

Sale of Public Assets

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. How does the Treasurer reconcile his commitment, repeated in his meetings around the state, to use asset sales to pay down debt and regain a AAA credit rating with the Premier's statement today that asset sales will be used simply to 'take the edge off some of the debt'?

Mr NICHOLLS: I can at last thank the honourable member for a question, because it has been 154 days since I was last asked a question about the economy. I am still waiting with some degree of patience to hear the solution to the problem that we were left with by the Labor Party, and that is the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt.

I do note the comments of the honourable member in terms of the contradiction that he claims is there. He fails to explain the contradiction with my old friend 'Mythbusters'. How does he claim now not to be in favour of asset sales? How does he deal with the contradiction that reducing debt is not necessary, and the old 'Mythbuster' here that says our reduced credit rating is no big deal? That is the myth; here is the 'Mythbusters' fact from the member opposite—

The credit rating is a big deal because it determines how much interest is paid on loans.

The loss of the AAA credit rating will cost the state an extra \$270 million over the forward estimates.

Colleagues, that is the contradiction which comes from the other side. They continue to peddle that they have a solution, but the contradiction is that they have no solution. It is the contradiction that says you can continue to spend without let or hindrance and it will not affect the debt rating or the credit rating. It is the contradiction that says you can continue to pander to your mates in the union movement and it will not cost Queenslanders more in taxes, fees and charges. It is the contradiction that we have from those opposite in relation to increasing fees, taxes and charges.

Here is another one from the member opposite, because it is important that we do not let them off the hook: they are the people who created this problem. We have done a lot of the heavy lifting to fix it up, but here is the contradiction from the member from Mulgrave. He does not like the answer, because here is what he is going to do for the cost of living for Queenslanders. This is what he did last time—

We have:

- raised land tax and stamp duty at the top end
- increased taxes on casinos and introduced new liquor licensing fees ...
- increased coal royalties
- increased motor vehicle stamp duty and we have recently introduced a rise to car registration.

The only substantial tax that could be increased is payroll tax and this is not good policy ...

That is the contradiction, Mr Deputy Speaker.

(Time expired)

Front-line Services, Funding

Mr CRANDON: My question without notice is also to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and is a nice segue from the previous question. Can the Treasurer further update the House on his state-wide listening tour and the choices Queenslanders face so that we can boost vital funding to front-line services, and are there any alternative views?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Coomera for the question, because he is someone who has experience in the finance industry and is vitally interested in making sure that Queensland's finances get back in the black and back on track.

I will take the last part of the question first, 'are there any alternative views?' Obviously, the only thing we can look at is the history of those opposite, because they have not actually put out an alternative other than to sit down and have patience. We know the alternative view from those opposite, and that is that they are going to either sit there and hope that in some way manna from heaven will fall and fix up the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt, and we are all going to have a Bex and a cup of tea and a good lie down and that will fix us up.

A government member: We'll have patience!

Mr NICHOLLS: Just have patience! That is one option that has been put forward. Their other option is to massively increase fees, taxes and charges. We know that is the case because the shadow Treasurer has stood next to people like their good friend Pete Simpson from the ETU—he

was not such a good friend three years ago—and John Battams from the Queensland Council of Unions, and we know that Mr Battams says, ‘Let’s increase payroll tax.’ But hang on a second! What does the member for Mulgrave say?

The only substantial tax that could be increased is payroll tax and this is not good policy ...

That is the contradiction we get from the member opposite.

To return to the listening tour, I have had another two meetings this week in Brisbane with community leaders, leaders from the education sector, the private sector, the Catholic education sector, the state education sector, people from the social services sector and the property sector. Last week I had some meetings in Gladstone, and I do want to acknowledge and thank the member for Gladstone for her constructive role in attending that meeting.

Let me make it clear that the member for Gladstone has firmly expressed her position in relation to the sale or lease of the port of Gladstone and that is that she does not support it. I thank her for having a position and clearly stating it.

We will continue to have that discussion, but the discussion we had in Bundaberg was a very different discussion around the sale or lease of government businesses, as was the discussion we had in Cairns, as has been the discussion we have had here. Unlike those opposite, we are going out and talking to the people of Queensland, and we will be doing more of it. We will be explaining the choices that they face as a result of \$80 billion worth of Labor debt, and we are happy to do it.

(Time expired)

Management of Young Children Program

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the minister for education. I am happy for the minister to take the question on notice if he does not have sufficient information to answer it.

This afternoon I was informed that the state government is withdrawing funding from the Management of Young Children Program, which assists parents to manage the behavioural problems of their children and I ask: will the minister investigate this matter and do whatever he can to continue the service?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think the program to which the member is referring was subsequently renamed Positive Learning Centres some years ago, and I can advise the member that it was not specifically funded by my department. Yes, the programs—which were originally called the Management of Young Children Program—were ones where people would get referrals, often from doctors or from other practitioners who may have been concerned about the behaviour of some students, and that is why they referred them to these Positive Learning Centres. That was over some years, Mr Acting Speaker, and there is no doubt that they provided good resources for parents and teachers in terms of some of the challenging behaviours of some of the children who were sent there.

It is very important to acknowledge that the government has also put in a number of programs that we do specifically fund, and one of those is the Early Years Centres that we funded to the tune of some \$32 million. We work with the honourable Minister for Health, and I have seen these programs in a number of places: Browns Plains; Caboolture; Cairns; the northern Gold Coast with outreach services in places like Nerang, Coomera and Labrador; Edmonton; Gordonvale for the one in Cairns; Deception Bay and Woodford for the one in Caboolture; Beaudesert; and Acacia Ridge. We also have children and family centres, which is a national partnership worth \$75 million where we have established nine centres: there is still one being built in the honourable member for Mackay’s electorate; Mornington Island; Ipswich; Logan; Mareeba; Cairns; Doomadgee; Mount Isa; Palm Island and Rockhampton. That \$75 million is providing many of those services that are imperative for early childhood development. We have a lot of programs where we are working with parents to get the community and other government departments involved to make sure that we can maximise the services that we provide.

When it comes to the services provided by these Positive Learning Centres, it is important to acknowledge what we are trying to do in my department. Instead of having seven different regions providing a whole raft of services and doing things potentially differently in different regions—some regions may be strong in HR or IT or other services—we want to have a Department of Education, Training and Employment way of providing services, and that is to fund schools directly to allow them

to access programs like these Positive Learning Centres. That will mean that if the providers who are in these Positive Learning Centres are relying on income from my department or from the schools that are within my portfolio, if the services that are being provided are ones that the schools will value, then they will be funded to use their funds to directly support those centres.

Flood Mitigation

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Can the minister advise the House how the Newman government is learning from events of the past to lessen the impact on South-East Queensland residents in future flood events?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for Nanango for the question. I can recall in 1974 watching the flood event throughout Brisbane and Ipswich. I can recall in 2011 watching a similar event and I can still recall and hear the echoes of members in this chamber recounting the events that had taken place in their electorates and the fact that in 2013 we came close again to a potential event. The government has taken heed of those events and, indeed, earlier events going back to 1893.

We are determined to learn the lessons from the past. Yesterday, the Premier and I released what are called optimisation studies into Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams. For Wivenhoe and Somerset, the third option is called alternative urban 3. That option allows more water to be released earlier from Wivenhoe to ensure that there is a reduction in inundation in Brisbane after water flows from Wivenhoe through the Moggill point and then into Brisbane. It also allows greater capacity in the flood mitigation dam to ensure that in the event the event continues, more water can be stored. It also means that Seqwater, which in the past had to take into account bridges around the area, is no longer required to do so. We will therefore see a number of bridges closed more frequently and more often but the trade-off is that, in the south-east corner under urban 3, there could be a saving of inundation of up to 1,500 buildings and homes. Under urban 4—a second alternative, which is being looked at but as a long-term scenario—that saving could be as high as 3,000 homes. Three thousand homes in Brisbane is a large number of homes to be saved from inundation not just in regard to the structures themselves but also in the misery that people go through when they lose their homes or lose their businesses.

Those studies are now out for consultation for three months. It is so important that Queenslanders make their voices heard in regard to these studies so that, at the end the year, we can come up with a realistic option as to what to do with Wivenhoe. But more than that, we are planning more dams across the south-east corner. At the end of this year, we hope to have a list of priorities and costings. This is day one of this plan but this government is committed to making certain that we use Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine and also understand the implications of putting dams in the region to keep people safe, their homes safe, their businesses safe and this state safe.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Training Positions

Dr DOUGLAS: My question is to the Premier. The deadline for applications for approved Royal Australasian College of Surgeons training positions is this Friday. I ask: will the Premier guarantee that those doctors applying for a place in a training position in a Queensland public hospital will have supervised accredited training from that date onwards?

Mr NEWMAN: I just want to ask the honourable member to in future really speak loudly and clearly because it is very hard to hear him when he mumbles so much. From what I can gather from the question, the answer is yes, I can make that commitment.

Having made that commitment, perhaps I should talk about the party and the goings-on in the Palmer party at the moment. I agree with our Prime Minister, who has remarked and observed that the Palmer party is trying to buy elected positions in the state of WA in the Senate campaign. I say to West Australian residents to look at Mr Palmer, look at his track record and the things that he does. Look at what he says versus what actually happens. Look at his track record. He has a facility in Townsville that this government has battled for the best part of the last two years to try to make him observe his environmental obligations. We have asked him to make commitments to the jobs of hardworking men and women at that refinery. He has refused. He has, as has clearly been demonstrated, completely trashed a once-proud five-star resort on the Sunshine Coast. He has sacked many of the people. He has completely tried to do over the small investors—the mum-and-dad investors. He lost a major golf tournament there.

Mr Palmer said to Queenslanders—to Australians—that he would not be involved in business anymore. I assert today that clearly he is involved in business. Yesterday, it was pointed out that he had not met his carbon tax obligations—something by the way that I do not agree with, nevertheless the tax is there, it is the law and we must all obey the law. He said that he had paid the bill, then he had not paid the bill, then finally the bill was paid but it was not paid properly. The point is that he is a federal member of parliament, but he is talking about the operations and tax liabilities of his companies. Clearly, he is still involved in business.

This is the man who parks in disabled parking spots and then tells porkies about having had a breakdown. I wonder if some journalist has bothered to go and ask, if he did break down, where the service record is from the company. I could go on.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I am surprised that there are interjections from those opposite, because we know that the Leader of the Opposition has met with Mr Clive Palmer in recent times. How interesting! From the statements of the Labor Party, we thought that Mr Palmer was the devil incarnate. That is what we thought. There are plenty of things on the public record about that.

So I say to the people of WA: watch very closely. Do not be fooled by someone who has shown that he wants to buy governments. That is why there was a fight with this team. We were not going to be bought.

Disability Services

Mrs OSTAPOVITCH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister please update the House on how this government is preparing Queenslanders with a disability to have greater choice and control?

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for Stretton for the question. I note her passion and advocacy for people with a disability and her great support of Queensland's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme to give Queenslanders choice and control over the specialist disability services that they receive.

The Newman government is absolutely committed to delivering the NDIS to an expected 97,000 Queenslanders. One of the ways in which we are preparing Queenslanders for the scheme is through the Your Life Your Choice initiative. I am pleased to inform the House that this government's Your Life Your Choice initiative continues to grow and benefit Queenslanders with a disability.

In February, I was very excited to advise the House that we had 750 participants in the Your Life Your Choice program. Today, I am delighted to further inform the House that we have over 920 Queenslanders with a disability who have chosen to self-direct their support, which gives them greater choice and control over the supports and services that they need and, particularly, who delivers them. That means that more than 920 Queenslanders who have signed up for Your Life Your Choice can choose between services that are delivered through non-government providers in the traditional way or they can choose to self-direct their supports using funding and resources to plan, to purchase and to select the supports that best support their needs.

This approach aligns absolutely with the key planks of the NDIS. It will make a real difference to Queenslanders with a disability, along with their families and their carers. They will be well placed when the scheme rolls out in the middle of 2016.

The popularity of the initiative has been quite overwhelming. It is double the number that we had originally expected—we had expected around 455 people to participate; we now have over double that. I think that demonstrates that this government is providing the service, the supports—the framework—for people to be able to choose the supports that they want, because they know the supports that they need to live an included, quality life, an ordinary life, a natural life; one that we can have. I think that, to be able to provide that framework for them is appropriate and, as we move towards an NDIS, to give them the opportunity to test that before that becomes the way that services are delivered into the future is really encouraging.

I say to honourable members, to those people in their electorates, that this government is looking after people with a disability by providing that—

(Time expired)

Port of Gladstone

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, thank you for your recent visit. The Deputy Premier outlined today a very important rail link to the Port of Gladstone. This will increase throughput to the port and therefore income to government. Does that benefit to this state and nation add weight to the local community's views that the port is not only intrinsically linked to the community, but it should remain in public ownership as an improving and significant income stream?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Gladstone for a thoughtful question that is well worth answering. One of the things that our listening and choices tour is all about is fleshing out those questions. I acknowledge the contribution made by the member for Gladstone to the debate we had in her electorate last Wednesday. We also had the mayor and the deputy mayor of Gladstone in attendance, as well as representatives from the local chamber of commerce and other community members. The attachment of the people of the town of Gladstone to the port was very evident not only in the comments that were made but also in the pride that was taken in the port. I think I acknowledged the importance of Gladstone to the state of Queensland. I called it, as I like to do, Queensland's muscle town. Every state needs a muscle town that delivers exports and industrial and heavy industrial activity.

Having said all of those things about it, we are confronted with some difficult choices as a state and as a government—that is, what do we do to pay down the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt? There are three choices. Those three choices, and I put them to every meeting and no-one has come up with a fourth—although the people of Gladstone did try—are to massively increase fees, taxes and charges. We know that that is one method that is supported by John Battams and the Queensland Council of Unions, and seems to be being increasingly supported by those opposite who want to increase the cost of living for Queenslanders by massively increasing fees, taxes and charges. There is, of course, reducing services. I would be interested to hear what those opposite say about that. And there is, of course, recycling capital and using that capital to pay down the debt and to invest in the infrastructure that we know a growing state is going to need over the next decade or so.

Member for Gladstone, we are very conscious of the value that the port adds to the state's economy. We are very conscious of the improvements that are likely to be necessary to grow the Port of Gladstone. We are discussing the options around the Port of Gladstone, including things like the inland railway and other options around the expansion of the Port of Gladstone.

Mr Seeney: The state development area.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is a part of, as the Deputy Premier points out, and I take the interjection, the development of the state development area around the port. That will all be taken into account as part of the consideration and the deliberations of government as we go forward and as we make our plans for dealing with that \$80 billion worth of Labor debt. I envisage, as I said to the newspaper up there last week, that Gladstone will continue to be the muscle town of Queensland, it will continue to deliver value for the state of Queensland and that investment both from the state and the private sector—bearing in mind it is the private sector's \$60 billion that has gone into Curtis Island—will continue to drive that growth.

Flood Mitigation

Mrs SMITH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. In light of the Premier's announcement about Wivenhoe Dam, could the minister please inform the House why flood mitigation is important and what else the government is doing in this area?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I sincerely thank the member for Mount Ommaney for the question, a member who understands the value of proper flood mitigation and proper flood defences. Indeed, she has been a very great advocate for her community when it comes to providing better information on those rain gauges to get information in real time.

The question posed is a very, very good one and that is: why does it make sense to do flood mitigation? It makes sense because we cannot afford not to. We simply cannot afford to continue what we have done time and time again and expect a different result. Can I report to the House as recovery minister that just to piece Ipswich and Brisbane back together after 2011 cost more than half a billion dollars. That does not include things like the lost economic opportunities, it does not include

myriad other things. That is just to get the communities back on their feet. That is not even including the social heartache that you put communities through by leaving them exposed. There is a real case for doing things and doing it properly.

What I say to the community, and the Minister for Energy and Water Supply highlighted this, is there is an opportunity for people to have their say in what is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. This is a government that is not just fixated on the next election cycle. This is a government that wants to build generational infrastructure and it can do so much for our great state. It is not just the state's capital that will benefit from our thirst to do things better and do things differently. I have reported to the House already the success stories that are communities such as Roma and St George. It was great to go there with the member for Warrego and see what happens when there is a council that has a view to do things properly and a local member with the ticker to support them. I say to communities across the state, 'Now is your time.' We have put out a call to arms for submissions to build flood mitigation devices across this state. I know that there are people like the member for Maryborough, the member for Burnett and the member for Gympie who have the ticker to stand behind their community and look those in the eye who say this is too hard, because we cannot afford to continue to shelve this. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. We have rebuilt assets to a better standard, but this is a different debate. It is about protecting the communities before heartache ensues upon them, before those roads are ripped up, before people have to pull up their carpets for the fourth and fifth time in the last couple of years.

To highlight something that was said yesterday, you will never flood proof Queensland. You will never flood proof the South-East. That is not what this is about. This is about saying there is a better way and there is a way that a government with a vision can get real results.

Mount Isa Rail Line

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Considering Aurizon has laid off another 67 employees on the Mount Isa rail line and the fact that the minister by his own admission is powerless to stop these job losses because of privatisation, will the minister support keeping the Townsville to Mount Isa rail line public to retain the annual income from that line to pay down debt and to keep railway workers' jobs?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Dalrymple for the question. Let us go back to the earlier comment he made about Aurizon. Let us not forget the history of what happened.

Mr Nicholls: It's his mates.

Mr EMERSON: It is his mates. I take the interjection from the Treasurer. It was his mates, the Labor Party—because they are the north-west branch of the Labor Party—that made the decision, without any mandate, without any discussion with the public, without any consultation, to sell off QR National which is now Aurizon. It was their decision. In this parliament time and time again we see the members of the Katter party backing Labor in this House. He comes in and backs them all the time, the people who sold off QR National without any mandate, without any public consultation.

What have we done in terms of that line already? In terms of that line we have invested \$40 million. We have seen a six per cent increase in volumes on that line. We have reduced safety incidents on that line. We remain committed to the line. But as the Treasurer has talked about, we face choices as a state, difficult choices, because of the \$80 billion of debt left by the mates of the Katter party—\$80 billion, \$4 billion a year of interest, \$450,000—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr EMERSON: I hear the shadow Treasurer interjecting. I will not go through the 'mythbusters', because the Treasurer really gets great joy from reminding the member for Mulgrave about that. However, I will remind him because I hear Labor trying to rewrite history over and over again. I hear them saying, 'There wasn't any debt,' 'There's no debt there,' 'There was never going to be \$80 billion of debt.'

