations providing services to individuals within the disability sector. Their organisation advocates for those who cannot advocate for themselves, campaigning to protect the rights of those most vulnerable in our community. That being said, I now discuss a number of concerns raised by the Office of the Public Advocate that I share.

The Human Services Quality Framework is currently being used in place of the Disability Sector Quality Framework as the disability service standards under the act. This was the outcome of the Disability Services (Disability Services Standards) Notice 2012. The Human Services Quality Framework was designed to reduce red tape. The framework outlines a set of quality standards that are to be conformed to by all non-government organisations that are funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. My concern and that of the Public Advocate is that while this framework includes many of the requirements put in place by the disability service standards, it does not include a number of safeguards that are specific to people with a disability.

According to the Public Advocate, some of the protections that are not addressed in the current bill include: the requirement for a personalised plan, opportunities for inclusion in the community and proactive policies to ensure the dignity of service users is protected. These may not be priorities in other areas of government and thus can be removed from legislation applicable to those departments, but for people who cannot advocate for themselves, who cannot tell someone that they are uncomfortable with the way they are being treated, it is crucial to ensure that there is legislation in place to protect these individuals and provide them with the best services possible.

The next concern I wish to raise is the removal of part 8 of the Disability Services Act 2006 relating to prescribed requirements. The DSA currently allows for a regulation to prescribe a number of requirements that must be met by a government funded disability service provider, including a requirement for a funded service provider to keep and implement a policy about preventing abuse, neglect and exploitation consistent with the department's policy. It also requires the department to

publish a policy about preventing abuse, neglect and exploitation. Omitting part 8 of the Disability Services Act 2006 will remove these legislative requirements and leave them to be dealt with administratively which, in my opinion and the opinion of the Public Advocate, is not good enough considering the significance of these issues and the associated risk for people with a disability.

Finally, I would like to briefly touch on the removal of the power to enter a place in certain circumstances without a warrant. As mentioned by the member for Redcliffe during the last sitting of this parliament, the LNP passed the Fair Trading Inspectors Bill 2013 which introduced provisions that allow fair trading inspectors and other authorised officers to conduct searches without a warrant, yet this part of the Disability Services Act 2006 is being removed. I cannot understand how it is deemed necessary to retain this capacity in the Fair Trading Inspectors Bill but not in a bill that seeks to protect the most vulnerable individuals in our community from potential abuse and poor treatment.

I acknowledge the government's response to the committee's recommendations tabled on 20 March 2014. Despite the government's statement, the opposition maintains its position and believes that in certain circumstances an authorised officer should indeed be able to enter a place where disability services are being provided without a warrant. The minister indicated that to date this special power has never been exercised, but the opposition believes that just because a power has not been exercised in the past does not mean that circumstances may not arise in the future where this ability is necessary.

The Queensland opposition does not oppose this bill, but I do believe it is important to point out that while it is desirable to streamline these three acts and remove duplicate legislation, it is also important to maintain the safeguards put in place to protect these most vulnerable individuals in our community.

Mr SHUTTLEWORTH (Ferny Grove—LNP) (2.38 pm): I rise in the House to make a short contribution to the debate on the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. This bill has once again further advanced the progress of one of our government's key deliverables—that is, to reduce red tape and the cost of compliance for businesses. This measure delivers the objectives of the bill as outlined within the explanatory notes—that is, to safeguard funding for the provision of services and products that contribute to Queensland's economic, social and environmental wellbeing and to enhance the quality of life of individuals, groups and their communities. I think the fact that the Health and Community Services Committee, with the diligent assistance of our secretariat under the guidance of Sue Cawcutt, only received a handful of written submissions from the 28 invited stakeholders and no-one chose to participate in the public hearing shows that the bill is both well constructed and is in keeping with both public and industry expectations of our government to continue to deliver productivity and efficiency gains through our continual review of burdensome red-tape legislation.

On 17 February the committee received a public briefing provided by Ms Cathy Taylor, acting deputy director-general for strategy and programs in the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, as well as Mr Matt Simpson, the principal policy officer. The briefing outlined that the Family Services Act 1987 will be repealed, the duplication within the Disability Services Act 2006 will be removed and there will be streamlining throughout the Community Services Act.

Throughout the minister's contribution to this debate, each of the recommendations and comments were addressed. In particular, the minister addressed concerns relating to the proposal to repeal section 134 of the Disability Services Act 2006 and the fact that there remain adequate mechanisms to ensure service users receive the support and protection they deserve through the investigative, remedial and enforcement measures available to the department. In cases where immediate and extreme measures are needed to provide the necessary protections to those most vulnerable within our community, means will be available to persons to ensure that the extraction of persons or immediate measures are able to be carried out. The minister also provided an undertaking that prior to the commencement date of the bill the department will work with Queensland police and the Office of the Adult Guardian to ensure clear protocols are in place should urgent action be required to protect people with a disability.

There is a level of comfort that can be gained through the knowledge that the approval and compliance of service providers is measured through the application of a human services quality framework that is a comprehensive standards and quality assurance framework. This framework forms the basis for the provision of services that all providers must comply with. There are a number of independent auditors who provide continual assessments to ensure providers' compliance within the framework.

I depart slightly from the regulations and legislation discussion to provide some real examples of the benefits likely to be experienced on the ground. Within my electorate of Ferny Grove is an organisation called Siena, an offering of CentreCare designed for people with intellectual disabilities and relatively low support needs. The facility allows patrons to engage in activities such as an arts space, gardening, computer awareness and training. There are chill-out spaces and many support workers and volunteers. Attendees can meet new friends or simply enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. Try telling Siena, an organisation like so many others throughout the electorates of every member, that the reduction in red tape and burdensome compliance is not necessary. When every cent that the organisation receives is channelled through better service delivery to their clients and patrons, try telling them that the red-tape reductions, estimated to deliver $2.6 million in savings across the state, are not needed. There are 18 service providers within the electorate of Ferny Grove currently receiving funding and I am certain each and every one of those would view favourably the streamlining that this bill will provide to them in the delivery of their services into the future.

As I said, my contribution is to be very short. In closing, I refer to the statement of the minister where she states—

> 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.

That statement effectively summarises the intent and key mantra of this can-do government. We are getting out of the way of business and professionals, allowing them to manage their operations and service delivery models for the benefit of their clients and their customers. I thank the minister and her department for the preparation of this bill and I support its passage through the House.

Mr KRAUSE (Beaudesert—LNP) (2.43 pm): I rise to speak on the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. This bill is about simplifying processes for the funding of community and non-government organisations. In 2012-13 the not-for-profit sector, local government and other community organisations received $1.5 billion in funding from Child Safety, Disability and Community Services. Those organisations are presently administered under three different acts of parliament: the Community Services Act 2007, the Disability Services Act 2006 and the Family Services Act 1987. The array of different legislative requirements, depending on the type of service being provided or the organisation receiving the funding, has created a duplication of legislative requirements and also unnecessary legislative requirements across different services. It increases the costs for community and not-for-profit organisations in delivering their services into the community. It also increases the red tape that needs to be complied with by those organisations. This government is unashamedly about reducing unnecessary red tape and regulation, and decreasing the cost of service delivery into the community.

In my electorate, there are organisations that deliver a variety of family services, disability services and other services that are funded under those various acts. As much as possible having a single funding framework will enhance their ability to get on with the job of delivering those services to the community. I think of organisations such as the Fassifern Community Care, Beaucare and Caddies at Jimboomba, which the minister visited recently with my friend the member for Logan. That organisation delivers services into both of our electorates. I am sure they will welcome the simplification of their funding requirements, which is being put into place by this bill.

This is about ensuring that government funds achieve as much as possible, including every dollar of taxpayer funds that is delivered into community services. In 2012-13, $1.5 billion was delivered. That is a significant amount of money taken from the people of Queensland through their taxes, fees and charges. This is about ensuring that every dollar achieves as much as possible for the community. Where funds are given to community services, not-for-profit organisations, local government and any other community organisations that are tasked to deliver services into the community, the government's regulation of the organisations using those funds should not be such that the funds are soaked up in administration and regulation. We have a responsibility not only to fund those organisations to deliver services but also to set in place a regulatory framework that enables them to use those funds for community services and to get on with the job so that they can achieve as much as possible in their communities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure that you and many other members will be aware that the organisations that receive funding through the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services often have a very high demand for their services and often that demand cannot be

met through their available funding. We should be implementing a regulatory regime that reduces their costs and enables more of that demand to be met. Ultimately, we are here to enable those services to be delivered where possible into the community.

The bill has a number of policy objectives. It amends the department's existing funding laws to remove all unnecessary red tape, but it retains essential safeguards for the funding the department provides. It does this in a number of ways. It amends and simplifies the Community Services Act so it is capable of being used for all of the department's funding to non-government organisations, local governments and other external entities, it repeals parts of the Disability Services Act that duplicates those provisions in the CSA and it repeals the Family Services Act 1987. An important note that I do not think has been picked up by other speakers at least today is that, whilst the Community Services Act will be primarily utilised by the department of communities in funding community organisations, it sets up a framework that could be used by other departments should they so choose in the future. As I said before, it simplifies existing funding laws by removing unnecessary and duplicative requirements and other matters that do not need to be legislated. Matters that can be dealt with administratively within the department and through service agreements with organisations will be removed from the legislation or amended so that they can be dealt with in that way.

In particular, the bill removes provisions from the Community Services Act and the Disability Services Act which require entities to become approved service providers before they can apply for funding. Instead of actually having to become an approved service provider before they apply for funding, which is a preliminary step and one which would take a considerable amount of time, no doubt, community organisations seeking funding will be able to make an application for funding and the outcome of that application will determine whether or not they become an approved service provider. This is about removing unnecessary steps in the process. The department will make an assessment about whether they should be funded. The result of that is that if they are funded they will become an approved service provider. That is a simplification of the process and a logical step.

The bill also removes provisions from those two acts specifying how the minister approves funding and requiring the director-general to enter into a written funding agreement. It gives more flexibility for these matters to be decided through administrative means. It removes provisions for the making of service standards. Funded entities are contractually required to meet quality standards which are set out in their funding agreements. This gives more flexibility for standards to be set according to the services offered by each organisation or according to the services which the department is giving organisations funding for to perform in a community. This recognises that different organisations provide different services depending on where their community is at and the specific issues they have. It is only right that there should be particular conditions for the organisations according to those circumstances.

The bill also removes provisions from the Community Services Act and the Disability Services Act which set prescribed requirements in accompanying regulations, a breach of which triggers investigative and remedial powers. Instead of this, the revised Community Services Act will provide clarity about the use of the safeguarding powers while relieving the compliance burden by specifying four serious concerns that trigger the use of those powers. Those concerns are: harm to a person; significant failure in service delivery; misuse of funds; or breach of the Disability Services Act.

The bill removes from the Community Services Act provisions setting out a show cause process for the termination of a funding contract where a funded entity has breached the contract. This is a process which is set out in funding contracts. Again, I make the point that I am sure it is foreseeable that there could be different show cause and termination procedures for different organisations and different services provided depending on the circumstances on the ground in different communities.

The bill amends the objects and principles of the Community Services Act to better align with a broader range of services and products that will be subject to it and the narrower scope of the revised act. The bill also expands the range of organisations eligible to apply for funding to give departments greater choice and flexibility about the organisations they fund to deliver services. This, combined with the other reforms, particularly the one about becoming an approved service provider before funding is provided, are beneficial and will enable new organisations to come online and deliver community services. We should not have barriers to entry when it comes to delivering these services because situations are fluid. Sometimes community organisations come and sometimes they go. Where there is a space in the community for services which needs to be filled sometimes that space needs to be filled very quickly. We need to have a regulatory framework which enables that space to be filled quickly where the need exists.

The result of all these reforms is that the Community Services Act will have a narrower scope. It will mainly set out the investigative and remedial powers that enable a department to take swift and decisive action to investigate and remedy serious concerns. Through the amended provisions, the act will enhance the array of community organisations which can apply for funding and make it easier for them to apply for funding as well. It will also simplify the process for compliance with the act.

One other provision which has received some comment from other members today is the provision that relates to ministerial funding declarations. The bill provides that the amended Community Services Act applies to funding that is the subject of a ministerial funding declaration and published on the Queensland government website or in other ways. They are described as Henry VIII clauses as they allow an executive action to determine where an act applies.

A key objective of the bill is to enable the government to take quick and effective action to protect vulnerable service users and to safeguard the use of public funds and the delivery of essential community services. In the case of disability services, there is no clearer situation where the government could be required to act quickly to protect vulnerable users. Allowing the declaration to be made where the act will apply enables that quick action to be taken.

Similarly, the bill also provides for the removal of the review of key decisions by a tribunal. The bill removes from the Community Services Act and the Disability Services Act provisions for funded organisations to apply for an external merit based review to QCAT for key decisions about funding. The decisions are appointing an interim manager and ceasing or suspending funding following a compliance notice process. Provisions enabling organisations to apply for an internal review will be retained. Some people will argue that the absence of an external review process will not allow for appropriate review. As noted, an important objective of this bill is to enable governments to take quick and effective remedial action to ensure that these publicly funded services—services that are funded to the tune of $1.5 billion in 2012-13; a significant amount of taxpayer funds—and products are delivered safely, and to safeguard the use of public funds. It should be noted that there are other examples of where a decision taken by a department is subject to internal review only. The housing act is one of those examples.

This bill simplifies the process of providing funding for non-government organisations, community organisations and other organisations funded under the various acts. It cuts away the red tape and regulation and will enable the dollars provided by the taxpayers of Queensland to go further in our communities in helping the community organisations to provide much needed services which we know are often oversubscribed. The demand is greater than the funds available for those services. Accordingly, by making those services more accessible and by saving money due to cutting red tape and regulation we are doing a great service to people who need those services. I thank the minister very much for bringing this bill to the House.

Mrs SMITH (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (2.57 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Community Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. This bill sets out to achieve two primary objectives: to reduce red tape; and to safeguard funding for front-line services. This government is in the business of ensuring that the delivery of vital front-line services occurs by ensuring investment in the many exceptional NGOs continues with all the checks and balances and without the burden of the current red tape that exists in the three relevant acts. The bill ensures that the delivery of funding continues seamlessly and, most importantly, that taxpayers' money invested by the government is safeguarded and accounted for. As we continue to make working with government more user friendly, we continue to have to peel away the layers of duplication created by the previous 'let's-make-it-hard-for-everyone' government. Red tape is a household staple in most offices of the ALP. We on this side object to unnecessary red tape, especially when it smothers and stifles business or, in this case, the department of communities which is trying to solidify front-line services for Queenslanders.

How will the bill work in practice? Let us consider as an example an organisation currently funded under the Community Services Act 2007. What happens if that organisation wishes to expand its operations to meet community needs and also provide services under the Disability Services Act 2006? Under the current arrangements, the organisation will already have completed a pre-approval process under the Community Services Act 2007 to be eligible to be apply for community services funding. To allow it to also apply for disability services funding in the future, the organisation now must go through a second pre-approval process under the Disability Services Act 2006. The organisation must use forms approved under the act for this purpose. It must also have started, or have agreed to start, a certification process concerning how it will meet the department's disability quality system standards.

Assuming the organisation successfully completes this second pre-approval process, only then may it apply and receive government funding for both kinds of services. Under the current arrangements, the organisation must enter into a separate funding agreement for each fund it receives. That all sounds very complicated. Each of these funding agreements must meet the requirements of the particular legislation the grant is given under. These requirements, although broadly similar in many cases, do differ depending on whether the service being delivered is a community service or a disability service.

The streamlined Community Services Act will create a simpler regulatory and administrative environment for this funded entity. Under the new arrangements, the organisation will be able to apply for government funds for its proposed disability services without further delays. The removal of the CSA and the DSA provisions for organisations to make application for a 'merit based' external review to QCAT but the retention of internal departmental reviews will streamline the process and ensure that accountability in the disbursement of funds continues.

The statutory pre-approval process will be removed from both the Community Services Act 2007 and the Disability Services Act 2006, meaning the current two-step process will be replaced with a much more streamlined single step. The red-tape reductions do not stop there. Once the bill is passed, there will also be no need for this organisation to have a separate funding agreement for each grant it receives. The bill will allow administrative reforms to be implemented by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, including further streamlining of standard contracts for social services funding.

The Health and Community Services Committee agreed that it is appropriate to reduce the administrative burden on service providers by removing from legislation the service quality framework and prescribed requirements about how services are delivered. The changes made by the bill will mean that compliance and administrative costs of funded entities will fall, allowing this organisation to deliver its vital services more efficiently but with appropriate safeguards.

In the child safety area, the ability to deliver to these NGOs with minimal fuss means that in real terms the wonderful people who provide the daily support to our children are serviced by a well-oiled, functional and streamlined organisation. At the end of the day, that is what they are doing—their job.

As I explained during the last sitting of this House, one of the great privileges of being a member of parliament is the opportunity to meet and speak with people from all walks of life and hear their stories. The Newman government consults widely with community members and stakeholder organisations to ensure that the delivery of vital services is in line with community expectation and also manageable in real terms.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the minister for introducing this very important bill. At the end of the day, it is about customer service, revitalising our front-line services and reducing red tape but, of course, ensuring that we have those safeguards in place. I certainly commend the bill to the House.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (3.03 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, may I apologise for my indiscretion with my phone just before.

Mr Elmes: Is it off?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is off. I rise to support the Community Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. I get so many wonderful opportunities to stand up in this House and acknowledge the work of our hardworking ministry—in this particular case the Minister for Communities—in their efforts to reduce red tape for the state of Queensland, to help every single Queenslander have more money in their back pocket and to allow us to do things that we need to do, and that is to improve the state of Queensland. In this case it is to put more money back in the hands of our wonderful service providers. I know that this minister has been working extremely hard to achieve this exact goal, to streamline the processes to make it easier. I know that the minister has been working on this piece of legislation for a good couple of years. It is something that is just so necessary yet in a way so simple, because what we are doing is combining those three acts into one in an effort to assist these community organisations to provide the services that they provide and to get on with doing what they do best.

Whether it is providing family support or disability services for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, the tireless efforts and invaluable contribution of these organisations do not go unnoticed and should be supported wherever possible. That is why over these past couple of years, as I have just touched on, significant efforts have been made to streamline the requirements imposed on our

not-for-profit and non-government organisations to enable these groups more time to focus on delivering front-line services that make a real difference in people's lives. This is extremely necessary after 20 years of mismanagement by the previous Labor government and Labor's $80 billion worth of debt. Labor's bungling and inefficiencies pushed the cost of providing services in Queensland to the highest in the nation.

Our government has already introduced a suite of reforms that substantially simplify quality standards, monitoring and reporting requirements, funding approvals and acquittal processes for grants. Other social services reforms include a procurement framework, social services investment portal and building public sector capability—all while aiming to develop a stronger and more sustainable community sector and improving value for money in government investment in social services.

The communities legislation amendment bill will build on these efforts by further simplifying the existing laws governing the funding of community organisations by removing unnecessary requirements and duplication for these community organisations. The reforms also reduce the prescriptive nature of requirements that do not need to be legislated but can be dealt with more effectively and efficiently through administrative arrangements. So often I get the opportunity to stand in this House and congratulate our government for common-sense reforms. What I have just read out are common-sense reforms.

Most excitingly, this bill will cut red-tape costs for funded organisations by almost $2.6 million per year and remove more than 60 pages from the Queensland statute book as the bill amends and reduces the Community Services Act 2007 and the Disability Services Act 2006 and repeals the Family Services Act 1987. This is a great outcome that will allow community organisations to focus more of their time and resources on front-line products and services rather than on meeting the compliance requirements of several different, duplicated and inconsistent acts.

I know the minister has come out to the great electorate of Nanango on numerous occasions and visited many of our community organisations. I was thinking about one of the organisations and providers out there ably run Nina Temperton, and that is South Burnett CTC. This community organisation would have in the past applied for grants under all of those acts. Now, thanks to this wonderful red-tape reduction legislation, they need only apply under one act. So it is common sense to note the benefits that would flow: they obviously would have the same terms and conditions and the same reporting requirements. These things seem quite simple but in practice it is the common sense that we are looking for, because all the different acts had different requirements for these organisations. These organisations predominantly employ people to provide services and they are not always in tune with the administrative requirements or, if they are, they would much prefer to be spending their highly valued time on providing services.

The contrast could not be clearer. Under the former Labor government, there were three different acts to provide funding to community organisations. Under our LNP government these organisations will now be able to use a single application for funding, thereby removing duplication and unnecessary compliance requirements.

This bill expands the range of organisations eligible to apply for funding to give departments greater choice and flexibility about the types of organisations that they fund to deliver services. At the same time the bill will help provide strong safeguards for the effective and continued delivery of these essential community services. These safeguards include ensuring the government has clear legal powers to safeguard the large investment of public funds in the non-government sector and to protect the people who use publicly funded products and services.

Our government's disciplined plan to cut red tape and reduce the cost of business will no doubt have a positive and lasting impact on the social services sector. This bill is another winning knock for the government in the ongoing fight to slash red tape by 20 per cent. This is a fight we will win, and I support the bill before the House.

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—KAP) (3.11 pm): We will be supporting this bill before the House today. I commend the minister on her red-tape reduction. However, there are some issues that we will elucidate in this speech that we are very concerned about. It appears the objective of the bill is to safeguard funding for the provision of services and products that contribute to Queensland's economic, social and environmental wellbeing and enhance the quality of life of individuals, groups and communities. But it also appears that the minister and her policy team are restructuring the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to function as an administrative

entity which will utilise and govern the expansion of NGOs to deliver services which were once the main responsibility of the department. I commend the minister on her creation of a policy barrier between her department and NGOs which will act as a shield to deflect any public criticisms of the minister if she decides to reduce or cut funding to vital community services.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services provided an estimated $1.5 billion to not-for-profit organisations, local governments and other organisations to deliver child safety, disability and community services. I can just imagine the Treasurer rubbing his hands together and encouraging the minister to think about the savings the government could make within this portfolio, but I can also understand the minister's concerns—and I know the minister and I know she has concerns—that any reduction in funding to people with disabilities, children in care and communities in need would be very unfavourable to the LNP's re-election chances.

This bill, like so many others, has been developed in response to the Commission of Audit's final report. Therefore, the minister and the government seek to make their investment more effective and efficient by reducing red-tape costs, simplifying regulation and having more consistent funding arrangements across social service agencies. If the public look deeper into the philosophy underpinning this bill, they will soon discover the truth of this policy direction, which is the minimisation and reduction of the government's responsibility to provide community, child safety and disability services whilst increasing the opportunity for the private sector to compete for funding to deliver departmental front-line services. Depending on one's ideological stance relating to this bill, one could argue that the private sector could deliver services better than government—and I would ask the minister to address this later—whilst the other part of the argument is that government is responsible to maximise the welfare of its citizens through departmental institutions.

The red flags in this bill which validate my concerns that the minister is taking the policy direction which advocates that the private sector should deliver departmental front-line services instead of the government are as follows. The bill will amend and simplify the Community Services Act so it is capable of being used for all the department's funding to NGOs, local governments and other external entities. The bill removes provisions requiring entities to become approved service providers before they can apply for funding. The bill removes provisions specifying how the minister approves funding and requiring the director-general to enter into a written funding agreement, giving more flexibility for these matters to be decided through administrative process.

The bill removes from the CSA provisions setting out a show-cause process for the termination of a funding contract where a funded entity has breached the contract. This process is set out in funding contracts and therefore not needed in legislation. The bill also amends the object and principles of the CSA to better align with the broader range of services and products that will be subject to it and the narrower scope of the revised act. The bill expands the range of organisations eligible to apply for funding to give departments greater choice and flexibility about the organisations they fund to deliver services.

As demonstrated, the content of this bill will give the minister and the department greater autonomy and flexibility to provide or reduce funding by applying the contestability function to NGOs competing for departmental funding. The competition model which the minister appears to be utilising could create a dramatic drop in the quality of services—and this is what we are extremely worried about—which existing NGOs deliver. This would be due to the increase of competitors entering into the communities, child safety and disability services market. I argue that the introduction of a market system and a substantial increase of competitors will have a detrimental effect on the quality of services provided to the most vulnerable members of our society.

I take the ideological and philosophical stance that maximising welfare, equality of opportunity and equality of outcome should be at the centre of any policy development which governs the most disadvantaged members of our society. This bill will increase competition pressures on NGOs to reduce their cost margins so they can meet the contestability criteria set by the minister and the department. Moreover, this will have a negative effect on the quality of services for the most disadvantaged members of our society. Therefore, I argue that the government and departmental institutions should be utilised to maximise the welfare of its citizens through maintaining government front-line services governed by strict regulations which will ensure equal opportunity and equality of outcome for our most disadvantaged citizens.

I suggest that the minister will fail to maintain or ensure an egalitarian approach if the minister takes the policy path that introduces a competition model into the communities, child safety and disability services sector. The empirical evidence will provide the evidence that competition modelling

may work in areas of the economy that reduces the price for goods and services for general consumption. However, in retrospect it will have a negative effect on services that are developed to maximise utility for the most vulnerable members of our society and, moreover, society in general.

I think there are better policy alternatives to deliver equal opportunity and equal outcome solutions. I encourage the minister to think about revaluating the department's policy approach to communities, child safety and disability services. I suggest that the minister should consider a policy approach that engages individuals and families at the prenatal stage of pregnancy, therefore developing and implementing strength based practice whilst underpinned by a combination of egalitarian and utilitarian philosophical principles. This policy approach will help members of our society find their strengths and recognise their weaknesses and grant them the ability to become self-reliant.

This policy approach will increase the utility of our families and minimise the harm to vulnerable children who are born into dysfunctional situations. Hence, if the minister can secure a strength based approach to maximise the utility of the individual and the family, there will be a greater increase in equality of opportunity and equality of outcome for our most vulnerable members. It is time that this government stands up and takes a positive policy approach with the objective to minimise inequalities within our most disadvantaged groups whilst maximising their welfare, utility, equal opportunity and equality of outcome.

Mr PUCCI (Logan—LNP) (3.19 pm): I rise today to make a brief contribution to the debate in favour of the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. Following the Queensland government's response to the Commission of Audit final report, reducing red tape is a key element of the government's reform agenda. The Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014 streamlines the funding laws used by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and other agencies.

During the honourable minister's visit to the Logan electorate in February, the minister met with service providers to hear firsthand of the needs of their organisations and how they function within our local community. The need to reduce red tape was evident in each of these meetings. When organisations are charged with delivering a service to support our community, they cannot afford to be bogged down in red tape that ultimately impedes their ability to work for our community. The bill will deliver simpler and more consistent processes and requirements for funded organisations including not-for-profit organisations and local governments within our community. The bill is in line with the LNP government's commitment to reduce regulatory obligations by 20 per cent by 2018. The achievements in reducing red tape in only two years are already having a positive impact on businesses and service providers. While providers in Logan are reaping the benefits of the LNP government's commitment to red-tape reduction, more needs to be done, and this bill will help to enable our communities to maximise their full potential.

The Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014 will cut red-tape costs for funded organisations by about $2.6 million per year and help the department exceed its 23 per cent regulatory reduction target. The savings will be achieved through two reforms. Firstly, the bill removes requirements that mean organisations must apply to become approved service providers before they can apply for funding to provide disability or community services. Organisations will no longer have to apply twice. Instead, they will simply apply for funding. This simplified application process will reduce barriers to organisations entering the market. During the single application process, the department will confirm the organisation's bona fides, governance arrangements and ability to manage the funds and deliver the required services. Secondly, the bill removes prescribed requirements that all funded organisations must meet. These requirements are set out in regulations and impose upfront obligations to keep and implement particular policies and procedures. For example, disability service providers must keep a budget policy outlining the procedures they will use to prepare their annual budget and keep it up to date throughout the financial year. Government may use its statutory investigative and remedial powers if organisations breach these requirements. To cut red tape while ensuring that government can take action to safeguard service users and protect taxpayers' money, the bill instead describes the circumstances when investigators and remedial powers may be used. The bill provides that government may use its powers to address four serious concerns: harm to a person, failure to deliver funded products or services, misuse of funds or breach of the Disability Services Act 2006. This approach will help provide a much more efficient and effective funding system.

The bill will also support and enable further reforms that will improve the way the department does business and cut more red-tape costs for funded organisations. These include introducing simpler and shorter funding contracts and streamlining funding approval processes so that organisations receive funding faster. I can tell honourable members that faster funding will be welcomed by the organisations that I deal with in Logan. The red-tape reductions in the bill have been welcomed by the human and social services sector, which is enthusiastic about its implementation and the benefits for the sector that will stem from our government's proactive approach to reducing red tape. In their submissions to the Health and Community Services Committee inquiry on the bill, two peak organisations, the Queensland Council of Social Service and PeakCare, supported the red-tape reductions.

Working with our community service providers, this LNP government is doing its utmost to support, nurture and enable the community services sector. I am proud of our government for not sitting back and letting such vital services fall by the wayside. For 20 years our providers were left behind by a government that cared more about fake princes than developing communities, services and industry.

I commend the efforts of the Health and Community Services Committee and their support staff, as well as the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and her ministerial and departmental staff for their ongoing commitment to reforming the industry and ensuring that Queensland remains a great state with great opportunity. I look forward to maintaining my close relationship with the community services within Logan as we work together to keep Logan charging. I support the passage of this bill through the House.

Mr MINNIKIN (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill. I would like to specifically concentrate on the safeguards for funding aspect of the bill before the House. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services funds a range of community based entities to deliver services and products that are essential for maintaining the wellbeing of all vulnerable Queenslanders. These services are essential for preserving the wellbeing of people and their communities. In fact, in the 2012-13 financial year the department provided an estimated $1.5 billion, which is about 60 per cent of its total expenditure, to not-for-profit organisations, local governments and other organisations to deliver child safety, disability and community services. In the vast majority of these cases, funded organisations use government funding as their model in good faith to provide the best possible services for care for Queenslanders in need. Like anything in life, though, from time to time serious concerns can arise. It is not always possible to resolve these cooperatively or under the organisation's funding contract.