An honourable member interjected.

Mr EMERSON: No, there was not; there was going to be a forecast \$85 billion of debt according to their own budget papers. I say to the member for Dalrymple: this is a challenge we face. This is a difficult choice we have to make. What does the member want? Does he want Labor's policies of cutting services and putting up taxes for all those communities? The reality is that we will go out there and talk to the community and discuss that.

Mr KNUTH: I rise to a point of order. The minister refuses to answer the question that I put forward.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: That is no point of order. The minister has time on the clock.

Mr EMERSON: I remind the member for Dalrymple that not only are they the mates of Labor but also we all know they have been having meetings with Labor members. We have seen them having meetings. The member for Dalrymple has had meetings with senior members of the ALP in this House—secret little meetings. Who knows what they are planning. However, the reality is that they keep backing Labor; we back Queenslanders.

Hermitage Research Facility School Plants Science Competition

Mr BENNETT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Can the minister outline how this government is promoting the importance of agricultural science to young people through the DAFF Hermitage Research Facilities School Plants Science Competition?

Dr McVEIGH: I thank the member for quite an important question. I am pleased to share with the House that the DAFF Hermitage Research Facility has an annual school plants science competition that is on again this year with the theme of 'Bug Attack'. It is a theme for this year's competition that aims to ignite a passion in young people in various schools. This competition is run out of the Minister for Health's own electorate of Southern Downs. The focus on agriculture and agricultural science is very important to make young people aware of potential long-term careers in these areas.

As the House knows, the Newman government is committed to growing agriculture as one of the four pillars of our economy. Agriculture underpins tens of thousands of jobs and contributes billions of dollars to our economy. It is the lifeblood of our regional communities. Therefore, it is vital that we foster an interest in science and agriculture among young Queenslanders so that they might take up careers in the sector should they wish.

The School Plants Science Competition offers very engaging ways for students to understand skills in key areas identified in the Australian science curriculum. This morning I visited Saint Saviour's College in my own electorate of Toowoomba South where I was thrilled to see students in year 9 undertaking experiments and learning how grain pests such as the rust-red flour beetle raids foodstuffs in family homes.

Mr Newman interjected.

Dr McVEIGH: Understanding how those insects live and how to control them is very important to the way in which my department conducts our research on food security. I take the interjection from the Premier. This morning I encouraged the students to keep in mind that what they were observing in their research is exactly what industry leaders in Queensland's and Australia's great industry—such as the Premier himself was engaged in in a former career—have to deal with right throughout the supply chain, whether it is grain storage, grain shipment, et cetera, from farm right through to end product. That practical understanding was understood by the students of Saint Saviour's College. It links directly to the Australian school curriculum and, therefore, it is great to see that some 70 schools have already enrolled in the program this year.

It is important for us to share such knowledge and opportunity through the agricultural centre at Toogoolawah, for example, which I opened with the member for Nanango; agribusiness gateway schools such as Downlands in my own town of Toowoomba; the Diploma of Agriculture that we have reinstated at UQ, Gatton, which was unfortunately ignored by the former Labor government; the Hermitage Research Facility itself, which again was ignored by them. They did not even have a dedicated department of agriculture.

(Time expired)

North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. The community-run North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service currently has no base operation funding. However, last year the three other community-run services in Queensland received a total of \$13.46 million. Less than five per cent of this would keep the North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service viable. I ask: will the minister acknowledge this inequity and provide a fairer proportion of this funding for north-west Queensland?

Mr DEMPSEY: I thank the member for the question. Obviously, having worked and lived in the area of Mount Isa over many years, I understand the peace of mind that the community needs in any type of disaster, such as a road accident or a snakebite occurring in an isolated part of the Mount Isa region. The member has written a question on notice to me in relation to this. If I recall, my answer to the good member was that there are a number of fully funded operational CareFlight and RACQ operations right across Queensland that are keeping people safe. That is also part of the new emergency levy fund to ensure that at any time that disaster strikes the community can have peace of mind knowing that this state will send whatever resources it can to keep Queenslanders safe, and they can also have peace of mind knowing that we will have the most modern and, obviously, the best infrastructure in place, not just the same resources as now but also the revitalised resources that all Queenslanders, whether in Mount Isa or Morningside, expect from a state government.

I am happy to get back to the member in relation to the question. In Mount Isa, the operators work on an as-needs basis. We have a number of fixed-wing services in Mount Isa that do a terrific job. I have worked there in emergency services myself. We also have support from Emergency Management Queensland's old helicopter systems from Townsville that can provide backup. They have satellite navigation and can fly in daylight and in darkness to get to an emergency. That particular operator certainly can have peace of mind knowing that, if an emergency is happening, they will be called on and funds certainly will be put aside for that. As the minister, I assure the member for Mount Isa that we have done an evaluation of all of our aviation assets for Queensland, including the police emergency helicopters and the government Air Wing, as well as other non-government operators. We are getting the greatest efficiency for the tax-paying people of Queensland and Mount Isa to make sure that we have an efficient and effective system, not just now but into the future. I am happy to take that up with that particular operator. I have spoken to him once personally in Brisbane. We will continue to look ahead and ensure that all Queenslanders are safe.

(Time expired)

Supporting Women Scholarships Program

Ms MILLARD: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister please inform the House how the Newman government is supporting women with opportunities in traditionally male dominated industries?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, you have two minutes.

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Acting Speaker, of course, you were there at the very important awarding of scholarships that took place this morning. I thank the honourable member for her question on a very important issue. As I have mentioned, this morning we held a ceremony to present 115 scholarships under the Queensland government's Supporting Women Scholarships program. Other members of parliament were present, as well: the member for Ipswich West, the member for Cleveland and the member for Bulimba, as well as Mr Mander, the Minister for Housing and Public Works.

This is a very serious policy about making sure that we can supercharge the Queensland economy by increasing productivity by getting women into traditionally male dominated professions. It is something that the Premier speaks about all the time. There is no doubt that if we can get more people with more qualifications into areas such as agricultural studies, architecture, building, engineering and information technology, that will make a significant contribution to our economy, to our society and, of course, to their lives.

The Supporting Women Scholarship program provides a total of 500 Queensland women with scholarships of \$20,000 each over four years. To hear their stories this morning was really quite inspirational. Some 126 women received scholarships last year and 115 this year. Of the 115 there were 71 school leavers just beginning their careers, 15 seeking a new career direction and 29 returning to study. It shows the value of the program and its appeal to women at any stage of their career.

One of the guest speakers was a lady called Amarna Fa'au. She received a scholarship last year. She is ineligible to receive any funding traditionally because she is not originally from Australia but from one of the Pacific islands. She graduated with an OP1 and is now studying a bachelor of engineering at QUT. She is going to be a great contributor to the Queensland society and economy where she has made her home.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

Mr PITT: I was going to make only a brief contribution, but I might make a longer one based on some of those comments. I fully support the opposition leader and the member for Gladstone in opposing this motion. This is about curtailing scrutiny of the government. Estimates are the bedrock of scrutinising the executive here in Queensland. It has been so since the mid-1990s. There have been changes along the way but everyone in this House should be aware that those changes have always been done in a bipartisan manner. There is nothing bipartisan about the way the government is approaching this issue. They have not asked anyone. But that is why they are known as the know-it-all Newman government. They do not ask anybody any questions that they think they will not like the answer to.

So what we know is that former governments of all stripes have seen estimates as an opportunity to communicate both their achievements as a government and, of course, an opportunity for the opposition and non-government members to scrutinise what is happening in the very important bills before the House regarding our budget. This is a critical time. I do not even think the Leader of the House believes his own words today. I do not believe that he can say that this is about openness and transparency. It is about overhauling the estimates committee process in a way that we have not seen in this parliament before.

Estimates are an important time for the parliament to grill the ministers. As we know, over the last two years we have seen the government flounder badly. They have been absolutely flogged at estimates. They have lost ministers. We have seen how this works.

Mr Stevens: You're kidding, aren't you?

Mr PITT: Let's have a look at some of the performances. Let's have a look at the performances of the Attorney-General, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Tourism and then there are the ministers who are no longer with us—the ones who have got the chop. Why? Because they were not across their portfolios or they made very poor decisions which were outed by this opposition and by other non-government members.

To those in the gallery—to the fourth estate—this is the real trick: this is about minimising media scrutiny. That is all it is about. All these committee hearings happening at the same time—concurrent hearings—makes it difficult. Broadcasting will be difficult. There may not even be video facilities available in all seven committee rooms. We may only see that in five; there may be only audio in the other two. But I am not sure they have even thought that far ahead, because this is about minimising their damage and not thinking about democracy in Queensland.

Mr Seeney: You cannot broadcast video from the estimates committee hearings anyway. They only do overlay. Where have you been?

Mr PITT: I was going to say that the Deputy Premier had been awfully quiet, which is such a change because he seemed very keen to talk about this to the newspaper. Shamefully, I have had to rise on a matter of privilege in this House and write to the Acting Speaker about the potential contempt of committee proceedings. What was the Deputy Premier's response when this was raised with him? When this was raised with him in the House earlier this morning, the Deputy Premier's response was, 'You've got to be kidding.' He was trivialising the importance of what he has done. The real test will be to see whether this is defensible. I will be writing to the Acting Speaker on that matter.

Maybe the Deputy Premier should have taken a leaf out of the book of his alter ego, the fake Jeff Seeney—Sir Fake Jeff Seeney now that imperial honours have come back. What did he say on Twitter? He said, 'New rule for shorter estimates hearing this year. If the entire hearing cannot fit into a 140-character tweet, it's too long.' That is basically where this is pitched at. That might seem like a joke but that is the way they are pitching this. They can get away with this because of their massive majority.

Queenslanders are tired of this arrogant government. They are tired of this government saying they know it all and they think they can run roughshod over the parliament and Queenslanders. They treat people like speed bumps. They are happy to roll over the top of them. They do not want scrutiny because they know every time scrutiny is applied to them they do not like it. Guess what, the skeletons come out of the closet. I have heard that we may well get an extra sitting week out of this. That surprises me because every time we come into this place we belt them. We belt these people.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr PITT: We belt you. You come away with a bad news story every week.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. When I stand on my feet I expect silence.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.


Mr Bleijie: Get me an icepack. I'm bruised. This mean opposition.

Mr PITT: I take that interjection from the Attorney-General, because at the moment he would be feeling very bruised. His ego is bruised and professionally he is bruised. His reputation is in tatters; it is not bruised. He is not having a good week. In fact, I do not think he has had a good month. Why do they not like this? The Leader of the Opposition touched on it. She said they do not like it because this came out of a recommendation from Tony Fitzgerald. It came out of the EARC process. It came from having to undo more than 30 years of National Party rule in this state which was destroying Queensland. It was corrupt. It was rotten to the core. Campbell Newman does not have to worry about people comparing him to Sir Joh, because he is living up to it every single day.

Before this motion that has been put forward we used to have one committee sitting at a time. Let us reflect on that. One committee at a time means that all eyes are on that minister. It means all eyes are on the questions being asked and that is obviously too much pressure. These ministers know that if they have to go through another estimates committee scrutiny under the old format they will crack. They know they have non-performers and they know that they have been losing people each and every year. They have had a scandal each and every year for the last two years under the scrutiny being applied not only by the opposition but by all non-government members. What I cannot understand is how can eight people in the Labor opposition be giving you so much curry? How can these eight people be dismantling your government and ruining your plans?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr PITT: That is what is happening. It is all falling apart. We know the Treasurer did not have a plan before the election when it came to paying down debt with asset sales. That is smoke and mirrors and that is coming out. This government has to take a really hard look at itself if it wants to stop this slide—and it is a slide. It will have to remember what happened in Redcliffe. It will have to remember the historic swing. It will have to live up to the words of the Premier when he said: we will listen and we have learnt a lesson. They have learnt nothing. Today's motion is evidence that they have learnt nothing. I was going to say that this is all about winding back. Guess what: the opposition will give a commitment today that we will wind back these changes when we return to government because this is not the way to run a parliamentary democracy in this state.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (3.55 pm): You have to assume that the previous speakers either did not understand the motion moved by the Leader of the House or were deliberately trying to make claims that were simply not true. The motion before the House increases the amount of time that is available for scrutiny of the government. It increases the amount of time that each minister has to report before the committee. It increases that time from one day to two days—two full days.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left!

Mr SEENEY: For many years the estimates committee process has been crammed and limited by time. It has been limited by time that we complained about when we were in opposition. I remember every shadow minister on this side of the House complaining about the fact that we only had two hours or we only had three hours to scrutinise the budget bills in the estimates process. I also know that since we have been in government ministers themselves have said they have not had enough time to put the government's positives in the estimates process.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left! The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. The Deputy Premier has not attacked the opposition. The Deputy Premier has simply explained the position, and I will soon be warning members for unruly interjections. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Acting Speaker, you cannot challenge the basic mathematics of this. Each committee will have to sit for two days. Previously each committee sat for one day. That is double the scrutiny. It is double the time for ministers to put their case before the committee, and it is double the time that members of the opposition have to ask questions. We have in the motion limited the hours—that is true—for each day because some estimates committees had to sit until nine o'clock at night.

Mr Rickuss: On Friday night.

Mr SEENEY: On Friday night.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left!

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Manager of Opposition Business under standing order 253A.

Mr SEENEY: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer because he is exactly right. It illustrates just how stupid the claims are from the other side that somehow this is lessening the scrutiny. When the former government had a controversial issue you got stuck on an estimates committee at nine o'clock on a Friday night. There were a lot of controversial issues when we were in opposition around the department of natural resources particularly—things like vegetation management, water reform and things like that. They were always in the estimates committee process on Friday night. They were always put on Friday night. How much scrutiny was there about that? What we are ensuring is that these issues will be considered by the estimates committee at a reasonable time of the day when people are able to tune in and to take note of what is happening.

The committees will sit at a reasonable time of the day, and to ensure that they can do that they will sit for two days rather than one day. That cannot be construed as restricting the opportunities of the opposition. It is extending the opportunities of the opposition. Do the mathematics.

Dr Douglas interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Gaven under 253A. You will have every opportunity to have your say.

Mr SEENEY: Do the mathematics. Under the proposition that has been put forward in this motion, the committees will sit from nine to five, or eight hours a day. Eight hours a day times 14 committees is about 112 hours of committee time. Under the old system, even if every committee had sat until 9.30 at night, it would have been 12½ hours a day times seven days so it would have been 87 hours. That is 87 hours as opposed to 112 hours. How is that possibly reducing the opportunities? It is 87 hours as opposed to 112 hours. Not only that, a significant portion of that 87 hours was at night-time; it was after dinner when nobody was watching and no-one was taking any notice. A considerable part of the 87 hours was at a time when nobody—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for South Brisbane under 253A for unruly interjections.

Mr SEENEY: Under the proposition, we will have 112 hours of committee time held during the working hours of the day. That simply cannot be construed as reducing the opportunities available to the opposition or as somehow constraining scrutiny. Of course it is not.

An issue was raised by a previous speaker about it constraining members from taking part in one or more committees. It does not do that at all. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to come and ask me about my travel backwards and forwards to Monto, which is the only question she ever asks me, she can do that. In fact she can do it on two days in a row. She can come and ask me on Tuesday and then she can come back again and ask me on Thursday if she likes, and so it is with the more serious questions that she might like to ask. She has a two-day window in which to ask any particular minister any particular question, and as she has done in the past she can drop into particular committees and ask a question. That is still possible. The opportunity to do that is still there for the Leader of the Opposition or indeed any other member, whether it is the member for Gladstone or whoever. The advantage is that they will not have to hang around until half past nine at night to do it. They will be able to do it during normal working hours.

So it is a complete and utter nonsense to suggest that this is somehow curtailing debate. What we have heard from the opposition, more to the point, is almost a fear that they are going to have to do the work. How many times over the last two years have we seen the opposition run right out of questions at estimates and government members have had to ask the questions? The government members have had to try to ask questions of the ministers.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SEENEY: That is right, filibuster to help them out. We have seen that happen, especially during those late night sessions when the crossbenchers have this bad habit of flitting away and disappearing and we have very few non-government members there. This will mean that the non-government members of the committee will have to work and they will have to work harder. They will have to work to get questions for two days. They will have to turn up to their committee for two days, and that might be a bit of a problem for members who sit up in the back corner and do not turn up to parliament very often. It will be a bit of a challenge for them to turn up for two days rather than turn up for one day.

I want to make some comments more generally about the committee system. As I have said to this House a number of times, I and a number of other senior members in this parliament put a lot of effort into reforming the committee system in the parliament. We went to New Zealand and we looked at the committee system there, and we put in place a committee system that was entirely different to anything that existed before. We put in place a committee system that allowed the committees to address a whole range of issues, including for the first time bills before the House. We also recognised that it was important for the committee system to continue to serve the purpose of examining the government's financial bills that were introduced into the House during the budget process, so each of those committees continues to have that role.

I think the committee system has been something of a success. The committee system in this parliament is maturing. The committees meet on Wednesday mornings in this parliament and they all meet concurrently. They all examine legislation at the same time, and they all have public hearings, depending on their own agendas, at the same time. That has not curtailed the activities of any of those committees. Are any of those committees seriously going to suggest that their efforts to examine the legislation have been somehow hampered by the fact that there are six other committees sitting in different parts of the building? That is just nonsense. If you followed the logic of the argument that has been put here today, each of the committees would only meet for half an hour on a Wednesday morning because one committee would meet for half an hour in the red chamber and then vacate it so the next committee could meet, and then they would meet for half an hour and then they would have to vacate the room so the next committee could meet. If you followed the logic that was put forward by the opposition, that is where you would end up and of course that is nonsensical and stupid.