Although rare, I am pleased to report, these situations can have serious consequences for individuals and communities. Quite rightly, both government and the community expect that publicly funded services are delivered in a safe, transparent and accountable way. Funding legislation gives the department clear legal powers to safeguard the delivery of critical services and ensure the proper use of its large investment of public funds. Protections offered by funding legislation have not been consistently available, however, across the department's funding lines. This is because funding legislation appears in some areas but not in others. For example, while specialist disability services are funded under the Disability Services Act 2006, some other departmentally funded services that clients with a disability might use are not. An example is community care services.

The Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014 makes consistent protections available for funding provided under the revised Community Services Act 2007. Under the bill, a minister will be able to declare the protections in the revised Community Services Act apply to particular funding streams. In deciding whether to declare funding, a minister will be able to consider a range of factors. These include, but are not limited to, the amount of funding the vulnerable service users are provided with and whether the funding is regulated in another way.

The bill's powers enable government to investigate serious concerns about performance of government funded entities and compel them to take specific remedial action when necessary. In worst case scenarios, the department can appoint an interim manager to the funded organisation that will use the funding to ensure the service is safely delivered to the community. These powers will be available where a funded entity misuses public funds, fails to deliver a funded service or product, harms a person or where the organisation is providing disability services. It breaches the protections in the Disability Services Act 2006 such as yellow card employment screening requirements. To

enable the department to take preventive action, the powers will be available if there is a serious risk of any of these things happening. As well as reducing red tape, the bill will make consistent safeguards available to ensure services are delivered safely and accountably.

Like many members in this hallowed chamber I, too, have had the privilege to be invited into the homes of many Chatsworth residents who have actually had people provide care under the minister's department. I would like to take this opportunity during this small contribution to acknowledge the efforts of all the carers and parents, not just in the Chatsworth electorate, but throughout the great state of Queensland. I take the opportunity as well to congratulate the minister. We talk here often about red tape as it pertains to economic bills, but this is red-tape reduction—very much the heart and soul of where it really matters and that is with people, not just with dollars. I particularly congratulate the minister on the efforts that she and her staff have taken in providing this bill for consideration before the House. On that note, this is a short contribution. I am very pleased to support the bill. Again, I congratulate the minister on her endeavours.

Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (3.29 pm), in reply: I would like to start by thanking all members who have contributed to the debate of this very important bill, both today and in the last sitting week. As a number of members have pointed out, funded organisations deliver a wide range of vital community services across Queensland. It was wonderful to hear of those great community organisations from various parts of Queensland, particularly those I have had the very great opportunity to meet and learn about the work that they do on the ground providing very important services to their local communities. The staff and volunteers of these services do a fantastic job, and their hard work and dedication really does make a very great difference in people's lives, particularly to vulnerable Queenslanders.

The legislation has been developed as part of this government's commitment to revitalise front-line services. We are simplifying the way my department does business, which will result in better services for Queenslanders. As I said previously, non-government organisations, the Health and Communities Services Committee, the opposition and crossbenchers all support the red-tape reductions in this bill. I am pleased that the opposition could not agree more with the idea of reducing red tape to free up resources for better services.

Members may recall that at the last sitting the member for Redcliffe raised a number of issues, particularly as they relate to a similar bill introduced but debated in the previous parliament: the One Funding System for Better Services Bill. In my speech during the last sitting I noted some of the ways in which the bill is different from the one funding bill. The government has taken the time since the 2012 election to listen further to key stakeholders and make improvements to the bill and adjust it in line with the priorities of a government which is committed to front-line service delivery and ensuring value for money for Queensland taxpayers.

Mr Bleijie: What took you two years took them 20 years and they never did it!

Ms DAVIS: I take the interjection from the Attorney-General. A number of the concerns raised by the member for Redcliffe were addressed in my speech, and I would encourage the member to look at that speech to understand the distinction between the two pieces of legislation. I will, however, take this opportunity to address some of them specifically.

Members of the House are well aware that I have spoken on a number of occasions in this place about the unfortunate events which occurred at the Redcliffe Community Association. What is disappointing is that the member for Redcliffe continues to raise this issue for no other purpose than to score cheap political points. When the Redcliffe Community Organisation was going through those issues, our government took decisive action to ensure that vital community services continued to be delivered on the peninsula. The Minister for Health engaged an organisation to continue providing services, and members would remember that the former federal member for Petrie, now member for Redcliffe, really did nothing to ensure that there was ongoing funding at a federal level.

During the debate the member for Redcliffe and the member for Woodridge claimed that the Fair Trading Inspectors Act 2014, which was passed in this place on 6 March this year, allowed inspectors and other officers to conduct searches without a warrant. The powers in the Fair Trading Inspectors Act 2014 are broadly the same as the powers in this bill. Contrary to what was claimed by the members, that act does not allow inspectors to enter private premises without occupier consent or a warrant. I think it is important to underscore for this House, as the member for Woodridge herself highlighted, that the special powers which are being removed have never been used. However, to

ensure that the rights of vulnerable people, including those with disabilities, are safeguarded, there are a number of mechanisms which can be utilised to identify and address any issues—for example, as I mentioned in my second reading speech, community visitors independently engaged through the Department of Justice and Attorney-General also regularly visit residential disability services.

As the member for Woodridge mentioned, another safeguard is the Human Services Quality Framework. This is a new quality assurance framework rolled out by my department that consolidates four existing sets of departmental standards into one. This framework is designed to enable entities to deliver services more efficiently with appropriate safeguards. The member for Redcliffe also raised the potential effects on existing contracts. I am pleased to advise the House that the bill will not impose any new obligations or have any impact on those organisations that are doing the right thing under their contracts, nor would the bill require the renegotiation of existing funding contracts. Applying the legislation to existing funding programs or agreements will allow the government to safeguard services that are already being delivered. The bill will not have a retrospective effect. The government will be able to use its powers only if a serious concern arises after a declaration is made.

The member for Redcliffe also referred to the Queensland Law Society with respect to making funding declarations. The member asked for my view on whether a minister 'must' consider the matters listed in the new section 12(3) of the Communities Services Act before making a declaration. The bill provides that a minister 'may' consider these matters.

The bill has been designed so that it is capable of being used across a wide range of funding; not just my department. Decisions about whether to declare a funding program or agreement will need to be made in the context of that particular program or agreement. The bill provides flexibility for ministers to consider any relevant factor in deciding whether to make a declaration, including those factors listed in the new section 12(3). My department administers funding to enable delivery of a very broad and diverse set of services. Given this diversity, different factors are likely to be relevant to different programs; that is why the bill allows for some flexibility. I can advise the House that most, if not all, of the matters listed in the new section 12(3) will be relevant when I consider making a declaration. I am therefore likely to consider most, if not all, of them. The statement that I have undertaken to make in the House will likely set out the rationale for my decision, which could include the matters that were considered.

The member for Redcliffe also raised an issue about the definition of a 'serious concern'. She referred to the concerns raised by the Queensland Law Society, QCOSS and PeakCare that the definition was too broad and subjective. It should be noted that the definition of the first three serious concerns in the bill is exactly the same as the definition in the opposition's 2011 bill—that is, the improper use of funding, failure to deliver a funded service and harm to a person.

The current bill establishes a clear preference for resolving issues through cooperative means. It preserves the funding agreement as the main method of regulating the funding relationship between my department and funded entities. At the same time, the bill gives my department clear legal powers to take quick and decisive action to protect public funds and the safety of service users. The definition of a 'serious concern' is designed to clearly identify the circumstances when my department can use its powers. It also provides flexibility to deal with the variety of circumstances that may arise in practice. Using more prescriptive language in the definition may limit the government's ability to act quickly and decisively when a serious concern arises. As part of preparing for the implementation of the bill, my department will develop guidance for staff on what constitutes a serious concern. Specialist advice and assistance will continue to be provided by a dedicated compliance team within the department.

The member for Redcliffe also raised the point that the bill provides that, before exercising a power under the bill, a chief executive 'may' obtain a written report from an authorised officer on the matter. She referred to a suggestion of the Queensland Law Society that this should be changed to 'must'. When determining whether a serious concern exists, the bill allows for the chief executive to consider a range of available information. This information could come from a variety of sources, including authorised officers. Information could also be obtained cooperatively from a funded organisation via a complaint or by a matter being raised by a member of the public. The bill is drafted to ensure that it does not limit the chief executive's ability to effectively gather information when determining whether to take action. Requiring the department to prepare and disclose a report may delay the protection of funding or service users. It may also lead to the overuse of statutory investigative powers that authorised officers have.

The bill provides flexibility for a report to be obtained where this is desirable and appropriate. In addition, the revised Community Services Act requires the department to state the reasons for wanting to conduct an investigation. This ensures that funded entities know why action is being taken. The member for Redcliffe also raised the issue of legal professional privilege and confidential client information. These issues have previously been raised by the Queensland Law Society. The member asked what processes will be put in place to ensure confidential information is protected. It should be noted that the bill protects confidential information in the same way as the opposition's 2011 bill did. The Queensland Law Society raised the same concerns with that bill. The former Health and Disabilities Committee concluded that the provisions in the former bill were not intended to alter the ordinary operation of legal professional privilege. The Health and Community Services Committee has come to the same conclusion on this current bill. Legislation can only override the privilege through express words or a clear intention to do so. The bill contains no such overriding provisions.

The committee also noted that under the bill services can only be compelled to provide the department with confidential client information if it relates to an offence under the Community Services Act or a serious concern. While talking about this issue, I also want to assure the House that the bill will still allow the sharing of client information between services where this is necessary to meet the needs of the client and to provide them with an integrated service response. Existing methods for sharing case information will continue to be set out in funding arrangements. Regarding the removal of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal appeal provisions, the member for Redcliffe noted that judicial reviews would still be available but claimed that the bill would severely limit the number of external reviews. In fact this is not the case, as no NGO has ever used the current provisions to appeal under QCAT.

In response to the member for Condamine, I want to highlight that this bill is about maximising services to those Queenslanders who need it most. There is no hidden agenda here. This is straight up and down a bill that is designed to make the lives of community groups easier in delivering services to our most vulnerable Queenslanders. In saying that, I want to reiterate what I have said in this House many times before: we will strive for better front-line services by maximising our investment in the crucial areas covered by my portfolio. We make no apologies for that and this government will continue to strive for that goal. On that note, I want to thank the members who spoke of their local community groups and how this bill will positively impact them, freeing them up to focus on the work that they do best and that very important work that they do best. Members, including the members for Townsville and Nanango, also spoke of the $2.6 million efficiency that will be created by this bill—a not insignificant amount—and resources that can be much better used.

Before I finish, I want to once again thank the committee and the secretariat for its consideration of the bill and the stakeholders who made submissions to the committee and whose participation in consultations informed the bill. These changes will reduce unnecessary red tape for service providers so that they can get on with the important job of delivering services for Queensland communities. I also want to take a moment to thank the departmental staff who worked on the preparation of this bill—Barb Shaw, Cathy Boorman, Matt Simpson, Craig Hodges, Yasmin Kennedy and Kirsty Mackenzie—and from my office Lisa Myers and Tim Rawlings, who put an enormous amount of effort into ensuring there was balance between driving best outcomes in terms of front-line services to people in Queensland whilst ensuring that those most vulnerable were protected at the same time. I am very pleased to have presented the bill to the House. I very much appreciate the support right across the chamber and 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 33, as read, agreed to.

Clause 34—

Ms D'ATH (3.44 pm): Clause 34 of this bill omits the entire section 97 of the Community Services Act 2007 which allows an interested party to apply for a review of a review decision. Previous clauses 30, 32 and 33 dealt with the peripheral administrative issues surrounding external

reviews that will also be removed, including the removal of the appeal right to QCAT for a stay of the decision whilst a review is underway by the department. The minister during her second reading speech in relation to the removal of external review rights stated—

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.

I would submit that natural justice should remain via the provision of an external review even though, in the minister's own words, the review process only relates to two specific decisions. While I agree with the minister that 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, the opposition does not agree with her statement that at the same time an appropriate and effective review process will be retained. How does removing an independent external review process which allows applicants an avenue to obtain a truly independent decision amount to an appropriate and effective review process being retained? As I have stated previously, we on this side of the chamber believe that it is imperative to maintain an external, independent review process of all decisions under the legislation and we will not be supporting the removal of them.

Ms DAVIS: I spoke at length about this. This provision had never been used by an NGO. The framework is appropriate from the bill. As the Health and Community Services Committee commented, removal of the current right is justified when the objectives of the bill are balanced against the retention of internal reviews. I can absolutely assure the member for Redcliffe that we will be doing what we need to do to ensure that the delivery of services to our most vulnerable Queenslanders are done in a timely fashion and that there is oversight so that there are no issues in terms of requiring a review. I appreciate the member's position. I agree with the Health and Community Services Committee that the current right is justified and the government will not be changing its position on that.

Clause 34, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 35 to 77, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (3.47 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. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (3.48 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.

CRIMINAL CODE AND ANOTHER ACT (STOCK) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 11 February (see p. 45).

Second Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.48 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its consideration of the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. The committee tabled its report on 25 March 2014. The committee has made a recommendation that the bill be passed and the government of course accepts that recommendation. The committee also raised four points for clarification, which I will now address. The committee has invited me to liaise with the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience to encourage councils that have not adopted model animal impoundment laws to do so. I advise the House that I have now written to my ministerial colleague the Hon. David Crisafulli, the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience, on this point.

The committee has invited me or the Minister for Police to assure the House that police and other authorised officers will meet their general biosecurity obligations when searching for and mustering stock so as to minimise the spread of cattle ticks, invasive weeds, invasive animals and other biosecurity hazards. I have consulted now with the Minister for Police, the Hon. Jack Dempsey, and I am satisfied that the Queensland Police Service has the appropriate resources at its disposal to perform its statutory obligations under the Biosecurity Act 2014 and the Stock Act 1915.

The committee has invited me or the Minister for Police to assure the House that the police will endeavour to execute a forced muster order efficiently so as to minimise inconvenience for the property owner. Again, I have consulted with the Minister for Police and I am satisfied that a range of options are available to ensure that police who execute forced muster orders will do so effectively and efficiently. This includes ensuring that appropriate internal management processes within the Queensland Police Service are applied and can extend to investigations of the appropriate actions of police officers by external agencies such as the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

The committee has invited me to inform the House of what briefings the Department of Justice and Attorney-General will provide to officers of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and other departments and representatives of bodies representing landholders and stock owners and what information will be passed to individual landowners about the proposed provisions in the bill. I can inform the House that the bill is proposed to commence by proclamation. This approach is being taken in order to ensure that the Queensland Police Service Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad has sufficient opportunity to ensure that it and its stakeholders are ready for the legislation.

The implementation plan includes the following: firstly, communication with Queenslanders via a media announcement from the office of the Minister for Police advising of the commencement of the legislation; secondly, direct communication of the amendments to key stakeholders; thirdly, readiness and approval of general police policy and procedures and also Queensland Police Service Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad local policy, procedures and forms to support the legislation; fourthly, readiness and approval of updates to police computer systems and the official police internet site to reflect changes in the legislation; and, fifthly, a public information release on the police website to advise the community of the impacts of the legislative changes.

It is usual practice following the passage of a bill for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to formally write to all key stakeholders to inform them of that fact. In this case, I am advised that the department anticipates writing to the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Queensland Law Society, AgForce, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the National Farmers Federation and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. As a matter of courtesy, as the provisions of the bill relate to the jurisdiction of the District Court and the Magistrates Court, the Chief Judge and the Chief Magistrate will also be informed.

The bill delivers on recommendations made by a working group comprised of industry and government experts on a range of issues in the area of stock offending. The provisions enabling the disposal of stock under court orders pending finalisation of criminal charges will assist in the administration of justice. The provisions increasing minimum penalties will assist in deterring stock offenders. The forced muster provisions will help resolve disputes about strayed stock and their recovery. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.52 pm): I know that the Attorney-General has been biting his nails waiting to hear the opposition's position on this bill. I know that he is worried that, like so many other pieces of legislation that he has introduced into this place, we will oppose this bill and it will eventually blow up in his face. After the VLAD law debacle, his run-ins with the judiciary and his general incompetence, we all know that the Attorney-General's

position in cabinet is hanging by a thread. The Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts is waiting in the wings. I must say that the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts will certainly bring respectability back to this portfolio.

The Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill could have been the straw that broke the camel's back but, fortunately for the Attorney-General, this bill is substantially better in quality than most of his previous attempts—probably because it stems in large part from the work that was undertaken by the former Attorney-General, Paul Lucas. For the moment, the Attorney-General can sit back and relax because the Labor Party is not opposing this legislation.

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at that and I ask for a withdrawal, please.

Mr MULHERIN: I withdraw. This is not the legislation that will bring about his downfall. Instead, the Attorney-General will live to die another day.

For the most part, we regard this bill as a sensible response to the existing deficiencies of stock offences. There are a small number of issues on which we will be seeking further clarification from the Attorney-General. As the Attorney-General has outlined already, this bill makes amendments to allow for the disposal of confiscated stock by police; allows a stock owner to apply to a magistrate for a forced muster if they believe that their stock is on someone else's land; renames the Animal Valuers Tribunal the Animal Valuers Panel; extends the period of search warrants for stock from seven to 21 days; provides for police to use the stock management facilities of the person whose land is being searched subject to compensation; increases the minimum fines for stock offences; and transitions all fines to penalty units. I will go through each of those changes in turn. However, I would like to start by taking a brief look at the genesis of this legislation, the Stock Working Group.

In January 2012, the then Attorney-General, Paul Lucas, announced the formation of the Stock Working Group to review the effectiveness of stock offences within the Criminal Code and other legislation. The group was chaired by John Jerrard QC, a former justice of the Court of Appeal. The group's members also included the Director of Public Prosecutions, officers from the Queensland Police Service Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad, and representatives from the Queensland Law Society, AgForce, the RSPCA and Biosecurity Queensland. This was a fairly quick review by the Stock Working Group, which reported back in March 2012 with a number of recommendations. I understand that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General then conducted an internal review. This legislation gives effect to a number of recommendations from the Stock Working Group. There are a few changes in this bill that do not precisely follow the working group's recommendations, mostly for sound and logical reasons.

Under the status quo, stock animals that are suspected of being stolen can be returned to their owners prior to a trial only with the agreement of the defendant. Obviously, people contesting charges of stock theft are unlikely to agree to this, meaning that police are often left holding stock for long periods of time. This is impractical and costly, with the Queensland Police Service required to agist these animals for months or even years at a time. This is a suboptimal outcome for all concerned, including the animals.

This bill will continue to allow stock to be returned to their owners prior to trial with the agreement of all parties but, in circumstances where this is not forthcoming, police will be able to apply for a court order to dispose of the stock. The police would then be able to sell the stock to either another producer or to slaughter. I can understand that that may seem to be a little draconian in cases where ownership has yet to be determined through the court system, but I am satisfied that it is the most practical and reasonable outcome. Any proceeds from the sale will be held by the courts until the conclusion of proceedings and then transferred to the court determined owner. If stock is slaughtered before trial by either the police through a stock disposal order or by the owner with the agreement of the defendant, they will no longer be required to keep the ears or hides of the animal as is currently the case. This is an eminently sensible change as proper photographic records are far more practical to use as evidence than ears and hides.

This bill also allows for a stock owner to apply for a magistrate's order to conduct a muster for his or her own stock on another person's land. Currently, there is no recourse for a stock owner if a property owner refuses them access to the land to conduct a muster of stray animals. This is problematic in cases where a property owner is not able to be contacted to give permission or where the said landholder is intransigent.

Under this bill, the application of forced musters departs fairly significantly from the recommendations of the Stock Working Group, as I understand them. Firstly, the working group recommended that the police be the applicant for a forced muster and not the stock order.

I understand the rationale provided by the Attorney-General's department that the aggrieved party is the better applicant. I appreciate that a stock owner has a greater incentive and is most likely better resourced to apply for a forced muster in a timely fashion. Secondly, the working group recommended that a forced muster order be valid for 21 days and this bill allows them to run for six months. Once again I understand the rationale for this as it can be difficult to access properties in that period due to a number of reasons. However, as I read the legislation, all forced muster orders are valid for six months regardless of the circumstances. To me it would seem reasonable to allow a magistrate to vary a forced muster length according to the facts of the matter. In some cases it may need to be as long as six months, but in other cases it could be over and done with more quickly. I also wonder whether stock owners conducting a forced muster on another property are able to leave and return at any other time within the six-month order. I am just a little concerned that these orders could be used in a vexatious way by a stock owner. We must remember that by the time a forced muster order has been made there is likely to be some tension between the stock owner and the property owner and some degree of heightened emotion. I understand that police officers may accompany the stock owner on the forced muster. However, this is not a necessary condition of a muster, according to the way I read the legislation.

I would ask the Attorney-General to spend some time in his speech in reply on this issue. Specifically, I would appreciate if he could clarify whether forced muster orders can be issued for a period of less than six months; whether a stock owner can leave and re-enter a property without voiding the order; whether a police officer must always be present during a forced muster; and any further safeguards to ensure a stock owner does not misuse a forced muster order.

The bill also renames the Animal Valuers Tribunal the Animal Valuers Panel to prevent any confusion on the role of the body. I do not have any problem with this. However, I do note that the Webbe-Weller review into statutory bodies and government boards made a recommendation that the tribunal be abolished. Specifically, the report 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. In relation to the Animal Valuers Tribunal, the government can outsource the function as required.

It does seem reasonable to me that the value of stock can be determined without having a standing government body, as is already the case in valuing most other types of stolen property. I wonder if the Attorney-General could briefly comment on the rationale for simply renaming the tribunal instead of abolishing it.

The bill also makes some eminently sensible changes to stock search warrants. Specifically, it extends them from seven to 21 days and provides for police to use the stock management facilities of the person whose land is being searched. The opposition has absolutely no problem with these provisions.

The bill also makes some changes to the penalty regime for stock offences. It transitions all prescribed fine amounts to penalty units and increases several of the minimum fines. The opposition supports the move to penalty units even with the recent legislation which requires that they will rise at a rate significantly above inflation in a blatant cash grab by the Treasurer. In relation to the increases in the minimum fine amounts, I wonder if the Attorney-General could give a little more insight into the rationale. I understand that the minimum fine amounts have for the most part not been increased for several years. Most date to the mid-1990s and some as far back as the late 1980s. I do not have an in-principle objection to their increase. However, they are increasing by a significant amount, in most cases from $200 to $1,100. This is significantly above the rate of inflation. Indeed, if these minimum fines had been tied to inflation from 1996 they would currently sit at approximately $310. If they had been tied to inflation since 1989 they would be approximately $385.

I also note that the Stock Working Group did not recommend that these minimum fines be increased. During committee examination, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General provided information that in the five-year period between 2007 and 2012 there were some 85 stock offences. I wonder if the minister could tell us how many of these offences received a fine equal to the current minimum and the average fine for each of these offences. In short, I would appreciate if the Attorney could step us through the rationale and evidence base for this steep increase in a little more detail.

As I stated at the outset, the opposition will not be opposing the legislation. I have raised a number of issues for the Attorney-General to clarify in his speech in reply and I trust he will provide that response. I thank the committee for its work in delivering its report and I acknowledge the great work that the committee staff do in enabling the committee to bring down its recommendations.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (4.05 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. It gives me great pleasure to speak to this bill as the chairman of the committee that considered it. It was an interesting bill and I thank the staff of the committee who worked extremely hard to prepare the appropriate documentation in relation to it. The previous speaker set out to provoke those of us on this side of the House, but I will not be provoked. I am an easygoing sort of bloke.

Beaudesert constituent Ian Harsant was on the Stock Working Group. He and his lovely wife, Carmel, own quite a bit of land and are very involved in AgForce. As soon as we got into government Ian was ringing up asking me what was going on with this Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill. The working group had done a good job going through the process. As the previous speaker said, it is a common-sense response. It is as much a good neighbour bill as it is a Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill. Unfortunately these issues have created neighbourhood disputes that have gone on for years. This gives a solution to neighbourhood disputes so they can be resolved.

Last night I was talking to the Police Commissioner, Ian Stewart. He is pleased that this bill will go through. It will assist his financial budget. Looking after stock for any length of time can become expensive, particularly in the drought conditions we have had recently. One can imagine the feed bill. The stock cannot go hungry. This is part of the reforms that this government is implementing that is really starting to improve things across the whole budgetary process. It will flow through. It will have a trickle-down effect. They are only small in nature but there are many of them. They will flow through and make a difference.

It does seem unusual that the Attorney-General is running this stock bill. It does have a lot to do with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and local government. It is good that the Attorney-General is taking a particular interest in this bill and has raised issues with the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience about councils who need to amend their empowerment laws to support this act. That is common sense and should be done.

The Attorney-General spoke to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services to ensure that the police are up to speed. The stock squad is an important part of the Police Service. They are great officers who work all over Queensland. They attend cattle sales and part of their role involves information. We will use media, key stakeholder groups and websites to deliver information, but it is the word-of-mouth method that happens at the saleyards that is also useful. I am sure that the member for Gregory will end up at the Longreach or Blackall saleyards and will talk about how this bill will be useful for sorting out neighbourhood disputes and other stock issues.

That is what it is about; it is about getting the information out there. We will make sure that officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry are fully briefed on the issue. That is important so that they have a good understanding of where the whole process is going. It is about common sense, it is about cutting red tape and it is about process. We want to ensure that people look after the biosecurity issues. For example, the Queensland Police Service will vaccinate all their horses against hendra virus in case those horses come into contact with the horses of people who are not so concerned about biosecurity issues. It is going through the whole gamut of issues that need to be managed to ensure that the whole process works better.

Importantly, in five years the stock squad has obtained convictions on 80 offences and probably a few more have not come to resolution simply because of the fact that the stock are on a neighbour's property and you cannot get them back. Some of those issues will be resolved in the long term. This is a good common-sense piece of legislation that the LNP brought to fruition once we came to government. I acknowledge that the previous working group did a lot of work, but it is about bringing things to finalisation, which is what the LNP government has been doing. It is about reducing red tape through common-sense, logical legislation that works for the community and will actually save the community money in the long run. As I have said, the Police Commissioner has said that it will definitely save him some money.

Mr COSTIGAN (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.11 pm): This afternoon I am pleased to be speaking in support of the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. In stark contrast to the previous Labor administration, this LNP government supports rural Queenslanders. As in so many other regional electorates around our great state, in my electorate that is music to the ears of the salt-of-the-earth, hardworking people who work the land, love the land and have a strong affinity with the land across a number of primary industries, but especially my constituents who are actively involved in our beef cattle industry. As I have said in this place before, the Whitsunday electorate is perhaps best known for tourism and sugar, but the cattle industry still plays a significant role around the town of Proserpine where stations such as Breadalbane, Collingvale and Goorganga are iconic, at least in the eyes of the locals, particularly families such as the Fausts, the Deickes and the Coxs. This government also understands that stock—

Mr Rickuss: They're the poddy dodgers, the last ones!

Mr COSTIGAN: I would not think so. I will let the member for Lockyer and my committee chair pass that on to Mr Cox next time he comes to the Metropole in Proserpine. I turn back to the bill. This government understands that stock related offences are costing our community, with losses for primary producers running into the millions annually. That is why we have strengthened Queensland's stock laws to stamp out cattle stealing. We may well joke about so-called poddy dodging, but it is a serious offence that goes back to the early days of European settlement. As a government, we have a duty and an obligation to combat this industry scourge. These new laws will deter the perpetrators while providing magistrates with more power to help graziers get their stock back. I do not know too many cockies from around my patch who will be bemoaning that outcome as part of these reforms. As I have said before, the stealing of cattle is a serious crime that requires serious penalties.

I commend the excellent work of our stock squad officers from right around regional Queensland. Life on the land can be tough—real damn tough—especially in the current climate with two-thirds of the state gripped by drought. The last thing that our battling cattle producers need is to have their stock stolen. I acknowledge that it was the former Labor government, which is best remembered for dumbing down primary industries in Queensland, that set up the Stock Working Group, but it is the Newman government that has put agriculture back on a pedestal, that is doing something and that is upping the ante on penalties for those persons who indulge in cattle duffing.

Under the new laws, the courts can order the return of cattle when stock have strayed onto a person's property and the stock owner refuses to remove the cattle, a so-called forced muster order as noted previously. Evidentiary requirements for stock prosecutions are also streamlined under the new laws. This government conducted a review of the penalties that relate to stock theft and the outcomes of this review are reflected in this bill. The minimum fines for a range of stock offences will now be increased from $200 to $1,100 per beast or the value of the animal, whichever is the higher amount. Those fines will hit the hip pockets of those who attempt to profit from hardworking graziers who I am certain will warmly welcome these new laws as the Newman government continues to deliver for the man on the land in this great state with great opportunity.

In closing, I thank the members of the Stock Working Group for their participation in this process. It has been highly valued by me and, of course, my colleagues on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee. I support the bill and I am sure it will go down very well with cockies across the Mackay-Whitsunday region, with whom I will next catch up at the Sarina and Nebo sales.

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—KAP) (4.15 pm): In a short address to the House, I congratulate the government on this legislation, which has been needed for far too long. Certainly we will be supporting this bill. In Queensland, stock theft is a major issue and it must be addressed. We have all heard stories. I know of stories about stock theft that at the moment are going around where I live. It is a major issue. We welcome the increases in fines and we welcome the powers given to police officers in this legislation.

Mr COX (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.16 pm): I also rise to speak briefly on this bill. Before I go any further, as other committee members did, I thank the departmental officers and the groups and individuals who provided submissions to the inquiry. As always, I also thank our research team, led by Rob Hansen. This bill will restore the rights of stock owners and, through reforms to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, make the work of police on stock related criminal matters more effective and efficient. In short, that is the aim of bill, which is long overdue.