One of the challenges for us when we set up the committee system was to make sure that there were enough committee rooms available for all of the committees to meet at the same time, and some considerable effort and capital has been expended towards meeting that. We have the facilities here for the committees to all meet at the same time, to all engage in whatever process it is and to do it concurrently. They do that every Wednesday morning that this House sits, and there is absolutely no reason why they cannot examine the budget bills in the same way as they examine every other piece of legislation. It will be just like when the committees examine legislation. When the committees examine the government's budget bills, those procedures will be recorded and they will be available for examination. They will be available for detailed consideration either on that day or on subsequent days, and the opportunities to question what has been said will actually be greater because the opposition will have the opportunity to go back over what was said on the Tuesday and pursue it further on the Thursday if they want to and if they choose to do that. That is not an opportunity that has been available previously. They will be able to do that at a time of the day that is a normal working time of the day.

I would submit that this is a change that is overdue. It is a change that is a natural consequence of the changes that we made to the committee system in the parliament. It is a change that is a natural consequence of the maturing of that committee system. The committees will examine the budget bills in the same way as they examine every other piece of legislation that comes into the House and goes before them. That is what is being proposed. There can be no suggestion, in my view, that this process limits that scrutiny or limits the ability of the opposition. It does quite the opposite. It provides considerably more opportunity, and that is a good thing. I am a believer in the system of democratic government that requires a government to submit itself to the test that should come from an opposition, but unfortunately that test does not come from the one that we have in this parliament.

The other thing that is worth noting—and once again this is something that we put in place as part of that review of the committee system—is the CLA, the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, and the role that it plays and the opportunities that members should have to ask questions of members of the CLA. Under this proposal, the CLA will meet on the Wednesday. So we will have

committee hearings on the Tuesday, the CLA will meet on the Wednesday and we will have committee hearings again on the Thursday. That will provide an opportunity for almost every member in this House to attend the annual meeting of the CLA and to ask questions of the CLA members about the decisions that have been taken regarding the administration of this House. It is an important change. Members who were not here before we had a CLA cannot be blamed for not recognising the difference. The CLA has put the elected members in charge of the parliament, in charge of our own destiny to a great extent. It is right and fitting that once a year the elected members should have the opportunity to ask questions of the members of the CLA who appear before them in that committee hearing format.

It is simply quite absurd for the opposition to carry on the way that they have this afternoon. Either they are opposing for opposing's sake, which I think is probably the best guess, or they are opposing out of sheer fear and terror—fear that they will not be able to rise to the occasion and participate in an estimates process that will go for twice as long as they are accustomed to. They will not be able to avoid their inadequacies being demonstrated. Estimates is not just about testing government ministers. Estimates is also about testing the shadow ministers. It is also about everybody in the general public having an opportunity to see how shadow ministers handle the challenge of estimates. For these shadow ministers—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left!

Mr SEENEY:—the proposition that they are going to be tested twice—two days in the week—rather than once is filling them with terror. They know that they will be exposed at estimates every bit as much as a minister may be if they were not up to their role. That, I would suggest, is the real cause for the mock outrage that we have seen here this afternoon—the ranting and the raving, the yelling and the carrying on—without addressing—

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr SEENEY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is a classic in estimates. If he had his way estimates would not last for five minutes. We are going to ensure that—

Mr Stevens: It ruins his hibernation.

Mr SEENEY: He has to wake up. We are going to ensure that there are 112 hours of committee hearing time, and every one of those 112 hours will be during normal working hours. That replaces a situation where we had 87 hours—even at best—of committee hearing time, and a significant portion of those hours were after dinner, late at night, when nobody took any notice. I would say that honourable members really have to struggle to argue that that is lessening the process. That is building a better process—112 hours during normal working hours as compared to 87 hours, about 25 or 27 of which would be after dinner or late at night when nobody is watching. How on earth can any argument be made with any integrity that that is lessening the process? Of course it is not.

I look forward to the estimates process. I look forward to the opportunities that we as ministers will have to put forward the positives of our government. There is a great story to tell that we do not get a chance to tell because the opposition never ask us about it in here. They never ask us about the government's agenda. They never ask us about the government's proposals. They never ask us about the government's achievements. I say to the member for Mackay in particular that during the estimates process he will have the chance to do that. In fact, he will have double the chance to do that. He will have double the chance to ask me the questions that he is not game enough to ask me in here, and I look forward to that process very much.

This is a natural evolution of the changes to the committee process that we put in place. Just as those committee processes have added an extra depth to the consideration of the legislation that passes through this parliament, these changes will add an extra depth to the consideration of the government's budget bills during the estimates process. We should always be keen to try to improve the processes of this parliament to ensure that this parliament carries out the functions that democracy requires it to do. This change is a good change. It will ensure that this parliament works better. I—

(Time expired)

Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (4.15 pm): I have to place on record my absolute disappointment in the Deputy Premier and his contribution to this debate. It is absolutely disgraceful that a person, a longstanding member of this House who participated in an all-party committee, a bipartisan committee, to look at the restructure of this place, should come into this place now with an arrogant plan to change the estimates committee process without seeking the support, the consultation or the advice of other party and Independent members in this place. I am disappointed that a man who is a longstanding member of this House, who participated so vigorously in the bipartisan committee that looked at reforming the parliamentary committees of this place, should so arrogantly dismiss that bipartisanship and steamroll over what has been an effective—

Mr Seeney: If there were decent members here now like there were then.

Ms TRAD: I will take that interjection from the Deputy Premier. The current system suited the Deputy Premier when he was in opposition. It suited him very well. Why did it suit him very well? Because it is an orderly, well-paced estimates program that allows for appropriate scrutiny. The Deputy Premier can talk about all of the hours he has calculated on the back of an envelope and he can talk about how this is a better process as much as he likes; but the simple facts remain, the simple maths remain. I refer to the member for Gladstone, who actually put the case so eloquently and so succinctly earlier. There are simply not enough opposition members to cover the 14 portfolio committees that the Deputy Premier mentioned before, the 18 ministers et cetera.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members. The member for South Brisbane has the call.

Ms TRAD: There just simply are not enough opposition members and non-LNP members in this House to adequately cover all of the portfolio committees and all of the ministers on two days of estimates sitting. There simply are not enough. Quite frankly—

Mr Seeney: How do you work that out? Seven twos are 14.

Ms TRAD: I am sorry, Mr Acting Speaker, the Deputy Premier's interjections are to be tolerated, are they?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members. The House will come to order. Member for South Brisbane, you have been taking interjections and there have been interjections as a result. You have the call.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. The point is that the estimates committee process that was determined by the bipartisan committee back in 2011, which the Deputy Premier alluded to, was something that reflected the contribution, the analysis and the consultation of members in this place. It was thorough.

It looked at other parliaments throughout the world, and it came up with a recommendation that would allow for appropriate scrutiny of the Appropriation Bill by the opposition and also allow the government of the day to put its case against the Appropriation Bill to the people of Queensland. That is what the Deputy Premier and those opposite supported when they were in opposition because it allowed them to sufficiently scrutinise the government of the day and the budget which was being put forward.

What do we have here now? We have an absolute rot of the parliamentary committee system, which is what we have regularly seen from this government since it took office. No humility, no dignity and no grace; just arrogance and completely and utterly riding roughshod over the parliamentary process. They have been taking not only the people in this chamber—their own backbench—for mugs, but all of Queensland. If this motion passes today, they will send a very clear signal to Queenslanders that not only do they not tolerate criticism and they will crush anyone who criticises them, but they do not want scrutiny.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Ms TRAD: I will take the Deputy Premier's point about this change being overdue. Nothing he said in his contribution to this actually demonstrated or evidenced why this was overdue apart from the fact that he did not want to be here on a Friday night. I am not sure about other people in this place, but I do not think it is a sufficient reason to cut five of the seven days of estimate committee hearings because having to work one Friday night a year might impinge on us. I just do not think that is a rigorous process. Correct me if I am wrong, members, but just because—

Government members: You are wrong!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Order! Members, I do not believe it was an invitation to interject; however, it came across that way and the member might take a little more caution. The member has the call.

Ms TRAD: With all due respect, it was an invitation. I will take every single one of their interjections. Where is the evidence? Prove that I am wrong. Prove that this is based on anything other than you wanting to escape scrutiny.

A government member: One hundred and twelve hours—

Government members interjected.

Ms TRAD: Prove it! Mr Acting Speaker, I am taking their interjections. Prove that this is based on anything other than you wanting to avoid scrutiny and those opposite wanting their Friday night up at the Deputy Premier's luscious apartments to put the drinks on. 'The bar is open!' All of those poor hardworking taxpayers out there in Queensland paying for your bar bill on a Friday night is disgraceful!

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member will speak through the chair. The Deputy Premier has a point of order.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Acting Speaker, obviously I find that offensive, nonsensical and stupid, and I ask that the member withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The member will withdraw.

Ms TRAD: I will withdraw if he withdraws.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I will give the member for South Brisbane one further opportunity to withdraw without condition, or I will invoke standing order 253A which is already over her.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. But I also take a point of order right now, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I am listening very closely to the point of order.

Ms TRAD: He has referred to me as 'stupid' and other derogatory words, and I ask them to be withdrawn.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I did not hear the member being called stupid, but the comments were. I do not believe there was any imputation on the member, and the member is on very thin ice. I suggest that the member gets back to the motion.

Ms TRAD: I will absolutely get back to this stupid, pathetic rant of a motion. Let me get back to this stupid rant of a motion, because this is emblematic of this LNP government: no humility, no dignity, no grace. 'Let's come in here and let's steamroll changes to the parliamentary estimates committee; let's bring in three bills and not send them to committee; let's do a whole range of things and not allow people to have their say on how we change laws in this place. But we are going to do it because we're the LNP, and we've got a massive majority. We're going to use it, and we're going to crush dissent and we're going to crush critics.'

Mr Mulherin: Just like Campbell did at City Hall!

Ms TRAD: I will take that interjection from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Just exactly the way—

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Order! The member for South Brisbane has the call.

Mr Bleijie: You said you are going to take every interjection!

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Attorney-General, if you want to speak to it you can get on the speakers list. The member for South Brisbane has the call.

Ms TRAD: I will take that interjection from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. In exactly the way that the Premier, when he was the Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council, crushed critics and absolutely dismissed any sort of critique of his administration; in the same way that he rejected any sort of opposition and brooked no criticism when he was at the council, he is doing exactly the same thing here in this place. This is not a democratic place; this is a totalitarian regime. The estimates committee structure that was agreed to in a lengthy bipartisan investigation has been thrown out the window because the Deputy Premier wants a Friday night off. Quite frankly, Mr Acting Speaker, I understand that he can get a charter flight on a Friday night. I am not sure why it is a problem for him to stay back a little bit later on a Friday night.

I want to address some of the comments made by the Deputy Premier where he said that the real reason the opposition is having problems with the motion before us is that we do not want to do the work. Mr Acting Speaker, let me make it clear that after the last two estimates committee processes many members in the media and in the community remarked to me about how hard and how thinly stretched all of the members of the opposition were, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, who actually attended I think 98 per cent of the estimates committee hearings which were held last year.

Let me put on the record of this place that I defy those members opposite to demonstrate an equivalent record when they were in opposition. I challenge them to demonstrate a work ethic and an application to the estimates process of a similar magnitude. They will not be able to do it because they have not done it. For the Deputy Premier to come in here like some bullyboy and suggest that the Leader of the Opposition and every single one of the Labor members in this place—as well as those members who are from the minor parties or Independents—are opposing this motion because we do not have the ticker for the work does not bear scrutiny in exactly the same way as the Deputy Premier's argument that this change is long overdue.

There is no evidence that there was a need for this change. I do not understand who was clambering at the door asking for this to be changed. Maybe a couple of LNP ministers who wanted a Friday night off—that one Friday night every year that maybe had them sitting back until 8.30 at night. It's terrible; I understand! It is one Friday night in each year. There is no evidence to support the Deputy Premier's suggestion, and I challenge the government to demonstrate an attendance at estimates when they were in opposition that stacks up against ours, and they will not be able to do it. They will not be able to do it, because they did not do it. Not only did they not do it—

Ms Palaszczuk: They're lazy.

Ms TRAD: Yes. I take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. They themselves were lazy. They could not even show up in this chamber while bills were being passed. Quite frankly, I challenge the Deputy Premier to put a bit of evidence to the statements that he has made.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Yes, I can hear the Deputy Premier squawking over there. I can hear him reading out all of the figures that he scribbled down on the back of an envelope, but I will not be responding to them, because it really defies the whole orderly process of estimates. This is about creating intense chaos over two days—

A government member: No, it isn't.

Ms TRAD: I will take that interjection. It might not create chaos for the great unwashed LNP backbenchers who have amateur ministerial advisers write their questions that are so inane. It might not be taxing on them. I know that it is very hard to read out words that you have not written. This is just a complete and utter disgrace.

Yesterday, I talked about this government winding back legal principles in this state. This government has shown that it is prepared to wind back the democratic practices in this House. Today, they have shown that quite clearly. It is an absolute disgrace that they should come into this place and repeal something, change something, that has—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Members, there is too much crossfire in the chamber.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. It really is a demonstration of their complete arrogance. It really is evidence that we have in this state a Premier and his leadership team who are not prepared to cop scrutiny and criticism and who will crush critics because they have 74 members in this chamber and they can do whatever they want.

This motion is evidence of what I think is a very damaging trend not only in this state but also in this House. This government has abused its massive majority. It has done whatever it wants regardless of the conventions of this place, regardless of what is right and proper in terms of good public policymaking and what is right and proper in terms of having adequate scrutiny, particularly of the appropriations bills that are presented in this place.

All of those members who support this motion will stand condemned in history for taking Queensland and the Queensland parliament back. There can be no doubt that, as the Leader of the Opposition said, in the same way that this government came in at 11 o'clock one night last year and


sacked the entire Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee because it did not like the work that it did, it did not like what the committee had established, this government is coming into this place and ripping the guts out of the estimates committee process.

Let us be incredibly clear. It took many years since the Fitzgerald inquiry—25 years my learned friend here says—to build up the democratic practices, to build up integrity systems in this state and in two years this government—

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Ms TRAD: Mr Acting Speaker, I can only assume that their hyperactivity in response to that comment is that it is cutting a little bit too close to the bone. It took the Fitzgerald inquiry to shine the light on corruption and undemocratic practices in this state. It took 25 years of reform, improvements and enhancements in this state to make sure that Queensland was a modern, ethical, transparent state. Let me say this: the systemic corruption that existed under Bjelke-Petersen has not been seen again in this state, but this government is doing absolutely everything it can to make sure that Queensland goes back to those dark old days as quickly as possible. Every single member who supports this motion will stand condemned in the same way they did when they sacked the PCMC last year. They will stand condemned for not only allowing but also voting for these dark old days to come back.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.36 pm): Mr Acting Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to the motion. It is interesting that we have had for the past 20 minutes the diatribe from the member for South Brisbane. If there is any advice that I can give the opposition leader it is this: you are safe. Based on that performance by the member for South Brisbane, you are safe from the member for South Brisbane, but nothing will save you from Cameron Dick. Nothing will save the opposition leader from Cameron Dick—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will speak through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: In the estimates committee process last year I was to appear on 18 July. I think I can offer something to this debate, because I was the minister who had the longest time allocated to me for the whole day. In fact, seven hours in total was allocated to me and then, as the Deputy Premier says, we had the night duty, which my honourable colleague the Minister for Police assumed after 4.30 in the afternoon and he took the hearing out into the night-time. So I had seven hours of debate in the hearing. In the short time I have, I think it is important to reflect on those seven hours.

As the Deputy Premier says, the opposition grilled me—bruised me and all, they say—for seven hours on 18 July. The motion says, for the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Tuesday, 15 July 2014 and Thursday, 17 July 2014. According to last year's estimates, I had one day. According to this motion, it looks like there will be two days for the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. If I can count, that is double the time that the opposition will have to ask me questions.

I think what is really interesting to note is that, in the seven hours of debate that we had, the Leader of the Opposition ran out of questions. I might get accused of contempt of parliament and liaising with the honourable committee members, but I remember over lunch saying to a couple of committee members, 'Estimates is really a chance for the opposition to ask the ministers who are accountable to the people of Queensland. Let them grill the ministers.' I remember suggesting to the honourable chairman of the committee, Mr Berry, 'Just cut short the Dorothy Dixers for a minute,' because I was interested to see where the opposition would go. We did that. It is important to reflect that, when the honourable government committee members, led by Mr Ian Berry, the member for Ipswich, stopped the Dorothy Dixers, he went to the opposition leader. She had a train of four or five questions that she had just finished asking me. Then the honourable chairman of the committee went to the opposition leader and said, 'Your next question?' She said, 'No, Mr Chairman, you can go to the government members now.' The chairman said, 'No, no, we're okay. You're on a roll. Keep asking the questions.' Mr Berry said, 'This is a chance to grill the Attorney-General. Keep on your questions.'

On three or four occasions the opposition leader said, 'No, it is the government allotted time now.' It was the government's time to hold the minister from the government accountable for their Dorothy Dixers. I think it is in *Hansard*. The opposition went into the estimates period with the schedule. The opposition leader talks about lawyers a lot. She personally attacks me. As I understand it, she has a law degree but has never practised. She could not go from issue to issue to issue without having a break so that government members could ask the government questions.

It was very interesting when the honourable chairman, Mr Berry—who did a fantastic job on the committee—said, ‘No, we do not have any further questions to ask the Attorney.’ What did the opposition leader do when she was faced with having no questions in front of her because her overresourced staff did not prepare anything because they did not expect that? Under our new estimates format you do not only ask the minister questions, you can ask questions of the directors-general or the heads of the jurisdictions. In my department there is the Electoral Commissioner, the Ombudsman and the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner.

We had about four hours of committee left and the opposition ran out of questions for me so the Leader of the Opposition got the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner up and essentially said, ‘Thank you, Mr Cocks. Would you like to describe to the committee what you do?’ Having that conversation for an hour, the opposition leader then got the Acting Electoral Commissioner up, Mr Walter van der Merwe, and said, ‘So, Electoral Commissioner, how’s it going?’ ‘What do you do?’ ‘What’s this project?’ ‘What’s that project?’ I still did not get a question because she did not have anything prepared. Then finally the opposition leader got the Ombudsman up and said, ‘Oh, Ombudsman, what does your office do?’ ‘How’s it all going?’ We had another hour of that. With respect to these fine individuals, it was four hours of my life I will never get back. With respect to the individuals, everything those opposite asked for the last four hours of the estimates was, ‘What do you do?’

Estimates is about grilling the ministers, getting into the details. Those opposite talk about conspiracies, controversies and crises. It is not a crisis when you get the Electoral Commissioner up and say, ‘What do you do for a living?’ It is not a crisis when you get the Ombudsman up and say, ‘What does your office do?’ It is not a catastrophe. It is not a minister that is going to go to jail when you get the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner up and say, ‘What projects are your department undertaking?’, and, ‘What does your office do?’ For four hours we did that.

The other point made by those opposite was with respect to this being the chance to bring down the government. I have seen a tendency in the estimates process for members of the opposition to not in fact ask the ministers questions in any event. It is all the public servants. When we were in opposition we had the chance to do that, but we wanted to hold the minister accountable. If the minister required further information from the directors-general or other heads of the jurisdictions they were there to be asked those particular questions. The point is that the opposition leader ran out of questions and I and other members and officers of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General had to sit there for four hours as we saw the opposition leader run out of questions but then ask basic questions such as, ‘What do you do for a living?’ to the Electoral Commissioner, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and the Ombudsman. It is all in *Hansard*.

I found it interesting when the member for Mulgrave, who said he was going to make a very long contribution to the debate today, talked about the matter of privilege suddenly arising that he raised this morning. I recall yesterday the opposition leader getting up and raising a matter of privilege complaining that she was on television or being filmed. It is interesting that the opposition leader is complaining today that there might be committee rooms without cameras and the media will not be able to film her. Again those opposite are flip-flopping. One day they are complaining they are being filmed, now they are complaining they are not going to get their 15 minutes of fame, they will not be on television. Where does the flip-flopping for this opposition end?


I take the point the Deputy Premier made in an interjection, which I hope made it into *Hansard*, when the member for South Brisbane was saying the current opposition leader attended 98 per cent of the estimates hearings. I agree with the interjection the Deputy Premier made: that is because she did not trust any of her shadow ministers to do it on their own. In fact, the member of the opposition who serves on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, the member for Rockhampton, did not show up to the committee during the whole day of estimates. He then had to come for the night duty. They sent the member for Bundamba and the member for Inala, the opposition leader, along to the committee. The member of the committee did not even show up to ask me about his great love or dislike of boot camps. He never even used the process of estimates. Now they will have two days to grill the Attorney-General. I am supporting the motion, but I hope I do not have to go through two days of what I had to go through for 3½ hours last time I was grilled in estimates and then have to listen to all the heads of the jurisdictions for two days get asked what they do for a living. But if that is their big strategy then that is fine.

I think the estimates process will be improved by these amendments. There is obviously more time allocated to the process. This is a process where the opposition should hold the ministers to account. Nothing will stop the opposition from doing their job, carrying out their responsibility, as

Queenslanders would expect them to do, with this new process. They will have two days—more than they have at the moment—to grill every member. The crossbenches will have ample opportunity; probably more opportunity than what they had under other circumstances. I think two days is sufficient time, more time than they have at the moment.

I would urge Queenslanders or the media watching this debate this afternoon to look at the record of *Hansard* for the estimates committee for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee last year where just after lunch the opposition leader actually ran out of a strategy. She completely ran out of a strategy because she went into the room relying on government Dorothy Dixers to get her by. If that is how they want to fill the time, that is fine. I would much rather fill the time being grilled all the time by the opposition. If they are not going to come to the party with appropriate questions and a strategy, the question is: what are they even doing there? What sort of opposition does Queensland have? I suspect that is why the puppetmasters in the Labor Party are bringing back Cameron Dick. They have seen the performance of this opposition over two years. There is no opposition in Queensland—I will rephrase that: there is an opposition, there is no leader in the opposition. That is why they are bringing back Cameron Dick.

I support the comments made by the Deputy Premier. This is a more transparent process. The opposition will have more opportunity to do what they are paid to do—that is, hold the government to account. They will have two days to do it, whereas before they had only one.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.47 pm): Today Queensland has morphed from a democracy to a kleptocracy. Today in this parliament we are looking at basically and fundamentally altering the way public administration is practised in this state. I say that from my experience as a former public servant, a member of parliament, a parliamentary secretary and chair of a number of estimates committees. I have seen the estimates process run in departments from the departmental side at a senior level as well as being run from the parliamentary side. I am probably one of the only people in this parliament who has actually seen that.

In 1989 I recall the Fitzgerald inquiry report being handed to me by a very, very eloquent under secretary of a department for me to go through. Part of that process was looking at how public administration in this state would change. One of the issues was in relation to the committee processes of the Queensland parliament.

Many good things came out of the Fitzgerald inquiry, including the estimates committees. It was about freedom of information, setting up the CMC and setting up the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. Since 1989, when budgets are being framed inside the Queensland Public Service the process involves not only the director-general, the deputy directors-general, the senior executive service officers and the senior officers but also the AO8s all the way down to the AO2s and AO1s. All of those levels within the Queensland Public Service have to review their areas of operation. That has been going on now for 25 years in the Queensland Public Service. I can assure the people of Queensland that from the very smallest branches up to the divisions, on up to the senior executive officers and the deputy directors-general and then on to the directors-general—right throughout the government agencies, from the lowest and most inexperienced public servants—the government of the day, regardless of its colour, tries to get the best value for money in the delivery of those services.

Everybody in the Queensland Public Service knows that the budget deliberations for the following year normally begin in about October and November of the year before. That is what happens. It is just normal process. Basically, Treasury and the senior officers in the finance sections and the delivery agencies, in particular, will talk about the moneys that they will need for the planned expenditure for the next 12 months. Treasury will normally say to the departments if it looks like there needs to be a little bit of cutting back or maybe there is going to be more money, particularly when federal Labor governments are in power, and then the departments can plan ahead for the proposed expenditure of that money. All of the directors-general—even when the National Party was in government and they used to call them under secretaries—that I have worked under wanted to get value for money. That includes the honourable member for Sunnybank's father, Brian Stewart, who was the director-general of justice and attorney-general. No director-general is ever appointed to waste money. Every director-general tries to get the best value for money.

I will go back a step. I feel like I am undertaking a training program for public servants and members of parliament. From 1989 on, in December, January and February when the departments get an indication, every single director-general or under secretary has it in the back of their head that they will have to go into the red chamber with their minister and defend the expenditure of every cent

of that money. I can assure this parliament that within Queensland government departments the internal process can be very scary for public servants, because the public servants, right down to the lowest levels, have to justify their expenditure on the delivery of services in Queensland.

When it comes to the expenditure of funding in some service agencies, particularly Education, Health, Police and other agencies, even Transport and Main Roads, that have quite a lot of money, they have to go through the internal budgeting forecasts of those departments anyway. That goes on. That internal mechanism goes on continuously within the departments. I assure this House that when the directors-general of the departments and the deputy directors-general put in their budget claims, a ruler goes over every single cent of that money. As I said before, it does not matter whether it is the National Party or the Labor Party in government—all directors-general are the same.

In relation to the estimates committees, from about February the finance heads of every government department start preparing for the budget estimates. In the big departments they have to start preparing far ahead because there are billions and billions of dollars of expenditure that they have to be across and they have to be on top of. The executive directors of finance will go through every single budget bid and budget statement, and it flows back down to all the divisions and all the other sections of the department. It also goes across the state. I note that the Minister for Education is in the House at present, so I take his department as an example.

In Education, the finance directors will be looking at the regional offices, whether they be in Cairns, Mount Isa, Townsville, Ipswich and so on. No matter where they are, they would go to that level. The finance directors of the departments ask the heads of the departmental divisions to justify the expenditure that they are seeking, if they are even going to maintain it at that level. In other words, some departments go on zero base budgeting—that is, they automatically start at a zero base. You do not necessarily get a two per cent increase. Over the years, we have had efficiency dividends—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, I am struggling to understand relevance to the motion. You started relevant and you moved off for about five minutes. I am calling you back to the motion.

Mrs MILLER: It is the budget estimates process and the scrutiny of the budget, Mr Acting Speaker. Basically, we have a situation where, for 25 years, internally the departments have developed their budgets knowing that the directors-general, their officers and the agencies—I note that the justice minister spoke about the Electoral Commission and the Anti-Discrimination Commission—are all prepared for the budget estimates process. Those officers are fully briefed in relation to the budgets in their areas.

I have been a member of this parliament for some 14 years. Before that, I was involved in this process as a public servant. With the budget estimates, normally at the big table sits the minister, the parliamentary secretary, the director-general, the deputy directors-general and, particularly, the finance directors of the department. They are there to assist the minister and the director-general to answer the questions. It is absolutely normal that the minister does not answer every question that may be asked by an opposition member or a government member. There is nothing strange in that. If a member of the opposition, a crossbencher or even a government member asks a question that the minister wants answered by a public servant, they are there with several folders and they are able to give an honest and accurate answer to the members of the estimates committee.

I turn to what the Deputy Premier had to say about estimates committees. As a former public servant, I was directed by the director-general of the department to Parliament House during estimates. All public servants were on notice that, if the minister or the director-general wanted them to answer a question, they had to be on the ball and they had to be prepared to come up to the top table, say who they were and answer that question, which is very good.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, for the final time I repeat my point: I am still struggling to see relevance. This is not a motion just about estimates. It is about the changes to estimates.

Mrs MILLER: That is right. I am getting to that.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: We do not need a basic lesson on estimates. This is the last call for you to stick to the motion.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, Mr Acting Speaker. In relation to the way estimate committees work, I have, as a chair of an estimates committee, given a lot of time to the opposition to be able to ask as many questions as they wanted. I recall one year when the shadow minister, who I


think was Lawrence Springborg, was given an extra 45 minutes to ask questions. That time could have been given to government members, but I decided that because he was on a particular track he should be given the latitude to ask further questions.

It is my clear view that this motion before the House will fundamentally affect the way public administration is practised in Queensland. It is outrageous. I believe that this government is going to sack even more public servants. There are public servants who are finance experts who will no longer be needed because of this crackdown in relation to the estimates committee process. This is an area of government where there has been a lot of expertise over the years.

I support the Leader of the Opposition in saying that this motion before the House will be not only the death knell of democracy in Queensland but also the death knell of public administration in this state. This particular government will not stop knacker the Queensland Public Service until it has a minister and a set of bean counters. All they will need to do is basically do a financial audit. What this government wants to do—and this is the start of it—is not have a public sector at all. They basically just want to privatise everything and throw it all to other areas of government. That is what they want and this is the start of the process.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Bundamba will resume her seat.

Mrs MILLER: I do not support this motion.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (5.01 pm): The motion is disgraceful. It is disgraceful at every level. There was no consultation with the opposition and crossbench before it was brought in. It condenses all the hearings to two days as all hearings are occurring simultaneously. It was announced in the newspaper before it was even tabled in parliament. It has the net effect of completely avoiding all real scrutiny of the various ministerial budgets.

After all the years that the Deputy Premier spent in opposition—and I was in opposition with him—where he complained bitterly about every change or model that the then Labor governments presented, none of those models would have ever looked like the shemozzle that the Deputy Premier has come up with today. I presume that his brooding anger that lies below has erupted to deliver this poor mathematics that he says that doubles the available time for consideration. Clearly, if the available time is doubled and the number of days for meetings is reduced by 3½ times due to the simultaneous presentation of 14 ministers in that time, it effectively reduces the available, practical time to one-fiftieth of what is currently available. That is the disgrace of this motion. Everyone should realise what is going on. Go and do your maths. Most of you people need to go and do some practical maths.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gaven, speak through the chair, please.

Dr DOUGLAS: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, and I will. Therefore the old system was 50 times more effective by default.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: I can show you the maths later on.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: I am happy to table it later on. I will show the Deputy Premier.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gaven, if you take interjections, please address them through the chair.

Dr DOUGLAS: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I support the very eloquent arguments that have been put forward by the opposition and also the issue that was raised by the member for Bundamba. She stated what is practical when dealing with senior public servants. That is what we were wanting over the years—that is, to have them participate in this process and have us question them as well. Effectively, we are reducing that capacity by reducing the available, practical time. This model that has been proposed will defeat the very best practices that we were seeking to achieve.

A government member: You fix it with your premier then.

Dr DOUGLAS: I will. This is just more of the same type of shallow governance that the LNP practices. This is just one more piece of evidence—if anyone was looking for any—that conclusively proves that when a government holds such a large majority it becomes reckless and undemocratic. The Deputy Premier stated today that he was democratic. This is evidence that proves that he is not.


The member for Gladstone made two points that were absolutely correct. It is impractical to allow practical scrutiny by a variety of members who will need to move from one committee hearing to another committee hearing on the day to ask unrelated questions. This implies that there is a

deficiency or lethargy of ministers who want to actively participate in the process. All ministers need to examine themselves and say, 'Do I want to participate in a process that demonstrates I am a deficient person?'

The member for Gladstone made the practical point that this parliament does not have an upper house, and has not had one since 1922. The whole estimates process is supposed to deliver a form of house of review, albeit only at one time of the year—that is, examining the budget. If you defeat that process, you effectively have the Premier as an emperor of sorts and this government a dictatorship. Is that really what members want? Is that really what they want? It will not deliver the kinds of outcomes they think it will.

I think it is a pitiful result. What it tells me is: is the LNP so fearful of what could come out that they seek to engage in secrecy as opposed to transparency? They seek to deliver an impossible schedule that actually denies efficiency of questioning over actually the efficiency of governance. This is the proof that anybody would need to prove they are lazy. When you do not want to be scrutinised it proves you are lazy, you are indolent and you do not want people to hear what you are doing.

This motion must be opposed. If the government and the ministers themselves have any real courage they will withdraw the motion, go back and consult with the opposition and approach this in a sensible way. Then they will deliver good governance for all Queenslanders.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (5.07 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on this motion. I will not be supporting it, and I will set out the reasons why. I listened to government members saying how this was an improvement on the current estimates process. They said how it would be much better. If it is so good and they wanted to reach out to the opposition, the minor parties and the Independents, what was wrong with going through the same process that occurred during the last government? Both sides had the opportunity to get together to talk about improving the way the parliament operates. We know how the last government did it. They reached out. They had members from both sides and Independents involved—the former member for Nanango and the Deputy Premier were on that committee. They came up with the suggestions that finally came to parliament.

I reject categorically the proposal that the government are thinking of the best interests of the opposition, the minor parties and the Independents in putting forward how they think the opposition, the minor parties and the Independents can better hold this government to account. I think that this is actually more about trying to respond to what happened last year. I can recall returning home after our committee hearing and listening to the news—I think it might have been 10 o'clock; I forget what time it was. For a number of days prior to our committee hearing—I was on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee—whether it was the morning news, the midday news or the afternoon news, every day there was a hearing there was something on the news about what was happening in the Queensland parliament's estimates hearings. Sometimes they were jovial; sometimes they were flippant; sometimes they were very serious. So I believe the agenda, the effect and the intent of this proposed change, is all about trying to limit the capacity of the media to monitor what happens in parliament. The way that will happen is that all of the committees are happening on three days. Everyone knows there are only so many minutes in the media cycle—

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! The member for Nicklin has the call.

Mr WELLINGTON: Everyone knows there are only so many minutes in the media cycle for each day. So I think this is a deliberate attempt, a deliberate attack, to try to minimise media coverage of what happens in our estimates hearings.

I also listened to the Attorney-General share a conversation he had with the chairman of the committee of which I happen to be the deputy chair now. The *Hansard* record will reveal exactly what the minister said. My recollection of what he said is along the lines of during the recess, the lunch break, he had a conversation with the chairman, Mr Berry, and, as a result of his suggestion, the chairman and the government members of that committee chose to put no further questions to the minister—or he said words to that effect. Can I also share with ministers my experience in attending not just the estimates committee last year but other estimates hearings. The normal protocol is that, once members know what committee they are on, they sit down, have a discussion and work out how the estimates hearing is going to be conducted: is it going to be conducted on a question-by-question basis or is it going to be conducted on the basis of block questions?

I might share with members what our committee decided, to respond to what the Attorney-General shared with us earlier about the conversation he had with the chairman of our committee. Our committee decided that we would have those questions in blocks. It was also agreed


that the chairman would not be ruthless on the time limits. So if a member of the government or the opposition or a non-government member were pursuing a line of questioning, they would have the flexibility and the latitude to continue to do that. The record of our estimates hearing shows that that is exactly what happened. So it came as a surprise to me when later during that day all of a sudden no longer were there any questions coming from the government. Now I know why.

We all understand the process. We know how many hours we have for a hearing; we work out basically how many questions we will have to prepare for that timeslot; and there is a gentlemen's agreement—agreement from all members on the committees—on how the committees are to be conducted. What I have heard today is clearly in my view disgraceful—that there was a conversation between the Attorney-General, a minister who was appearing before our committee, and the chairman of our committee. This matter has not been shared with committee members. Whether the Attorney-General and the chairman of our committee has done anything that contravenes our standing orders or is in contempt or whatever, as the Attorney-General suggested, I do not know. But to me I think it shows how the Attorney-General will do whatever he can. I think it is clearly wrong. It is clearly wrong when a committee has sat down and agreed on how hearings are to be conducted so that members can go away and prepare their questions with the expectation of how much time is going to be allotted and then the next minute we have other conversations happening outside. I think that is unethical.

I believe that that goes to the real question we have been raising recently, and the media has been raising recently, about the fitness of our Attorney-General to be in that position. We have heard, and the *Hansard* record will show, exactly what happened in that conversation between the Attorney-General and the chairman of our committee. I put on the record that the chairman of our committee did not share with committee members the contents of that discussion. I do not know whether he was required to, but I would have thought that he should have. I think it is disgraceful that this Attorney-General is doing whatever he can get away with. Forget about what is morally right. Forget about what you should do. To me it seems that we have heard today that our Attorney-General will do whatever he can to progress his own political agenda. I think that is totally wrong.

Queenslanders will in due course decide whether this is an improvement in the democratic process of our government, or in the running of this parliament. I think it is not. I believe that, if the government were sincere in saying they are trying to improve the way our estimates committees conduct themselves, the senior members of the government would have used the very precedent of the last government when there was a discussion with other members to say, 'Let's have a talk about how we can improve it.' Instead, I heard the member for Gaven, the leader of the Palmer United Party, say he heard about this on the news before it was shared with members of the parliament. The first I knew about this was when I walked into the chamber and I saw the proposed motion on my table.