As we know, the Newman government supports rural Queenslanders and understands that stock related offences are costly to the community, with losses for primary producers running into the millions each year. Life on the land can be hard enough and the last thing farmers need is to have their stock stolen. As we have heard, the Stock Working Group was set up by the former government to provide recommendations about changes to stock laws. While the former government set up the working group, this government is actually changing the law and cracking down on cattle thieves by increasing the penalties that apply to them.

A few years prior to coming into this parliament, my background was in the beef industry. I was raised on Inkerman Station, south of Townsville. During my family's time on that property, we were fortunate in that we never really had to deal with the infamous poddy dodger, as we refer to it, and stolen cattle. We were fortunate enough to have great neighbours such as the Reas, the Porters, the Tapiolas family, the Berrymans and, of course, the Heatleys at Byrne Valley. If they got any of our stock in one of their musters they would return them to us. Likewise, if any neighbour's cattle were seen on our place we would return them and notify that neighbour. People such as Humphrey Heatley and Don Rea of the Burdekin run properties that have been in their families for a long time, as my family did. Such people hold high values and are held in high esteem by other cattlemen, and they respect each other's stock. It was because of people such as those that we never had to deal with issues of cattle theft.

The bill amends the Criminal Code and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. It obliges a police officer who seizes an animal in connection with a criminal charge to cause a visual record to be taken of the animal. The visual record is then admissible in a proceeding on the charge as evidence of the existence and condition of the animal and any identity marks on the animal. Objection cannot be taken to the visual recording being evidence of these facts. This means that photographs rather than the animal, or its skin or ears, can be relied upon by the prosecution as evidence during a trial.

I do not want to speak about all of the bill, but I want to point out that the provisions are going to save a lot of time for the stock squad in dealing with the issues that they have had to deal with over the years. They will save money for the people of Queensland. The bill allows a judge or magistrate to make a stock disposal order, enabling the police to avoid the lengthy and expensive agistment of stock while criminal cases are pending. A stock disposal order allows police to sell stock without prejudice to the interests of the complainant or defendant. The net proceeds are dispersed at the end of a criminal trial.

The other part in this bill is that it introduces a regime for a magistrate to make a forced muster order for the retrieval of stray stock in circumstances where the landowner onto whose land the stock has strayed is withholding permission for the stock owner to enter and retrieve the stock. Basically, all three of these provisions are common sense. Again, I commend the minister for bringing in such common-sense provisions.

Following the government's announcement of the proposed changes, AgForce made the following comment—

> Losses from stock theft annually can be many millions of dollars and are a malicious impost on the rural sector.
>
> We welcome the Government's moves to take a harder line on stock crimes and to give more power to law enforcement to convict perpetrators and protect stock owners.

This government has done this for the people on the land. It has always stood up for and looked after people on the land.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr COX: I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. The previous government were in government for a long time. Towards the end of their time in office they put together a working group to look at this issue. Again, it was all too late. As we know, that was often the case with the previous government.

I would now like to talk a little about the new stock disposal order regime. I will mention some of what is contained in the report. The new stock disposal order regime was recommended by the Stock Working Group. It was put together by the previous government. The existing provisions enable the return to the owner pending the trial or the return to the owner and slaughter of the animal pending trial with agreement from the defendant and complainant, and where an animal is returned by agreement for slaughter the ears and hide must be kept for production at trial.

The Stock Working Group found the existing Criminal Code provisions allowing for the return of an animal seized in connection with an offence to be problematic and unworkable, to say the least. The main issue identified was that agreement of the defendant and complainant is not often forthcoming, meaning that the police have the cost of the agistment of stock potentially for many years. Those who have had any involvement with these matters would know that. The value of the stock could increase or decrease in that time. They could go through drought or flood or become diseased.

The Stock Working Group determined that there should be no requirement that any hide or skin, ear or other part be kept and produced for tendering as an exhibit. This is common sense in the modern age given the technology and photography available to retain proof of the cattle or a recording of them. This is long overdue. Those I have known in the stock squad have been calling for this for a long time.

Under this legislation there can be a forced muster. This has been an issue for a long time with regard to cattle theft. It refers to the issue where cattle may be on a neighbouring property or have been shifted somewhere else but the person whose property they are on denies access to their land. The Stock Working Group noted that there are currently no legislative provisions that allow either an owner of stock which have strayed onto another property or police to enter that property to retrieve the straying stock without the permission of the owner of the property. The group determined that disputes relating to the recovery of stock could be reduced by allowing applications to be made by a stock squad officer for an order for a forced muster of the property.

The amendments provided grounds for a magistrate to issue a forced muster order subject to the satisfaction of certain conditions and documentary and evidentiary requirements, including the provision of an affidavit. The amendments also outline the details and conditions of any forced muster order together with offences and concordant penalties relating to the execution of an order.

Again the issue in the past of persons who may have been accused of stealing cattle not letting anyone onto their property to identify, search or retrieve cattle has been problematic. These provisions are going to help solve a lot of these crimes. More importantly, they are going to save a lot of time and resources for our stock squad. There will be quicker results. At the end of the day, it is the person whose cattle have been stolen who is the person affected most. That is a big part of their income stream—whether it is one head or hundreds of head of cattle. It is a big impost for people, particularly given the struggles they face—at the moment it is drought.

The bill provides for the expiry of the forced muster order after six months from the date of the order rather than 21 days. This was recommended by the Stock Working Group. The Stock Working Group decided that this amount of time would be needed—and this was explained to us in one of the public hearings—due to drought, which we are experiencing now; extreme rain events; or flooding. Some of this country is very inaccessible and we are talking about quite large properties. Twenty-one days could cause problems in that if there was a delay they would have to keep going back to get an extension.

The committee questioned this and has asked the minister to address this point. It wanted an assurance that there would not be undue delay and this process drag out for six months for no particular reason. We know that the prime aim of the stock squad is to solve these crimes as quickly as possible. I think in the end the committee was happy that the period of six months was left.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr COX: It is sensible, member for Whitsunday. The beef industry has been in my blood and in the blood of generations of my family. Cattle theft has been a scourge in our country and other countries for as long as we have domesticated cattle. This bill goes a long way to address the infamous poddy dodger and to make sure we return the valuable cattle, whether it be one or hundreds, to their rightful owner. The people who are committing these crimes will now be the ones with fewer powers than the stock squad and the owners. I support this bill.

Mrs MADDERN (Maryborough—LNP) (4.27 pm): I rise to contribute briefly to the debate on the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill. Ever since I was a small child living on a cattle property there have been stories around poddy dodging or cattle duffing—the stealing of cattle. As the member for Thuringowa said, it is a crime which has taken place since man first herded cattle. Fairly recently one of my constituents came to me with his concerns about the difficulties with the legislation surrounding stock related crimes.

One of the four pillars of the LNP government is that of agriculture. The government understands that stock related offences are costly to the industry, costing millions of dollars a year. Life on the land is hard enough with landholders contending with droughts, fires, floods, low commodity prices et cetera. They do not need to, nor should they have to, contend with stock related crime.

One of the difficulties of dealing with this type of crime in the judicial system is the fact that the prime exhibit or stolen object is usually a live animal—a somewhat different proposition to deal with than, say, a piece of jewellery, a bike, a car or some other inanimate object. This bill seeks to bring the manner of dealing with the exhibit or stolen object into the context of modern day technology, with the resulting reduction in costs to the judicial system.

Under the current legislation, cattle under disputed ownership must be held as evidence. This means the cattle must be fed and watered for the duration of the process, which can be many months or even years. This is an expensive and time-consuming exercise. If the cattle have been killed then the ears and hides must be held for evidence.

Under this bill, the Criminal Code will be amended to allow a court order for police to dispose of the stock which are the subject of the criminal proceedings and to place the proceeds into the court for payment at the direction of the court at the end of proceedings. Rather than keeping the stock as evidence, police will be able to tender a visual record which then becomes the evidence of the animal, its condition and markings. This evidence can be relied upon at trial. This proposed change will bring this facet of the trial process into line with modern day technology.

Fences are meant to prevent ownership disagreements, but often cattle have no respect for a fence that is down and will wander onto a neighbour's property. The retrieval of these cattle is dependent on the goodwill of the neighbour and, while most adjoining neighbours get on very well, there are occasions when this is not the case.

This bill will permit a magistrate or judge to make a forced muster order subject to certain conditions and documentary and evidentiary requirements for the retrieval of stray stock where there is no cooperation between neighbours. Conditions attach to the forced muster including supervision by police and processes limiting a negative impact on the owner of the property where the forced muster is being held. The forced muster order has a time frame of six months to take into account such conditions as floods and drought—and in my area we have had these frequently in the last few years.

Then there are also those people who do not see fences as any kind of barrier to them helping themselves to someone else's cattle. To assist police in ascertaining that an offence has taken place, warrants issued for the search of alleged stolen stock will be extended from seven days to 21 days to take into account the often large areas which need to be searched. The bill also contains an amendment which will allow police to be able to require the use of facilities such as cut-out yards in executing the stock warrant.

Penalties for crimes relating to stock have been converted to penalty points and in most cases have been significantly increased, and that is a reflection of the fact that the penalties have not increased for many years. Significant consultation in the formation of the amendments has been undertaken by the Stock Working Group, a group which comprised all relevant stakeholders.

On behalf of all landholders who have stock and some of whom have been subject to the loss of stock either by theft or animals wandering from their property boundaries, I thank all those involved in putting together this bill including the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the Stock Working Group, those who provided submissions and my fellow committee members. I wish to thank the minister for addressing those points of clarification raised in the committee's report.

While the numbers affected by this changed legislation will not be large, as most people within the industry respect boundaries and are good neighbours, I am sure that those affected, including the police, will feel heartfelt relief at the changes which will be made to both reduce costs and make it easier to resolve issues. As previously stated, life on the land is hard enough. This bill will strengthen Queensland's stock laws to stamp out cattle stealing. They will deter perpetrators while providing magistrates with more power to help landholders to get their stock back. Cattle stealing is a serious crime and requires serious penalties. I am pleased to support this bill.

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (4.32 pm): I rise to speak in strong support of the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. In doing so, I congratulate the Attorney-General for bringing this bill to the House. I thank and acknowledge the efforts of the committee in its deliberations and those of the Stock Working Group, which has been referred to in debate so far here this afternoon. I also acknowledge the input from industry right across-the-board, particularly AgForce.

That leads me to reflect on discussions about this bill, and the problem being dealt with in this bill, between me and most particularly the Premier, the Attorney-General and Mr Ian Burnett, the General President of AgForce, whilst we were in the member for Gregory's electorate at Longreach last year. I would also like to acknowledge many regional police officers and certainly members of the stock squad with whom I have discussed these sorts of issues over almost the last two years. This bill is, I think, very much an example of the can-do Newman government getting on with the job and not dragging the chain on these issues as industry has told me was the case when we came to power just two years ago.

Stock related offences, which are being dealt with in this bill, are certainly one of the highest costs to our primary producers. This of course has been mentioned by other honourable members in this debate this afternoon. We must protect and legislate against those who target our producers. Why? Quite simply, it is because of not only the impact from cattle stealing or poddy dodging—call it what you will—but also the impact that comes on t op of so many other negative influences on particularly graziers throughout the state of Queensland. I am referring of course to the current drought that still grips our state quite significantly—some 80 per cent of our state—despite recent rainfall that we have all celebrated in the last week or so, which I must share with the House has certainly brought great benefit to a number of areas in what you might call the coastal regions of the southern half of the state, including the North Burnett, the South Burnett, the Darling Downs and the southern downs, but unfortunately has not yet brought drought relief to more western areas, particularly in the south-west and the north-west.

Our producers have got it tough enough, and they certainly do not need to continue to contend with the historical challenge of cattle stealing throughout regional Queensland. Many honourable members have reflected on that reality in this debate this afternoon, and I look forward very much to the contribution from other members also listed to speak to this bill, particularly, might I say in advance, the member for Gregory, who was there discussing this very issue, as I said, with our Premier, our Attorney-General and me in his home town of Longreach not so many months ago.

Mr Bleijie: And 50 head of cattle.

Dr McVEIGH: That is correct. The Attorney-General was very much at home there at the Emerald Agricultural College in the cattle yards looking at those cattle—feeling right at home as the member for Kawana and of course the Attorney-General.

This bill allows stock owners to retrieve their animals by way of court order under the supervision of police and gives the police the ability to use photographs, for example, of the stock as evidence. Under the previous legislation, the actual animal itself, its skin or its ears were required for the process of identification. So the ability to use photographs now as evidence is, I think, a significant step forward—an example of this bill, a significant step forward that provides some great assistance to our police men and women throughout regional Queensland.

The bill also gives police the power to apply to have the stock sold in order to avoid costly fees for housing, feeding and maintaining animals. Again, I acknowledge that a number of the honourable members involved in this debate this afternoon have recognised that very, very important point. This will ensure the maximum return for the owner of the stock once a verdict has been reached and it will also result in a drastic reduction in the loss of income for the owner of those animals. As well as that, it is of course an animal welfare issue that I, as Minister for Agriculture, remain concerned about right across the state, as does the Attorney-General, given his focus in another bill on animal welfare and animal cruelty prevention measures that he has brought before the House just recently.

Can I share with the House that that is a particular issue that I have discussed at great length during my tenure as Minister for Agriculture with my colleague the police minister. He recognises, along with me, that the current requirements on our regional police officers dealing with stock theft accusations or cases of such theft mean that they have to go to great lengths to look after not only animal welfare but evidentiary requirements for any action that might be taken. The police minister and I have agreed that that is inefficient, it is costly for the police force, as I have said, and it is not in the best interests of animal welfare.

This bill will provide police with the ability to sell the animals if the stock cannot be returned and the proceeds will be given to the owner after the court process has been concluded. This will further reduce bureaucracy, red tape and time spent on issues that police officers across our great state could devote to other activities in protecting our community. On those couple of points, can I just reiterate that selling stock under that mechanism ensures the best outcome for the stock and, as I have said, avoids animal welfare issues.

The bill will see an increase in penalties, will help encourage the return of stray stock and will act as a deterrent for those who might have stock that, strangely enough, they find or others find may not belong to them. That is a significant deterrent, as I have said, by way of these penalties. Under the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014 stock owners will have more rights and this bill will prevent, as I have said, extra costs to our producers. It was those couple of points that we did discuss on many occasions right across the state—and again I reflect on that meeting with the Premier, the member for Gregory, me and the Attorney-General in Longreach. I meant what I said in reflecting upon these penalties on that day and the necessary deterrent that this bill will provide.

Our Attorney-General is not only standing up for Queenslanders and getting tough on crime in the city, he is getting tough on crime in the bush, and I congratulate the Attorney-General in that regard. It is proof that the LNP government is committed to supporting rural Queenslanders. Our producers, as I said earlier, do it tough enough. By introducing this bill, we will be taking a step closer to easing the burden on Queensland farmers and particularly graziers.

In conclusion, can I sum up by reflecting upon some key elements that are being reflected in this bill and the work that the LNP government, led by the Attorney-General in this case, has put into its development. It is, amongst other things, about red-tape reduction, which the assistant minister rightly reflects on. It is about being tough on crime, as the Attorney-General is leading us in. It is about animal welfare and it is about efficiency in government services. I am honoured to support the Attorney-General in this regard, and I support this bill very strongly.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (4.42 pm): It is with much pleasure that I rise to speak to the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. From the outset I say that this is another piece of documentation that the Attorney-General is going to put on the stage of good policy for the LNP Newman government here in Queensland—something that is long overdue. At the outset, I want to pay tribute to the stock squad in Queensland for the great work they have done over a great number of years. Some wonderful people have been working within this organisation. I know that the police minister is in the House today. I trust and hope that he and the Treasurer continue to work together to make sure we have the necessary and proper tools to allow our stock squad people to fulfil their duties across this state.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: There are none out there. They are all at Tambo, they tell me. We will talk about that after. I will tell my colleague and friend the member for Warrego a story about one at Quilpie in a minute.

I also recognise this afternoon in relation to this legislation Detective Inspector Mick Dowie, the coordinator of the stock squad in Queensland, and also Detective Inspector Trevor Stevens, who is in charge of the southern region. I also recognise the good work that Detective Senior Sergeant Jim Lacey is doing in the central region. I also want to recognise the great work that Detective Inspector Ian Robertson, who has retired, did in his role as the state coordinator of the stock squad. I want to put on the record the great work done by retired inspector Mick Keys of the Longreach Police district, who was a detective senior sergeant in the stock squad. You do not pick up men of this calibre on the street corner outside the local pub on a Monday morning. They are professionals. They are people who have been brought up in the stock industry. They are people who know full well what the industry is all about and how to go about apprehending people who break the law.

The most important factor about this piece of legislation is the fact that a magistrate can order a muster to occur rather than having to hope like hell that somebody is going to get enough evidence so that a muster can take place. This is one of the issues that has long been an impediment to stock apprehension teams, to the stock squad or police officers across the state. More importantly, it has been a huge impost on police resources in terms of having to look after cattle, sheep or whatever the stolen stock might be. I believe that we have to make certain that SARCIS, the Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad, has all the necessary resources so they can be the best not only in this state, but possibly the world.

I heard the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry make his contribution. One of the great failings of the former government was that they did not have enough people in the field. We saw the decline in biosecurity officers, stock inspectors—if you can call them that. Going back to the early days of my life in the bush in the pastoral industry, we had stock inspectors and police in every country town and there was a role for them to play. They knew every movement of all stock, from which station they came and where a lift was going. We have to get back to those traditional roots. We have to get back to that traditional situation where the police know what is going on, those stock inspectors know what is going on and, at the same time, everybody is out there on alert. Today we are understaffed in terms of stock inspectors and we have not had the right people on the ground in terms of police.

Over the years we have seen changes come through in the agricultural area and in the police surveillance area. One of the areas that is of major concern to me at the moment is that some of these lame-brained idiots who eat and drink green all day are trying to stop the branding of cattle in this industry. If we see the cessation of the branding of cattle, we are going to see a situation where we will need every copper in the state and right across the nation to be surveillance officers for the people who want to lift cattle, sheep, goats or whatever it may be. I will tell honourable members why. It is because that is the only form of real identification to prove that a beast has been stolen, whose it is or maybe where it is going.

The National Livestock Identification Scheme is very good, but if those tags fall off, nobody will know whose stock they are. The honest people are not a problem, but some of those midnight riders will find a way around the issue. At the end of the day, that is what it is about. The real issues that I see have been created by a lack of those important personnel: the local community who befriend the local police, the local police know what is going on, the local stock inspector and other people—when we get back to fully resourcing our people in the bush, I believe a lot of these issues will be made a lot easier.

The other thing that is a real problem in rural and regional Queensland is that we have just been subjected to one of the greatest droughts in my lifetime—probably since 1965. When that drought finally ends, there is going to be a shortage of female breeding stock, whether it is sheep, cattle or whatever it is. They are going to be at a premium price. Mark my words, anyone who has them will want to ride guard 24 hours a day if they are located in an area that does not have the proper resources to ensure that those livestock are kept safe. People out there will think, 'I'll get the best out of this cow. That cow there is a dry cow. That one there is a wet cow.' Like bloody hell! When it comes to big rain, 99 per cent of them will be wet cows because they will be in calf. I know how a lot of these blokes operate; they will keep the cow there and the calf will be six months old. Then they will send the calf home as she is a dry cow, but the calf—'don't know where she came from'.

I know how it works, and I know my colleague behind me understands full well. But years ago when I was at Quilpie—I come from Quilpie, if you didn't know; one of the greatest towns and one of the greatest areas in Queensland—we had a big sheep stealing case back in the mid-1960s that went on for about 18 months. We had police officers out there tailing those sheep around for about 12 or 18 months. Not only were they tailing those sheep around, but they were also tailing our sheilas around. I think two or three of them might have met up with a couple of those girls and married them. I think they might have even nearly had a family before the case was over, that's how long the case went on for! Us local blokes couldn't even get in there, but the coppers came in and cut us all out! So if this is about expediting the process, we are certainly on the right track to doing it.

For too long now we have been trying to secure country around some of our major centres so that the stock squad can have a place to hold cattle until such time as the court case is over. With the technology that we have available today, we have to make certain that every procedure is put in place so that our police have the right tools to go about their business—whether that is satellite phones, motorbikes or good horses to ride. As I said to the police minister here today, if we do not have plenty of properly trained people we will go backwards in 2014.

When we do get a wet season we are going to see the resurgence of the livestock industry in this state and in this nation, because we have the best farmers, the best pastoralists and the best producers of livestock in the world. The other thing I might say with regard to our livestock is that we meet the marketplace and we have always set traditions, and that is a compliment that we have received from good police officers, good stock inspectors, good vets and those types of people in the field. We will go on to once again protect the industry and make certain that it is safe for those people who have that investment in their property and their stock. May we all say at the end of the day that

we have to revisit some of these issues, and may we also look at the issue of branding. It must never, ever cease in this state or in this nation, because it would make it impossible for police to go about their detection work.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Member for Gregory, it was brought to my attention that you may have cussed during your contribution and—

Mr JOHNSON: What did I do?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: It has been brought to my attention that you may have sworn and used unparliamentary language.

Mr JOHNSON: That is just how I talk all the time, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would ask that you withdraw.

Mr JOHNSON: Did I offend you, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. You used a term that may be considered unparliamentary, and I would ask that you withdraw.

Mr JOHNSON: Well, whatever you find was wrong. Do you want me to withdraw the whole lot and start again?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just simply withdraw, member for Gregory.

Mr JOHNSON: Whatever you find offensive, Madam Deputy Speaker, I apologise if I have upset you.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, it was not offensive. For clarification, it was the use of an unparliamentary term.

Mr JOHNSON: I am sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you withdraw?

Mr JOHNSON: I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (4.53 pm): It gives me great pleasure to stand in this House and follow the wonderful member for Gregory and his eloquent speech. It is members like the member for Gregory who do support our regional areas with the passion that they do, and it is very, very important for members such as me to be able to follow him in this House.

I do rise to support the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to thank the Attorney-General, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, for bringing this bill before the House. I would also like to acknowledge the work and the contribution of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, chaired by Mr Ian Rickuss, my colleague here beside me, for reviewing this bill, and I note that the committee recommended that the bill be passed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the amendments contained in this bill will directly benefit the graziers in my electorate who live with the daily possibility of stock theft from their properties. In my electorate this relates mainly to cattle producers, but we also have graziers with sheep, goats, horses and other livestock. It gives me absolute pleasure to stand in this House and support another common-sense LNP Newman government bill before this House. It is just simply unfortunate that there are so many stock related offences which account for millions of dollars of losses in primary production mainly because investigations often involve significant police and state resources. On that point, I am very proud to acknowledge the hard work of my two local stockies in the Nanango electorate, Detective Sergeant Mark Ferling, who is a fantastic—

Mr Dempsey: Holly Ferling!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection by the minister. He is the father of the amazing Holly Ferling, who has just completed her third international cricket tour and she is only 18. She has only just finished school. She is an amazing example of—

A government member: They breed 'em good in Nanango!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: They do breed them well in Nanango! I do appreciate the work of Detective Sergeant Mark Ferling, and he is ably assisted by Detective Senior Constable Paul Jones. Whilst these two stockies might be stationed in Kingaroy, they cover a massive area. It is great that their minister is sitting in the House so that he can acknowledge their hard work too. Like all the stockies around the state they really do have these massive areas to police, so the amendments to the bill will make their lives easier.

I wish to acknowledge one of the common-sense initiatives that the Attorney-General has allowed to go through with this bill, and that is in relation to the admissibility of visual recordings. That is common sense. Obviously in the past the stock has had to be kept somewhere, so this bill obliges a police officer who seizes an animal in connection with a criminal charge to cause a visual record to be taken of the animal which is then admissible in a proceeding as evidence of its existence and, most importantly, the condition of the animal and any identifying marks on the animal. Further, objection cannot be taken to the visual record being used as evidence of these facts. This means that the photographs rather than the actual animal or its skin and ears can be relied upon by the prosecution as evidence during a trial.

I can tell you now that this is common sense, and it makes sense to me that the Newman LNP government would bring this in because obviously it is saving administration time for our hardworking stockies. These detectives can now take a visual record of the evidence. A couple of years ago in my electorate there was a case of severe animal cruelty, and the cost to the government for holding these animals was absolutely incredible. This sort of common-sense amendment should have been brought in years ago. It does not surprise me that it was not, because they were not a can-do government. We on this side of the House are a can-do government. We have stepped in and we have decided to get things done, and we have empowered our stockies on the ground like 'Jonesy' and 'Ferlo' in Kingaroy.

Another important and common-sense change that this bill makes is that it allows a judge or a magistrate—and usually it would be a magistrate—to make a stock disposal order enabling police to avoid the lengthy and expensive agistment of stock while criminal cases are pending, and this is what I was talking about earlier in relation to the animal cruelty case in Kingaroy a couple of years ago that I mentioned. That case involved cruelty to dogs and the agistment of those dogs cost an absolute fortune because they had to be impounded whilst the case was going on. This amendment allows the police to sell stock without prejudice to the interests of the complainant or the defendant and, importantly, the net proceeds are dispersed at the end of the criminal trial.

The reason I am standing here in support of this bill is that it is evidence that our government—the Newman government—supports rural industries. It also supports rural Queenslanders and understands the cost to the state of stock related offences. They are costly to the community, with losses for primary producers running into the millions each year. That is why we have put in this can-do plan to strengthen our stock laws and to stamp out cattle stealing. This is a serious crime that should also justify an increase in penalties. The rise in stock offences penalties from $200 to $1,100 is in line with current community expectations—that is, if you do the crime, you pay for it. These fines should be paid by offenders because those offenders are trying to profit from our good, hardworking graziers, cattle producers and stock producers across the state. It is the hardworking graziers such as those in my electorate who are quite often at the hard end of the deal with drought and the market conditions that they are currently facing. It is wonderful to see that we are bringing these fines in line with current community expectations.

With the small amount of time that I have left I want to acknowledge the difference between our government and the previous government. I heard one of the members opposite say that they set up the working group. It is interesting to note that they may have, but they did not do anything about it. It was so typical of what the former Labor government did. They set up a lot of working groups, but did they ever do anything? I do not believe they did.

Mr Krause: Two months before the election!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection from the member for Beaudesert: two months before the election. How convenient! I am proud to stand here to fully support these amendments which will restore the rights of stock owners and give them confidence once again in the system. This bill reflects our government's respect for a contemporary beef industry which deserves better protection and also gives appropriate powers to our Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad. I fully support the bill before the House.

Mr KRAUSE (Beaudesert—LNP) (5.03 pm): It is a pleasure to speak to the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. My electorate of Beaudesert is a little slice of South-East Queensland which represents the heart and soul of Queensland. We have a little bit of everything there including a little bit of Queensland's beef industry, but a very important part nonetheless. It is amazing how many beef producers there are in the 4,308 square kilometres that make up the Beaudesert electorate. One only needs to visit one of the local saleyards on a day that sales are occurring at Beaudesert or at Silverdale or at Boonah or at Kalbar to see that there are a lot of people

invested in the industry. Therefore, the community that I represent, including beef producers and dairy industry producers, will welcome the amendments to stock theft laws which are represented in this bill.

The LNP government supports rural Queenslanders and we understand that stock related offences are very costly to the community. There have of course been incidents of stock theft in the Beaudesert electorate in past years, as there have been in all rural electorates, but the losses for primary producers run into the millions each year. That is why we have brought these laws to the parliament. We are strengthening the stock laws to stamp out cattle stealing and to ensure that there is a gr eater deterrent for potential perpetrators. I welcome the contribution from the member for Gregory and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and endorse much of what has been said by other members here today in relation to the various aspects of the bill.

This bill will provide magistrates with more power to help farmers get their stock back, and I want to touch on this important point. The provisions allowing a judge or a magistrate to make a stock disposal order enabling police to avoid the lengthy and expensive agistment of stock while criminal cases are pending is a great reform and is something that, really, should have happened years ago. A stock disposal order allows police to sell the stock without prejudice to the person complaining about them being stolen and the proceeds will be held in court pending the outcome of any criminal proceedings on foot. This is an important reform, as is the reform which obliges a police officer who seizes animals to take a v isual record of the animals which can be used in those criminal proceedings.

The increase in mandatory minimum fines for stock offences has also been mentioned, and it has been noted that these have not increased since the 1980s. That is a long time for a penalty to stay stagnant in the community. I am sure that increasing the fines for these offences will act as a deterrent for potential thieves. Also when criminal proceedings are on foot it will make the community take note of the penalties that can be imposed and reflect on the fact that this is a very serious crime for those of us who live and work in and represent rural communities.

The Stock Working Group was set up by the former government to provide recommendations about changes to these laws. As the member for Lockyer and chairman of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee has noted, one of my constituents, Ian Harsant, was a member of that Stock Working Group representing AgForce. Mr Harsant has made a lot of representations to me, to the member for Lockyer and to the Stock Working Group as well and I know that he will be very pleased to see these reforms coming forth.

The Stock Working Group, as has been noted, was set up by the former government in January 2012—just two months before the election. I must take note of the mention made by the member for Mackay in which he basically sought to claim credit for the opposition for this reform coming to the House. The fact that it was set up two months before the election says something about the importance to which the Labor Party gave this issue. It was in office for 14 years, and two months before the election it established a working group to look at this issue. During those years it had plenty of time for other matters which acted to the detriment of landholders and graziers in particular. I refer to the Vegetation Management Act, which criminalised the actions of landholders and victimised graziers. It had time for that, but it did not have time to do anything about cattle theft laws. It had time to deal with local government amalgamations, which no-one wanted and which further marginalised and intimidated rural communities. It had time to gut the DPI and in fact to abolish the DPI and subsume it into some super department under which no-one was responsible for primary industries. It had plenty of time for locking up gr azing land in national parks and s hutting out farmers from properties and land which had been used as cattle properties for generations. That land was locked up by the government of the day, of which the member for Mackay was a part.