So to me there is no genuine discussion with other members of the House. Premier Newman said after the Redcliffe by-election, 'We have listened to the message and we will do things differently.' I say that this is doing things exactly as they did before, and the contribution from the Attorney-General has clearly articulated that here today. I say to Queenslanders: note what has happened in this chamber tonight and remember it—remember everything else that this government has done and remember it when the election is finally called.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.15 pm): I want to make a short contribution to this debate. I would have to start by describing this as poor form in the extreme. Other members have made comment about the way in which the parliament should operate—the very bipartisan nature that should be supporting these sorts of arrangements for estimates. People seem to forget—and the way it operates at the moment—that it is the executive arm of government being scrutinised by the opposition, the crossbench and supposedly the LNP backbench. That is part of the role of the LNP backbench—that is, to scrutinise their own executive arm, not that you would ever see that happening in any way that counts. But the fact is that if the government was genuinely serious about proper, appropriate scrutiny, the Leader of the House should have walked across to us and had a chat. What is wrong with that? What is wrong with the Leader of the House coming and having a sensible, grown-up, adult discussion about applying better scrutiny? But no, that is not the way this government chooses to do business. This government would rather drop some sort of motion in here and reduce the capacity of the opposition to actually scrutinise it.

The member for Gladstone appropriately pointed out that the numbers are difficult. Members of the opposition have many shadow portfolios and we try the best we can to get to each committee to confront in the best way we can those ministers that we cover. These sets of arrangements will make

it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for us to appropriately address that issue of looking at the portfolios we shadow. This nonsense that two days rather than one is going to be of assistance is just that: absolute nonsense. It is a mathematical smokescreen. The fact is that the opposition and the crossbenchers will be seriously limited in our capacity to scrutinise those ministers we shadow and it is a deliberate ploy.

I think that the budget this year is going to be even worse, if that is possible, than the last two. That is what this is all about. This is about a government that wants to absolutely limit the capacity of the opposition or anyone else to scrutinise this third-year budget, this budget that is leading into an election campaign—an election campaign, I would suggest, that the government probably wanted to have earlier than full term. But, if government members have been looking at the polls recently, it is increasingly likely that they are not going to have a member for Ashgrove if they go to the election any time soon.


So the whole point of this is that they do not want to see the budget scrutinised. This budget is not going to have green shoots of economic growth; it has gangrene. The fact is that you are not going to be able to put anything on the table in real economic terms that is going to demonstrate that you have a grasp of Economics 101. It is a ridiculous notion designed to limit the capacity of Queenslanders and the opposition and the crossbenchers to look at this budget. It is a harm minimisation strategy deliberately constructed to manage these circumstances, and Queenslanders should be absolutely outraged.

We know about the government's desire to be scrutinised. Who could forget the budget debate last year when the Treasurer deliberately got up, surprisingly on a Friday night, and made sure that most of the opposition could not get on the record in that debate. Why? Because you do not want to have scrutiny. You do not want to have anything criticised. You have form for this. You have form for it across government—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The member will speak through the chair, please.

Mr BYRNE: Mr Acting Speaker, the government has form for this: all the bills that have been controversial and all the problems that have been dropped into this House at short notice. There is no adult behaviour or genuine desire to come up with the best thing for Queensland. This is a government that seeks to dominate and dictate. That is what is going on here, and Queenslanders are well and truly awake to it. It is all about our Friday nights, apparently. I think it is simply about harm minimisation. It is the third budget. It will be revealed to be an absolute mess, and the government does not want to go into an election campaign where the failures of that budget process will be publicly visible.

Queenslanders know what the deal is here. I can assure you of that. Queenslanders out there right now in the mainstream media and in the social media are commenting on this measure brought on by the government, and all any member of this parliament needs to do is look at the commentary on this debate. They will see that no-one out there believes this motion from the government is about better transparency or making sure the executive is held to account for all Queenslanders. This is about harm minimisation. It is brutal, it is nasty and it should not be allowed. Every Queenslanders who genuinely wants to see a democratic state should be horrified by this.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.20 pm): I oppose this motion. In the Strangers' Dining Room the President of the LNP, the Premier, the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier were very concerned. As they spoke, they could see that their government was in trouble. They saw the polls in Cairns showing a 17 per cent swing. They saw that the Premier had no hope of winning his seat in Ashgrove. Likewise the poll in Redcliffe—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is a practice that no-one refers to guests in the Strangers' Dining Room—a practice established by previous speakers.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Dalrymple has the call.

Mr KNUTH: They could see from these discussions that there was a problem, but they could also see that as they won this massive majority their arrogance was slowly starting to filter out right across Queensland. They did everything in their power to try to stop this. They did everything in their power to try to prevent this. So they took the cameras out of Parliament House. That is just the start. They took the cameras out of Parliament House. They may laugh, they may choke, they may criticise—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr KNUTH: The reality is that there is less than a year before the next election. The way they are trying to win voters back right across Queensland is to hand down a good budget. They have sent out a smokescreen that they will build dams, infrastructure and all these wonderful things. But there is one little obstacle in front of them right now, and that is parliamentary estimates where they know they will be appropriately scrutinised. They know well and truly what the parliamentary estimates have done in the past. For example, there is the Gordon Nuttall affair. They are hoping that issues like that may not arise out of this parliamentary estimates process.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Coomera will cease interjecting.

Mr KNUTH: It is well known that governments hate scrutiny. There is no doubt about that. They hate scrutiny. When the Leader of the House moved the motion and said that it is just a trial, all he had to do was walk across the floor. He could have come and spoken to us, but this is nothing different from the way they operated in the beginning when they were elected to government. Like all opposition members of this House, I fully oppose this motion.

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

AYES, 69:

LNP, 69—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gullely, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

NOES, 15:

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

KAP, 3—Hopper, Katter, Knuth.

PUP, 2—Douglas, Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Cunningham, Wellington.


Resolved in the affirmative.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 1 April (see p. 986), on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (5.31 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise and speak to the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This legislation is a much needed reform to workplace health and safety. It restores the balance on work sites away from unions, who were granted unjustified powers under previous Labor governments.

Throughout this discussion, members should be aware that there are three types of workplace health and safety officials. We have around 239 extensively trained inspectors who are employed by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. These inspectors generally have years of training and years of experience. Throughout the discussions of the committee, it was more than apparent that they have the highest level of knowledge about workplace health and safety and therefore they represent the greatest level of protection that we can deliver to the safety of workers. Work sites also have a designated workplace health and safety officer who generally comes from among the staff of the work site. A work site can also have a union representative, who is generally known as an entry permit holder. These union representatives have minimal training. They can have as little as one day of training but they frequently have as little as three days of training. Under the current arrangements, union representative entry permit holders have the power to enter any work site without notice, and with that they have the power to order a stop work on part or all of the site.

At this point, I would like to reflect on what a wonderful committee we have, chaired ably by the member for Capalaba, Steve Davies, and staffed by Debbie Jeffrey, Lyn Whelan and Maggie Lilith. They have done a fabulous job assisting us to review this bill. I want to record my congratulations and thanks to them.

The committee and the government want to make sure that everybody in Queensland gets home from work alive and well, and that is the purpose of workplace health and safety and electrical safety. Workplace health and safety is not a weapon to wield power, demand money or be abused by people as part of an industrial campaign. It is disappointing, but perhaps not surprising, that those opposite cannot come to this consensus. After all, they do owe their very position here to those very same unions.

The change in this bill that means that permit holders will be required to give 24 hours notice brings us into line with the Fair Work Act, the federal act, but importantly it stops what can only be described as a loophole or, as I would prefer to call it, a rort—where unions, faced with their obligation to give notice under the Fair Work Act, which is a federal Labor act, can circumvent that by feigning a workplace health and safety issue and then enter a work site without notice. It is time such loopholes or abuses were put to the sword.

The committee and the government are very concerned to see that workers' safety is protected, and workers' safety is not in any way being altered by such a change. Workers will have and always have had the right to cease work if they perceive they are in danger. They also have the right to call Workplace Health and Safety. In their testimony to the committee, Workplace Health and Safety made it very clear that if workers feel pressure, fear or intimidation they can call them anonymously and Workplace Health and Safety will take appropriate action. Workers can still call their union representative if they wish. The committee, and I am sure the government, have put a lot of effort into making sure that every protection is in place for the genuine safety of workers.

One recommendation which came from the illustrious member for Sunnybank, who is present in the chamber, is that we develop an app that workers could use. This particular event within our committee had importance that went even beyond that, because for several years I have been complaining that when everyone says there is an app for this or an app for that they have never been able to explain to me how to get it. But in the course of this hearing, the member for Sunnybank not only put this very sensible suggestion forward but he became the first person ever to demonstrate to me how to put an app on my phone—which I can now do. When we get the workplace health and safety app, I will be even more safe in my workplace thanks to that member.

The committee also recommended that the progress of these changes be reviewed from time to time. There was one particular suggestion, which I know at this time the government has not seen fit to endorse, which I would like to explore a bit more because I think it is a very sensible suggestion given some thought. We have around 239 workplace health and safety officers. There is no argument from anywhere that I heard—anywhere at all—that they are not the best qualified people to protect the safety of employees. In large workplaces such as major construction sites, new hospitals, new CBD buildings, or major rail, port or airport installations, these agencies currently can appoint a workplace health and safety officer from within their staff, but the suggestion was that we should look at having them fund an additional workplace health and safety officer for their location.

Before people say, 'Wouldn't that add red tape?', bear in mind that these large employers and these large sites, some of which are quite dangerous, are already spending significant amounts of money on a workplace health and safety presence. There are examples that have come to notice where unions have pressured employers, particularly in the construction industry, to take on a union official or union representative in the workplace health and safety position. In one case that I am aware of, they demanded a salary of \$8,000 a week. This, of course, is for somebody whose training does not even remotely approach that of a true workplace health and safety officer. It could be an opportunity to have more workplace health and safety officers funded by industry out of funds they already have to expend. Particularly when one thinks of regional Queensland, it could expand the presence of workplace health and safety officers in some of those locations.

One of the very important things that should be emphasised in this debate is that workplace health and safety officers do not just respond to incidents. They do not just offer stop-work orders. They have a vital role in educating employers and employees about the safest ways of doing things and about their rights and obligations. They have a proactive role in seeking to identify problems before they become a safety threat to the employee. Such a proposal could potentially spread that sort of benefit within other workplaces. It is my belief that abuses of workplace health and safety, using it as an extension of union or industrial activity, actually weakens the safety of workers. We have all heard of the boy who cried wolf. If we want people in workplaces to take workplace health and safety issues seriously when they arise, they should be able to have confidence that people bring a workplace health and safety issue to notice and act on it because there is a safety issue and not for any other reason.

I would also emphasise the fact that a significant protection—and I have not seen a lot said or written about this. Having been an employer myself, as I know a number of other members of this chamber have also, I know that employers can face very severe civil and even criminal obligations if somebody is injured by negligence. That of itself is a significant factor. When we see abuses of workplace health and safety, when we see a major construction site shut down—one example that was given to us was of a large multistorey, city building. There was a toilet leak and a closure order was issued for the entire building—not just the level that had a leak from a toilet—even though there were other working toilets on the site. These sorts of closures, particularly if it were to apply in the resources industry, the power industry, the construction industry or the transport industry, have huge costs associated with them. Imagine closing down something like 1 William Street or the Children's Hospital because a toilet on a level developed something of a leak. At the end of the day unions do not give this much thought—and I can tell honourable members that the rest of us should—but somebody pays the cost of that. The union may think it is the employer or the contractor, but ultimately the whole community pays.


In removing the right of union representatives to enter without notice, the legislation cannot be seen to be anything other than a sensible measure that would not only have no implications for the safety of workers, but would also stop an abuse and something which potentially costs all of us a large amount of money. I have listened to some of the comments from the other side in relation to this particular matter. There is no surprise to any of us that Labor members would have to stand up for the union powers that have been inserted by previous Labor governments. But to have any credibility whatsoever they would have to demonstrate that the unionised sites that have the power of entry without notice and the power to shut down the site without warning delivered a better safety record than sites that were not unionised where that power, for practical purposes, was not enforced. That is not the case and it cannot be shown to be the case. I would suspect that the opposite might be the case.

The issues around keeping workers safe and getting them home safely at night to their families are dear to the heart of all of us. No-one wants to see somebody injured as a result of workplace safety issues. That is why safety issues are so heavily protected by law. That is why the state of Queensland invests so much in workplace health and safety. Despite the modest changes that are present in this bill—and they are modest changes—we will continue to have a significant cost and a significant red tape or regulatory burden on workplaces to keep workers safe. That needs to be the case because we should not be repealing or peeling back any layers of protection unless we can see clearly that we are not compromising the safety of workers. I believe that that is clearly the case in the bill presently before the House.

The hearings of the committee were particularly interesting. One thing that our fearless chair, the member for Capalaba, commented on was the poor attendance by employers. Quite frankly, I think that there is an element of fear amongst some employers who do not want to be seen to be publicly criticising the powers of unions in case they are subject to reprisals. I think that that may have been a factor in the poor attendance by employers at our hearings.

I approached a workplace health and safety officer in one of the largest manufacturing facilities in Brisbane. I will not name that manufacturing facility because the particular workplace health and safety officer—and it is a unionised facility—expressly did not want me to name it. He was able to give many examples of the misuse of workplace health and safety in his particular facility—significant examples. He was the work site officer. He was probably in one of the positions that the committee recommendation might envisage could be staffed by an actual workplace health and safety officer. In quite vigorously urging me not to say anything that would identify the particular site, he made it clear that both he and his employers expected reprisals from unions if they entered into this debate. I do not think that anyone who has been associated with some of these heavily unionised industries like construction, transport or manufacturing would have any doubt that reprisals are a feature for employers. That is the sort of environment where a union can attempt to tell an employer on a large site that they want one of their members employed at \$8,000 a week and if they do not, they know that the union will be in there paying them back, as it were, with no notice entry, workplace closures and so forth.

I congratulate the minister for introducing these reforms. They are very reasonable and moderate reforms. I think they have paid more than due regard to ensuring that we do not compromise the safety of any worker in Queensland. I am very happy to support them and also very happy to support those recommendations of the committee to which I have referred in my speech.

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I confirm to the House that I am a member of the Finance and Administration Committee and familiar with report No. 39 of March 2014 that reviewed the bill in question.

Before I begin, and in the presence of the member for Mulgrave, I enjoyed listening to your draft preselection speech.

Clearly all Queenslanders deserve to work in a safe workplace. Every Queensland and every employee deserves great opportunities free from the excesses of employer and union interference. The basic thrust of my commentary tonight is that I am confident in the ability of the independent arbiters—highly trained and experienced industrial inspectors—to be fair and impartial adjudicators of the workplace. Remember that industrial inspectors undertake a minimum of two years on-the-job specialised training, have experience in the industry and usually come with trade or university qualifications. Compare this to union officials, who undertake a one- or three-day course to become a permit holder.

I liken the ALP laws that we are amending to a fast bowler dressed in his whites with the sunscreen on and the red mark where he has been scratching away at the ball. He runs in at full tilt, bowls down close to the pads or close to the bat, then screams ‘Howzat!’ at the top of his lungs, builds up the slip cordon to join in the ‘Howzat!’ with his appeal, and then walks back behind the stumps, stands where the umpire is, takes another look and sticks his finger up. This bill and the committee’s proposal will bring some balance back to the scenario. This bill and the committee’s proposal will allow an independent umpire: an adjudicator of a safe workplace who is neither batsman, bowler, employer nor employee, but a truly independent umpire.

Several weeks ago in the Parliamentary Annex we heard from submitters to the committee hearings, including the Masters Builders Association and the CFMEU. I note yesterday’s press article regarding the \$1.2 million fine that was imposed on the CFMEU for their tactics in another state. I would also like to mention the member for Moggill’s example of the building site that was shut down for several days—several days after the actual event was resolved. I may be a humble accountant in my prior life, but I did—

Mr Crandon: Were you a good one?

Mr GULLEY: That would depend on the definition of ‘good one’, member for Coomera. I dragged out my humble dictionary—via the laptop—and looked up the word ‘extortion’, which is a legal term. It said—

The crime of obtaining money or some other thing valued by the abuse of one’s office or authority; oppressive or illegal exaction, as of excessive price or interest; extortion of usurers; extort or to wrest or wring money from a person by violence, intimidation, or abuse of authority; obtain by force, torture, threat, or the like.

Mr Acting Speaker, I daresay that the CFMEU are quite familiar with that type of activity and were quite happy to extort money from employers using the previous legislation. In fact, I daresay that the CFMEU would be quite proud of being compared to the Camorra in Italy when it comes to tactics of extortion. I would like to compare that particular union to some others.

I compliment the Nurses Union and the manner and the words of their policy adviser, and I took on board his views and insights regarding the hospital setting. I also extend my thanks to the firefighters who appeared before the committee. Firefighters are expected to turn up to dangerous scenarios on the spot, and we fully support their capacity to act on society’s behalf in dangerous scenarios.

This amendment bill addresses two separate pieces of legislation: the Electrical Safety Act 2002; and more predominantly the Work, Health and Safety Act 2011. This bill comes after the Queensland government’s review of the National Model Work Health and Safety Bill, WHS, which investigated concerns raised by the construction industry about the misuse of right of entry powers by union officials. Under the current system, unions have entered work sites without notice and shut them down for ‘safety contraventions’ that impose no immediate risk to workers. Such a misuse of power comes at a cost to businesses, contractors and hardworking Queenslanders.

In implementing the findings of the Queensland government’s review, this bill brings right of entry rules in line with the Commonwealth law by imposing notice of entry requirements on work health and safety permit holders as well as health and safety representatives. I will repeat that last sentiment again. The Queensland government is bringing the right of entry rules in line with Commonwealth law. Going back to the umpire scenario, we will have the same laws in Queensland, the same umpires, as other states.

The bill also amends a number of other sections which will improve the overall safety and fairness of worksite operations. Part 2 of this bill amends section 210(3) of the Electrical Safety Act 2002, increasing the maximum penalty units to not more than 300 penalty units for a breach of regulation, as outlined in clause 4.

Part 3 of this bill amends the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, introducing provisions to stop union bullying and increase the penalties for noncompliance with Work Health and Safety entry regulations. Clause 6 outlines the powers and limits the health and safety representatives. Importantly, it omits section 68(2), which removes the reference that health and safety representatives have the power to cease work consequential to the removal of section 85 under clause 11.

Subsections (3A) and (3B) will also be inserted under section 68. Notice of a health and safety assistant's entry on-site must be given at least 24 hours, but no more than 14 days, prior to entering the said site. Notice of entry must be given to both the person conducting the business at the site as well as the person managing the site.

Furthermore, clause 7 of this bill adds subsection (5A) under section 71 of the existing act, which permits the person conducting the business to refuse to grant access to a person assisting a health and safety representative if the health and safety representative fails to comply with these notice requirements.

Clause 13 amends section 119 of the act, outlining similar conditions of notice of entry for work health and safety permit holders, as were outlined in the powers and functions of the health and safety representatives under clause 6. The amendment to section 119 will require work health and safety permit holders to give notice of entry of at least 24 hours but no more than 14 days to members undertaking business and managers of the work site. This clause aligns with other provisions in the Work Health and Safety Act as well as the Fair Work Act 2009.

Clause 16 inserts a new section 143A to prohibit a workplace health and safety permit holder from entering a workplace unless they are given notice required under section 119, or section 120, or section 122. The penalty for doing so is a maximum of 200 penalty units as outlined in section 123 under clause 15.

The Murrumba electorate is a growing area. I would argue that it is the fastest-growing area in Queensland.

Mr Crandon: You know that's not true.

Mr GULLEY: I say to the member for Coomera that we are going toe to toe for growth.

Mr Crandon: You had five schools built in the last five years and two more to come?


Mr GULLEY: We are still growing very fast.

Mr Minnikin: Or accrual versus cash accounting.

Mr GULLEY: Absolutely. My electorate has a considerable number of large construction projects, particularly in North Lakes and Mango Hill. The construction industry is a pillar of the Queensland economy and is pivotal to the growth of not only the Murrumba electorate but also the region. Construction is one of the four pillars of our Queensland economy and a strong economy creates jobs. Such an important industry is important for the livelihoods of the residents of my electorate, and the region should not be unfairly hindered by overzealous union officials who are interested in drumming up membership fees and funding a well-paid union management salary.

I had the chance to review the government's response to the committee's recommendations and I am fully satisfied with that detailed response. The government's reforms foster safety, fairness and productivity by providing legitimate avenues for safety issues to be raised and dealt with appropriately. The Newman government is committed to making Queensland's workplaces the safest in the nation while ensuring that the working rights of Queenslanders are protected.

I would like to thank the Acting Speaker for his generosity in allowing me to speak on behalf of the electorate of Murrumba, the Aboriginal word for 'good place'. I also thank the committee, the submitters and the secretariat for their work on this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (6.01 pm): I rise to speak to the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I think workplace health and safety is a very sensitive issue and that was borne out in our committee hearings, not only by the verbal contributions to the hearing, but also by the tenor of the contributions to the public hearings. There is certainly a polarisation of the points of view of some in the working community.

As is self-evident, I represent a heavily industrialised electorate. Workplace health and safety is a critical issue, no matter where you are from. I think the current government and the former government released a number of ads about workplace health and safety. I think they were very well thought out in that those ads showed dad going off to work or mum going off to work and that the most important thing for the family was that, at the end of the day, that person came home safely. That is the truth of workplace health and safety—that we have mums and dads, daughters and sons who are able to go to work in the knowledge that the best possible attention will be given to safety in the workplace.

I certainly do not believe that the majority in my electorate—and, indeed, I do not—support the misuse of workplace health and safety issues as a smokescreen for industrial action. I think that pays poor regard to the importance of safety at the work site. It undermines the confidence of both sides of the equation—both the employer and the employee—in the process and places at risk, because of that undermining, workers' safety. However, I am concerned about a couple of clauses in this bill, which I will touch on. Because of the diversity of our workforce, I believe that removing the opportunity for the workplace health and safety permit holder to come on site without notice and also undermining or removing the role of the workplace health and safety representative on the work site will place at risk employees who are perhaps timid by nature, those who cannot afford to risk losing their jobs because of a reaction from the employer, or those who, because of language or cultural background, have a poor understanding of their rights as employees and also a poor understanding of the workplace health and safety regime in Queensland.

The committee had one dissenting report. As a committee member, I felt that, had the recommendations that the committee put forward all been accepted in the spirit in which they were recommended, it would have in great measure answered my concerns about the promptness with which a workplace health and safety concern could be addressed. I note that the government has fully supported quite a number of the recommendations. However, in relation to the one in particular—and I will touch on this in a few minutes—that I was most concerned about, the government has not accepted it but has said that this provision already exists. Unfortunately, I do not believe that it exists in any strong way.

The committee found that, from the point of view of employers, there was a consistent concern that workplace health and safety issues were used as an opportunity to call the guys out on the grass so that they stop work, stop productivity and use it as a bargaining tool. Again, I say that that is not the intention of workplace health and safety. If a workplace goes out because of a genuine safety issue, those workers have every right to do that. They should not have to wait 24 hours. They should not have to do any of that. If it is a genuine safety issue, they should be able to remove themselves and anyone else who is at risk or who is potentially at risk from that workplace until that safety issue is properly addressed. I am a firm believer in that, no matter what the workplace is. Again, I reiterate, before somebody gets up at a subsequent time and says that I am supportive of the misuse of that activity, I not supportive of the misuse of it.

It has already been noted that in Queensland we have a workplace health and safety inspectorate of 216. That excludes the 46 mining inspectors. The table on page 15 of the committee's report shows where Queensland sits in comparison to the other states. However, it should be noted that my understanding is that, in the instances of all the other states, it is unclear whether their inspectorates include or exclude mining inspectorates—whether it is the full gamut of inspectorates or just workplace health and safety inspectorates. So we could be in a better position than this graph indicates in relation to the other states, but I suspect that we are in a worse position. New South Wales has 315, Victoria has 214, Queensland has 216 and then the next closest state is Western Australia with 103.

Given Queensland's high number of heavy industrial sites, in regard to the refusal of the government to support a recommendation, or even modify the recommendation that additional workplace health and safety inspectors be funded at the major sites—and I know that some of those major employers would complain about what they would see as an extra impost, but those big employers can incorporate that position into their current staff and that work responsibility and maybe provide that person with appropriate training—I believe that there is room to improve when you are removing what is a substantial number of people who, whether the government likes it or not, have been acting as pseudo workplace health and safety inspectors.

I do not believe that every permit holder has acted contrary to the intent of their role. I do not believe that all union delegates act in a fairly manipulative way. I know many who work very productively and very well with workers in the community. They do not all abuse that process. We are losing all of those people who were adding to the role of the inspectorate.

Recommendation 3 of our report is—

The Committee recommends that the legislation be amended to include provision for the regulator, or inspector by reason of delegation, to be authorised to provide consent for a WHSR to have assistance provided within the 24 hour notice period.

The government supports that recommendation in part. That particular concern was most agitated by representatives of the United Firefighters Union. They are specifically placed to have to go into workplaces and need immediate support in terms of safety. I believe that it should be enshrined in legislation that those high-risk employment areas, like firefighters, ambos and others who have to go into what could be unsafe environments, can immediately get the necessary assistance and advice that they need to be able to then proceed with their very responsible position. I remember a discussion with an emergency plan coordination committee when I was in local government. The proposal was that in any disaster nobody would be able to enter an area. The issue of firefighting came up. It was suggested that somebody could rush into a building that was on fire to try to rescue somebody who was in there. It was going to be put forward that nobody could do that unless there was a structural engineer able to verify and validate that the place was safe. I defy anyone to believe that an Aussie bloke or woman walking past where there is a trapped person would not forego their own safety—it has historically been shown—and go into those premises. It is important that people in those high-risk roles can get help as quickly as they possibly can.

The Queensland Nurses Union also was concerned that there were insufficient inspectors. This legislation takes away all of the support of workplace health and safety permit holders and, as I said, undermines what a workplace health and safety representative can do. Whilst there again are a small number of union delegates who do the wrong thing, there are equally a good number of union people who work well for the safety of the community.

Recommendation 5 states—

The Committee recommends that section 85 not be omitted but amended so that WHSR may direct a worker to cease work only after receiving authorisation from the regulator.

The government has said in its response that this is as it currently exists. I believe, however, that when this legislation goes through, workplace health and safety representatives will be significantly disempowered to do that. The recommendation by our committee was to allow for a representative to make a phone call to an inspector and get either phone or electronic verification that what they believe is an unsafe situation is that on the indications provided, that an inspector would be out imminently and that the representative is given the authority on behalf of the inspector to stop that particular work until a full inspection is done. I believe strongly that it should be the role of a workplace health and safety representative to identify and get advice from an inspector and immediately be able to cease the at-risk activity. In many of our workplaces, not just in my electorate but across Queensland, there are people who have poor language or who could be 457 visa holders. Remember that 457 visa holders can only remain in the country while their employer, their sponsor, supports them to be in employment. If a 457 visa holder has concerns about the safety of his workplace and complains, that benefactor role could be withdrawn by the employer and the 457 visa holder is back off home. They are significantly disempowered. I believe that recommendation 5 should be accepted in its entirety.

Recommendation 6, which was not supported, is in relation to additional inspectors at high-risk employment places. Because of time I will only deal with the priority matters. Currently workplace health and safety entry permit holders have a process that they must follow to gain entry. If they state that there is a suspected contravention as provided under a regulation they can go straight in. The argument of government is that that has been misused, but to put the 24-hour notice on everybody is, I believe, undermining the safety of workers, particularly where there are specific issues that are unsafe. As I said, the previous recommendation would have given coverage if a workplace health and safety representative could specifically be empowered to stop work by use of electronic or phone contact with an inspector.

Recommendation 9 states—

The Committee recommends that the regulator undertake an extensive marketing campaign to inform workers of the contact details and new arrangements of government inspectors.

The government's response was that they support it in part. I would like to read what the response was—

This recommendation is supported in part. Information will be prominently placed on the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland's website.

Putting information on the website is inadequate. It is not sufficient. In recommendation 11 the committee recommends—

that the regulator include changes to work place inductions to inform workers of their right to cease work if the worker has a reasonable concern that to carry out the work would expose the worker to a serious risk to the workers' health or safety, emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard.

Again the government says it supports this recommendation in part and states in its response—

The content of induction training is a matter for employers to provide. However, information can be included on the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland internet site for use in workplaces.

Not everybody accesses the website. Not everybody is savvy to the internet. I have not navigated Workplace Health and Safety Queensland's website a lot, but some websites are particularly difficult to navigate. It would not be unreasonable to believe that some departmental websites are intended to tell you as little as possible. I have been there and got very frustrated with the lack of information. It is not sufficient to leave the onus on the employer only in terms of what a worker's right is when there is an alternative, when there are better options for information for the worker; they should not be used 'either/or' they should be used 'as well as'. I am very concerned that the government's attitude is that a worker should look up the website or wait to be told, because not everybody is a good self-starter and not everybody is well informed in terms of knowing places to get this information. Again, many workers are in a position lacking in power. They are in a disproportionate position. They will find it incredibly difficult to stand up to an employer that is lackadaisical about safety. You can say all you like that employers want safety because they want productivity. However, history—even recent history—shows that there are employers who are prepared to put a worker's safety at risk for the dollar.

Recommendation 12 from the committee is—

The Committee recommends that the regulator ensure that any details of workers who report issues to the regulator remain strictly confidential.

In its response the government has said that this is currently the situation. For it to be brought up by the committee indicates that it is not well known and therefore workers will lack the confidence to make a complaint if they believe the boss could get to know who it was who made that complaint.

Recommendation 14 states—


The Committee recommends that legislation be amended to include provision for the regulator, or inspector by reason of delegation, to be authorised to provide consent for a WHS entry permit holder to have access to a workplace within the 24 hour notice period.

The government's response states—

Where a worker has a concern about their health and safety they can contact the regulator and request the assistance of an inspector. An inspector can provide immediate assistance over the phone if necessary.

Again, our recommendation was made on the basis that many workers do not feel empowered and many workers are not well informed. Whilst we can say that the role of the unions is in great measure to educate, I do not want to see anyone hurt because of a lack of information when in the past, perhaps, they felt they had an easier access to intervention. I am also concerned that the 24-hour notice may lead to the circumstances in a workplace being remedied before the inspector actually comes in, because of the 24-hour notice. That was confirmed at the hearings when one of the witnesses said that in that 24-hour period the employer would have the opportunity to fix the fault. If that is a proactive willingness to fix the fault because other workers could get injured, that is good. However, if the proactivity is merely to avoid a workplace health and safety black mark or a fine, that is bad because the systemic problem will not be addressed.

I believe that workplace health and safety should not be an issue used for union activity or union abuse. On the other hand, I value too much the lives of our men and women, young men and women included, who may not have the capacity to represent themselves articulately to their bosses or to anyone else. I would hate to see that, as a result of a passion being pursued by the Attorney-General to have another shot at the union, anyone in the workforce is placed at risk of injury or further injury. For that reason, I have some reservations about the legislation. That will be dealt with in the clauses.

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Firstly, I wish to thank the member for Capalaba for his leadership, and my colleagues on the committee and our staff for their diligent work. There are 160,000 workplaces in Queensland. As we heard from the Attorney-General yesterday, complaints have come in regarding the unlawful entry of unions to building sites. Seven million dollars of taxpayer money has been wasted because of action taken at the children's hospital. It is evident that some unions use the workplace health and safety laws for industrial sabotage rather than safety issues. At the end of the day, the desired outcome is for a safe workplace. This legislation allows industry to be on the front foot.

The committee spent many hours in discussion, sought submissions from industry and unions, and held a number of public hearings. While most unions were there in good faith to give us information that could help us make recommendations, I was very disappointed at the behaviour of a couple of the representatives at the hearing. It was, indeed, a shame that the representative for the CFMEUQ chose to take most of the time allotted to all 10 of the union representatives in attendance, choosing to speak on his opinion of a court case instead of allowing time for questions. That left little time to ask questions of the union representatives. Instead of leaving the bipartisan committee with information that we could use to make a sensible and reasonable conclusion, this aggressive attitude left us scratching our heads and wondering if he was even there to bring about a good outcome for his members or just to beat his chest like a gorilla to try to intimidate us. We were not intimidated at all.

I would like to voice my disgust over a comment that this union representative stated, that employers and this government did not care if people were maimed or killed or if a piece of concrete fell on a pedestrian. Nobody in their right mind would believe such a nonsense. It is a ridiculous if not slanderous comment and highly offensive to all of us. I would like to state for the record that, as a person who cared for patients when I was a nurse and also as a community volunteer at a community centre, I find the comments highly offensive. Furthermore, employers actually do care very much about their employees' safety. Even if you believe the unions that employers are all heartless and greedy, it would make no financial sense at all to not care if they lost the productivity of an employee who was unable to work because of injury. Programs such as Zero Harm at Work, which employers engage to reduce injury, are a testament of this fact. Clearly, the results prove that prevention through education works. As the member for Capalaba said, if unions really cared about employees, not their union fees, they would spend more time educating.

The committee looked at both sides of the debate and I believe that as a bipartisan team we came up with 15 sensible and reasonable recommendations. In relation to requiring at least 24 hours notice for a permit holder to enter a workplace, it is appropriate to point out that all parties agreed that workplace health and safety inspectors are experienced, are highly trained for years and, most importantly, are impartial. We were advised that there are 239 specialised inspectors. It is also appropriate to point out that a permit holder, usually appointed by a union, is different from a workplace health and safety representative. The WHS representative is generally an on-site employee who is best placed to bring the attention of the supervisor to any possible situations that could cause harm to an employee. As expressed by the representative of the Nurses Union during a hearing, these employees have one to three days of workplace health and safety training on top of the specialised training in their field, and they have a very important role in workplace safety. They should ensure that each of their fellow workers takes responsibility for working in a safe environment.

In one of the submissions received, an example was given by a union representative that a permit holder discovered a ladder had been placed in front of a door, which obviously could be dangerous. It is probable that an employee was irresponsible in leaving it there, not the employer. It would be easy to move it and remedy the dangerous situation. Stopping work for something so easily fixed is absurd. Committee recommendation 14 states—

... that legislation be amended to include provision for the regulator, or inspector ... be authorised to provide consent for a WHS entry permit holder to have access to a workplace within the 24 hour notice period.

We pointed out that, in this day and age, it is practical to use a smart phone to send a photograph of a situation to a workplace health and safety regulator or officer. The officer would be able to make a judgement to allow the workplace health and safety representative to stop work during the harmful situation until the harmful situation was remedied and an inspector could attend and take the appropriate course of action.

The committee has recommended that section 85 not be omitted but amended so that the workplace health and safety representative may direct a worker to cease work only after receiving authorisation from the regulator. However, we have since been advised that this is already a regular practice. An inspector can provide immediate assistance over the phone, if necessary. Inspectors have significant powers under the Work Health and Safety Act, including the power to stop work activities, require answers to questions, require the production of documents and the ability to seize items for use as evidence of an offence. It should also be noted that, under current legislation, workers have the right to stop work should they feel a situation is unsafe.

The committee has made recommendations to set performance indicators and monitor response times for all complaints and these should be included as a subject in the review to be held within two years time. The member for Mulgrave says that workplace health and safety inspectors cannot be everywhere. That is true, but another 250 permit holders cannot be everywhere either.


Debate, on motion of Mrs Ostapovitch, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLICATIONS (BILLBOARD ADVERTISING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 23 May 2013 (see p. 1799).

Second Reading

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.30 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

'There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.' The sentiment in the wise words of Nelson Mandela are etched in the child and family focused policy that the KAP has developed regarding billboard advertising in Queensland. I am very proud to stand here in the Queensland parliament tonight to debate, on behalf of the Queensland people whom I represent, the implementation of the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. Mr Deputy Speaker, would you be able to silence these squawking parrots over here?

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! I would ask the member for Dalrymple to refer to members in the chamber by their correct titles, please.

Mr KNUTH: What first brought my attention to this issue of inappropriate content use and geographical placement within the billboard advertising industry was the number of people contacting the KAP head office complaining about the failure of the advertising and marketing industries to apply a classification ratings code to billboard advertising and their inappropriate placement in public areas frequently occupied by children and families.