Mr Costigan: Into it up to his eyeballs.

Mr KRAUSE: I take that interjection. He was into it up to his eyeballs. The credit for this reform cannot be given at all to the members of the Labor Party.

There are other reforms going on as well. I make reference to the myPolice Stock and R ural Crime Investigation Squad. It is an online tool that is being run through the myPolice website. It is a great interactive tool that has had over 10,000 hits already. I know that the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services is a great advocate of getting out there and interacting with the community in all facets of crime prevention and detecting crime. The myPolice website can provide updates on what is happening if there is a s tock theft or other matters occurring in rural communities. It can engage with the community. Some people have this image of graziers and farmers in general as not

being connected with things like that. Times have changed and these days everyone is connected through iPads or smart phones or any other sort of interactive device on a mobile basis. These sorts of tools help the stock squad in investigating and making people aware of crimes that have occurred and in preventing crimes as well by raising community awareness about the tools and the resources that are available to assist them. That tool is solving crimes right now and it is a credit to the Police Service and to the minister that those tools continue to be rolled out and developed.

I applaud the Attorney-General for implementing these recommendations of the Stock Working Group. As the member for Beaudesert, I know that graziers in my electorate will welcome them. I look forward to welcoming the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to my electorate in coming weeks where he will be visiting one of the saleyards and addressing the graziers of my area. I am sure that this bill is one of the government's reforms that he will be able to talk about on that day. I support the bill and thank the Attorney-General for bringing it to the House so promptly.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (5.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill, which was introduced into this House by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie. This bill has also been thoroughly considered by the members of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee under the guidance of the member for Lockyer. It has certainly been well considered by the members of that committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Attorney-General for bringing this legislation into the House, because it is long overdue. It is much needed and, as the member for Nanango said, it should have been introduced years ago.

This bill implements and backs up the recommendations of the Stock Working Group, which was chaired by the Hon. John Jerrard QC. Other members of the committee included the Director of Public Prosecutions, officers of the Queensland Police Service Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad as well as representatives from the Queensland Law Society, AgForce, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Biosecurity Queensland within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. There was broad consultation right across the community and, certainly, this legislation met with widespread support.

Although the former government set up the working group, it is this government that is changing the law. It is this government that is cracking down on cattle thieving by increasing the penalties that apply to that offence.

Dr Flegg: That is the correct terminology. It is thieving. Well said.

Mrs MENKENS: I thank the member. Through this legislation, like all the other legislation that it has introduced into this House, this Newman government is continuing to show its commitment to the hardworking people of Queensland. Cattleduffing is big business in Australia and it has been throughout the generations. Sadly, throughout the tapestry of Australia's history many of our earlier criminals—cattleduffers—have been lauded as heroes. I have to say that quite a lot of colourful history surrounds cattleduffing in Queensland. But thankfully, gone are the days when cattleduffers were lauded as they were in the 1870s when Harry Redford, the now legendary Captain Starlight, was a working stockman on Downs station near Longreach. He built up a secret herd of 1,000 branded cattle on that vast property. He knew that he could not sell them in Queensland because of their branding and he also believed that New South Wales was probably a bit too close to dispose of his acquired stock. So with the help of two associates he managed to drive the cattle right across the desert country—some 800 miles—to South Australia. When he was apprehended in Sydney—I think it was about two years later—Redford was brought back to Queensland to face trial in Roma. However, the jury—bless their hearts—was so impressed by his remarkable droving feat that they found him not guilty, much to the disgust of the government of the day, which was so furious with the people of Roma that it shut down the courthouse there for eight months. I am sure the good member for Warrego would agree that that definitely would not happen in Roma today.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: They are lucky to get the cattle back. Fair enough. There have been a lot of jokes made about cattleduffing and it has been made light of, but it should not be. It is a serious crime. The Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill is yet another firm commitment to rural Queenslanders. This Newman government understands the cost of stock losses to primary producers, which each year runs into millions. Cattle stealing is a serious crime. This government intends to send a clear message that thefts will not be tolerated and they will attract serious penalties—genuine penalties will indeed apply.

Most property owners right across Queensland have suffered droughts, bad seasons and goodness knows what else. Those events have cut a swathe through the profits of livestock producers. It is already tough enough for our farmers who work the land hard without at the end of the day having their stock stolen. Prices for cattle are well down. It has been predicted by ABARE—the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics—that there will be a more than four per cent decline in farm production in the next financial year. In January, AgForce welcomed the Newman government's announcement of $20 million in drought funding for the remainder of the financial year as the drought declarations expanded to cover 65 per cent of our state. Thankfully, rains have arrived in some of those areas to assist, but it is still only a start. We need a lot more rain. In a number of those areas drought has persisted for more than two years. The Newman government is committed to growing a four-pillar economy and, as has been said continuously in this House, agriculture is one of the fundamental four pillars.

The first key recommendation of this bill overhauls the legislation dealing with how police handle stock animals that are seized in connection with an offence. Under the Criminal Code, the term 'stock' has quite a wide definition to include horses, asses, mules, camels, sheep, swine, deer and goats. It is all stock. The bill also amends the Criminal Code and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to cut down on the red tape and ridiculousness that has existed in the legislation until this point. Rather than bringing the actual animal, or its skin, or ears, into a courtroom as evidence, which had to happen previously, these amendments enable photographs to be relied upon by the prosecution as evidence, which is a much simpler and r eliable process. Judges or magistrates will also be able to make a stock disposal order, which will effectively enable police to avoid the lengthy and expensive agistment of stock while criminal cases are pending. We hear of stories about stock sitting there for years which, of course, is no help to the landholder whose stock has been stolen. A stock disposal order allows police to sell stock without prejudice to the interests of the complainant or defendant and the net proceeds are disposed of at the end of the criminal trial.

The bill contains other common-sense amendments, including the introduction of a regime for magistrates to make a forced muster order to order the retrieval of stray stock in circumstances where the landowner onto whose land the stock have strayed is, shall we say, not obligingly permitting the stock owner onto the property to rightfully retrieve their stock.

Searches of large rural areas can take more than seven days so this bill also increases the length of search warrants connected with stock offences from seven days to 21 days. As affirmed by the High Court, the minimum mandatory penalties were inconsistent and this bill will see an increase in penalties which have not been increased since the 1980s. The minimum fines for a range of stock offences will now be increased from $200 to $1,100 per animal or the value of that animal, whichever is the highest amount. Stock related offences are a costly aspect of rural crime. It is not just the direct losses to primary producers, it is also the loss that comes from the tying up of significant state resources in investigating these crimes and in prosecuting them. I acknowledge the work of the stock squad officers. It is a hard and thankless job. Any of those policemen will tell you that it has been an absolute bureaucratic nightmare up until now to collect evidence and charge offenders. The Newman government is listening to the people of Queensland. This bill is in response to industry calls for law reform on stock related offences. I am the third generation of my family involved in the cattle industry. Our family is the fourth generation. I understand exactly what it is about. It is a very serious issue. It is always disappointing to hear the jokes that are made if you are a landowner, such as if you kill cattle it is your neighbour's cattle. Nothing annoys an honest landowner more than the types of jokes that are made about eating your neighbour's cattle. We will move on from that.

This legislation does cut red tape. It is legislation that is tough on crime in an area that has been ignored for many years. People living in the bush often feel forgotten. They often feel that they are out there working hard and governments are not looking at them, but this government does support the people in the bush.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.21 pm): I rise to speak to the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. Can I contribute to this debate by saying how much I appreciate, as I know do the people in my electorate, the hard work of our rural families. Whether they are raising beef or other livestock it is a very hard lifestyle, particularly in the weather that has been encountered over the last few years. It has been feast or famine. This legislation is being amended to give due recognition not only to the hard work of the rural community but also to the cost of theft in the rural community to properly value cattle and other livestock as a commodity to the farmer. It is their livelihood.

I was very pleased to hear that we are moving from having to carry bags of ears or hides into the court to photos of the stock. No doubt there will be arguments about whether the stock that the photograph represents is actually the stock that is missing, but I am sure that there will be wise heads to determine that.

I would also like to place on the record my appreciation of the stock squad that works in our area. Over the years the number of people working in the area of stock control and policing certainly reduced markedly with the former government. I certainly hope that with the interest of this current government and this legislation there will be sufficient staff in the stock squad to be able to properly administer the work and to show due regard to the work that is done by our rural families.

I would also have to concur with previous speakers that the ability to dispose of cattle before they lose condition or before a protracted period of time so that not only the animal's welfare is addressed, and that is critically important, but also the value of those animals to the rightful owner can be maintained is welcome.

This bill has been a while in coming. I acknowledge that others have said that the previous government started the investigation into the changes a couple of months before they lost government. I commend the rural ministers in this government for the work that this bill represents and I again place on the record my appreciation for all those who work tirelessly in our communities to provide good quality food to us and good quality clothing if they are raising animals for fleece. I commend them for the work that they have to do in all weather at all times of the day and night and I thank them. I hope that this legislation and these changes rightfully respect the work that they do.

I also mention that the increase in the fines is most appropriate. Many times people who want to do the wrong thing have a look at the cost of wrongdoing and decide whether it is going to hurt too much and if it does not hurt a lot they will go ahead if they think they can get away with it. This fine more accurately represents the true cost of this illegal activity and also the cost not only to the farmer who loses cattle but also to the community that carries the cost of that illegal activity. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr YOUNG (Keppel—LNP) (5.26 pm): I rise to support the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. As a stock owner I can only applaud the Attorney-General's hard work to get this bill before the House. The bill amends the Criminal Code and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to achieve the policy objectives. I want to thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its work on the bill. I note it received two submissions, one from the Law Society to provide valuable input and the other from AgForce cattle president, Howard Smith. AgForce was a key stakeholder in the industry reform and part of the Stock Working Group. Other members of the Stock Working Group were the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Queensland Police Service Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad, also known as SARCIS, the Queensland Law Society, AgForce, the RSPCA and Biosecurity Queensland within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

I note that in Howard Smith's submission he quoted that Queensland loses 4,000 cattle to theft each year with an average of 1,150 being returned. I point that out for the member for Warrego. Stock theft has an extremely costly impact on the primary producer, not only in the cost of cattle stolen but the large amount of time given by the stock owner assisting with those investigations. I myself have put in days with police trying to locate evidence. I talk about a slaughtered bullock on one of my properties. Senior Sergeant Terry Hanly arrived early in the morning and we would have spent the rest of the day on our hands and knees looking for lost evidence.

Debate, on motion of Mr Young, adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Auditor-General's Report, Referral to Portfolio Committees; Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (5.28 pm): I seek to advise the House of determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved that pursuant to standing order 194B the Auditor-General report titled *Report to Parliament No. 15: 2013-14 Environmental regulation of the resources and waste industries* tabled on 1 April 2014 be referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for consideration; and that pursuant to standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report on the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 26 May 2014.

MOTION

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.29 pm): The motion before the House tonight is very clear. I move—

That this House has no further confidence in the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to perform the duties of his office.

It is an extraordinary step to bring a motion of no confidence in a member of the government and it is not something that the opposition would undertake lightly. However, the actions of the Attorney-General since he took over the portfolio of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice have been so lacking in the standards one might expect of the first law officer of this state that this action has become necessary. The Attorney-General started the term as a laughing-stock with the legal profession. His reputation rapidly declined from that point to what it is now.

Some of the Attorney's first actions were to close the diversionary courts in Queensland and to abolish court ordered justice mediations. His arrogance was palpable when, at his first estimates hearing as a minister, he dismissed my question as to whether he had actually visited the Special Circumstances Court with a wave of his hand and a dismissive, 'Highly unlikely now because I have abolished it'. It was embarrassing because the court was sitting that very day.

Then we had the instance when the Attorney-General decided he would appeal against a sentence imposed on Samantha Macey in the Magistrates Court. Samantha had appealed to the District Court and the Attorney-General, unhappy with the court's decision, appealed to the Supreme Court. The only problem was that he did not have standing to appeal. The Chief Justice ordered—

Unsurprisingly, the Attorney-General has this morning abandoned that proceeding and we ordered that the 'purported' notice of appeal, I suppose it should be called, filed on the 7th January 2013, be struck out.

Then there was the litany of legislative failures. The Attorney-General attempted to give effect to the LNP election policy to increase penalties for police evaders. The Supreme Court in Cairns found that it was ineffective, so he was forced to introduce amendments in the second bikie bill to correct the error.

Then we witnessed the spectacular failure of the Criminal Law Amendment (Public Interest Declarations) Amendment Bill 2013. That bill was drafted with transitional provisions that were to apply if the bill were found invalid by a court. As I pointed out during the debate, it was the first time that I had ever seen legislation drafted in contemplation of being declared unconstitutional. Luckily it was, because that is exactly its fate. I have to say that I did envisage it would at least make it to the High Court, but it did not even make it that far. It was struck out as invalid by the Court of Appeal. It was criticised by the then President of the Law Society. Her objection to the laws reflected that of many other legal stakeholders. On ABC Radio she very diplomatically skirted around the question of whether the Law Society has confidence in the Attorney-General. She might not have been prepared at that time to make such a declaration, but the opposition has no qualms. Even the then President of the Bar Association, Roger Traves QC, opposed the bill. He said—

The Bar Association of Queensland opposes the Criminal Law Amendment (Public Interest Declarations) Amendment Bill 2013 and strongly encourages the government to let the bill lie in the parliament while it is given further consideration.

In fact, this bill has become so notorious that it is already the subject of an assignment question for constitutional law students at a Queensland university. Students have been asked to imagine that it at least made it through the Court of Appeal and what argument would they bring against its validity in the High Court.

The bikie laws have also been the subject of a High Court challenge. An application has been filed in the High Court challenging the validity of the legislation and we await the court's decision as to the validity of those bills. As well as the constitutional questions around those laws, there have already been problems associated with their drafting. When the Attorney-General introduced the first bikie laws, his definition of 'participant' in a criminal organisation was drafted very widely. During debate I pointed out that a definition would include two lawyers going to a court with their client. Therefore, at 1.20 am the Attorney-General introduced amendments to ensure that they were not included.

These are all examples of an Attorney-General who is out of his depth. It is evidence of an Attorney-General who has insufficient legal experience to do the job that he is charged with. However, the events of last week show that it is much more serious than just ineptitude. The Attorney-General

betrayed the confidence of the President of the Court of Appeal, revealing details of a confidential consultation he had held with her over judicial appointments. The Attorney-General is a solicitor—he is an officer of the court—yet he has chosen to disregard his obligations to keep confidential what is considered confidential. For the Attorney's benefit, rule 9 of the Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules states that you must not disclose any information which is confidential to a client, but you should also be aware that at common law you will generally owe a duty of confidentiality to certain persons who may not be defined as clients.

Therefore, is it any wonder that the outgoing Solicitor-General has described the Attorney-General as untrustworthy and said that the public should be alarmed by his conduct? Mr Sofronoff wrote an opinion piece in the *Courier-Mail* where he said that it was now impossible for anybody to offer Mr Bleijie honest and candid advice in confidence. He said that Mr Bleijie has shown he is prepared to betray a confidence and Queensland deserves much better from its first law officer. Mr Sofronoff stated—

It is not just startling, but it is also a matter for public alarm that the Attorney General believes that it is permissible to reveal what he claims to be part of his confidential consultation with the president of the Court of Appeal.

Further, he stated—

That he would have done so under any circumstances at all short of legal compulsion is shocking.

That he has done so for personal and momentary political gain by attacking a respected servant of the public is unacceptable.

And further—

What is most unfortunate, his conduct has the hint of a nasty schoolboy's snicker in it.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They may well snicker. The former Solicitor-General has described the Attorney-General as unethical and ignorant and his actions as indefensible, and has called on him to resign. Mr Sofronoff has questioned whether Mr Bleijie has the aptitude for the job of Attorney-General, saying that the state has a chief law officer who does not seem to understand that breaching Justice McMurdo's confidence is indeed a problem. He said—

Having regard to the unawareness that he's shown about what he's done, it seems clear to me that that must carry over into his other functions, and it's really difficult to conclude otherwise than that he should go and do something else for which he might be suited.

I think those words say it all. For the benefit of the House and newer members, I point out that Walter Sofronoff was appointed Solicitor-General in 2005. He served in that position for four—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Here the Attorney goes again, snickering. Is this the sort of behaviour one would expect of the state's first law officer?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Your whole backbench is watching you.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The whole backbench is watching you and—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There is too much crossfire across the chamber. Members will speak through the chair. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Sofronoff served in that position for four previous Attorneys-General. In their time, he has never ever spoken out against the actions of an Attorney-General in this state. The fact that he has taken this unprecedented action is very telling. Tony Fitzgerald, who presided over the most in-depth inquiry—

Mr Stevens: Who?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, they ask, 'Who?' Let it be recorded. I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach who said, 'Who?' He asks who Tony Fitzgerald is. He presided over the most in-depth inquiry into corruption and the excesses of government in Queensland's history. What did he have to say? He had quite a lot to say! He said—

> Extraordinarily, those attacked by Bleijie include one of Queensland's most respected judges, the President of the Court of Appeal ... a woman of absolute integrity who has served Queensland as a judge with great distinction for more than 20 years.
>
> In one sense, she was an obvious target. It was the Court of Appeal over which she presides which held that Bleijie's madcap scheme to give himself power to overrule a court's decision that a prisoner be released was invalid.
>
> Bleijie's bizarre response includes a proposal for a new appeal court gives some indication of how far the Justice Department is out of control.
>
> It is appalling that a junior solicitor appointed to a position which is unsurprisingly far beyond his competence and experience has betrayed her honour's confidence and defamed her.

(Time expired)

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I give the member for Rockhampton the call, in terms of the conduct of the chamber, can I just ask that members refrain from using the side door during the debate. One of the opposition members used the side door while the opposition leader was on her feet and the level of noise at the time I found disruptive. I found it difficult to hear what was being said. Can I ask people to refrain from using the side door during the debate. I call the member for Rockhampton.

Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.39 pm): It would surprise few in this chamber that I take great pleasure in seconding the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. When the LNP came to power the Premier said, 'I pledge to you that we will conduct ourselves with dignity, grace and humility, and we will work for all Queenslanders regardless of their vote tonight.'

Two years later, the actions of the Attorney-General cannot be described as dignified, gracious or humble. It is clear that the Attorney-General is not governing for all Queenslanders, but actually targeting and picking fights with some, in fact many. Amazingly, after all the Attorney-General's bungles, the Premier states that he still has full confidence in the Attorney-General.

It begs the question: is the Premier's support for the Attorney-General only due to the fact that by keeping him in that role the community directs some of its anger towards the Attorney-General, deflecting it from the Premier himself? Is it some sort of perverse unpopularity contest? Even if the LNP members vote to protect the Attorney-General tonight they know that the community has already passed a vote of no confidence in the Attorney-General. That position is reflected in recent polls. Every single LNP backbencher in this chamber knows in their hearts why they are in this position.

The list of bungles that can be attributed to the Attorney-General is long. But for the sake of tonight's debate, I wish to highlight one of his worst and one of my favourites. I am, of course, referring to boot camps. It is worth reminding the House that the LNP went to the 2012 election promising hardcore boot camps. That is what they promised in the campaign. That is what they campaigned on. They did not say they were going to rebadge Labor's early intervention programs and call them boot camps.

The Attorney-General assumed responsibility and quickly rushed out his party's ill-considered plan, ignoring the warnings of experts who told him evidence from around the world proved that these hardcore boot camps do not work. Despite these warnings, the first sentenced boot camp was set up in the Cairns area. It lasted a couple of days after the first participants used a dangerous weapon to escape from the boot camp and then threaten nearby residents after breaking into houses. What was the Attorney-General's response? He sacked the boot camp provider, rather than taking responsibility for the incident as he should. It must have been a pretty woeful tender process. Who is responsible for that, I ask? There is nothing dignified in finding a scapegoat for your own stuff-up.

Then, in an effort to appease the unruly backbench, the Attorney-General promised both Townsville and Cairns boot camps. But after continuing delays and mismanagement, he had to merge them into one operation. Amazingly this is the trial that never produced a report and just rolls on. The Attorney-General puffed out his chest and promised in March 2013 that the boot camp in Townsville would be running by September. The poor people of Townsville waited until September only to find the camp was not operational and that the first youths would not be going into that camp until after Christmas.

Were they sentenced by a court like the Attorney-General initially claimed? No, they were not. It appears they were simply relocated from a juvenile detention centre and given a get out of jail free card to put someone, anyone, in the camp to mask the problems plaguing the Attorney-General's boot camp program. The Attorney-General has yet to announce how many youths sentenced by a court are in the camp after two years of having this policy shemozzle.

Big questions have been raised about the process the Attorney-General used to appoint some of the boot camp providers. Complaints about the process were raised by aggrieved tenderers with the opposition. The Attorney-General seems to indicate that the top provider selected by an independent panel was not given the boot camp contract and questions over the process to select some of the boot camp providers remain unanswered.

Many questions about boot camps remain unanswered by the Attorney-General. How quickly can an ambulance respond to a sentenced boot camp should a youth attempt self-harm? We watched the *7.30 Report* about the Gold Coast boot camp that showed young people were committing criminal offences while they were there.

The Attorney-General prefers to act on ideology, not evidence. This is a habit with this government and this particular Attorney-General. God forbid we would ever want to have evidence based policy from the LNP. It seems the Attorney-General's capacity to deal with complex legal argument and policy is limited to sound bites which is why no credible person would back him up. The Premier needs to remove the Attorney-General and replace him with someone who has the confidence of Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (5.47 pm): I move—

That all words after 'has' be deleted and the following words inserted:

- total confidence in the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to perform the duties of his office; and
- notes that the reforms led by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice are making Queensland the safest place to live, work and raise a family.

This Attorney-General has been a breath of fresh air in this state. This Attorney-General has achieved more in two years to rebuild the confidence of the Queensland community in the justice system than anybody arguably in two or three decades. Today I table for the benefit of all members a very comprehensive summary of all his achievements. I will in the very short period of time allocated to me seek to cover some of the highlights of this Attorney-General's stewardship of the justice system in this state.

Tabled paper: Office of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice: Attorney-General and Minister for Justice—Keeping Queenslanders Safe [4820].

Let us get into it. In terms of sex offender laws, this individual has done more than anybody else to make this place a safer state to raise a child. We have already introduced the toughest laws in the country despite protests from Annastacia Palaszczuk and civil libertarians who are soft on these animals—these grubs—who go after our kids. Within less than two years we have brought in some of the toughest legislation in the country. Our two-strikes policy means that repeat child sex offenders now face mandatory life in prison. If they are convicted of a sexual crime punishable by life imprisonment and then commit a like offence after being released, they will receive mandatory life imprisonment and will not be eligible for parole for 20 years. What about the Safe Night Out strategy? He has been working for a long time—over 12 months—to create a plan, in partnership with the Premier's department and the Police Service, to actually make this the safest place to enjoy a great night out.

In terms of financial support to community organisations and Victim Assist Queensland, an additional $2 million over four years has been allocated to organisations that support victims of crime. The Women's Legal Service has received an additional $750,000 over three years. I might stop for a moment. This Attorney-General was mobbed at a function for the Women's Legal Service here in Brisbane on Friday night. He is a rock star. If he is doing such a bad job, why did everyone want a photograph with him? They wanted to talk to him, get his autograph, pat him on the back and say he is doing a great job. In terms of Legal Aid Queensland, in response to the January 2013 floods LAQ has been provided with an additional $100,000 to assist flood affected Queenslanders.

The member for Rockhampton wanted to talk about boot camps. The boot camps have been implemented and operational on the Gold Coast, in Rockhampton, on the Fraser-Sunshine Coast, in Townsville and Cairns. We only promised a trial of two. This has now expanded into the full rollout of the program, and they are working, despite a lack of support from the Australian Labor Party.

There have been CMC reforms. Animal cruelty reforms have been announced in the last few days. There have been changes to workers compensation to create a fair scheme for workers and the best place to operate a business in Australia. In terms of fair trading, there has been the review of the property agents and motor dealers legislation. We have seen the establishment of the Justices of the Peace branch, the implementation of the JP QCAT trial and the revitalisation of the whole role of the JP. We have seen JPs lifted in the community, the expansion of the JPs in the Community program, the establishment of the formal mentor program and the consolidation of the categories of JPs. With the registry of births, deaths and marriages we have seen the major transformation in terms of recording manual hardcopy onto a digitised system to create efficiencies in the way documents are recorded and released to the public.

Then there is red-tape reduction. Under Labor, Queensland had some 70,000 pages of regulation—the most of any Australian state or territory—and our focus is to reduce red tape by 20 per cent. The Attorney-General has played a major role in starting the drive towards the reduction of red tape.

But I say this in summary: this Attorney-General has the confidence of the cabinet, he has the confidence of myself and, most importantly, he has the confidence of his parliamentary team and Queenslanders. The Labor Party should get out and talk to people more often. The Labor Party should listen to real Queenslanders who will tell them that this bloke stands up for them—this bloke stands up for them against the crims, against the grubs in our society. He is on their side: they know it, they smell it, they breathe it. They know that he is protecting them and their kids. That is why I have wholehearted confidence in this Attorney-General.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (5.50 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the amendment moved here this evening by the Premier in support of the Attorney-General and the great stewardship he has of this great justice department. The Labor Party are the prophets of lawlessness in this state and have been over the last number of years, and we have witnessed that in every aspect of society. In the 24 years I have been in this place I have never witnessed a more astute, gritty, gutsy AG than Jarrod Bleijie. Jarrod Bleijie is a man of his convictions. He is a man who stands up for what is right and what is decent, as opposed to this group on the other side who had a revolving door of sending prisoners to jail and letting them out again.

We have heard what he has done. He has made our communities here in Queensland from the least safe to the safest. We saw paedophiles running rampant under Labor. Now we see those paedophiles facing mandatory life sentences, as we have just heard the Premier say. In the time of this Attorney, from 2012-13 to 2013-14 robberies in Queensland have decreased by 21 per cent, armed robbery has decreased by 22 per cent, common assault has decreased by nine per cent, overall offences against a person have decreased four per cent, unlawful entry has decreased by 23 per cent, unlawful use of a motor vehicle has decreased by 22 per cent, fraud has decreased by 30 per cent and offences against property have decreased by 15 per cent. Mr Deputy Speaker, do you know why? It is because we have a man who has put his life and his name on the line and because he has the guts, grit and determination to stand up to protect the communities of Queensland. He is a young family man himself. He knows full well the responsibilities of a father and a husband, and when it comes to children he knows that they are not negotiable. In my own area of the Capricornia region, assaults have decreased by six per cent, robbery has decreased by 57 per cent, offences against the person have decreased by 14 per cent, unlawful entry has decreased by 23 per cent and offences against property have decreased by 11 per cent.

It is under the stewardship of this Attorney-General, Jarrod Bleijie, that we have seen the criminal motorcycle gangs in this state face reality and be brought to their knees and brought to justice. We have seen productivity in business increase on the Gold Coast. People want to be part of living in our cities and towns again and they want to feel safe. On the tourism strip of the Gold Coast we will see a resurgence of patrons supporting restaurants and night-life, and again people will feel safe to enjoy an evening out on a holiday on this holiday strip.

Since the Attorney-General declared open warfare on criminal motorcycle gangs, the statistics—current as at Monday, 31 March 2014—are that 748 criminal motorcycle gang participants and associates have been charged on 1,691 offences; 245 search warrants have been executed; 207 traffic infringement notices have been issued; and there have been 976 criminal motorcycle gang related reports to Crime Stoppers since 1 October 2013 and, of those, 52 persons with nil evidence or unconfirmed links to criminal motorcycle gang involvement. Those statistics are current as at Monday, 31 March 2014.

I congratulate the Premier and his cabinet but the Premier more so for selecting Jarrod Bleijie to be the No. 1 law officer for this state, a man everybody talks about wherever you go. I cover a fair area of Queensland and I am out there all the time, and everybody says, 'Thank God for Jarrod Bleijie.' The man has guts and determination to make our towns and our communities safe for our families to reside in, for our kids to play in, for our kids to grow up in and for our elderly people to feel safe in and not be locked in their homes—unlike the Labor cause, when we had people locked in their homes, frightened to death—

Ms Trad: Mr Acting Speaker—

Mr JOHNSON:—because Labor had a policy that did not stand for anything.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The member's time has expired.

Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (5.55 pm): Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I rise to support the motion moved by the opposition leader. Two years ago this week the member for Kawana was sworn in as the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. As the member is the 47th Attorney-General of Queensland, he follows in the footsteps of such luminaries as Sir Samuel Griffith, TJ Ryan, Matt Foley and Linda Lavarch. Sadly, his performance has fallen far short of virtually all of those Attorneys-General who have preceded him. His bungling puts him on a par with his only rival in the race to be Queensland's worst Attorney-General—Denver Beanland. Denver Beanland and the member for Kawana have much in common—a conservative who also hails from the Liberal part of the LNP; an ambitious young man who was also first elected in his 20s, much like the member for Kawana; and an Attorney-General who had lost the respect of the Queensland judiciary and legal fraternity well before serving out his first term in the job as first law officer of this state. Mr Beanland was so incompetent that a vote of no confidence was successfully moved in this chamber in response to his performance—and his party had the numbers! I am not so sure that we will be so successful here tonight. However, I am sure that if those opposite voted according to their conscience, voted according to their hearts and heads, then this House would express no confidence in the Attorney-General here tonight.

The two-year tenure of the member for Kawana has been marked by the winding back of long-established legal rights and conventions in Queensland. It appears that the Attorney is determined to send Queensland back in time with his regressive changes to our legal system. In fact, it seems the legal rewind has taken us even further back to a time when we were just a dumping ground for prisoners from our colonial masters ensconced in the mother country—a time, a place, a system of governance that I am sure the Attorney is no doubt fond of.

The damaging wind-back in our legal system has been exposed in an extensive essay published in the *Sydney Law Review* last month. The essay titled 'The Great Leap Backward: Criminal Law Reform with the Hon Jarrod Bleijie' pulls no punches in documenting the breadth and depth of the Attorney-General's destabilising of our legal system. I table a copy for the benefit of the House and particularly those members opposite.

Tabled paper: Article in the *Sydney Law Review*, vol. 36:1, by Andrew Trotter and Harry Hobbs, titled 'The Great Leap Backward: Criminal Law Reform with the Honourable Jarrod Bleijie' [4821].

Written by lawyers Andrew Trotter and Harry Hobbs, it provides a scathing assessment of the Attorney-General's changes to Queensland's legal system. It outlines the principles of our legal system, principles that reflect centuries of understanding and practice—all of which have been attacked outright by this Attorney-General, this Attorney-General who thinks that a few years of practising conveyancing law entitles him to turn back centuries of legal learnings to satiate his ideological thirst for a criminal justice system that is a little bit medieval, a little bit Spanish Inquisition and a lot 19th century colonial rule.

Let us go through some of those principles: the principle of a fair trial, the principle of a just sentence, the principle of a fresh start after those who have been convicted have served their sentence, the presumption of innocence, the admissibility of prior convictions, mandatory sentencing,

fettering judicial discretion, removing court ordered parole and suspended sentences, executive overrule of parole decisions and the publication of offenders' details upon release are just some of the issues that the Attorney-General is using to erode our legal principles, our legal system.

It is time for the Attorney-General to be relegated to history, which is where he belongs—back in time. It was Paul Keating who once said of John Howard and Tony Abbott that Howard was the old fogey and Abbott was the young fogey. It seems that with the passage of time Abbott now finds himself the old fogey and Queensland's Attorney-General can claim, as has been claimed for him, the title of young fogey. Lest Labor be accused of being mere knockers, I do have a solution for the Premier to consider and that is to simply swap the arts minister's and the Attorney-General's responsibilities. After all, we do know that the Attorney-General appreciates theatrics, as was mentioned recently in the *Qweekend* magazine in which someone stated—

'He came to all the parties and that, but he had to be the centre of attention,' says a former friend. 'Drag queen shows. He'd get up and do karaoke and dress up in random costumes. He was sort of … not the class clown, because he wasn't funny, but he had to be noticed.'

Queensland can get by with a funny arts minister, but we cannot get by with this arrogant Attorney-General, who thinks that three years of conveyancing practice entitles him to undermine our legal system.

Mr BERRY (Ipswich—LNP) (6.00 pm): I honestly thought I would never be standing here making the speech that I am about to make. What the member for South Brisbane has done is attack a very fine Attorney-General, one whom I will remember for quite some time. I will tell honourable members a story before I start to talk about our Attorney-General and how he is doing great things for Queensland. This is a story that is steeped in fact.

I acted for somebody whose son and cousin had died in a motor vehicle accident coming home from Chinchilla. Unfortunately, the magistrate—and I might say this magistrate was a Labor researcher back in her early days—actually made a bit of a mess of the Coroners Court. She got the vehicles upside down, inside out and let the fellow off. It was Denver Beanland to whom I wrote and said, 'This is a travesty of justice, an absolute travesty. How can somebody, a magistrate, make an absolute mess of a Coroners Court?' It was a case of a vehicle overtaking another vehicle and crashing head-on into a truck. But somehow a mess was made. Denver Beanland was the only person who came to the rescue of this poor man and his wife, both injured. He was the only one who would present an ex officio indictment against this driver after the magistrate had made an absolute mess. I think Matt Foley, that wondrous Attorney-General, appointed this particular magistrate! He was brilliant at appointing magistrates and judges! Absolutely brilliant! I take my hat off to him! The end result was that this fellow pleaded guilty on the first return date of an ex officio indictment. This is not the place to be bringing up names of people who cannot defend themselves. Denver Beanland was a very fine Attorney-General and, quite frankly, Jarrod Bleijie is a very fine Attorney-General and one who ought to be applauded. This is a man who goes out of his way to make Queensland a safer place. The result is that it is safer. I refer to the statistics that the member for Gregory cited, and I will not recite them again.

The reality is that this government, through this Attorney-General, is making a difference. The reality of life is that we are devoid of policy from Labor members. I listened to all the argument—and they talked about evidence. Let us talk about the evidence. The only evidence that was introduced that would be of the slightest relevance to this whole debate was that the Attorney-General had a conversation with a judge. That is it. The Attorney-General, in fact, has advisers in relation to appeals and so forth. They proceed as a matter of course. What do we do? Do we blame the Attorney-General because he takes the extra step, and he tests the legislation? Of course you cannot castigate him for that. The reality is that is his job; that is what he is required to do. The nonsense we have had to listen to in this debate—if one calls it that—has been absolutely ludicrous. I cannot believe we are here on this day debating such absolute nonsense. It does not make any difference at all.

I can tell honourable members that I have the utmost conference in this Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. He is doing the right thing. I have conducted a survey of people in my Ipswich electorate and 3,000 people replied. Do members know what the No. 1 issue was? The No. 1 issue was law and order. Do they know what the other issue was? It was a perception that they have little confidence in the sentencing procedure. I do not know what the disconnect there is. Maybe we have to do some work; we have to get out there and try to explain. But that is the reality. I think the data that the member for Gregory cited was so apt and correct and it was in line with what the survey material showed. I phoned about 50 of those people in the surveys and they said only one thing: they

want to be safer and they want their children to be safer. Quite frankly, Queensland is safer because of this Attorney-General. Quite frankly, it is absolutely ludicrous for the member for South Brisbane to stand up and give us a lecture about evidence. Heavens above! The last I want to hear about evidence is from that member, because she said nothing—absolutely nothing. She spoke for ages and only told us about a conversation with a judge, but then went on and lambasted everybody else including Denver Beanland, who is a very fine man. This Attorney-General is the best Attorney-General we have had for quite a long time. I noted that the member for South Brisbane did not mention Cameron Dick.

(Time expired)

Ms D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (6.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this debate. The opposition lacks confidence in the Attorney-General and calls on this House to also express its lack of confidence in the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to perform the duties of his office. The actions of the Attorney-General over the past week or so have been astonishing, to say the least.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: His attack on the President of the Court of Appeal is unprecedented and clearly illustrates why he is so unworthy of the position of first law officer in this state.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! The member is not taking interjections.

Ms D'ATH: To have revealed confidential discussions which took place during the consultation process for judicial appointments totally undermines the capacity of any member of the legal profession to have any confidence that their discussions will be treated with the confidentiality that they expect. The former Solicitor-General has taken the unprecedented step of calling on the Attorney-General to resign. He has, of course, failed to do the honourable thing.

One of the few people who has supported the Attorney-General in this matter is Tony Morris QC, the man who, due to his conduct at the Bundaberg Hospital inquiry, was found by the Supreme Court to be biased. That seems to be the only support that the Attorney can muster outside of the members of his own government. He has been criticised by the president of the Bar Association and called on to apologise. He has been roundly criticised by Tony Fitzgerald and the former Solicitor-General, Walter Sofronoff. There is a petition on change.org calling for the resignation of the Attorney-General. Two eminent QCs have given their opinion that the Attorney's statements are defamatory of the President of the Court of Appeal, who has been described as 'a woman of absolute integrity who has served Queensland as a judge with great distinction for more than 20 years'. We have also just found out today that a firm of solicitors has lodged documents in the Supreme Court claiming $600,000 in damages for defamation against the Premier and the Attorney-General for comments made about lawyers in relation to the bikie laws.

The level of enmity against the President of the Court of Appeal, which has been ongoing for some considerable period of time, has affected the Attorney's ability to properly perform his duties. Back in 2012 the Department of Justice and Attorney-General prepared a briefing note for consultation on the proposed amendments to the criminal proceeds confiscation legislation at that time. That briefing note attached a number of consultation letters seeking the views of the various heads of jurisdiction, and those on the other side might want to listen to this. Letters to the Chief Magistrate, the Chief Judge of the District Court, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the President of the Court of Appeal were all included with the briefing note. The Attorney-General signed the letters to the Chief Magistrate, the Chief Judge and the Chief Justice. The letter to the President of the Court of Appeal had a line drawn through it with the instructions 'do not send'. The only letters with those instructions were to Justice McMurdo and to Michael Cope from the Council for Civil Liberties, and I table the letter to the heads of jurisdiction.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, to judicial officers regarding proposed amendments to criminal proceeds confiscation laws [4822].

I would be very interested to hear the Attorney's explanation for why the consultation letter was not sent to Justice McMurdo. The Attorney-General has said, 'I've got a lot of time for Mr Sofronoff. I am one of his biggest fans.' It is a shame that the feeling does not appear to be mutual. The Attorney-General does not have the level of integrity required to fulfil his duties and should resign. Because he continues to refuse to do so, it is incumbent on this House to express its displeasure with his actions by supporting this motion of no confidence.

We have heard many in this debate and on the other side saying that this is a ridiculous debate, but they are completely ignoring what the public is saying. The Premier claims that he is listening to the people. Come to Redcliffe and listen to the people of Redcliffe, because I can tell you that the people of Redcliffe are fed up with this Attorney-General. The people of Redcliffe are fed up with this government and they believe that they have gone too far. The comments from the former Solicitor-General and Tony Fitzgerald are further proof that the Attorney-General does not know what he is doing and he should resign.

The Premier stood here in this House today and conveyed his full confidence in the Attorney-General; however, this is the same Premier who stood in this House and showed his full confidence for the former member for Redcliffe, Scott Driscoll. Guess what? The Premier was wrong then and the Premier is wrong now. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.10 pm): As Leader of the House it gives me great pleasure to speak to this motion for several reasons but, most importantly, to espouse the wonderful vision of our Attorney-General who, at a very young age, has taken on the responsibility of delivering community expectations about matters pertaining to the law. As I sit in this House as Leader of the House, the Attorney-General—or 'Aggie' as he is referred to by those close to him—would be sitting right there delivering nearly 70 per cent of the legislation that comes through this House. I am absolutely aghast at the paucity of talent over there that can only come up with a motion that plays the man and not the game. It is a typical Labor tactic of picking on an individual, when it is really all of this side of the House. At last count we had—

An opposition member: You've got nothing!

A government member: No, you've got nothing!

Mr STEVENS: Correct. This side of the House makes the decision on the matter—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! There is too much interjection. If the Leader of the House could take his seat, the House will come to order. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr STEVENS: We have a bloated CMC running rampant and out of control with staff who are not achieving any results and actually endangering people in this state by the release of inappropriate information. The Attorney-General has moved to address that matter very, very successfully.

The Attorney-General has brought back the QC designation, which has been enormously well received by the legal profession. Some 90 per cent of the former SCs who I know have voted to return to 'QC' rather than the socialistic 'SC'. On the Gold Coast particularly the Attorney-General has addressed the problem of criminal bikie gangs which the Labor Party failed to address year after year and about which I complained to the Labor party. The Attorney-General has moved quickly to address the matter. We do not see bikies in the Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach area because of the Attorney-General and his laws. He has attacked sex offenders and addressed red-tape reduction in relation to youth justice. All members would hear complaints about graffiti, and the Attorney-General has moved on those matters as well and is now turning to address animal cruelty. He is all over his briefs at every stage, and there is no piece of legislation that he is not on top of.

As for one particular Walter Sofronoff from the legal profession, who pontificates over what he thinks in his political opinion—not legal opinion; political opinion—is the inappropriate airing of discussions with judges who determine whether he is successful in his $10,000-a-day judgements over the Attorney-General, who is giving a political direction recognising community sentiment, there is no comparison. The Attorney-General is the politician the community talks to to make sure that their voices are heard in this House through legislation that the Attorney-General delivers, and he has delivered a clear and definitive response to the community's outrage and disappointment over certain judicial decisions. The legal profession is not the barometer of public opinion: politicians are, and they are greatly assisted by the media in the sharing of unexplainable judicial decisions with the greater community.

This Attorney-General has addressed those community expectations and concerns by introducing legislation to deal with sexual predators and bikie gangs that have been riding roughshod while the Labor Party has done nothing and flip-flopped left, right and centre. Those opposite are the flip-flop specialists. As many times as they flip-flop over different decisions in this House, they should all be wearing thongs. They have little to offer, and that is quite clear from their attack on the Attorney-General—

(Time expired)

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (6.16 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to speak to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The motion is very simple, and that is that the House has no further confidence in the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to perform the duties of his office. I wonder how many members have actually taken a look at the Attorney-General's Act 1999, which sets out what the Attorney-General's duties and responsibilities are. For the benefit of members, I refer them to the contents of that act. It says—

The Attorney-General has the functions, powers, prerogatives and privileges of the Attorney-General for the State under the common law or equity or by tradition or usage.

Then under the principal functions of the Attorney-General it sets out—

The Attorney-General's principal functions are—

(a) to be the State's chief legal representative; and

(b) to give legal advice to the State; and

(c) to be the Minister responsible to the Parliament for the administration of law and justice in the State.

We earlier heard the example from the member for Ipswich about how another Attorney-General had responded to a call to challenge a decision. Can I say that that is part and parcel of the role of an Attorney-General. If they believe that a magistrate or a judge has made a mistake, that is the capacity in which the Attorney-General can challenge that decision, and I know of numerous examples where other Attorneys-General have made similar challenges. I suppose when we take members to the role of the Attorney-General and whether there is a conflict between the Attorney-General pursuing the political agenda of the government or whether the Attorney-General is taking on the guardian role of the public interest of Queenslanders, I believe that on occasions what we have seen since our Attorney-General has taken on this role is an overlap, where the political agenda has overridden his responsibilities as guardian of Queenslanders' rights and liberties.

In Queensland we have no bill of rights to protect the freedoms and liberties of Queenslanders. Instead of having a bill of rights so that the citizens of Queensland could have some protection, what we have seen is the removal of the equality of Queenslanders before the law. We have seen the removal of the freedom of people to associate in Queensland without fear of being taken before a court. We have seen the removal of the capacity of magistrates and judges to exercise reasonable discretion in exercising their powers as properly appointed magistrates and judges in our justice system. I believe that the removal of discretion from magistrates is very significant, and I believe it is reflective of the stance that the Attorney-General has taken on a range of bills that we have seen introduced into this parliament. The Attorney-General has taken the overriding political agenda of the government in preference to ensuring that the rights and liberties of the citizens of Queensland are protected.

I note that the member for Ipswich said that there was no evidence presented by the opposition in relation to supporting the case. There is ample evidence already on file: we have the Queensland Law Society criticism of our Attorney-General as well as the former Queensland Solicitor-General; the Queensland Law and Justice Institute; the new Human Rights Commissioner, Mr Wilson; the Council for Civil Liberties; and former Queen's Counsel Tony Fitzgerald. It is interesting that when Mr Fitzgerald's contribution was mentioned I heard members of the government backbench saying, 'He's yesterday's hero. He's out of touch.' I do not believe that is the case. I believe the contributions made by Tony Fitzgerald QC are significant and it is a foolish government and it is a foolish member of parliament who simply paints Tony Fitzgerald as yesterday's hero and out of touch with what could happen with changes to laws in Queensland. I also listened to Premier Newman rattle off a series of achievements from his government led by the Attorney-General. I note he has referred to the Crime and Misconduct Commission reforms and he has claimed credit for those. I certainly do not want to touch on those because there is a bill before the House and I have no doubt that there will be significant debate when that bill finally comes forward. If that is going to be one of the Attorney-General's significant claims to fame if the current bill proceeds, let us let Queenslanders be the judge. During the debate we heard numerous speakers say who is listening to Queenslanders. Government members said they are listening to Queenslanders. Opposition members said that the government is wrong. I say bring on the election and let us all really see what Queenslanders say. I believe there is a real challenge in our community because many of—

(Time expired)

Hon. IB WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (6.21 pm): It gives me great pleasure to stand and support the Premier's amendment to this motion and to support my—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting. The member had hardly begun his speech. I warn those on my left and I will start naming you. The minister has the call.

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I do stand here with pleasure to support this motion and my good colleague and friend the Attorney-General, who is doing a great job for this state. I want to first start by elevating the discussion a little bit tonight and then I want to finish by getting it back down to basics. To elevate it—and I think it is appropriate that I do it—I turn to Shakespeare. On the one hand the Attorney-General, as a great lover of language and in particular the English language, will appreciate this and on the other I as arts minister will appreciate this. The other night I was sitting over at QPAC for *Macbeth*, the wonderful production that QTC is staging. Please go and see Michael Attenborough's great production. The language of Shakespeare rolled on and it reminded me of the wonderful words that Shakespeare wrote that have become part of our language. At the beginning of *Macbeth* you hear wonderful phrases like 'milk of human kindness', 'one fell swoop' and 'poisoned chalice'. As the play went on further and further other words and phrases that Shakespeare delivered were heard such as 'lily-livered' and 'a sorry sight'. When we got to that bit my mind wandered towards the opposition at that point, because what a lily-livered sorry sight we have of those opposite moving this motion tonight and failing to take into account the great work that the Attorney-General has done.

In his amendment the Premier rightfully refers to the reforms that the Attorney-General has brought in and, really, that is the test of whether or not this Attorney-General has the confidence of this House. I went back to the election commitments of the LNP and the Attorney-General has fulfilled them one by one. Let me go through them. The first was breaking the cycle of youth crime. Let me remind the House of what Queensland was like under Labor. Under Labor more than a third of all young criminals in detention had been there five times previously, there was a high proportion of property crime committed by children and there were more than 1,450 child offenders in youth detention over the past two years. That was the scene that the LNP faced when we came into government. What were the promises of the LNP team? A youth boot camp diversion program would be trialled to break the cycle of crime and give young offenders a second chance. Has the Attorney-General done that? Yes, he has. Another promise was to support participating juvenile offenders and their families through follow-up mentoring and supervision. Has that happened? Yes, it has through the boot camp trial. The second set of commitments related to delivering swift and fair justice. Again, I give the House a reminder of what we were suffering under Labor. Under Labor the Queensland justice system was in gridlock. Labor's mismanagement of the court system had resulted in increased costs and delays in hearings. Under Labor victims of crime felt that they had no voice. They were left out of the process and not kept informed of court proceedings. That was the situation in which we found ourselves.

What were our promises as an LNP government? They were to spend $3.5 million to extend the Justice of the Peace (Magistrates Court) to reduce court backlogs. Has that happened? Yes, it has. The trial at QCAT is proceeding apace. Only a couple of weeks ago I was very fortunate and privileged to have the Attorney-General attend my electorate of Mansfield at the Mount Gravatt Bowls Club where a couple of hundred justices of the peace turned up to be told of the reforms that he has made in that area, and the particular interest of justices of the peace serving in this capacity was obvious for all to see and their support of the Attorney-General's position on this matter was very clear to see. Another commitment was to refocus on the JP branch on compliance and support for justices of the peace across Queensland. That has happened. Another commitment related to victim impact statements to be read out in court if the victim wishes. Only a couple of weeks ago in the Morcombe trial the Morcombe family was given the great privilege, responsibility and honour of speaking to the court about what the impact of the crime that had been committed on their son meant to them, and what a great thing that was. Another commitment was $2 million more for victim support services. That has happened through Victim Assist Queensland.

There is no question that the Attorney-General has not failed in his duty to implement not the policies of himself but of this government. He stands for this government. He represents this government. He is performing well in his capacity in doing so. I am very proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with him and to support the Premier's amendment to this motion this evening.

Division: Question put—That the Premier's amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 67:

LNP, 67—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

NOES, 10:

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

PUP, 1—Douglas.

INDEPENDENTS, 1—Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: For any future divisions on this issue, the bells will ring for one minute.

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

AYES, 67:

LNP, 67—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

NOES, 10:

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

PUP, 1—Douglas.

INDEPENDENTS, 1—Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House has:

- total confidence in the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to perform the duties of his office; and
- notes that the reforms led by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice are making Queensland the safest place to live, work and raise a family.

Sitting suspended from 6.34 pm to 7.35 pm.

CRIMINAL CODE AND ANOTHER ACT (STOCK) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 950, on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr YOUNG (Keppel—LNP) (7.35 pm), continuing: Prior to the meal break I talked about the high cost of stock theft. One of the aspects of stock theft that needs to be recognised is the high cost and amount of time that primary producers put in to assist detectives to solve the crime. I have put in days working with police trying to locate evidence. I want to tell members quickly a story about a bullock that was slaughtered.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr YOUNG: I take that interjection from the member for Gregory. A good friend of ours, Senior Detective Terry Hanly, attended the crime. All we had was the head on the ground. Terry had one look at the head and said that it had been shot by a .303. We then spent the rest of the day—starting at six o'clock in the morning and going well into the evening—on our hands and knees looking for evidence. At the end of the day we found a cigarette butt of a name brand and also a bit of blue paint. I retired home and at 10 o'clock that night Terry phoned me to say that he had apprehended the man cutting up the beast. So it was a good outcome. Terry made mention of the fact that the cost of the

restitution for the beast and the time that he put in in overtime costs would not fit the crime. Tonight, we are amending the level of penalties for this offence. The reality of modern agribusiness, with fixed overheads in cattle production and the rising costs associated with wages, fuel, equipment costs and then the unforeseen variable cost, namely climate conditions—floods, droughts—supplementary feeding and the availability of stockfeed in drought, are very well known.

A very important aspect of this bill is the provision for the disposal of stock that have been seized by police in connection with a stock offence. I refer to the costs associated through agistment. I flag the Bravo operation, where cattle were held for approximately four years. The cattle were seized in a time of drought. As members could imagine, at that time the cost of agistment was at a premium of $4 per beast per week. Holding those cattle for four years ran into a cost of more than what the cattle was worth. Then there was the Ciccolini case in North Queensland, where the cattle were held for over 10 years. Understandably, some cattle died of old age whilst being held and many offspring were generated, which proved problematic. I am pleased to say that the old method of retaining ears and hides for court evidence will be withdrawn. This became a laborious process and problematic for court cases owing to deterioration over time to the point at which the hides could not be recognised and used as evidence. I have mentioned before that my father was a policeman in northern Australia. There was the case of cattle that were stolen from a property. The man who stole the cattle thought that, as the cattle were cleanskins—there were no visible brands on them—he was going to get away with it. The cattle were slaughtered and their hides were pegged out. At a later date they were produced as evidence. The property from where the cattle were stolen had a number of Indigenous stockmen working there. Upon producing numbered cattle hides as evidence, the Indigenous stockmen were brought in one at a time and, upon being showed the hides, recognised each beast individually. One had a bent horn and another one had a broken leg. They did an impersonation of a beast having a broken leg in the courtroom, which created a lot of humour, but the evidence was overwhelming and a conviction was recorded. The method of filming and recording the conditions of beasts prior to going to auction will alleviate the high cost of holding cattle on agistment. The moneys received at auction will be held over until the case is settled.

The forced muster is another important aspect of retrieving stock that make their way into neighbouring properties. I know firsthand how this works. I have one of those neighbours where I make sure that I am always there to do the mustering so that I get some of my cattle back prior to the brand being placed on their hide. Prior to entering politics I made myself very available at my neighbouring musters.

I commend the Attorney-General for this very important bill. The cattle industry is going through a really tough time. This bill will bring about penalties that should be introduced to make the fines appropriate. I want to commend the Attorney-General for that. I also commend the committee.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.41 pm): I rise to speak to the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) amendment Bill. The explanatory notes to the bill under the heading, 'Policy objectives and the reasons for them' state—

> The objectives of the bill are to ... make improved provision for the disposal of stock which have been seized by police in connection with a charge of a stock offence ... rename the 'Animal Valuers Tribunal' as the 'Animal Valuers Panel' to better reflect the non-judicial nature of animal valuer experts ... end the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* to ... permit a magistrate or judge to make a forced muster order for the retrieval of stray stock in circumstances where the landowner onto whose land the stock have strayed is withholding permission for the stock owner to enter and retrieve the stock ... and enhance police search warrant powers with respect to investigations of stock offences.

We cannot guarantee that this bill will be the be-all and end-all and will result in perfection harmony. This is not an easy situation. In many circumstances it is neighbour against neighbour. During drought periods, as the member for Gregory would understand, cattle will smash through fences, get out on the roads, go through neighbours' blocks and be in the next door neighbour's block. I commend the minister and all those who have contributed to putting this legislation forward because it is not easy legislation. The stock squad does a great job in Queensland. Queensland is a massive state. The member for Gregory mentioned earlier the importance of stock inspectors who are playing their part. They have a big area to cover. North Queensland is an area of a quarter of a million square miles. There are huge distances that have to be covered to ensure that we do not have stock theft, that properties are protected and neighbour disputes are resolved.

The legislation that is delivered by this bill has not been easy to put together. There is support from AgForce and police stock inspectors who have participated in putting this legislation together to get the best outcomes in relation to stock theft and neighbour disputes. If one buys 100 heifers it will take five years before there is a return. The last thing you want is someone to come along and steal

that return from you. I believe that this legislation puts in place a framework to ensure that there are safeguards so that a person does receive that return. There are many issues to contend with in the cattle industry, including drought, theft and diseases such as botulism where cattle drop dead as a result of chewing bones. There are many factors involved in trying to make a living in the cattle industry. At one time they used to say that you needed 17,000 acres to make a living. I would say at this present time you need 100,000 acres to make a living. There are also the difficult circumstances in relation to the depressed market, especially with the banning of live exports to countries such as Indonesia. As a consequence of the banning of live exports to Indonesia and the scare campaign I believe the grazing industry has been absolutely gutted.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr KNUTH: The member for Lockyer is right. I am not arguing with him. It is an issue that is hurting people and the industry. There have been suicides and bankruptcies. There have been many properties handed in. When there is the opportunity of an export market and that is then taken away, graziers hold onto their stock and look for other markets. When there is a drought and a surplus of cattle and the banks are breathing down their throat it is not an easy thing. It causes great fear and concern in the grazing industry. I hope we can all work together and not make this a political game. We want the best outcome for those in the cattle industry who are suffering. Recently, the Aussie Helpers were in Charters Towers with four semitrailer loads of hay to support those who were battling in the grazing industry. It was great to see those people and businesses who were supporting the industry such as IGA, FoodWorks, the Lions club that donated $50,000 in support of those graziers and the forklift operators who helped give those people a few bales of hay to help them out through these difficult times. When there is stock theft in the middle of all these difficulties, which takes away the livelihood that they are struggling to make a living at, it is even more difficult.

This is a complicated issue that deals with disputes between neighbours. These types of disputes have been going on since time began. The last thing I want to do is get up in parliament and point the finger. I commend the minister, the department, the industry, the police and all those who have been involved in trying to sort out the issues and deliver this outcome. I can see that it is an important thing not to ridicule, but to say, 'Full credit to you.' I commend this bill to the House.

Mr BOOTHMAN (Albert—LNP) (7.50 pm): Today I rise to make a reasonably short contribution to the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill. Whilst the Albert electorate is certainly part of the growth corridor of South-East Queensland, we do not have a lot of agricultural land, although we have certain pockets where you can find cattle grazing and small hobby farms. However, my local residents have a very keen interest in discussing the future of food production in this great state of ours.

As we all know, we have had nasty droughts in recent times and they are continuing at the moment. Even though we have had a recent downpour that has helped to some degree, we need a fair bit more follow-up rain. If you live on the land, you face extremes: you have floods, you have droughts, you have floods and you have droughts. That makes it very hard for the primary producers. However, I have to say that this government's commitment to looking after farmers and rural communities is unparalleled. At the last election we gave a firm commitment to build a four-pillar economy and part of that four-pillar economy was the agricultural sector. Therefore, I certainly thank the Attorney-General for this piece of legislation, because it is going to make it a little easier for individuals. As committee chair, the member for Lockyer does a fantastic job pushing through these pieces of legislation, listening to what the working groups have to say and assimilating the information. Certainly, it is great.

I am speaking on this bill and I am quite passionate about this subject because, in my younger days, I used to spend my weekends at Beechmont on my father's hobby farm. The next-door neighbours, the Marshals, used to run Friesian cattle. The property was about 600 to 1,000 acres of prime agricultural land. It is red-soil country. The best agricultural—

Mr Rickuss: Kikuyu grass.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Kikuyu grass—

Mr Berry: It must be very cold up there with Friesian cattle.

Mr BOOTHMAN: It can be a bit chilly in winter. It is the ultimate farming land. There are still some milk producers around Flying Fox Creek in the great electorate of Beaudesert. They are still running some Jersey cows out there. I remember when I was a young fellow riding through the

avocado paddock on my good old 100cc motorbike and there was a massive 600-kilogram Friesian cow in front of us. We had to slam on the brakes. I can tell members one thing about cattle: if they can find a hole in a fence, they will find it. They are professional escape artists.

Mr Dowling: How many burgers could you get out of that?

Mr BOOTHMAN: They are dairy cattle; you do not eat dairy cattle. To educate the member for Redlands, on average a Friesian cow can produce about 10,000 litres of milk per year. To give members an idea of what that means, that is 14 two-litre cartons of milk every day. That shows how valuable those cattle are.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BOOTHMAN: It is absolutely delicious milk.

An honourable member: Full cream?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Yes, it is full cream and Jersey cattle give creamier milk.

An honourable member: Skinny milk?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Unfortunately, that is processed. The examination of the bill involved extensive work by groups actively involved in the area, such as AgForce Queensland; the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Biosecurity Queensland; the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; the Queensland Law Society; the Director of Public Prosecutions; and the Queensland Police Service's Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad. During the Brisbane floods, I helped with the SES search phase in the Lockyer Valley. I spoke to an officer from the Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad. I was quite interested to hear him talking about his work and how his investigation processes are undertaken. From what he told me, it appeared that those processes were extremely bureaucratic. One of the key changes in this legislation cuts that away and makes it a lot easier for police to sort out issues far quicker and more efficiently.