With this in mind, we personally went to the Queensland people asking them what they thought about inappropriate content being displayed on billboard advertising and their geographical placement. The response received from the majority of people was a call for the implementation of a classification rating and classification zoning system to regulate billboard content and geographical placement. This is common sense.

During our discussions with concerned members of the Queensland community there appeared to be a recurring reference to particular billboard advertisements such as: 'rip and roll' ads on bus shelters; Brisbane's sweetest adult club Honey B's billboards; Sexpo billboards; and 'Want longer lasting sex' billboards. Recently complaints have been made to us about Foxtel's 'Festival of WTF' billboard and 'Congratulations you're having a lesbian' billboards.

Two main issues kept resurfacing whilst in discussion with members of the Queensland community. They were: the constant exposure to families and children of M and MA content on billboard advertising; and the geographical placement of M and MA billboard advertising in public spaces that are frequently occupied by families and children. On further investigation into the concerns voiced by community members, we researched the particular billboard advertisements consistently being referred to. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I will have to present these articles in my reply speech for members to contemplate before voting.

I clearly state that the articles which I will present in my reply speech expose a self-regulatory system which has failed to meet community expectations. Recognising the failure of a self-regulatory system, I argue that this bill must be implemented to stop advertisers and marketers from taking advantage of a broken and failed system which engages the problem after the damage is done.

I sincerely hope that members of this House have taken the time to read through the bill and realise this is a preventative policy which will stop rogue advertisers and marketers abusing a weak system. The public have expressed increasing concerns about the outlandish use of M and MA content on outdoor billboards and, in particular, their geographical placement. That means that these M-rated billboards are close to public parks and schools.

It should be noted that the Advertising Standards Bureau is failing in its task to meet community expectations in terms of what is acceptable and not acceptable with regard to billboard advertising. The Advertising Standards Bureau has displayed inefficiencies when dealing with the issues of inappropriate content in public spaces that are occupied frequently by families and children. It is obvious that the Advertising Standards Bureau is reactionary as opposed to preventative when dealing with inappropriate billboard content and geographical placement.


The failing of community expectations is reflected in the Advertising Standards Bureau 2012 community perceptions research, which states—

The community is in general more conservative than the Board regarding themes of strong language and sex, sexuality and nudity. With regards to language there was widespread concern over the exposure of children to strong language. This is an area where community views appear to have become more conservative since 2007.

The highest level of community unacceptability for any advertisement shown in the research was 54 per cent. The mediums of advertisements potentially providing children access to advertisements were a substantial source of concern for those ads with the highest levels of unacceptability. After conducting our initial investigation into the complaints received, we then proceeded to call a meeting with the KAP policy research team to formulate a planned response to the concerns of the Queensland community.

The first point of call was to put in place a methodology in the form of a thorough literature review of the sexualisation and commercialisation of children relating to advertising by: researching the Bailey review of the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood, as an international comparative study to validate our direction on the proposed policy; researching academic literature, peer reviewed journal articles, the federal government's Senate inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment in 2008 and regulations that govern outdoor signs which include assessing the effect of sexualised images on children and on gender equality; researching the Queensland Classification of Publications Act 1991; researching the Commonwealth Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995; and engaging with the Australian Family Association, the Australian Christian Lobby, the National Civic Council and face-to-face engagement with the general public.

A non-scientific method was used when conducting the research study. The outcome of the six-month research study to develop a public policy to meet the concerns and demands of the public associated with billboard advertising standards has delivered the creation of the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I thank the House for considering this bill. I have a lot more to say in my reply speech. I thank the House for considering this bill.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (7.38 pm): The Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 is not supported by the government. The bill proposes that geographical zones be established which will be classified as G, PG, M or MA15+, with zone classification based on the frequency with which children and families access the area. I note that that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, in tabling its report on the bill on 25 November 2013, recommended that the bill not be passed.

The committee identified that, based on the zones proposed, it would be almost impossible for zones other than G classification zones to be established due to the proximity of locations to schools and other areas 'frequented by children and families'. The Queensland government agrees with the committee's position on this. Despite the unlikely event that a zone would be classified anything other than G-rated under this scheme, it is likely that children will be subjected to billboards in all of the proposed classification zones. Even if children do not access a particular area on a frequent basis, they may still attend the area or drive through an area—for example, on their way to school. It is clear

from this bill that the concept of geographical classification zones has been poorly considered, with no thought as to the practical implementation of such a scheme. What would you expect from the Katter's Australian Party research division?

The Queensland government is generally of the view that the proposed scheme is unworkable and will not achieve its policy objective. Under the bill, if the Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General receives a complaint about a billboard being placed in an inappropriate geographical zone, an inspector can remove the billboard advertisement if the inspector may lawfully enter the place where the billboard is placed. The problem with this approach is that billboards are often on private property and so the inspector would have no power to remove the billboards anyway.

The state billboard geographical classification zoning panel and branch proposed by the bill would require significant government resources. To fund the panel and branch, the bill introduces a monthly levy on billboard owners of 10 per cent of the net revenue for billboards advertising for billboards with M or MA15+ content. This funding scheme is unworkable as most outdoor advertising would likely fall into the proposed categories of G or PG. So it is possible that the majority, if not all billboards, would not meet the threshold for payment of the levy. No money would ever be collected, so this would result in the full burden of the cost of the board and panel to fall on the Queensland government, or more particularly the Queensland taxpayer.


Overall, the proposed system establishes a lengthy administrative process and, given the volume of billboards across Queensland, it is likely to have a negative impact on businesses. The application process will increase red tape and create a significant burden on businesses in both Queensland and other jurisdictions. It is also likely that this framework would reduce the viability for businesses to use billboards as an advertising option.

This government is committed to ensuring Queensland is the safest place to raise a family. That is why, in response to community concerns about inappropriate and sexually explicit outdoor advertising, this government took action and referred the issue of outdoor advertising to the Health and Community Services Committee on 17 April 2013, well prior to the member for Dalrymple's opportunistic political bill here tonight. This committee considered whether the outdoor and billboard advertising industry in Queensland should be reformed, including whether legislative reform is needed to protect children from being exposed to sexually explicit and inappropriate advertising.

On 31 January 2014, the committee tabled a comprehensive report on sexually explicit advertising. The committee's report makes a number of recommendations, including that the government introduce legislation to establish a co-regulatory approach to outdoor advertising with a recognised industry body to develop a code of ethics for outdoor advertising that is given effect by regulation. An industry adjudication board would also be established to determine whether outdoor advertisements breach the code of ethics, with noncompliance with board determinations to result in the matter being referred to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to consider enforcement and penalties. The Queensland government is carefully considering the committee's recommendations to decide the way forward for outdoor advertising in Queensland.

What we will do is consult with Queenslanders. This government was very proud to have set up a committee inquiry to look at this issue, well prior to the member's bill being introduced in this House. We held a press conference at Parliament House with some ladies who, of course, supported the government's intention to look at this in a proper way, to talk to the experts and the billboard owners with respect to the fact that we do not want to see billboards that display the objectification of women. We will attend to that, as we have, in a thoughtful process. We set up a committee inquiry. I think that was a great outcome in terms of the committee's ability to look at the issues. The committee has made some recommendations. There are some controversial recommendations which the billboard companies have been on to me about, but what I have said to the billboard companies is that we will take our time. We are looking at the committee's recommendations and then the government will respond accordingly in the time allocated to us to respond to the committee report.


What I will do is work with the billboard advertising owners because I believe they genuinely want to work with the government and to cooperate with the government to ensure that the objectification of women and children is not displayed on these particular types of billboards. I look forward very much to working with those advertisers and owners of the billboards and the stakeholders and all the relevant people so that we can come up with a program that actually will work and will lead to the non-objectification of women in Queensland. We oppose the bill.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (7.43 pm): I rise to speak to this piece of legislation, the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I was at an ACL conference it would have to be 12 months ago now I think, if not a bit longer. The member for Dalrymple spoke at that conference. Part of that conference was the ACL presenting the need for G-rated billboards. There were two ladies who spoke very passionately about their belief in the need for generally acceptable billboards right across Queensland. They gave examples of inappropriate billboards that had been erected near the boys grammar school. After quite a lot of hard work on their part, those billboards were removed.

After a number of other speakers, the member for Dalrymple then had the opportunity to speak generically. He raised the issue of billboards and he actually talked about this bill, that the Katter's Australian Party were looking at introducing this legislation that was going to set up geographical classification zones. In my mind it was like a target—the centre would be G-rated where kids are likely to be and then it went out to more 'generous', for want of a better word, ratings. I had some grave concerns about that because kids go everywhere. They are in mum and dad's car. They travel everywhere. Because of those concerns, my initial reaction was not to support the legislation. That changed when the Attorney-General just spoke, when he said that under this provision it would have to be G everywhere. Excellent, I thought. So I am going to support the legislation.

What is wrong with G-rated advertising everywhere? What is wrong with billboards being able to be seen by everybody in a family without awkward questions being raised? Why should our outdoors be polluted with advertising that is questionable? If somebody wants to look at or be informed by or influenced by some of the material that is about, they can go to the newsagency and buy questionable books or books with that sort of paraphernalia. To do that, you at least generally will have to go into a store, although I have some misgivings about some of that material not being shielded from children as well—but that is a different topic.

However, billboards in the public arena are unavoidable, unless as a parent you feel so strongly about the content of a billboard you will actually alter what would be the most direct travelling route to avoid a sign. Why should you? Why shouldn't signage around a community be acceptable and appropriate for all ages? I do not think there is a problem with that. It does not impinge on the right of people to advertise their product. It does not impinge on the opportunity for me as a consumer to be told about a product. But I just ask that for my eyes, and more particularly my children and more particularly my grandchildren, they not be influenced by material that is inappropriate either for their age or for our value set. So I support the G rating and I am going to support this piece of legislation. I thank the Attorney-General for the clarification.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (7.47 pm): I rise in support of the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. A wise man known as Professor Scott Prasser, Director of the Public Policy Institute at the Australian Catholic University, said 'Creating policy is a three-step process'—first, recognise the problem; second, compile the research and place it into a black box; and, third, develop a solution based on the research compiled in the black box and apply it to the development of an evidence based policy.

KAP have acted in precisely this manner when developing the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. I am very proud to stand here in the Queensland parliament today to debate, on behalf of the Queensland people whom I represent, for the implementation of this bill.

Before developing this bill, KAP was assigned the task to gather academic, political and investigative journalistic literature for evidence that suggested a failure of self-regulation relating to outdoor billboard advertising in public spaces. The weight of evidence provided in the research suggested that, based on the balance of probabilities, self-regulation by the Advertising Standards Bureau is failing.

Acknowledging that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the self-regulating outdoor advertising industry is ineffective, we went ahead and developed a policy that was based on evidence and community concerns. The policy utilises a wide range of literature such as the Australia Institute's *Corporate paedophilia: sexualisation of children in Australia*; the Australia Institute's *Letting children be children: stopping the sexualisation of children in Australia*; *Sexualisation of children in the contemporary media* by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts in 2008; *Letting children be children*, a report of an independent review of the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood; *Reclaiming public space*, an inquiry into the regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising; the 2011 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and

Legal Affairs' *Sexualisation of young people*; the *Sexualisation of girls in popular culture: neoliberalism, choice and invisible oppression*; 'Community perceptions research 2012—overview' from the Advertising Standards Bureau; the *Politics of Pornography and Pornographication in Australia* by M Tyler; 'Billboard Advertising and Sexualised Images' from Bravehearts; 'Premature Sexualisation of Children' by the Women's Forum; the Senate Inquiry into the Sexualisation of Children in the Contemporary Media Environment from the Victorian Child Safety Commissioner; the *Advertising effect: how do we get the balance of advertising right*; and *Think of me as evil? Opening the ethical debates in advertising*. As can be seen, there is a litany of literature that this bill is based on, and I table all of those documents to support this bill here tonight.

Tabled paper: Report of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, dated July 2011, titled 'Reclaiming Public Space' [4835].

Tabled paper: Australia Institute discussion paper No. 90, dated October 2006, titled 'Corporate Paedophilia, Sexualisation of children in Australia' [4836].

Tabled paper: Australia Institute discussion paper No. 93, dated December 2006, titled 'Letting Children Be Children, Stopping the sexualisation of children in Australia' [4837].

Tabled paper: Report of the Commonwealth Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts, dated June 2008, titled 'Sexualisation of children in the contemporary media' [4838].

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents relating to the sexualisation of children in advertising [4839].

Tabled paper: Document, dated February 2010, authored by Dr Linda Papadopoulou, titled 'Sexualisation of Young People, Review' [4840].

Tabled paper: Independent review of the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood, dated June 2011, authored by Reg Bailey, titled 'Letting Children be Children' [4841].

It is compiled and presented as evidence which suggests that inappropriate advertising and marketing content and geographical placement of billboards displaying this content in public spaces can have a negative impact on children and families. That is an undeniable fact that all of us are very conscious of. E Rush and AL Nauze deliberate that the sexualisation of children in advertising and marketing content exposes children to numerous risks. The effects of sexualisation on children can be identified by five different categories: physical harm, psychological harm, sexual harm, the 'opportunity cost' of sexualisation, and its ethical effects.

Often the five different categories can occur simultaneously in a child's life. For example, eating disorders can present physical and psychological harm, which are closely interrelated. The ethical debate has been used by the advertising and marketing industries to justify their use of inappropriate content, claiming that they are merely reflecting community values and reject responsibility for various undesirable social effects. Clearly, there is quite often a moral vacuum. Pollay in 1986 offered an opposing view which is almost unanimous among humanities and social science scholars, suggesting that advertising and marketing operate as a 'distorted mirror', reinforcing a particular set of cultural values and symbols. This view can be highlighted by the regular exposure of young children to images of adult sexual behaviour expressing no emotions, attachments or consequences, debilitating them from developing 'the foundation they need to become adults who are capable of forming positive, caring sexual relationships'.

It appears that children themselves are now being sexualised in advertising and marketing content which emphasise male domination, which appears to possibly increase the risk that the ethical values that foster healthy relationships will be undermined, in particular for boys. Rush and Nauze in 2006 further suggest in their discussion paper *Letting children be children* that a solution could start with a restructure of the regulatory environment for Australian media. The establishment of a division within an office of media regulation to protect children's interests with respect to all forms of media would acknowledge the increasing importance of media in children's lives. In particular, it would be able to address the ways in which children are now much more heavily targeted by advertisers and marketers than they were in the past. At the same time, it would allow parents more choice about the ways in which they introduce issues related to sex and sexuality to their children. At present, unless children are kept at home with tight and constant supervision of their media consumption, that choice is being taken out of their parents' hands.

In June 2008 the Australian Senate conducted a Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media. There were many recommendations that came from the inquiry, but the one that concerns billboard advertising was recommendation 12, stating—


The committee recommends that the Advertising Standards Board rigorously apply standards for billboards and outdoor advertising to more closely reflect community concern about the appropriateness of sexually explicit material and the inability of parents to restrict exposure of children to such material.

The concerns and recommendations made relating to the 2008 Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts' *Sexualisation of children in the contemporary media; Corporate paedophilia: sexualisation of children in Australia; and Letting children be children: stopping the sexualisation of children in Australia* were echoed in Britain through the *Letting children be children* report of an independent review of the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood by Reg Bailey. This review was presented to the parliament by the Secretary of State for Education by command of Her Majesty in June 2011. It appeared the British public and government were dealing with the same issues relating to inappropriate content in the contemporary media as in Australia. The KAP used the Bailey review as an international comparative study whilst developing our billboard advertising policy. The Bailey review presented many recommendations that were compatible to the June 2008 standing committee. In particular, recommendation 2 states—

Reducing the amount of on-street advertising containing sexualised imagery in locations where children are likely to see it. The advertising industry should take into account the social responsibility clause of the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) code when considering placement of advertisements with sexualised imagery near schools, in the same way as they already do for alcohol advertisements. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) should place stronger emphasis on the location of an advertisement, and the number of children likely to be exposed to it, when considering whether an on-street advertisement is compliant with the CAP Code. The testing of standards that the ASA Summary of Report and Recommendations undertakes with parents (see Recommendation 7) should also cover parental views on location of advertising in public spaces..

The KAP combined the two recommendations from the 2008 standing committee with regard to this bill. This placed content and geographical placement as the main focus when developing this bill and other legislation within the policy framework. In July 2011 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs conducted a reclaiming public space inquiry into the regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising, which reinforced the importance of the findings made. The inquiry found that outdoor advertising has no special category and the current board determinations may take into consideration the medium of an advertisement, such as use of a billboard, in addition to its placement. Certain codes place restrictions on the placement of outdoor advertisements for some products. However, there is no separate regulatory code or process for outdoor advertising. Despite their public and unavoidable nature, outdoor advertising is regulated by the Advertising Standards Bureau in the same manner as other forms of advertising.

Central to this inquiry is the issue of whether outdoor advertising warrants consideration as a special category. Two issues are raised from this evidence. Firstly, should outdoor advertising constitute a special category of advertising which is subject to a different code regarding content and placement? The second issue is whether the current self-regulatory system has the capacity to adequately regulate outdoor advertising. It is quite obvious from the evidence presented in the literature that the current self-regulating system has only the capacity to act as a reactionary system, after the damage has been done by scrupulous and self-interested advertisers and marketers. With this in mind, we believe that outdoor advertising constitutes a special category of advertising which is subject to a different code regarding content and placement.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (7.58 pm): In rising to speak to this legislation, I congratulate the member for Dalrymple for having the intestinal fortitude to do what he is doing here. I will be extremely disappointed in the LNP and the Labor government if they do not support this legislation.

I will tell the House a story. Recently I went to my doctor for a health check, as you do at my age. After the doctor was finished he asked, 'What do you think is the best cure for heart disease?' Of course, the answer was 'prevention, prevention, prevention'. He said, 'No doubt that is the best cure for any physical ailment, and in your line of work I would suggest it should also be a cure for social policy,' so prevention it shall be in the case of my health and the health of this great state. I told this story to my colleagues the honourable Shane Knuth and the honourable Rob Katter and during this story the penny dropped for all three that prevention must be the guiding light when the KAP develops social policy.