A government member: You need to put a stake in the ground somewhere.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Yes, a stake in the ground. One of the key points of the legislation relates to what I was talking about before, that is, when cows break through a fence and get into other people's properties. The legislation will sanction a forced muster. An individual may say, 'Look, you can't come onto my property and take back your cattle. Even though they may belong to you, you still need my permission.' Under this legislation, a farmer will be able to get a police officer to accompany him to retrieve his cattle and take them back to his property. That will save an enormous amount of heartache and a massive cost for the farmers.

Tonight I will keep my contribution very brief. I thank the Attorney-General. Certainly, this is a fantastic piece of legislation. Most importantly, it is going to be widely welcomed by farmers. It is a great piece of legislation.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (7.57 pm): Tonight I rise with a brief contribution to the Criminal Code and—

A government member interjected.

Mr DOWLING: Not at all—and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. I begin by congratulating the Attorney-General on bringing this legislation forward. It follows through on two things: a commitment to Queensland to cut red-tape bureaucracy and waste. This achieves both. While I am in the process of thanking the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I also thank the member for Albert for his education on all things livestock.

This legislation seeks to amend the Criminal Code and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. It has been fairly comprehensively dealt with so I will keep my contribution brief. A senior officer from the stock squad lives just outside my electorate. He is a family friend. It is not until you sit down, as the member for Albert did, and talk to some of those officers who work in the field that they really start to drive home what are the issues around identification, the real value of those beasts when they go missing and the serious loss, not only financially but also emotionally, for the landowners.

It is criminals who this legislation is going to be going after in the most simple terms. I stress the word 'criminals'. Throughout the debate we have heard lots of colloquialisms, lots of colourful language, lots of airy-fairy and soft talk. We have heard them called duffers, rustlers and poddy dodgers. But what they are are thieves. They are criminals. None of these romantic terms and none of these colloquialisms should apply. These people are thieves. Everything we can do to empower the

police to go through the process, to get the arrests, to get the convictions, to get these people in jail is to be commended. Again, I commend the Attorney for this legislation. I look forward to it passing through the final stages in this House.

Mr SORENSEN (Hervey Bay—LNP) (8.00 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the debate on the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. I congratulate the Attorney-General for bringing this bill to the House. It goes to show that this government supports rural Queenslanders. It understands that stock related offences are costing the community millions of dollars, and especially the primary producers out there who work so hard. A lot of the time it is the good cattle that these criminals want, not the scrubbers. It is important to make sure that we deter these sorts of people.

In folklore there is a romantic belief attached to this. Earlier my colleague the member for Burdekin was talking about bushrangers and horse stealers and the fact that we made heroes of these people. When a small property owner loses half of their cattle it is pretty disheartening because half of their income goes out the back door.

In the past there was not much that could be done about it. The fines are $200. If somebody shoots a beast and takes the legs and a few of the finer cuts off the beast that would amount to a lot more than $200 if they had to buy that from a butcher. The fines are pretty low given what these people get for these beasts at the end of the day. We have midnight butchers out there who butcher them and sell the meat on the black market.

Mr Rickuss: Midnight cowboys.

Mr SORENSEN: Midnight cowboys or whatever you want to call them. These laws are here to deter those perpetrators and give the magistrates more power to help farmers get their stock back. Cattle stealing is a serious crime. We need some serious penalties for those crimes. This sort of legislation goes a long way towards that.

The definition of 'stock' in section 1 includes horses, asses, mules, camels, cattle, ox, buffalo, sheep, swine, deer and goats. There is the romantic folklore of *Waltzing Matilda* and putting a 'jumbuck in your tucker bag'. It is not romantic when we see truckloads of sheep disappearing down the road never to be seen again. It is pretty devastating for a lot of people. From my experience, when I see a beast that has been hacked up a bit and has had its legs and finer cuts taken off and the rest of the carcass is left to rot it is heartbreaking. It is heartbreaking for a lot of people in the industry.

The bill amends the provisions relating to warrants. At the moment the warrants last for only seven days. The warrant will now end 21 days after issue. In rugged country somebody could flog someone's cattle and put them in hilly country. They may not see them for a little while. When the situation blows over they could go and muster them again. There are a lot of tactics that these blokes have used over the years. It is good to see that the warrant will continue for 21 days. If cattle are dumped in some of this country we would not see them for weeks. We may see them around a waterhole. I congratulate the Attorney-General on introducing these provisions.

Another provision relates to killing an animal with the intent to steal. For some of the small farmers on the coast—the five-acre block farmers—if someone pinches their horse, their cattle or their sheep it is devastating. It is especially so when they have children around who love the animals. When they disappear it is heartbreaking for the kids. This legislation will go a long way to helping stop some of those crimes.

Branding is the only way to identify cattle because it is permanent. We can put tags in the cattle's ears but when they are rubbing up against trees or bushes they can lose their tags. From my experience, the farmers have to put new tags into the cattle's ears before they send them to market. They have to be able to track those animals back to where the calf was born more or less these days.

I think this legislation goes a very long way to helping out the rural producers who have been struggling for many years with the leniency in penalties for these offences. What is $200 today when we are looking at a bullock that is worth up to $1,200? Why would someone not take the risk? This sort of legislation will go a long way towards stopping that. The legislation refers to the value of the cattle.

It is good legislation. I hope it stops people from actually taking advantage of those who cannot keep an eye on their cattle all the time. Farmers cannot keep an eye on their cattle all the time when they are on some of those big runs. They have to trust their neighbours and keep an eye out for trucks driving around. Attorney-General, I thank you very much for the bill.

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.06 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Bill 2014. The bill implements the recommendations of the expert Stock Working Group. I anticipate the stock disposal order provisions and the increased minimum fines will assist in the administration of justice and the deterrence of stock offenders. I further anticipate that the forced muster order provisions will assist our farmers in the area of neighbourly relations.

I will now address some of the matters raised by some of my honourable colleagues. The member for Mackay raised the issue of forced muster orders. The order lasts for six months. This is set by the bill. Consideration was given to making a shorter expiration period with the ability for owners to make submissions to the court for further time where necessary. However, advice from the Queensland Police Service stock squad was that cattle cannot be mustered during drought or flood. As such, it would be impractical to limit the order to a shorter period, given the unpredictable weather conditions prevalent in Queensland. The weather can rapidly change after an order is handed down by the court.

Police are not required by the bill to be present for the forced muster. But police procedure will be heard both on the application and accompanying the stock owner to keep the peace. General safeguards in the bill include the ability to order costs of the application including after the muster, police have a right to be heard in the application and the court must be satisfied that the landowner was unreasonably refused access.

In terms of how the penalty review was conducted, DJAG reviewed the penalty rates in 2013. Our penalties were found to be on a par with or higher than those in other jurisdictions. It was also found that the maximum fine imprisonment levels for stock offences were significantly increased in 2002. In contrast, the minimum fine amounts for most offences have not been increased since their inception in the 1980s. To this end, minimum fine amounts were increased to take account of the significant period of time since their insertion in the 1980s and the increases in stock values since that time.

In recommending the increases, regard was had to the ranges of values of stock most commonly the subject of offending. The rationale for keeping the Animal Valuers Tribunal rather than scrapping it was that the Stock Working Group found that there was still a need for the Animal Valuers Tribunal, despite a 2008 report by Simone Webbe and Professor Matt Weller. This is because significant reliance is placed on their expertise by the QPS and the DPP. However, the tribunal was renamed the Animal Valuers Panel by the bill to reflect the fact that it is not a tribunal within the true sense of the term.

I thank the opposition for supporting the legislation. I also pay particular tribute to my colleague the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, John McVeigh, who I recall joined with the Premier and me at Longreach at the agricultural college there, where we announced this legislative policy position of the government. And I do thank the Minister for Agriculture—

Mr Rickuss: They didn't give you any elbow gloves?

Mr BLEIJIE: No. We had a good time with the cattle and on the tour we had of the agricultural college. The minister was right: this is not about a government making sure that those on our streets in our cities are safe; it is about making sure that rural and regional Queenslanders are safe as well and also making sure that those who commit these types of activities and crimes are held accountable for their actions. I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.11 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. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.11 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.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 13 February (see p. 234).

Second Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.12 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill gives effect to the findings of the government's review of the national model workplace health and safety laws, which came into effect in Queensland on 1 January 2012. The government has had concerns about the impact of these laws, including unanticipated or inequitable compliance costs. We can all appreciate the advantages of harmonised national model laws but not where they are a drag on Queensland's economy. The Newman government was elected on a platform that included rebuilding the Queensland economy and getting our state back on track, and this is something we are determined to do. We want Queensland to have the safest workplaces in Australia, but this will not be achieved by choking businesses with paperwork and unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape. This is achieved by government working cooperatively with businesses to assist them in identifying and managing the risks to achieve safer workplaces.

The results speak for themselves. There has been a substantial reduction in the serious injury rate in Queensland of approximately 19 per cent over the five years from 2007-08 to 2011-12. This includes significant reductions in the serious injury rates in our priority high-risk industries of construction, agriculture, manufacturing and transport. In the construction industry, there has been a 25 per cent reduction in the serious injury rate over the five-year period; in the manufacturing industry, the reduction rate has been 29 per cent; and, in the transport industry, a 22 per cent reduction; and, in the agricultural industry, a 21 per cent reduction. The projected serious injury rate for the 2012-13 period is expected to decrease by almost five per cent, despite public commentary that we are trashing worker safety in this state. This is a great result, and I want to thank Queensland employers and workers for their ongoing efforts to ensure that workplaces in Queensland are safer. I also want to encourage them to continue to have workplace health and safety as their business priority.

As part of the government's review, I chaired two industry roundtables and met with industry stakeholders and representatives to hear firsthand their concerns about the workplace health and safety laws. During the review, the construction industry raised serious concerns about the misuse of right of entry provisions by union officials which they report is a daily occurrence and causes significant distress for the industry and disruption on business. While this is mainly an issue for the construction industry, other industry sectors noted the complexity and confusion created by inconsistency between right of entry provisions under the Work Health and Safety Act and the Fair Work Act, which I might add is a federal Labor piece of legislation.

The construction industry's concerns are confirmed by complaints the workplace health and safety regulator has received about union right of entry disputes. In 2011-12, workplace health and safety inspectors responded to 57 right of entry disputes at construction workplaces. Most of these disputes related to entry without prior notice to inquire into a suspected contravention under the Work Health and Safety Act. Inspectors found that, while some notices were issued, overall none of the issues identified were considered to be an immediate or imminent risk to workers or others at the workplace.

Most construction businesses, even the large ones, usually decide the pressure and confrontation that would come from challenging unions—militant thug unions—on the matter of right of entry would just be too much and further impact on their commercial interests. The Grocon matter in 2012 was a classic example of this and was most likely a costly exercise for Grocon to challenge the behaviour of the unions. This matter is still before the Supreme Court of Victoria.

In December 2013 a judgement by the Federal Circuit Court of Australia found that union officials had contravened the Fair Work Act, which provides that union officials exercising particular rights at the work sites must not intentionally hinder or obstruct any person or otherwise act in an improper manner. The case centred on the behaviour of certain union officials after entering a construction site on Albert Street, Brisbane, in February 2010 and the disruption that occurred when they were purportedly there for safety issues. Since then, there have been other disruptions at major construction sites in South-East Queensland where safety concerns have been used for industrial purposes.

Recently, work was disrupted for two days at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital after unlawful entry by union officials. This resulted in the Fair Work Commission issuing an order prohibiting industrial action at the site for one month. The Commonwealth Fair Work Building and Construction Authority has ordered an investigation into the conduct of union officials at the Brookfield Multiplex construction site at Indooroopilly Shopping Centre. Multiple complaints have been received that safety concerns were being used by the union to enter into retail outlets in order to coerce small operators into signing union enterprise bargaining agreements. It is no secret that union militant thugs in Queensland are using workplace health and safety as a measure of industrial disputation. The Commonwealth Fair Work Building and Construction Authority, as I said, has ordered an investigation. We had unlawful disputation at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital site and the Fair Work Commission has issued an order prohibiting industrial action at the site for one month.

At the Pacific Fair redevelopment on the Gold Coast, claims of unsafe work conditions resulted in disruption and work stoppages at the site. However, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland inspectors found that there were no serious health and safety risks requiring notices to be issued. In fact, they found that consultative mechanisms were working well at the site and health and safety matters were being identified and resolved collaboratively. These sorts of unnecessary disputations impose significant costs on the construction project. We cannot afford this problem any longer. Something needs to be done now.

The LNP government had already responded to the concerns of industrial lawlessness on construction sites by introducing the Implementation Guidelines to the Queensland Code of Practice for the Building and Construction Industry, which were effective from 1 July 2013. This government has also established the Building and Construction Compliance Branch within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. The BCCB is responsible for monitoring, auditing and reporting on compliance with industrial relations laws on state funded infrastructure projects. It also responds to notifications and complaints of interruptions to work site productivity such as unlawful industrial action. More action is required. There is no place for union officials who abuse their powers and engage in inappropriate behaviour in workplaces.

Mr Pitt: Change the Industrial Relations Act then.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am really looking forward to the opposition's contribution to this debate tonight considering, as I said, that the Sunshine Coast University site was shut down but the Fair Work Commission said, 'Get back to work,' and, 'You can't have unlawful industrial disputation for a month.' We have had the Grocon issue with the Children's Hospital site. We lost $7 million of taxpayers' money. We have had the Indooroopilly Multiplex site, and let's not mention the fact that there is a current standing royal commission into union corruption and governance in this country. Let's not let that get in the way of a good story. I am really looking forward to the opposition's contribution tonight about unlawful industrial disputation and the fact that there is a standing royal commission in relation to union corruption. Let's not mention the HSU. Let's not mention Craig Thomson. I look forward to

the debate that is about to ensue in which the Labor Party opposition will get on their feet and they will defend the unions till the cows come home. Despite all the evidence, despite all the facts, despite the taxpayers losing millions of dollars a year because of unlawful industrial disputation with workplace health and safety used as an industrial disputation measure, they will still do that. Do members know why? It is because their preselections rely on it. Their preselections rely on what they say in this place. If they come in here—the member for South Brisbane and the member for Mulgrave—and attack the unions or tell the truth, God forbid, they will not be preselected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I hear all the interjections from over there. In the last 48 hours the federal Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Tanya Plibersek, has said that unions should not control the Labor Party any longer. Bill Shorten, ex-union official and current Leader of the Labor Party, said at the beginning of this year or early last year that there should be inquiries into union corruption, particularly on construction sites. So I am really looking forward—

Mr Pitt: I thought this was a safety bill. I thought this was a safety bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: I say to the member for Mulgrave that this is the workplace health and safety bill. What are we doing? We are stopping militant union thugs, supported by the Labor Party, from using workplace health and safety as an industrial disputation method in Queensland. That is what we are doing. That apparently is what the federal Labor Party wants to do—both Bill Shorten and also the deputy leader. I really caution the member for Mulgrave, who has drawn the short straw for this debate tonight, about coming in here and standing up for the unions. I take the theatrical interjection from the member for Burleigh. The member opposite is the puppet for the Labor Party. He drew the short straw for coming in here—

A government member: Crystal ball.

Mr BLEIJIE: I do not have a crystal ball, but if I did, it would say that the member for Mulgrave is about to make a contribution that will defend the unions and say that we are attacking the rights of the workers, Work Choices—all this sort of stuff. I can see it all. I could have written the member's speech. It is about to happen.

The reality is that the Queensland Labor Party has no choice, particularly because Cameron Dick is back in town. The opposition leader and the member for Mulgrave in particular as the shadow Treasurer know that, when Cameron is in town, he will not stand for that sort of incompetence in the shadow Treasurer. He will want some competent people in his team, not like the member for Rockhampton. Those who are over there will not stand the test of Cameron Dick when he is leader.

I proffer some advice to the Labor Party in Queensland. They should take some advice from Bill Shorten, their federal leader who said that there are issues in the unions. Although he said we should have a royal commission, we should have a police inquiry into unions, Tanya Plibersek, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Labor Party, certainly came out in the last couple of days saying that the unions should not have the say that they do in the Labor Party.

So I say to the member for Mulgrave that, when he makes his contribution, he should do so as a member of this House, not on behalf of or channelling his union thug mates. He should do it as a member of this parliament and as the member for Mulgrave sticking up for the constituents in Mulgrave, not because his preselection will shortly rely on a union militant thug being flown from Brisbane or wherever they are in the Labor Party to support his preselection.

The member for Woodridge does not have to worry about her preselection because she has said that she is clearing the way for Cameron Dick, who happened to get the gig without a preselection, might I add. So much for local say in that preselection! Let's see just how much sway the unions still have in the Labor Party. All honourable members on the government side can imagine what the speech that is about to delivered will be like. It will all be about this government attacking the rights of the workers and supporting unions in this state rather than sticking up for the workers in this state, rather than sticking up for one of the four pillars of the economy in property construction and letting projects go ahead—and the best thing for a worker is to have a job in Queensland. The best thing for a worker is to have a construction job in Queensland. It does no good for the worker if the construction company goes out of business because of $7 million in industrial disputation. No-one wins: the worker does not have a job and the employer does not have any work, but that is the Labor way. They challenge the construction companies and challenge the big developers. They might have a win on the front pages of the newspapers, but then no-one wins. Their supporters do not win because no-one will have a job at the end of the day if a construction company in this state collapses.

Mrs Scott: What is your unemployment level?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Woodridge. The economic growth—

Mr Kempton interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Cook. That is the best contribution that the member for Cook has ever made since coming to this place. That is the first time we have heard the member for Woodridge interject. I take the interjection. Let me tell the member for Woodridge what the economic stability in Queensland is now. Australia has 1.9 per cent economic growth. What does Queensland have? It has 4.1 per cent economic growth. The average in Australia is 1.9 per cent and Queensland is storming ahead because of the efforts of the Premier, the Treasurer and the parliamentary team on the government side. The Queensland economy is powering ahead because of this government, not because of the Labor Party.

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the laughing interjection from the member for Rockhampton. The member for Rockhampton is laughing away. He is laughing because he has not experienced the Labor Party regime. He did not experience the Paul Lucases, the Anna Blighs, the Robert Schwartens and the Andrew Frasers of the world. He did not experience their economics. When the member for Mulgrave was in the cabinet coming up with those very important decisions to drive the Queensland economy, they drove the Queensland economy down. Everything they touched wrecked the economy in Queensland. We are rebuilding the economy. We are rebuilding the economy based on the four pillars, and property construction is a major part of that. As a government, we will not stand—and nor will the people of Queensland—for union militant thuggery on work sites any longer.

If the Labor Party want to take a lesson from anyone else and they do not want to listen to me, that is fine; they should take a lesson from Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd, who introduced the fair work legislation, and guess what? They put in place a requirement for 24 hours notice to be given for unions to enter work sites. So now I am going to be accused of copying the federal Labor Party legislation. If that is what they are going to accuse me of, that is fine. However, they will stand up in this place in about 44 minutes time—when I have finished my contribution—and they will bleat and they will moan about these laws but at all times they will stand up for the union militant thugs of the Queensland unions. When we are talking about union militant thugs, we are talking of course about the CFMEU, the ones who continually go on to construction sites in Queensland. Time and time again I have heard of the complaints from the construction industry.

You only have to talk to the honourable health minister about the children's hospital site. The Queensland taxpayers lost how much money? Have a guess how much money the taxpayers lost in Queensland because of union militant activity. $7.5 million. That is just the taxpayer; that is not the company. I take the silence from the opposition as an acceptance that that is all just part of doing business in Queensland with the unions. The rort on construction sites, the union militant thuggery, will and must stop.

I am very pleased to advise honourable members that I attended the Master Builders Association of Queensland lunch the other day with Nigel Hadgkiss, who is the new commissioner for the federal body which will be the reintroduction of the ABCC that the coalition government has announced. He too has the same determination to make sure that this type of activity is not happening. In the last two years I have seen good construction sites and projects in Queensland being shut down because when one of their union militant thuggery mates is in court they shut down because of a workplace health and safety issue, and they all run down to the Commonwealth courts to have their protest. It is not about safety; it is about sticking up for their militant mates on the construction sites. This will ensure that those responsible for workplace health and safety in Queensland are the inspectorate of the workplace health and safety regulator; not militant union thugs who stop our construction sites and lose millions of dollars for the Queensland taxpayers.

For the last 10 minutes I have digressed in this debate—which I do not ordinarily do in a second reading speech—but I want to highlight the point that the honourable member for Mulgrave drew the short straw because he is not the shadow minister for this debate. The Labor Party sent him in here to defend the CFMEU and the right for unions to come on sites and shut them down. The best thing that we can do for workers in this state is to make sure that they have workplace health and safety officers on site with the inspectorate being the ones responsible and for making sure that there

are obligations on all employers to create the safest environment in which an employee can operate. And lo and behold, it will come as a surprise to the opposition that the best thing that an employee can have in this state is a job on a construction site because if they do not have a job, they cannot provide for their families and others.

The preselection of the honourable member for Mulgrave will be determined on how favourable his speech tonight is to the unions. We have not heard whether he has been preselected yet, but I suspect he is about to get the nod. The unions will be watching his speech tonight or watching it on instant replay tomorrow to make sure he says the right things. If I was the member for Mulgrave facing a battle of preselections—because if it was based on competency, as shadow Treasurer he would not win the prize—without relying on local members of the Labor Party but the hierarchy of the ALP, I would back the unions because they will back me. That is the Labor way. That has always been the Labor way. That has been the way of a few other members in this place. But certainly that is what he will be doing, and I fully anticipate it will be a government-bashing exercise. I would suspect Work Choices might even get a mention. All I need do is remind the honourable member of the Fair Work Legislation and make sure that the member for Bundamba's mate Peter Simpson at the ETU, when he wants to enter a construction site as the militant union thug that he is, gives 24 hours notice. It is Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd's legislation. If it is okay for the federal Labor Party, why is it not okay for the state Labor Party?

If I have been completely premature in my attack on the member for Mulgrave, I apologise. If he is going to stand up in 38 minutes and support the legislation, I will stand up and I will withdraw everything I have said about the member for Mulgrave. But I suspect not. The member for South Brisbane is the numbers lady over there, but I do not know who she is doing the numbers for anymore. Whether it is Cameron Dick, herself or Palaszczuk, I am not quite sure.

Mr McArdle: Who is Cameron?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the honourable minister for water. Who is Cameron? Well, we know who Cameron is. I will bet you they do not want to know who Cameron is. I take the interjection from the member for Caloundra, because the honourable member for South Brisbane will be wondering who is going to have the goods after the next election. Is it Cameron? Is it the opposition leader? Where does she fit into the arrangement? But I guarantee the minister one thing: it will be whatever is in the interests of the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. Not only is the minister misleading the House, but he is also making offensive personal remarks and I ask for him to withdraw them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Minister, would you withdraw your comments, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: I was being complimentary. I was saying she could be leader!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister, the member has asked for them to be withdrawn. Could you withdraw your comments, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. That was the biggest compliment I have ever paid to the member for South Brisbane: that I see her as a leader. But I take the point of order and I will not do it again.

Mr Byrne: Desley for PM!

Mr BLEIJIE: I will throw my support behind the member for Rockhampton.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I see the member for South Brisbane flashing the *Qweekend* magazine around. Oh, she wishes she was on front page of the *Qweekend* magazine! I think I have seen the member for South Brisbane on the front page of the *Qweekend,* but I have not seen Annastacia Palaszczuk on the front page of the *QWeekend*. There are two things that are guaranteed in life, and of course we all know that one of them is death. The other thing that is guaranteed is that that mob over there, as the good show *Yes, Minister* said—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: No, you would want to hear this, member for South Brisbane. This is particularly relevant to the member for South Brisbane—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am waiting for silence. I seek your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. As was said in *Yes, Minister*—and I can imagine the member for South Brisbane saying this—'You have got to get behind someone before you can stab them in the back.' Cameron Dick has ruled out a challenge already and he is not even in parliament yet!

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did not refer personally to anyone.

Ms TRAD: I ask for you to rule on relevance. I know it is quite peculiar, but the Attorney-General seems to be going on a bit of a flight of fancy.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I would ask that you please remain relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I do find it interesting that the member for South Brisbane would ask for a ruling on relevance, considering that she just took a point of order of personal imputation and asked for a withdrawal she seems quite happy to get into the debate through the interjections.

Those opposite do not like the fact that Queenslanders are awake to the idea that the Labor Party is run by union militant thugs.

Mrs Miller: Rubbish!

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Bundamba. I suggest to honourable members that they look at the Electoral Commission of Queensland disclosures in terms of donations and see who is donating money and who donated money in 2012 to the member for Bundamba. If the member for Bundamba can stand in this place and say that she has not had anything to do with the unions, then I will be shot down.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am not jealous. I can assure the member for Bundamba that I am not taking donations from unions. There were not only donations from unions in Queensland but also donations from other unions in other jurisdictions. We know who the member for South Brisbane, when she was the puppet master in the Peel Street head office, took donations from on behalf of the Labor Party.

I have digressed for half an hour. I admit that I have gone off subject in the last half an hour. In the interests of openness, transparency and accountability, I think it is important that we put on the record what I suspect the members of the Labor Party will be talking about. I suspect that their contribution to this worthwhile debate will be very much about government attacks on workers, which is not true. We have a great workplace health and safety regime. As I said earlier in my contribution, we have had a reduction in workplace health and safety incidents. I have developed a really good relationship with Mal Meninga, who is the Queensland workplace health and safety ambassador.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order!

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Mal Meninga is Queensland's workplace health and safety ambassador. Tragically, he lost his father to a workplace injury. I am very pleased that Mal Meninga is on board with us going to the Zero Harm at Work leadership forums. I thank the honourable members who have represented me at those particular breakfasts that we are holding. Recently, we have had the workplace health and safety awards where we have acknowledged businesses that are doing the right thing by their workers. No-one wants an injury at the workplace. That is why we have the best workers compensation scheme in Australia making sure that every worker has statutory entitlements to workers compensation. We have a workers compensation environment that encourages employers to hire people, getting more Queenslanders on the job.

Mrs Miller: Winding back.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Bundamba, who is saying 'winding back' workplace health and safety. The Labor Party, in introducing the fair work legislation, put in a 24-hour notice period for unions to enter particular sites as well. If it is okay for the federal Labor Party, it should be okay for the state Labor Party. That is what we are doing. We will make sure that we live in a state that does not have militant union thugs operating at these construction sites.

Mr Pitt: You don't even understand what the federal legislation does.

Mr BLEIJIE: I caution the member for Mulgrave to be very careful—

Mr Pitt: Don't you warn me about anything, mate.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am not your mate. Let me say to you, member for Mulgrave—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister and member for Mulgrave, I ask you to refer to each other by your parliamentary titles.

Mr BLEIJIE: My caution would be to the member for Mulgrave that, before he gets up and reads a speech that was prepared by the 23 people sitting on level 9, there is a—

Mrs Miller: You can't even get that right.

Mr BLEIJIE: They have more than 23. There is a royal commission occurring as we speak in relation to union corruption and governance. It will be very interesting to see what comes out of that royal commission and the witnesses who come forward. I would caution the member for Mulgrave against enthusiastically going into overdrive in support of particular unions tonight, because it may be that those words of encouragement and union support come back to bite him. Of course, without anticipating the royal commission's findings, what I hear on the grapevine is that there are some very interesting stories—very interesting stories—coming out about the construction industry, including union militant activity that will be subject to a royal commission.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: If the member for Bundamba wants to contribute to the royal commission, then she will probably have the opportunity to do so. If any member knows more than anyone else in this place about the inner workings of the unions, particularly the ETU, it would be the member for Bundamba. I suspect that the member for Bundamba knows exactly what union thugs get up to, because for her whole career she has relied on the strong support of the union movement. If we talk about merit based appointments, the member for Bundamba got into this place because of the work of the unions and the behind-the-scenes, dodgy deals that were done—going from the office that she worked at and the little support that she gives now. That is how the member for Bundamba serves in this place.

On this side of the House we have people who have had real jobs—not just jobs as ministerial advisers to former Labor Party politicians or union thugs; real jobs. We have had people on this side of the House who have worked in the construction industry—people who have worked in real jobs and who understand the issues and the union thuggery and militant activity that occurs.

Mrs Miller: Don Lane.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is why this legislation—

Mrs Miller: Leisha Harvey.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for Bundamba ought not talk about former politicians who went to jail, because I only have to mention her master and that was Gordon Nuttall. If the member for Bundamba wants to rattle off a list of politicians who are in jail, she only has to go and have a cup of coffee with him at Woodford prison, or wherever he is. Like in *Star Wars* she was the apprentice to 'Chancellor' Nuttall. Gordon Nuttall was training the member for Bundamba to be all that she is today. The member for Bundamba, who sits in this House today, is the result of the training of Gordon Nuttall and she thanks Gordon Nuttall very much for all of that training.

Mrs Miller: Leisha Harvey, Don Lane.

Mr BLEIJIE: I hear the member for Bundamba rattle off the names. I suspect that there are more former Labor politicians' names that we could rattle off than the member for Bundamba could. I think her close friend—

A government member: Merri Rose.

A government member: D'Arcy.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, D'Arcy. I take that interjection. Merri Rose.

A government member: Keith Wright.

Mr BLEIJIE: Keith Wright. That is right.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take all the interjections from the government members of all the former Labor politicians who have been to jail, including the master and commander of the member for Bundamba. We thought it was the unions, but it was actually Gordon Nuttall. He taught the member for Bundamba everything she knows about health in this state.

A government member: Kaiser.

Mr BLEIJIE: Kaiser. No doubt, the member for Bundamba would have been outside earlier this evening at the protest and speaking—

Mrs Miller: Absolutely.

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely—on a megaphone. While the member for Bundamba, in her 15 minutes of fame, had the stage, did she have the heart to remind everyone that she was the apprentice to Gordon Nuttall, who now serves time in jail? Did she have the heart to tell people that she was part of a government that never paid its nurses, that never paid its allied health professionals and that it cost over $1 billion to fix the health system? Did she have the heart to tell the crowd out the front of Parliament House tonight that Anna Bligh, her former leader, said that the health system was sick and that it needed a—what do you call it?

A government member: Jumpers.

Mr BLEIJIE: Defibrillators?

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: That thing. Did the member for Bundamba have the heart to tell people that Health was a sick system? She did not have the heart to give all the ins and outs of the militant union activity that she knows all too well? Again, they will battle for their preselections and they will be on the phone to the likes of Peter Simpson of the ETU and so forth working out what dodgy deals can be done.

That is everything that the Labor Party is going to say about the bill tonight. Let us look—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I can assure the member for Bundamba that I wait with anticipation.

As I said earlier, we fully appreciate and acknowledge where the Labor Party will come from. They will do anything and say anything in this House to back their union militant mates. They have not learnt the lesson from Bill Shorten or the deputy opposition leader, Tanya Plibersek, that the unions should get out of the Labor Party. The Deputy Leader of the Labor Party, Tanya Plibersek, went one step further—and I would love to see what the Queensland Labor Party position is on this—and said that if you belong to the Labor Party you should not have to be forced or mandated to join a union. I remember when Annastacia Palaszczuk, the opposition leader, was talking about the reform of the Labor Party. She said that in Queensland we should still have input from the union movement. That is not what Kevin Rudd said. Every other Labor Party division in Australia apart from the Queensland Labor Party is going away from union militant thugs. It relies on them so much. It has to attach itself to it. It cannot rip that bit of Velcro apart. It cannot rip the bandaid from the wound, and say it rejects union militant thugs in this state like Bill Shorten has, like Tanya Plibersek has, like every other Labor Party in this nation has. It cannot do it.

I feel sorry for the member for Woodridge who has not stood the latest test of union militant thuggery. Cameron Dick, the white knight, the saviour of the Labor Party, will come riding into Woodridge and save the Labor Party from the current opposition leader. That is what is occurring. We all know it. Those opposite cannot deny it. There is one thing we know: the union movement has brought in Cameron Dick to give the Labor Party some form of credibility in this state. Cameron Dick will bring back to the Labor Party some form of credibility. They will not get it from South Brisbane, they will not get it from Bundamba, they will certainly not get it from Mulgrave, they will not get it from Rockhampton and people gave up a long time ago wishing they would get it from Woodridge. They will certainly not get it from the member for Mackay. We all know they want to be leader, but the only one who is going to lead the Labor Party is, of course, Cameron Dick. In question time this morning when the opposition leader was speaking there were a couple of interjections from this honourable side of the House. The interjection was 'Cameron Dick'. One could see the opposition leader switch to defensive mode.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have actually ruled on relevance before and the Attorney is straying.

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

Ms TRAD: Relevance. He is not speaking to the bill and has not for some time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for South Brisbane. Minister, I would ask you to keep your comments relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: For the benefit of the House, I am trying to draw a nexus or connection between union militant activity, Labor Party leadership and, more particularly, the commentary from the federal division of the Labor Party in terms of these very issues. If we look at the nexus even closer, it is a fact that the federal Labor Party introduced laws which required unions to give 24 hours notice. That is what this bill does. I take the point of order from the honourable member for South Brisbane.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have satisfied myself that I have drawn a necessary connection between all these issues in what I have been speaking about for the last 40 minutes. This bill contributes further to the government's reform in the construction and property industry. We have four pillars of the economy. We talk about agriculture, tourism, resources and construction. I acknowledge the honourable tourism minister and the wonderful job she is doing in the tourism sector. There has been $1 billion, I am advised, from September to September last year in additional tourism spending. Well done to the minister and her team.

This bill requires the unions to give 24 hours notice when they want to enter a work site. As I said, if anyone is going to shut a work site down in Queensland it is going to be a Queensland workplace health and safety inspectorate not union militant thugs. As I have said, the current unlawful conduct suggests that stronger sanctions and penalties must be attached to any behaviour that breaches the notice requirements or breaches the right of entry provisions. The bill will also increase the penalties for noncompliance with workplace health and safety entry permit conditions and introduce penalties for failure to comply with the entry notification requirements to reflect the seriousness of these activities. Given the already high cost of building in this country, these amendments are expected to have a positive economic effect and will be welcomed by the business community and in particular the building and construction sector.

For consistency, the bill will require at least 24 hours notice before any person, such as a union official who is assisting a health and safety representative, can have access to a workplace. This closes a loophole that currently exists where union officials come onto projects without appropriate notice and without following proper right of entry processes. The amendment will prevent this current abuse by union officials. The bill will also remove the power for health and safety representatives to direct workers to cease unsafe work. The Work Health and Safety Act establishes a framework for resolving work health and safety matters before they become a serious and imminent risk to health and safety. Health and safety representatives play an important role in this framework and retain wide ranging powers, including the ability to issue provisional improvement notices to rectify health and safety risks. However, in the event of serious and immediate risk to health and safety the statutory right to cease work should remain the decision of the worker rather than at the discretion of a health and safety representative. In the event of a genuine emergency, the worker needs to take action as their representative may not be available to provide that advice.

Business representatives also raised concerns about the cumulative compliance costs associated with red tape. Not only does this government hear these concerns, we are determined to follow through and reduce the red-tape burden of excessive regulation. The bill proposes amendments to address concerns about red tape. The review also considered a range of national model codes of practice that could be adopted in Queensland. Harmonised model workplace health and safety laws and codes have advantages but stakeholders considered there is a need for some scope to vary the model codes when they can be more relevant to work practices and conditions in Queensland. For example, for forestry operations in Queensland there are unique hazards that need to be addressed in a code of practice, including working in conditions of high temperature and humidity and the hazards posed by the prevalence of vines and trees. The act does not currently permit flexibility and the bill will rectify this issue.

This is not about making change for the sake of it, rather it is about ensuring Queensland's regulatory framework is pertinent for Queensland. The bill also makes a technical amendment to the Electrical Safety Act to provide that the maximum penalty for offences in the electrical safety regulation can be no more than 300 penalty units, replacing the current maximum of 40 penalty units. This will ensure the Electrical Safety Act is consistent with the maximum penalty for regulations made under the Work Health and Safety Act and nationally consistent penalties can apply to electrical safety offences.

This bill is not about lowering safety standards. Every Queenslander deserves the right to go to work, do their job without interference, get paid and be treated fairly. We believe Queensland workplaces should be safe, but this is not achieved by allowing union militant thug officials to misuse powers under the banner of safety or choking businesses with unnecessary red tape. The changes I have outlined in this bill will restore balance to the system and foster safety, fairness and productivity in Queensland workplaces. I thank the parliamentary committee for reviewing the bill. I table a copy of the government's response to the committee's recommendations and I commend the bill to the House.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 39—Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, government response [4823].

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (8.58 pm): What a pleasure it is to speak after hearing for more than 40 minutes from the jumped-up K-Mart lawyer from Kawana. That was one of the most disgraceful performances that we have seen from the Attorney-General. His performance is declining. It is declining because he very clearly knows that he is going to meet an untimely political end that will not be at a time of his choosing.

Over the last 40 minutes we have learnt that the Attorney-General is fond of charades—and is not very good at it—and he is also all about self-gratification—his words not mine. Sadly, we have seen the tone of this debate lowered enormously by the Attorney-General's attack on unions. He attacks unions, but it is really an attack on workers. That is what we have heard for the last 40 minutes. The saddest thing of all is that there are a whole lot of people on the government benches here this evening who are here because they are on roster and have to be here, otherwise I think they would have walked out the door as well. It was an absolutely disgraceful performance.

This bill is purported to be about workplace health and safety, but we know that it is about using an alternative form to attack unions and workers. That is what it is about. It is such a shame that the Attorney-General is using the guise of work health and safety to make those sorts of attacks, as we have seen time and time again from the government. When it comes to the Attorney-General, he would be the sort of person who would finish a meeting with his so-called colleagues by saying, 'Please, say something nice'. I think the only thing that they could say is, 'It's nice to see you leaving'. That will be the sentiment for the entire cabinet at the next election.

I rise to oppose the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This bill poses significant risks to workplace health and safety standards on Queensland work sites. The changes reduce the focus on prevention in Queensland's workplace health and safety system. It increases the risk that working men and women will go to work and suffer injury and harm.

In November last year when the Attorney-General introduced another attack on workers in his Orwellian legislation known as the Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2, I spoke in this House. At that time I reflected that the legislation was just the latest in a long list of abuse from this government on the rights and conditions of Queensland workers. I said—

This is an appalling piece of legislation. It is the latest in a long line of appalling bits of legislation offered by this appalling Attorney-General. It attacks the hard-won workplace rights of decent Queenslanders.

After the Redcliffe by-election, the Premier said that he had learnt his lesson and he would listen to Queenslanders, but just weeks after that here we are again, with the Newman government pursuing an ideological attack on working men and women. The latest in these attacks shows just how callous and out of touch the Premier is. His chosen vehicle to attack workers and unions is removing protections against workplace health and safety concerns. How low can they stoop? Are they so captured by their blind ideological pursuit that they would see health and safety conditions go backwards?

Perhaps it should not be that big of a surprise given the attacks we have seen from this government to date. On numerous occasions other members of the opposition and I have had to explain to the House that we need to look at the series of attacks on workers. Time and time again we have had to put on record the history of attacks that this government imposes on its own workforce. With the imposition of this latest attack, I need to remind the House once more of the long line of shameful treatment by this government of workers. As I have said before, these changes are very real and will have very serious consequences for working men and women. The real significance of this legislation is how it compounds the damage already caused by the range of changes made by this government and its mindless commitment to disempower everyday Queenslanders.

The government's first steps were taken in 2012 when it attacked the power of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. As we have said before, we all know that when the LNP wants to go after workers, its first step is to go after the independent umpire. It imposed tight restrictions on what the QIRC could consider, including the requirement to consider the fiscal position of the government in any enterprise bargaining negotiations. The testimony presented by the Treasury is not open to cross-examination as would normally be the case in the commission. It is simply enforced onto negotiations without consideration of other factors or arguments.

Then the LNP moved on to destroying job security for the Public Service. With the stroke of a pen, the LNP removed the job security that had been at the core of what modern public service practices had been for decades. That was on top of the 17,000 or more workers we know the government has sacked. In fact, today the Public Service Commission confirmed that more than 15,000 fewer jobs are now available in the public sector. The real question for Queenslanders is what services are no longer available because of the loss of those nurses, wardies, allied health workers, teachers, policy officers, scientists, lawyers and the wide range of people who make up a dynamic public service. In addition to the pain and suffering caused to those particular Queensland workers, the arrogance of the LNP also destroyed the rights of those left behind, those trying desperately to pick up the pieces.

Let us be clear about the underlining threat this creates for the Public Service. Apart from the obvious and immediate threat to the livelihood of individuals and their families, the greater impact is on the role of the Public Service itself. As argued during the previous debate, when public servants are at risk of losing their jobs without any protections, the impetus for fair and frank advice from the Public Service is destroyed. That is particularly the case with the consistent approach of this Premier and this government that has treated any alternative view as a declaration of war. With this government you are either with 'em or you're against 'em. It seems to be channelling George W. Bush. When it comes to independent advice from departments, that is a very unhealthy environment to create. I have worked in various roles in the Public Service, both as a departmental officer and as a cabinet minister, and I know that maintaining an independent public service that provides independent advice is crucial to good governance and effective public policy outcomes.

The way the LNP government handled this also has an economic impact. The constant threat of holding an axe over a worker's head destroys the economic confidence of the broader workforce. It is just common sense that when workers are threatened and their job security destroyed they reduce their family spending, whether that means putting off a renovation to the house, extra outings for the family or a holiday. That impacts on the broader economy as small business, tourism, construction and all facets of the local economy contract. As a member representing a regional community, I can tell the House that those losses are felt particularly deeply in regional communities, where job losses not only see spending in the local economy reduced, but also see families moving away, hurting local education numbers, the volunteer base and community engagement. Other attacks we have seen include: the restructure of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; imposing more restrictions on employees taking industrial action, including giving the minister the power to unilaterally intervene; and of course, their favourite pet project, changing the Labour Day public holiday because they just can't stand anything with the word 'labour' in it.

The so-called transparency and accountability changes were an outrageous attack on free speech. Continuing the arrogant approach of the Premier, the government attacked the rights of unions and their members to engage in public debate. Again, the Premier goes to extraordinary lengths to shut down anyone perceived as having opposing opinions. In this case, it was shutting down the ability of unions and members to honestly and effectively promote the interests of their fellow workers and the impact of government decisions on the services available to members of the public. This attack on free speech strikes at the heart of a modern democratic society, which is an increasingly worrying trend with this administration. As the House is aware, the laws are being challenged through the Courts and we await that result with interest. I will not go into the various ways that the legislation attacks the freedom of speech and ability of workers to promote important issues of public policy in the public arena. Perhaps the best way to describe the extreme nature of the laws is to remind the House that it was made clear during committee hearings and debate in the House that the legislation is so extreme there is not a similar example of restricting the freedom of industrial organisations participating in public and political debates in any other Australian jurisdiction. In fact, the government has been unable to point to a similar example anywhere in the world where a western democratic country has introduced such extreme industrial relations changes to restrict freedom of speech.

Then we saw the government attack the Queensland workers' compensation scheme. Queensland had the best system in the nation. It worked, it was sustainable, it was profitable and it was fair. However, the LNP made a secret promise to the CCIQ that it would make the changes and then put the parliament, the committee system and the public through an absolute charade of an inquiry. We saw two separate LNP dominated committees unanimously recommend against the changes, but the Attorney-General and the Premier pushed ahead with their pre-determined position. The LNP arrogantly pushed ahead with its ideological attack on what was a fair and balanced workers compensation scheme. Instead of accepting the overwhelming advice from the legal community, industrial organisations and other experts in the system, the LNP delivered on its secret deal and introduced a five per cent WPI threshold. What that means in real terms is that about half of the injured workers who previously relied on access to common law now will no longer be able to seek that support. The arrogance of this government will see working men and women who are injured at work being denied access to their common law rights, even when they have been injured because of the negligence of their boss. The most appalling result is that this will deny the support and care to injured workers and their families at the very time that they most need it. Today we are seeing this arrogant and out-of-touch government adding salt to the wounds.

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! Please hold for a moment, member for Mulgrave.

Mr BLEIJIE: The act of parliament the opposition leader is referring to was passed by this parliament some six or seven months ago.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: My point is of relevance. This is seven months later. This is a new bill. That one has been debated. Stick to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Attorney. I remind the member to talk to the bill.

Mr PITT: It is quite amazing that, after a tirade of 40 minutes talking about almost anything but the bill, the Attorney-General is seeking to attack me on relevance. We are trying to show that there is a very significant link between the overall actions of this government, particularly the attacks it has made on the workers compensation scheme, and of course the flow-on effect and the compounding effect that has on workers in this state. As I said, today we see this arrogant and out-of-touch government adding salt to the wounds. The government is not content with making it harder for injured workers to access their legal rights and get the support and care they deserve; now it wants to take away workplace health and safety protections, meaning not only will injured workers lose rights and support, but also the LNP government wants to make it easier for them to get hurt in the first place.

As I said at the outset of my contribution, this legislation poses significant risks to workplace health and safety standards across Queensland work sites. The key proposed changes in the bill include that it prevents workplace health and safety officers from having the power to stop work, or a particular activity, if it is deemed a safety risk. It prevents union WHS officers and/or organisers from having access to sites when there is a safety risk or there has been a workplace health and safety incident. This is the result of imposing the requirement for union officials to give notice of their intention to enter the site, then having to wait 24 hours before being allowed to enter the site. This creates risks that evidence will be changed after an incident or irresponsible employers will change safety concerns before having the WHS representative on site.

The committee reported back on Tuesday, 25 March 2014 and I submitted a dissenting report to the committee. I will expand on the opposition's position tonight. This bill poses significant risks to workplace health and safety standards on Queensland work sites. The changes reduce the focus on prevention in Queensland's WHS system. It increases the risk that working men and women will go to work and suffer injury and harm. It ties the hands of working people to stop injuries occurring and taking preventative action. It provides avenues for dodgy bosses to skimp on safety standards and cover up mistakes and serious incidents.

Those opposite are happy to go along with the misplaced bias and over-the-top caricatures of union officials, but these are men and women who dedicate their working lives to standing up for their fellow employees. What it means on a day-to-day basis is that it is not actually about the union officials. What this bill does by pursuing the LNP's ideological attack is actually impact normal working

people, across all industries and communities throughout Queensland. In short, by removing workplace health and safety protections, this government is making it easier and more likely that people will go to work and be injured.

During the committee hearing the committee was provided with ample examples of how this legislation will impact on the safety of workers on a day-to-day basis. Chris Ketter from the SDA provided the example of how simple but important WHS protections operate in the workplace. He gave the example of a worker who could be your sister or brother, your daughter or son or even, perhaps, a member of this chamber. As I said earlier, the real concern about this legislation is its effect not on the caricatures of union organisers, but on the real workers who simply go about their jobs. The SDAQ gave the example of a deli worker in a grocery shop. They stated—

An example of a heightened risk may be evidenced in that of the duties performed by a Deli worker who readily uses dangerous equipment such as a meat sheer on a daily basis. If a meat slicers' mechanism is faulty due to a high volume of work, a manager may simply indicate the worker 'to be careful while operating it'. A HSR on the other hand would however be able to view the machine, tag and issue an improvement notice on it if she/he believes it to be unsafe.

In effect, this power should not be removed from HSR's as it acts as a proactive system, by preventing injuries before they occur, rather than acting as a reactive system and waiting for injuries to occur before something is done.

Mr Symes: Have you worked in a deli before?

Mr PITT: In answer to the member for Lytton, yes I have worked in a deli before. I think he should do a bit of research before he attacks us and assumes that we have all, apparently, worked in a ministerial office and not in other places.

They do not have to try to search the whole store or threaten a company-wide strike. The right that this government is taking away is the ability of a health and safety representative to stop a particular activity that is unsafe. I challenge those opposite to state why they support the removal of the right for a health and safety representative to take such simple and sensible steps to avoid injury. If it becomes an issue in the workplace, I challenge those opposite to explain why a SDA representative should not be able to attend the store and provide support to members who are trying to take appropriate steps to have a safe workplace.

In health care, the QNU provided case studies and evidence that the nature of 24-hour health services require protections against workplace injuries. State secretary Beth Mohle gave evidence—

We are here today to represent the interests of over 50,000 nurses and midwives who provide health services across this state. They work in a variety of settings—from single person operations to large health institutions and in a full range of classifications from entry level trainees to senior management. As with all of our submissions, our claims are based on evidence. We have cited a number of academic sources that point to the hazards nurses and midwives face every day and we have provided case studies which demonstrate the need for unions to enter the premises to inspect unsafe workplaces. These are not stories designed to entertain. They are true and accurate accounts of hazardous workplace situations that can occur through oversight, negligence or accident. It is critical that nurses and midwives know that they can call on their union to assist when there is an immediate workplace health and safety risk.

Nurses work in a unique occupational environment that can require rotating and night shifts, long shifts, prolonged standing, lifting and exposure to chemicals, infections, diseases, x-ray radiation and other hazards. Because nurses work extended, unpredictable hours with a lack of regular breaks, they are more likely to experience elevated fatigue levels. Night duty rotations are common, particularly in specialist units where nurses must maintain careful and astute observations of vulnerable patients. The continual demands of their work places them at high risk of musculoskeletal disorders and diseases, and they are increasing exposed to workplace violence.

All of these factors can negatively affect nurses' and midwives' health and performance. Thus nurses' safety is intrinsic to patient safety. For these reasons, the QNU strongly opposes the requirement to give 24 hours notice to enter a workplace when we become aware that the situation poses or may pose an imminent risk of threat to the health and safety of our members.

I challenge those opposite to explain why QNU officers should not support their members when there are safety risks in a hospital. I challenge those opposite to explain if a certain theatre or machine was unsafe, why a staff member should not have the right to say that it should not be used until it is safe.

The United Firefighters Union provided the additional perspective of that of the men and women often called upon to deal with incidents where work and safety accidents have occurred. This of course can include chemical or factory fires, explosions, collapses, to name a few. The UFU made the point that reducing standards of WHS not only threatens the workers on each work site but also those workers whom we call upon to fix up the mess when the worst accidents occur.

We have heard a couple of times the Attorney-General talk about this being harmonisation with the Fair Work Act. This bill runs counter to the national harmonisation of workplace health and safety standards and actually takes Queensland in a different and dangerous direction. In addition, taking

Queensland away from harmonisation with national systems will increase the red tape of businesses that operate across state borders. We hear those opposite carry on about red tape every day of the week, but when it comes to taking workplace health and safety protections away from workers apparently red tape is not a problem.

Once again, we see this government arrogantly introducing changes that have not received proper consultation. In the field of workplace health and safety there are existing and long-standing traditions of government, employers and employees working together. In fact, WHS standards have been negotiated nationally for harmonisation and both employer and employee organisations agree that some agreements have been developed over some time and should be hands off to ministerial interference.

I will now go to a section of the public hearing and quote the transcript. I asked the WHS officer from the SDA—

Mr PITT: Thank you, Chair. The last question I have relates to the opening statement by Mr Walker and is in regard to the code of practice. We heard in the previously hearing from Mr Crittall, from the Master Builders Association. He believed that one thing Master Builders and potentially several of the representatives from the union movement here today would agree on is that the code of practice is an extremely important part of what has been developed over many years in this state. You referred earlier that the minister can make changes without the tripartite arrangement. Given that there seems to be, from one extreme to the other, agreement that the code of practice is an important part, why do you think this is in the bill and why has that provision been put to the minister?

Mr Walker: I do not really know. My point about it is that it is the people who work at the coalface who know what the real hazards are, and if you are not going to consult with those people and their representatives, and the employers for that matter, then people at the ministerial level do not have the actual hands-on knowledge in each industry to know what can and what cannot be done. I have an example in the retail industry. I am on the sector standing committee for retail, and I recently was pushing for us to put up some proposal for a new code of practice to deal with the increasing incidence of armed robbery in our industry which in fast food and those sorts of areas is really becoming extreme and putting people at a lot of risk obviously. I was told, 'Don't bother because if these provisions come in there will be no need to consult. It will just be a decision made by the minister.'

This is an outrageous development under this government and demonstrates the absolute distain this government has for stakeholders, even when negotiation, consultation and decisions would actually impact the safety of workers.

As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, this is a reminder of the previous legislation this government used to attack workers. This legislation should also be viewed in the context of this government's approach to workers who are injured at work, including those injured because of the negligence of their employers. The government seriously weakened the protection for workers injured at work by introducing a WPI threshold for injured workers to have access to their common law rights, even when they were injured because of the negligence of their employer. It is gravely concerning, therefore, that at the very time that changes to workers compensation laws reduce rights and support to those who are injured, the government is now proposing changes that reduce workplace health and safety protections that are currently in place to actually prevent harm occurring in the first place.

I want to rebuke the assertion made by several LNP committee members and no doubt will be repeated by LNP members who speak following me. Despite all the evidence by those who work at the coalface, the LNP pretend that inspectors will be able to fill any void left by both health and safety representatives in the workplace and union organisers and WHS officers. That is simply naive at best and misleading at worst. There is simply not the capacity for inspectors to cover every site on every issue. We certainly are not seeing any funds from this government going to increase the number of inspectors, are we? Perhaps the Attorney-General can answer that.

We also heard evidence in the committee hearing that those on the front line are best placed to know what risks exist. That goes across industries, from nurses being experts about the work of nurses and midwives to retail workers knowing the tasks in stores, firefighters knowing the variety of risks and incidents they are called to attend and construction workers who have years of experience working in a variety of small and major construction sites—sites, I might add, where people have actually lost their lives. Dismissing their expertise is a mistake and reflects the LNP government's ideological bent, rather than any logical approach to improving workplace health and safety.

The LNP government has also failed to answer the glaring question that there are already avenues to take action if an official does misuse their WHS right of entry. Currently, complaints can be made under section 138 to have a workplace health and safety holder's permit revoked. If this is such a huge public policy problem and there is such widespread misuse, why is this section not used

by the companies who are multimillion dollar companies or by their employer group representatives, including those who appeared at the committee hearing? Let me refer to the departmental public briefing. I asked the department—

Employers currently have the ability under section 138 to have a WHS holder's permit revoked if they believe there has been a contravention. Is the department aware of how many permits have been revoked for inappropriate use of the permit?

The departmental representative Mr Paul Goldsborough, Senior Director, Workers Compensation and Policy Services, said—

I am advised that there is one matter before the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. I do not know anything about it, but there is one matter.

So the LNP claim that there is such a huge issue with WHS holders misusing their permits that they want to take away protections and lower standards for WHS right across the state and across all industries. But there is only one single matter where a complaint has been made about the misuse of a permit.

As mentioned in the dissenting committee report, the opposition notes that some changes to the legislation are being recommended by the majority of the committee; namely, changes to clause 11. As I have outlined, the opposition does not support this legislation overall, but I want to congratulate my committee colleagues because they have given a more considered approach to looking at this issue than the Attorney-General has. He is not taking this issue seriously. He is using it as an attempt to attack unions and to attack workers, as opposed to trying to improve workers' safety. If anything, he is going backwards.

This legislation is another attack on workers, as I said. I ask those opposite to actually stand up for their communities and to stand up for the men and women who go to work every day on the basis that they will arrive home safely after a full day's work. They want to know that they can go to work and come home to see their loved ones without risk of injury or worse.

This legislation will see WHS standards fall. Logic suggests that as standards fall the likely outcome is going to be an increase in injuries—and all of this at the time when the LNP have already removed rights of workers when they do get hurt. This legislation is unfair, it is not called for and it is just another ideological attack. I urge all members in this House to oppose this bill. If there is a suggestion that we need to change further industrial relations provisions in this state, then let us have that debate and not use the guise of workplace health and safety to push through an ideological agenda attacking workers in Queensland.

Mr DAVIES (Capalaba—LNP) (9.22 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to commend the AG for implementing real change that will ultimately increase safety in the workplace while presenting amendments that make it easier to do business in Queensland.

This bill is part of the government's review of the national model laws, which commenced on 1 January 2012. As a government, we are committed to having the safest workplaces in Australia. The changes proposed will return the rule of law to Queensland construction sites by aligning union right-of-entry laws with the Commonwealth Fair Work Act and cracking down on unlawful militant union activity. We are restoring the balance and ensuring that safety is not used as an industrial weapon. Workers have a common law right to cease work if they believe there is a safety issue, and this is not changing. In fact, the recommendations of the committee actually strengthen the rights of all workers but particularly the most vulnerable.

Considerable consultation formed part of the government's review, including two ministerial roundtables, where the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice chaired the industry roundtable meeting with key stakeholders including around 35 representatives from industry, unions and legal bodies. These were held on 29 August 2012 and 11 July 2013 to discuss the operation of the laws and to consider the recommendations of the various working groups. Again, there was lots and lots of consultation.

Business representatives raised concerns about the cumulative compliance costs associated with red tape and advocated reducing the burden where this could be achieved without reducing safety standards. This is consistent with the Queensland government's goal of reducing the red-tape and regulatory burden for business. The bill has a number of amendments to address these concerns raised during the review.

The review also considered a range of national model codes of practice that could be adopted in Queensland. While there is general support for harmonised model workplace health and safety laws and codes, stakeholders considered that there is a need for some scope to vary the model codes where they can be made more relevant to circumstances in Queensland. The act currently does not allow this flexibility.

There was also strong support from business groups and employers, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Master Builders Queensland and the Housing Industry Association, for the proposed amendments. Ultimately the amendments brought forward in this bill enable business to improve productivity, competitiveness and safety in the workplace, not to hinder it with unnecessary red tape, prescriptive requirements or provisions that can be misused by unions as an industrial weapon under the guise of safety.

Workers' safety is of paramount importance to this government. In the financial year 2012-13, serious injury rates are projected to have decreased by around five per cent under our watch. That is despite the opposition saying that we are risking further workers' safety. When safety issues arise on work sites, it is important that the independent department inspectors respond, rather than sites being shut down by militant union behaviour and the use of workplace health and safety as an industrial tool. This use of workplace health and safety issues has the real potential to lead to a 'cry wolf' mentality around safety issues, rather than seeing safety as just that—safety. In the last quarter of 2013, over 86 per cent of Queensland's industrial disputations occurred in the construction industry. As one of our key pillars in our plan to turbocharge the economy, construction is vital.

The bill will amend the legislation to require at least 24 hours notice by workplace health and safety entry permit holders before they can enter a workplace to inquire into a suspected contravention to align with the other entry notifications in the Work Health and Safety Act and the Fair Work Act 2009. It will also increase penalties for noncompliance with workplace health and safety entry permit conditions and introduce penalties for failure to comply with entry notification requirements. It will also require at least 24 hours notice before any person assisting a health and safety representative can have access to the workplace. It will also remove the power of health and safety representatives to direct workers to cease unsafe work, although a worker's statutory right to cease unsafe work is unaffected.

It will also remove the requirement under the Work Health and Safety Act for a person conducting a business or undertaking to provide a list of health and safety representatives to the work health and safety regulator. It will also allow for the code of practice adopted in Queensland to be varied or revoked without requiring national consultation as required by the model Work Health and Safety Act. It will also correct a drafting oversight in the Electrical Safety Act 2002 and increase the maximum penalty that can be prescribed for offences in the Electrical Safety Regulation 2002 to 300 penalty units.

I would like to highlight two aspects to be addressed by the bill: firstly, the requirement of at least 24 hours notice by a workplace health and safety entry permit holder before they can enter a workplace to inquire into a suspected contravention to align with any other entry notification periods in the Work Health and Safety Act and the Fair Work Act 2009.

During our committee hearings it became painfully obvious through many, if not all, submitters from both sides of the argument that union based workplace health and safety permit holders saw themselves as de facto workplace health and safety officers. The reality is that the union workplace health and safety entry permit holder can hold that role with as little as one day training, with most having three days. This is in stark comparison to the 216 active workplace health and safety officers who are full-time public servants, many with specialised degrees in their field of expertise. On top of this, workplace health and safety officers have had over two years specialised workplace health and safety training in the field and there is ongoing mentoring. There are also 46 mine safety inspectors, adding up to just over 260 safety officers working throughout Queensland. No-one is better placed to determine safety in the field than these dedicated officers.

The workplace health and safety permit holders are not de facto workplace health and safety officers. They do have a role, and it is about educating workers about their rights and their role in creating a safe and healthy workplace. Unfortunately, again and again we have heard stories, particularly in the construction industry, of militant unions such as the CFMEU, the BLF or the ETU using their permit holder and workplace health and safety as an industrial weapon. Recently the

CFMEU in Victoria was fined $1.25 million. It is quite interesting to see the Grocon dispute as it relates to the past leader of the CFMEU in that state, John Setka, friend of some of the Labor people. He is also a very good chum of Mick Gatto, who is an underworld figure in Victoria. That fine was in response to the bullyboy tactics of the CFMEU. What they get away with is just unbelievable.

It is obvious that Labor is beholden to the unions and relies on them for preselection. The opposition seems to oppose anything that weakens the union bullyboy tactics. They should stand up for workers. I have had a long and varied background in the building sector of over 12 years as a general labourer, a ceramic tiler by trade and a brickie's labourer for over a year. I worked on everything from residential houses in my electorate of Capalaba to high-rise apartments at Kangaroo Point, the Wool Stores apartments at Teneriffe and a long, cold stint converting the old Challinor Centre at Ipswich into the state-of-the-art UQ campus we enjoy today. That was freezing cold. During my time working on building sites I had the opportunity to see the good, the bad and the ugly of the union movement. The good often centred around the union providing support and much needed safety and financial education to their members. The bad: I have seen and personally experienced union thuggery on site, most notably when some did not see the need to become union members. They were basically threatened. Finally, the ugly: I have been on a site where the union, for no good reason, forced the site to shut down for three days because the employer was not requiring contractors, including me, to become members. I do not know what industrial mechanism they used back in the day. All I know is that I lost half a week's pay, which was pretty important to a man with a young family.

The second aspect I would like to highlight is the amendment to remove the power of the health and safety representatives to direct workers to cease unsafe work. The first aspect of this change that needs to be highlighted is that the amendment does not change a worker's statutory right to cease unsafe work. In this regard, it is important that there is a strong partnership between the unions, the employer and the workplace health and safety organisation to basically educate their workers about their rights at work. Using the example of the member for Mulgrave of a worker in a deli who feels that it is dangerous to use a particular cutter, saw or whatever in that deli, the fact is that if the worker believes that is unsafe, that worker can actually say he wants to stop work. In fact, the workplace health and safety rep can actually say to the worker, 'Look, that's unsafe. I would suggest you shut down.' It becomes a choice of the worker. That worker can make that choice. There are plenty of work sites out there in the wider community where there is not a workplace health and safety rep. There are plenty of work sites where there is not a union person, which are not unionised workplaces. This legislation puts the onus back onto the worker; they have a right. I believe that the unions have a purpose here, and that is to educate their workers about their responsibility to employ safe practices not just for themselves, but also for those around them. A worker needs to know that if he or she is doing something that is dangerous, they need to stop that work.

The workplace health and safety reps are on site. They are nominated. These reps are nominated from within the building site or in the workplace to oversee the safety of their site. These guys only have about one week's training in workplace health and safety. Again, I contrast that against the two years training of the workplace health and safety officers. The public servants who are employed by workplace health and safety have two years training. I contrast that against the permit holders, which are the union reps who come on to the site. They have one or three days training in workplace health and safety. I do not know if anyone with one or three days training is instantly an expert in this field. I would much sooner trust an inspector who has had two years on-the-job training and continual mentoring and is continually updating their skills. Not only that, many of them come in from the building sector, the nursing sector—different sectors that they are working in—and so bring their expertise as a workplace health and safety officer.

This legislation is all about empowering workplace health and safety officers. The representatives and the permit holders are, indeed, not de facto workplace health and safety officers. The union continually sees themselves as that. Ultimately, it is just a trojan horse to get them in and get their union agenda across the line. The highlight of reviewing this bill for me as the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee was seeing the very robust debate around the changes, especially an amendment I was highlighting earlier. The member for Gladstone certainly fought very hard to make sure any changes would not negatively affect workers, particularly workers who do not have union representation—and there are so many of them. I think only 12 per cent of all workers are members of a union. What about all those people who are not members of a union? Where do they fit into this whole thing? What we are trying to do is—

Mr Bleijie: Union militant thugs.

Mr DAVIES: That is exactly right. That is all it is about with these guys.

We want to empower the workplace health and safety officers. They are the people best positioned to actually do this. It is about safety, despite what the member for Mulgrave said. This is about safety, because the workplace health and safety officers are in the best position to actually determine if something is unsafe. I think it sets a very dangerous precedent when people with one or two days experience come in and use workplace health and safety as a trojan horse for their industrial action and their intimidation of people in the workplace. That will lead to genuine unsafe practices. As I said, there is the old story of people who cry wolf. These guys come in continually saying, 'Workplace health and safety, workplace health and safety,' to the point where people just do not listen because they see it as the union clanging a cymbal yet again. As I said, there are many people who are not part of a union and they do not need unions. I speak of fruit pickers and farm hands. These are non-unionised workforces. They need to be protected. What the Attorney has proposed still provides that protection and it is very important.

One of the other recommendations that we made as a committee was raised by the member for Sunnybank. He made a very strong argument for a recommendation of creating an app for people with smart phones, which most people have nowadays. If they see anything dangerous in the workplace, they could take a photo of it using this app. I think the police minister has a very similar app by which people can take a photo of a crime and send it to the police. It is almost instantaneous. The member for Sunnybank suggested that we create an app so that if a worker sees something dangerous he or she can take a picture and it is sent straight to Workplace Health and Safety, and the officer can respond very quickly. I commend that particular recommendation. I would not have expected that of you, Mark. It was very good.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! I remind the member for—

Mr DAVIES: The member for Sunnybank.

A government member: You're a 'marked' man!

Mr STEWART: I rise to a point of order. I take offence—

Mr DAVIES: I withdraw. The committee also made a number of other recommendations, including reviews of the bill's effectiveness and to monitor accusations of those opposite that this will somehow affect safety. It was one of our recommendations that that be reviewed within two years, and I hope the Attorney takes that on. The other thing is creating KPIs for workplace health and safety officers, making sure that they are working well and achieving their KPIs.

One of the interesting things that came out was inspectorate activity broken down by jurisdictions across the nation, and it was very interesting to see that in Queensland Workplace Health and Safety has a really strong pro-active model. They are actually getting into building sites before there has been an incident and pro-actively educating and finding faults before there is an incident. The fact of the matter is if there is an accident it is already too late, so it is about stopping accidents. During 2011-12, in Queensland alone there were 26,091 pro-active visits. The closest other state was Victoria, 21,000; New South Wales, 6,000; South Australia, nine; Western Australia, 5,000. For what they call reactive visits, Queensland was the basically the lowest. It just shows that these pro-active visits actually had a real outcome on incidents in the workplace. There were approximately 13,000 reactive visits compared to 18,000 in Victoria and I think it was over about 35,000 in New South Wales, so the model has really worked with Workplace Health and Safety.

In closing I would like to say that the recommendations of the bill were about strengthening the powers and availability of the workplace health and safety inspectors. These guys are the front line; they are the people who best deal with the problems. If an employee has a workplace health and safety issue, they can contact their workplace health and safety officer over the phone. The workplace health and safety officer does not even need to go to the site; he can delegate authority to that workplace health and safety rep at the building site.

I would like to thank the secretariat for their hard work: Deb Jeffrey, Lyn Whelan and Maggie Lilith. They really did help us. They were actually troopers. I would like to thank the department—their insight into some of these issues was very helpful—and the submitters to the report and the hearings, including the unions and industry groups. PROPS to Master Builders, Australia Master Electricians and Cane Growers, who actually turned up—I was very disappointed that three of the employer agencies did not turn up—but they did turn up, and they gave us a very strong case for their position.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members. They really did wrestle with this and there were some very robust debates, and I thank them for that. I would like to thank the Attorney-General for his great work, and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Davies, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.43 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Norman, Mr G

Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (9.43 pm): These days the term 'hero' is often too easily used to describe a variety of people, but I can say that the men and women that I have met during my time as a shadow minister, those who proudly wear the Queensland firefighter's uniform, are certainly prepared to live up to that title when the situation demands. Our firefighters willingly place themselves in harm's way on behalf of the community, which is why we owe it to them and their families to respect them and to grieve for them when the worst happens.

A firefighter's role is to occasionally take calculated risks to assist the community where years of training, teamwork and experience provide the foundation for success. It is therefore not surprising that one of our firefighters would be drawn into the world of skydiving, where the same levels of professional preparation, training, experience and dedication to safety are required to be displayed at all times. As a one-time military parachutist, I well understand the thrill of jumping and fully appreciate the associated risks.

Last Friday I had the privilege of attending the memorial service for Glenn Norman, who tragically died in a light plane crash at the Caboolture airfield which most would be aware of. I was fortunate to hear family and friends pay a heartfelt tribute to Glenn Norman, who was the loving husband of wife Linda, a loving father to daughters Sarah and Megan, a professional firefighter and a skydiving inspector with over 10,000 jumps—which is no mean feat. Glenn Norman's friends, colleagues and family spoke about his qualities—honesty, integrity and loyalty—as qualities that defined his life. They described his ability to mentor and teach others as key elements of his legacy, whether it was at work, while skydiving or teaching kids in the neighbourhood to ride their bikes. They described him as a very moral man and a great father. His fellow firefighters told a large crowd that as a firefighter, Glenn always respected the tradition of 'what happens on shift, stays on shift'.

Among the crowd of those real Queenslanders like the ones gathered at Glenn's memorial there is often a reluctance to talk about some of the acts of bravery or moments of sadness and regret that occur on the job. Some of the reasons for this reluctance to talk are due to the bonds developed by the group built on values of respect and developed over time doing the job for their teammates, their families and their communities. I respect that firefighters keep that bond for themselves, but it does not stop those like us outside the tent valuing the sacrifices they make in the name of protecting all of us.

To the families affected by the tragedy at Caboolture, my sincere condolences go out to you all. I am sure the other members of the House would support those sentiments. Glenn Norman was clearly a man of substance who demonstrated those personal qualities that few do. He will be sorely missed, though not forgotten.

Murray, Mr D

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (9.46 pm): I want to use this occasion to express my sadness and appreciation for the life of one of my area's most colourful—in fact, some may say outlandish—characters, Doug Murray, who was well known to most of us. Doug unfortunately passed away all too early on 12 March at the age of 63 after a short battle with a very aggressive cancer.

Doug will be remembered by most as the host of first *Brisbane Extra* and then *Extra* when it changed its name. His roots in journalism and in rural Queensland go back a long way. He went to Gatton College and studied agriculture in 1968. His activity as a journalist was right up to recent times, when he presented the weather on Channel 9 with Melissa Downes and Wally Lewis over the summer break this year. Originally Doug took a cadetship with the ABC, and he commenced that in 1973. During the 1980s he presented weather on the ABC, and he is of course very well remembered

for his founding role in the programs *Countrywide* and *Landline* on the ABC. In 1992 he made the shift from the ABC to Channel 9, where he ran continuously through *Brisbane Extra* and *Extra* until they faded away in 2009 when Doug retired.

Doug had what we referred to locally as a camel farm on Savages Road at Brookfield, the suburb where I live myself. I recall that Doug was a regular at the Brookfield Show Society. He turned up at the Brookfield Show one day in what I would describe as a cowboy outfit with big wide pants and one word down each side that said 'Doug's phats' and there was always a hat. I have seen him in tartan beanies. He was known as 'the man in the hat' and of course always the pencil thin moustache.

We held a memorial service at Brookfield showgrounds for Doug. It was attended by some 800 people—many people from the Brisbane media and his friend and professional colleague Rick Burnett spoke glowingly of the man in the hat—the man who liked to drink, the man who liked to go to the races—

(Time expired)

The man who was always bright and cheerful, the man people always wanted to be with and perhaps above all, the man who was always zany, colourful and out there.

Doug was known to ride a camel down to the Brookfield Store for a coffee in the morning. One thing about Doug is you always knew he was around. He will be sadly missed by all his friends, particularly those that are active in the Brookfield Show Society, such as registered nurse Vivienne.

I want to extend my sincere sympathies and those of Doug's many friends in the Moggill and Brookfield area, to partner Jeannie, to his son Lance and also to his mother Pamela and siblings Deborah, Michael, Geoffrey, Lisa and David.

Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils

Mrs MADDERN (Maryborough—LNP) (9.49 pm): I imagine that most backbench members are like me: we concentrate very much on our individual electorate, working to get the very best outcomes for our individual communities. However, occasionally it is good to step back and look at the electorate in the context of a region. Last week, I had an ideal opportunity to do just that. I was able to attend the quarterly meeting of WBBROC—the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils. This group is made up of representatives of each of the regional councils of Bundaberg, North Burnett, South Burnett, Gympie, Fraser Coast and Cherbourg.

What I found most interesting was that many of the issues that I grapple with on an electorate basis are also regional issues—issues such as mobile and internet black spots. Every one of the council areas has black spots—areas that are not covered by mobile coverage. We have all found these black spots on occasions. For travellers, these black spots are a nuisance, but for people who live in those black spot areas it is often a detriment to the growth and profitability of businesses. This situation is even more so if it is a black spot for internet coverage. The attitude of these combined councils is to attack the issue on a regional basis: sharing costs in research, sharing knowledge, accessing professional information from the telecommunications carriers and lobbying both the carriers and the federal government.

Another area that is being addressed by this group is the investigation and establishment of a regional waste strategy. It makes sense to work jointly to ascertain the likely best locations for regional landfill and transfer stations, which councils can provide some of the services associated with waste management and minimising costs associated with waste management by utilising economies of scale. WBBROC has endorsed the establishment of the Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee—or REDAC. This committee is made up of representatives from WBBROC, government and private enterprise.

One area of REDAC's work that is of real interest to me is the regional priority project named the Rural Innovation Centre—a project that is aimed at assisting people or business with new ideas, undeveloped existing ideas, products or processes to turn these into income-producing ventures. This initiative fits so well with the LNP government's policy of growing the agricultural sector.

WBBROC is investigating the development of a regional priority infrastructure plan developed locally—a plan that would indicate the future needs of the overarching infrastructure for the Wide Bay region, which would then allow the region to develop economically and also benefit from the Queensland government's Queensland Plan to have 50 per cent of the population located outside of the south-east. The work of WBBROC and its advocacy for the region aligns very closely with my goals for my community. I look forward to working with WBBROC in the future to achieving our shared goals.

Corowa, Ms LC

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (9.52 pm): Loris Cecilia Corowa was born in Mackay on 22 July 1949 to Omie and Henry Youse. She married Trevor Corowa and they raised Nicole, Sharalee, Marsha and Jovitah. Loris loved her grandchildren: Saria, Roshame, Natalyne, Ezekial and Sevitah. Loris was renowned by her most memorable character traits as being a happy, fun-loving, caring, welcoming, musical, family orientated, strong and proud Christian woman. Her life was God. She lived and breathed his ways and never passed up an opportunity to share the gospel. She loved to travel home to Vanuatu where she was often asked to share the gospel, most recently to Espiritu Santo in Sanma Province.

Loris loved to open her home and have visitors sit at her table for a feed and/or a yarn. She loved to sing and her most favourite music was gospel music. She played the piano, the guitar, the ukulele and the piano accordion but, most of all, she loved to sing. Her favourite food was mullet and rice and vowed that the Boyne River mullet was the best mullet by far. Loris was also a sporting fan and remained loyal to her region as she supported the Brisbane Broncos and Queensland in the State of Origin matches.

Loris worked for Education Queensland as a community education counsellor and maintained that position for more than 20 years. Loris had a short break in March 2009 when she tried her hand at something different: she assumed the responsibility of manager of the recognised entity Nhulundu in Gladstone and took leave from Education Queensland. She worked there for almost two years. She was a hardworking person and impacted many lives. That is why Loris was able to maintain valuable lifelong relationships, because her favourite motto of life was 'Never leave room for people to talk about you'.

Following the example of her Lord, Loris always thought of others before herself. She considered her relationship with Christ the most important relationship of all. Even to her last, Loris never lost sight or love for God. Our community was enriched and enlivened by Loris's presence. Although Loris will be greatly missed, her love and laughter will remain a legacy to all who knew her. To Trevor and family, you have lost a sunbeam from your lives. She has gone to her Lord, but we know that we are the poorer for it. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

McKinnon, Mr A; Spinal Injuries

Mr HOLSWICH (Pine Rivers—LNP) (9.55 pm): Monday a week ago I sat down with my sons to watch Monday night football and to watch one of my favourite teams, the mighty Newcastle Knights, take on the Melbourne Storm. In the minutes leading up to half-time I watched as the drama unfolded of a tackle on Knights forward Alex McKinnon—a tackle in which this young man's life was changed forever in that instant. At the age of 22, McKinnon was a rising star of rugby league. Whilst many may not have heard of him before last week, any Knights fan would know that players such as McKinnon have formed the backbone of a Knights team with so much potential—a team that made it to the preliminary final in season 2013. Those who have followed this story would be aware that the tackle broke two of McKinnon's vertebrae and that he was placed in an induced coma following his initial surgery the day after the injury occurred. Tonight, McKinnon remains in hospital in Melbourne, away from home and familiar surrounds, unclear on what his future holds or how long rehabilitation will take.

Alex McKinnon's spinal injury has been a high-profile case, but most spinal injuries do not receive this level of media focus and attention. According to Spinal Injuries Australia, in Queensland on average one person sustains a spinal injury every four days. That is around 90 people per year across our great state. It goes without saying that sustaining a spinal cord injury is a traumatic experience for any individual, but it is a traumatic experience for not just the individual but their family and friends as well. It remains so once any TV cameras and media have moved on to cover other stories.

Last year, I gave a speech in this chamber about my experience in taking part in the Spinal Injuries Australia Take My Seat challenge—a challenge in which participants spend time in a wheelchair navigating Brisbane's CBD accompanied by a chaperone who spends their entire life using their wheelchair as a mobility aid. Although that experience for me was eye-opening and certainly challenged some of my views, it was for only one day. It was not my reality. It is not something that I have to live with every day.

Thankfully, for people who suffer from a spinal cord injury or other related conditions and injuries there are organisations such as Spinal Injuries Australia that provide invaluable services for their clients and their families. Spinal Injuries Australia and its counterparts around our country work tirelessly to rebuild lives, promote independence and educate and lobby to prevent injuries. Organisations such as Spinal Injuries Australia are the unsung heroes of our community as they work to put people's lives back together.

Whatever the future holds for Alex McKinnon—and everyone wishes him the best for his recovery—our thoughts go out to him and his family and our thanks and praise go to organisations such as Spinal Injuries Australia for being there for people in their greatest hour of need.

Heritage Bank Toowoomba Royal Show

Mr WATTS (Toowoomba North—LNP) (9.58 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to congratulate all of the people who were involved in the 2014 Heritage Bank Toowoomba Royal Show, which was held from 27 March to 29 March. Unfortunately for the show organisers this year, Toowoomba experienced its highest rainfall for the year throughout the duration of this fantastic community event, but nobody there had their spirits dampened. Everybody was pleased to see the rain, because there were so many people from the land who have been struggling without the rain.

Whilst it was great to see, it did affect the show. On opening night my heart went out to the 2,000 cast members who had prepared a show for Her Excellency the Governor Penelope Wensley. Unfortunately the show had to be cancelled because it was so damp. I spoke to Damon Phillips over the weekend and my office spoke to him after the event. I would like to congratulate him, all of the staff and the thousands of volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this event a great event for our community in Toowoomba.

It needs also to be acknowledged that a former member for Toowoomba South, Mike Horan, was the person who moved the show to its current grounds. Many people in Brisbane would not be aware that the Royal Agricultural Society of the Darling Downs was formed 15 years before the Brisbane Royal Agricultural Society. Our show celebrated its 150th year this year. I would like to mention a few of the board members—I will not go through them all. Keith Beer, Kent Bligh, Wayne Bradshaw, Shane Charles, Cameron Collins, Greg Death, George Fox, Mark Freeman and our Chamber of Commerce manager, Greg Johnson, all did a fantastic job. There are many others on the list, including the staff on the day, Damon Phillips, Greg Lyons, Cindy Phillips, Karen White, Liz Speed and Sharron Edwards. Andrew Conway had the tough job of making sure the grounds were functional, along with Jai Phillips and Karl Morris.

It was a great show. We did receive a lot of rainfall. I manned a booth with the LNP's candidate for Condamine, Pat Weir. It was a great day to get out and meet the people and introduce Pat to the people of our region, the proud people of the land of the Darling Downs, one of the most fertile agricultural areas. They were there to display their produce and cattle and also to look at that of others to see what lessons they can learn and what equipment they might be able to buy. It was a fantastic show and I wish the staff all the best in the repair work that they will have to undertake after the massive rainfall we had.

Oral Cancer; Gold Coast, Immunisation

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—PUP) (10.01 pm): I rise tonight to talk about two significant health issues on the Gold Coast which affect the nation more widely. Whilst there is much public education about breast, ovarian and prostate cancer, a study by Griffith University's School of Dentistry and Oral Health has found there is a dangerously low level of knowledge surrounding oral cancer. ABS statistics reveal that 700 people in Australia died in 2011 from malignant cancers of the lip, oral cavity and pharynx—over twice the rate of cervical cancer—yet few in the community are aware of its existence. It has a very sad history of delayed diagnosis. It is far more common in smokers, as most people realise.

Researchers Mahmound Bakr and Emma Skerman surveyed dental students, dentists and community members who attended the Griffith health dentist clinics and found very few patients were aware of oral cancers, how they emerged and how they can be prevented. People need to go to their GP or their dentist. Dental students are actually learning about oral cancers. A similar day kicked off awareness in Ireland when a screening day was held at Dublin University. They found five preventable cases of cancer at that time. This could be screened for opportunistically.

My second issue relates to immunisation. I have spoken previously in parliament on this very difficult situation. I have raised concerns about the poor immunisation rates for teenagers and children on the Gold Coast. In the *Healthy Communities—Immunisation rates for children 2012-13* released last week, which compares immunisation rates across Australia by the National Health Performance Authority, the immunisation rate for Gold Coast girls to protect against human papillomavirus was one of the lowest in Australia. Worryingly, only 60 per cent of Gold Coast girls turning 15 in 2012 were immunised against HPV. Strategies to improve HPV vaccination rates on the Gold Coast are starting to work but it is very slow.

An awareness program has begun at two Gold Coast schools and as a result consent rates have increased by up to 15 per cent. A public awareness campaign for all parents, to remind them about the importance of returning consent forms for their children, has begun. It is the same problem across the state. Immunisation rates for younger Gold Coast children remain stable with 90.7 per cent of one-year-olds, 91.7 per cent of two-year-olds and, sadly enough, 89.2 per cent of five-year-olds fully immunised. Critically, this is less than the 90 per cent of children who are entering prep who need to be fully immunised. The rates at both ends of the coast, the north and the very south, are considerably lower than that—in the order of between 80 and 85 per cent. The report also indicates that the Gold Coast region has the fifth highest number of conscientious objectors—people who formally register their objection to their children being immunised—in Australia. This is affecting a lot of communities. I agree with the Gold Coast Medicare Local Board Chair, David Rowlands, when he says it is very important to maintain the national immunisation target of 90 per cent to keep diseases such as diphtheria, hepatitis, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, mumps, rubella, polio and HPV at bay.

Algester Electorate, Schools

Mr SHORTEN (Algester—LNP) (10.04 pm): Under the Newman LNP government we have seen significant investment in our local schools, both through the Advancing Our Schools maintenance program and our Great Results Guarantee. I would like to talk tonight about the fantastic Great Results Guarantee investment in my local schools. In total, $1,113,415 has been allocated to my local schools under this program, ranging from $378,000 at Grand Avenue State School to $55,000 at Pallara State School. What does this significant investment mean for the mums and dads of the Algester electorate and their kids who go to these schools? Grand Avenue State School will employ two full-time prep to year 2 maths coaches and purchase resources to help them do their work; employ a reading coach for two days a week and resource them; employ teachers to undertake Early Start data gathering; employ maths support teachers for 14 hours a week; release prep to year 2 teachers to engage in data analysis and targeted responses; increase teacher aide hours to support identified prep to year 2 students; and implement a prep to year 2 oral language program.

At Algester State School they are going to extend the support-a-reader program from prep to year 6; support teacher aides with programs in their speech language support; have teacher aide time for classrooms to provide an additional adult to work on individual student needs in each classroom for one hour per class per week; five interactive data projectors to create usable withdrawal learning spaces for individual and small group support; and in the prep oral language program deliver the program by iPads, extending on their existing trial of 25 iPads for an additional class set.

At Forest Lake State High School they will work in partnership with Griffith University to improve reading intervention and support skills for all staff through the introduction of a model that focuses on continual data analysis, reflection, coaching and professional development with a particular focus on teachers of years 8 and 9; and create individual learning plans for students not able to reach the NMS in reading and/or numeracy with individual goals and support strategies to be able to achieve those goals.

At Boronia Heights State School they will be employing the equivalent of two full-time senior teachers to deliver targeted early years intervention across prep to year 2 and release teachers to work directly with identified students in their classes; appoint and train a teacher aide to facilitate a pre-prep oral language and metalinguistics program; and also train all early years staff in metalinguistics.

Environment

Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (10.07 pm): When I stood for the South Brisbane by-election in March 2012 I gave a commitment to my electorate that I would come into this place and stand up on the issues that they felt were important. A lot of those issues were associated with our environment. There can be no doubt—no doubt at all—that the single biggest issue confronting the world, the world's population, our environment and human health is that of climate change.

Government members interjected.

Ms TRAD: Immediately I mention climate change those opposite get all uppity, they get all mouthy. Why is that? Because they actually do not believe in climate change. Let me make it very clear to the sceptics, deniers and screechers on the other side: yesterday the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its fifth assessment report. It was titled *Climate change 2014: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*.

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms TRAD: Was that an interjection from the member for Burleigh saying 'sucked in'? Seriously, Mr Acting Speaker?

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! The member has the call.

Ms TRAD: I sincerely hope that the member for Burleigh is on the LNP hit list to go, because he is definitely one of the more gross underperformers that this parliament has ever seen. I make it very clear that yesterday the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported on the fact that climate change is real, it is happening, humans are causing it and only humans can mitigate the effects of it. There is no doubt that the impacts include loss of biodiversity, cost to infrastructure, impacts on human health, increased bushfires and extreme weather events. This is the single biggest issue confronting our environment and today the environment minister had plenty of opportunities to stand up and say something about the IPCC report.

Mr Powell: You haven't asked me a question in two years.

Ms TRAD: I will take that interjection from the Minister for Environment. Why would I ask him a question when he has so clearly abrogated his responsibility, when the Deputy Premier is the lead minister on all environmental issues and when he has quite clearly, according to the Auditor-General's report tabled in this place today, been such a woeful and hopeless minister, undeserving of his $70,000 pay increase. He is a disgrace!

(Time expired)

Labor Legacy

Mr COX (Thuringowa—LNP) (10.10 pm): I rise to speak briefly about Jupiters Townsville and its new owner, Mr Chris Morris, whom I met on Monday morning before coming down to parliament. Chris Morris brings a massive amount of enthusiasm to Townsville as he settles in beside our port, for strategic reasons and also for the obvious location as it sits on the premier site in Townsville. However, first I will mention the previous speaker.

The member for South Brisbane spoke about the job that she came here to do, which is to look after and promote the environment. Obviously she would not want to go anywhere near the $80 billion debt that Labor gave this state. That $80 billion debt has imposed so much upon the state that what she would possibly like to see being done for the environment will always be hamstrung and held back. The state has lost its AAA credit rating, and the debt is costing us $450,000 an hour, $4 billion a year. For Townsville, that equates to about $270 million, which could have been spent on building a bridge across the Bohle. It could have been spent on building a stadium or overpasses along many of the intersections of what is one of the fastest growing cities in the country. Up my way at Riverway, a four-lane road needs extending. Schools could have been built. Many schools were left in disrepair by the previous Labor government. We have had to spend $300 million on maintenance.

Mr Gibson: The Bruce Highway.

Mr COX: Yes, the Bruce Highway. I thank the member for Gympie. Obviously, in health we could have provided more nurses and extra beds in our hospitals for $270 million a year. We could be putting extra police on the streets, and thanks to the responsible minister who sits in the House tonight that is happening. I also mention public transport, which is something that I have taken on and

told people that it was an issue that I would deal with when I came into this place. The Port of Townsville needs urgent work, but it is being held back by those opposite who support their green friends in stopping any potential dredging along any of our ports that export coal.

The Treasurer is travelling the state talking to the people of Queensland about the choices they have. One of those choices is the possible sale of the Townsville port and the rail line that runs north-west. If the people of Queensland choose to do that, the new owners will bring much-needed capital to the port and the rail line, which has been left in disrepair by the previous Labor government and its debt of $80 billion. Therefore, I thank people such as Chris Morris who have chosen to come to our city with vision and enthusiasm to inject capital into the city. This government believes in private business and it believes in entrepreneurs. We are inviting them back to our state. He has told me that it is a pleasure to be back in Queensland now that there has been a change of government, because we are the best to deal with.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.13 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, D'Ath, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young