We have embraced the philosophies of egalitarianism and utilitarianism to underpin the development of this prevention based policy. I am very proud to stand in the Queensland parliament today and debate on behalf of the Queensland people whom I represent the implementation of the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The House is very quiet tonight. There is not much gibbering, there is not much laughing and there is not much abuse. If there was, you would get a personal letter in your local paper because this is a touchy subject. We do not care what consenting adults do in their bedroom and we do not care what they choose to do sexually, but do not put it in front of our kids. That is exactly what the legislation before the House tonight is all about—do not put it in front of our kids.

The member for Gladstone heard the Attorney-General say, 'Are we going to have G-rated billboards everywhere? We can't agree with this because that might happen.' Well, woe betide you, Attorney-General. So it should be. We should have G-rated billboards where our kids go when they are driven to school, where our kids go to the beach and where our kids go to the park. That is exactly what the member for Dalrymple is doing with this legislation, and the Attorney-General should hang his head in shame.

Members of the House have listened to the speeches tonight from my two KAP colleagues. They presented the concerns of their communities regarding the use of inappropriate content and the geographical placement of billboard advertising. The evidence consistently presented in academic literature, government inquiries and national and international reports strongly suggests there is a considerable risk to children—that is, the kids of our state—of premature sexualisation and commercialisation within the broad advertising, marketing and media industries. Outdoor advertising is featured as one of the mediums that has a direct and continual impact on children and their families because they frequently use these public spaces. So this is what they attack. They put the billboards where they will be frequently seen, where the most people will see them, and that is exactly what happens. We are trying to protect the youth of our nation by saying that we want to have cleanliness on these billboards.

There is a real concern amongst us here in the House about the failure of the self-regulating Advertising Standards Bureau system. I would like to acknowledge the Hon. Fiona Simpson, the Speaker of this House. I would also like to, heaven help me, recognise the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie for what he has done in the past. I would also like to acknowledge the honourable Mark Robinson and the member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham, for the stance they have taken. I would like to acknowledge Eric Abetz, the Hon. Shayne Neumann, Graham Perrett and Tarnya Smith for having the courage and the fortitude to represent the members of their communities by supporting the ever-enduring hard work of Wendy Francis of the Australian Christian Lobby. Wendy has worked hard on these G-rated billboard advertisements across Queensland, and everyone in this House has to back her.

I would ask the Attorney-General to meet with Wendy Francis after he votes against this legislation tonight. He should sit and have a cup of coffee with her and ask her what she thinks about him after he has advised his government not to support this. It is absolutely ridiculous, and those who vote against this legislation should hang their heads in shame because what they are saying is that they want our children to be sexualised by billboards. That is exactly what they are saying when they do not vote for this legislation in the House tonight. We should write letters to your local papers and let your constituents know that you have refused to pass such simple legislation in this chamber. You should hang your heads in shame.

A government member interjected.

Mr HOPPER: If we get a comment from you, you will get a letter for sure. You will be top of the list. Mr Deputy Speaker, let me tell you right now—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! Member for Condamine, if you refer to someone in the House, can you please use their title.

Mr HOPPER: Absolutely, I apologise. I would like to also acknowledge the many others who are working tirelessly to rectify a broken, self-regulated billboard advertising industry throughout Australia. I would like to give credit to Ashley Dodd tonight. He has worked tirelessly on this. Ashley is a great warrior for things like this. I commend him for the work he has done on this and I mention him here tonight. I am proud to have Ashley on our staff working for the Katter's Australian Party. The research Ashley has done has created a policy that is simple and effective. This policy will place pre-vetting as a key indicator for the approval and placement of billboards under the geographical classification zoning system. This means that you can have the tough stuff where the kids do not go. We would love to see G-rating right across the state, but we have allowed for the Attorney-General's want and we can have his sexualised billboards in places.

This system will reduce the ability of rogue operators from the advertising and marketing industries to take advantage of a self-regulating system that reacts after the event. An example of this is the Foxtel bestiality billboard. How dare that even be put out there? How dare it get space in our precious state of Queensland? The honourable Shane Knuth will refer to that in his closing speech, and I hope you will listen because you are going to vote for that. You are going to say, 'Foxtel, please put it out there. Please put it in front of our children.' That is what you are saying by not supporting this legislation tonight. You are saying, 'Foxtel, you can put bestiality in front of our children,' and that

is what is happening. I might sound serious and I am serious. We have the opportunity to stop this through this simple legislation from the member for Dalrymple, Shane Knuth—and I am proud of you, Shane; I am very proud of you. This particular billboard was used as a shock and awe campaign, with the marketing and advertising industries having no regard for the advertising code of ethics and social responsibilities, and it slipped through.

I would also like to refer to another article which the member for Dalrymple will present later called 'Sex sells—but bold ad doesn't last long'. I hope grandmother Carol Wallace will not be placed in the same awkward situation as when she had to explain to her little granddaughter what the billboard meant about longer lasting sex. That is the exact situation we are talking about here tonight. The pre-vetting procedure within the geographical classification zoning policy will ensure that this type of situation will never, ever happen again. It is such simple legislation and that is what is before the House tonight. I am asking the LNP to support the member for Dalrymple; if they do, we will go out and congratulate the LNP. We will not bag them; we will thank them for having the intestinal fortitude to keep bestiality away from our children.

It might sound rough, but we understand the concerns of the Outdoor Media Association, the Communications Council, the Eros Association, the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law and members of the civil liberties council relating to G-rated blanketing of all outdoor advertising. We agree that there has to be a middle ground relating to policy that will meet everybody's concerns. I would like to table some more information and some more research that Ashley has done.


Tabled paper: Queensland Government report, undated, authored by Dr Susan Dunn and Dr Stephen Dunn, titled 'Insight and Overview of Social Marketing' [\[4842\]](#).

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents relating to an Australian Christian Lobby conference 'Preservation of Our Public Spaces' and the Health and Community Services Committee inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising [\[4843\]](#).

In my speech tonight—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr HOPPER: You should hang your head in shame. Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I say that the Attorney-General is going to tick off the sexualisation of our children through a public billboard system tonight because he has the opportunity to vote for this legislation and he is refusing to do that. Hang your head in shame, Attorney.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (8.08 pm): I am not going to recite the title of the bill because that is about the length of time I will take to make my speech, but let me be very clear on a couple of things. It is so easy to come into this place and make a simple subject sound so emotive, but the result of all of this is very clear. The first thing is that we start to confuse advertising with media. Media is all-encompassing; billboard advertising is such a small area.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr BERRY: I was just going to compliment the member for Dalrymple on the basis that I am sure he means well but, quite frankly, it just has not hit the spot. I only have one reason to tell the member why it has not, and I owe this to my good friend the member for Kallangur. The point was an easy one, and I thank him very much for inviting me to be in his public hearing because this really summarises it.

We have heard from the Attorney-General that with regard to classification we may as well put the whole of Queensland under the classification of G. Let's assume that, but what does G mean? The G classification means that content is very mild and is appropriate for a general audience. Let's drill down to understand what G means because it goes on. In relation to sexual content, sexual violence is not permitted. Sexual activity should be very mild and should be very discreetly implied and justified by context. Coarse language should be very mild and infrequent and be justified by context. Nudity should be justified by context. There is no banning of sexual activity, no banning of coarse language, no banning of nudity.

What do we have? We have a bill about which we can rant and rave and jump up and down but effectively it does not achieve its purpose. There is not much I can add except to say as an overrider that billboard advertising is self-regulating and it is self-regulating well. It was made very clear that if this regulation was in place we could not get a matter into court. Besides the layer of regulation we would put onto advertisers, which ultimately has to be paid for by society, effectively we would not be able to get a prosecution and a conviction by the time the self-regulators could fix the problem. The reality of life is that it is working pretty well, and they say it is. I do not know why—

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr BERRY: Does the member want another turn? Does he want to speak twice?

Mr Hopper interjected.


Mr BERRY: I do not know where the heck that came from. With all this research material I do not know where that came from. I have not seen a sign.

Mr Bleijie: Of what?

Mr BERRY: Something about bestiality. I have not seen that sign. The only sign I have seen in Ipswich is the one of me. I do not fit into any category. The reality of life is that it is just so easy to confuse billboard advertising, which makes up such a small part of the advertising industry. To simply impose a G classification on the whole of Queensland is not going to achieve the object.

There was one thing in relation to self-regulation that speakers impressed me with. That was in answer to a question that I asked regarding standards, which do change over a period. If we look back historically and work out what was inappropriate 10 years ago, we will find that it is not the same today. That is the reality of life; it needs to adjust. There needs to be a body to do that, and they do it very well. I am sorry, member for Dalrymple, but I cannot support the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! Before I call the member for Kallangur, I would like to recognise the members of Nerang Rotary who are visiting the Queensland parliament.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (8.12 pm): This is an incredibly difficult subject. I hope that the members of the KAP will listen to what I have to say. I am not trying to be confrontational. The reality is that I share their same concerns.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr RUTHENBERG: Mr Deputy Speaker, could you please remind the member for Condamine that I sat through his entire speech and listened courteously to him without saying a word. So I would expect the same courtesy back, please.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kallangur, I will rule on the House.

Mr HOPPER: I rise to a point of order. When he addresses me I have the right to retaliate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: When you refer to the member you need to refer to him as the member for Kallangur. Thank you. Member for Kallangur, you have the call.

Mr RUTHENBERG: I have the same concerns as the KAP. My problem with this bill is that I think it will create more problems than it tries to solve. I do not come at this from a perspective of having done no research. I did a considerable amount of research in the months that we spent looking at this as a committee. In fact, if honourable members look at the report that we tabled in this House, chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 contain an extensive amount of research on this subject. Chapters 7 and 8 go into our recommendations. I want to go through a couple of the reasons why I do not think the bill that the KAP have put forward will accomplish its objective. The first is that we need a standard for outdoor advertising that is consistent right across Queensland because people drive all around Queensland with kids in their cars. It is quite simple. I do not think we want to create zones where certain advertising is allowed in certain areas and more risqué advertising is allowed in other areas. That is the first point.

The second point is that standards need to reflect a general audience. Using classifications from film and computer games, as suggested in this bill, simply is not suitable. It is not just our committee that said that; the federal Senate committee also said that classification simply did not fulfil the aim of outdoor advertising. Honourable members should remember that outdoor advertising does not encompass just billboards. There are groups like Wicked Campervans who use their image as brand collateral. Currently there are no laws that capture that organisation, and they need to be dealt with. What is proposed in this bill simply will not work in this particular instance. The current laws and the changes suggested in the bill will not capture those sorts of organisations.

In the KAP bill there is also no regard for the current COAG arrangements. I think that the current COAG arrangements probably need to be reviewed. The bill would set up a fairly large, new department, as I would assess it, using an awful lot of government money. Using government money for good means is not a bad thing; I am not objecting to that in itself. However, I think we can accomplish the objectives that the KAP have set out in a much more efficient manner. Currently, the problem is fairly small, although it continually appears. We see guerilla advertising occurring. I agree

with the member for Condamine when he talked about the bestiality ad that appeared in Kings Cross. It was up for a day and then was taken down. That then created an immense amount of free advertising through all the morning television and radio talk shows right across the country. We have to close that loophole. That is the loophole that we need to shut down. We need to do that in a cost-effective manner.

The solution is better based on the suggestions made by the Health and Community Services Committee. Again, I say that we did an immense amount of work in this area and there was unanimous support for my report when I brought it to the committee in this regard. That was because we did an awful lot of research on this. I do not discount the research that the KAP have put on the table tonight. There is a lot of research that suggests that we need to get our head around this issue, but we need to do it in a very efficient manner and in a manner that is preventive; I agree with that. The recommendations put forward by my committee provide that preventive opportunity and provide a framework that would achieve the objectives that the KAP are looking for without creating humongous bureaucracies. It would also give the current industry significant ownership of this solution. It would also be a significant deterrent. It would also allow us to stop organisations like Wicked Campervans putting slogans on the side of cars that we all find fairly offensive. While I think the KAP bill is of good intent, I do not think it is well suited to provide the solutions or the outcome that it seeks to achieve.

I will conclude simply by making this statement: Wendy Francis, the Queensland Director of the Australian Christian Lobby, spoke with us at some length during the inquiry which looked at this issue. I can report to the House that Wendy actually congratulated us—and there are members of my committee here who can verify that—on the recommendations we made. She believed that the recommendations we made would be a good response and a good way to actually deal with this issue once and for all. It would take into account all advertising right across this state that is of an outdoor nature, and that includes inside shopping centres, on shop windows, on vehicles and on billboards. That is what we need to do.

Since Wendy was referred to here tonight by the member for Condamine, I want to finish by simply quoting the last two paragraphs of the submission she made to this bill. This is what she said—


Overtly sexualised imagery should not be tolerated in public spaces in the name of free speech or of advertising.

I do not think that anyone would disagree with that. She further stated, 'Sexualisation is harmful to children in a number of ways.' We know that intuitively. We understand that as a society, and there is research that backs that up. 'Furthermore, it devalues and objectifies women.' Absolutely! She stated further—

A society which values children and women should not tolerate such sexualisation in advertising. When this advertising is prevalent outdoors, in full view of the public, steps need to be taken to regulate it and ensure such harmful messages are not displayed.

This bill recognises the problem of sexualisation in outdoor advertising; however, it falls short of offering an adequate solution. Establishing zones in which adult content can be displayed, even for a cost to the advertiser, is not an answer. We have a responsibility to protect children from sexualised advertising. All public spaces should be safe for families and children. All outdoor advertising should be G-rated. This is the only system of advertising regulation that will provide a safe environment for all our children.

The Health and Community Services Committee report makes recommendations that would actually address the issues that the KAP is trying to solve. I agree with their sentiment. I understand their frustration, but I do not think the bill they put forward would adequately address the issue.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (8.21 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. At the outset I thank the committee secretariat for the work they have done in helping the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to prepare its report. I support the Attorney-General and the comments that he has made in his contribution to the debate tonight.

I do not think anyone in this House disagrees that the sexualisation of children is a bad thing, but the reality is that the bill that is being put to this House tonight by the member for Dalrymple simply does not work. The geographical zones that are being proposed are not workable or feasible, and it is ultimately ineffective legislation. That is not what this House is here to pass; this House is here to look for workable, viable solutions that will protect children and the vulnerable in our community.

What has been suggested by the Katter party ultimately only seeks to impose more regulation, red tape and burden on industry—something that this government has, over the past two years, tried to reduce. I look forward to the government's full response to the fantastic report that was prepared by the Health and Community Services Committee. I would like to put on the record my thanks and appreciation to the member for Kallangur for the great work that he and his committee did. They have tried to come up with something workable which will address the issues that have been raised.

Ultimately, what is more likely to be effective than any kind of bill that the member for Dalrymple has proposed is a merger of the cats and dogs in the back corner presenting a viable alternative for government in Queensland. The reality is that—

Mr JUDGE: I rise to a point of order.


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

Mr JUDGE: Referring to Katter's Australian Party and the Palmer United Party as 'cats and dogs' is offensive and I ask the member withdraw it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! You cannot take offence to that. There is no point of order. The member for Broadwater has the call.

Miss BARTON: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think that is the sort of petty, glass-jaw response which shows exactly why the cats and dogs in the back corner are not ready to govern Queensland. I look forward to seeing the details of their merger when Bob and Clive can work out whatever the hell they want to do.

Ultimately, this is ineffective legislation that does not address the issue. This government is concerned about addressing issues, and I look forward to not only seeing the government's response to the member for Kallangur's committee's report but also the proposed solutions and the real solutions that will be presented to the people of Queensland.


 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—PUP) (8.24 pm): I rise to support the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As the father of four children—an 18-year-old daughter, a 16-year-old daughter, a three-and-a-half-year-old son and a seven-month-old son—I think it is important to support this bill. The member for Mount Isa has indicated to the House that legislation should be developed through an evidence based approach, which is not something that the Newman government has understood and which has been reflected in many pieces of legislation that have been brought before the House by the Newman government. They have ignored evidence over and over which has been presented by senior members of departments and they have also ignored the reports of academics.

The Newman government effectively opposes on principle the bills of non-government members. What is very concerning is that this bill has been in front of the committee for almost 12 months. We have heard members of the House tonight speak of inquiries that have been conducted. Laws can be passed and amended to improve those laws; for example, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act was introduced a long time ago and there have been amendments to that legislation. The Criminal Code 1899 has been amended. Just in case the Attorney-General does not understand, laws can be amended through amendments to legislation and they can be amended by way of case law. As the Attorney-General should know, it is quite a simple process to amend legislation in parliament.

We have an opportunity here tonight to introduce legislation which improves the standards and quality of life in our community at large. The member for Ipswich spoke about how times change, and they do, but it is not always for the better. We know that children are being sexualised. We know that children are being exposed to violence more and more, and that is being reflected in children's behaviours in school yards and in courts; for example, children are going to court for serious violent sexual offences. I am sure there is research that would validate that, and I am sure that members in this House would agree with that. The bottom line is that tonight we have a chance to pass the bill that is before the House, and if the government decides to take some action and keep up with the game and introduce amendments to improve the laws, they should do that. But the chance is here now to introduce a bill that actually does something positive for society.

I introduced the Cheating at Gambling Bill in October and it has been delayed. We could have those laws in place now to target corrupt betting and organised crime. I introduced preventative laws in child protection ages ago that have been held up in the committee system, and the looting laws have also been held up. These laws have been held up for 12 months and they should be passed. The relevant minister should introduce an amending bill which should be considered as a matter of urgency by the relevant committee. If the government thinks that the bill needs to be improved, changed or altered in any way, it should be amended.

I commend the member for Dalrymple for introducing this bill. I encourage members to put party politics aside and do something for your community, do something for society, do your job in this place, vote for this bill and then go away and do some work and introduce amendments that improve it if you think it needs improving.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (8.28 pm) in reply: I am very disappointed tonight in many of the comments here from the LNP—particularly the backbenchers—because a lot of them do not have a clue what they are talking about. The member for Ipswich says that self-regulation is working well. The Advertising Standards Bureau has thrown out complaints about a billboard showing a pregnant woman with the caption ‘Congratulations, you’re having a lesbian.’ Is that self-regulation? The member for Ipswich said he never saw anything in regards to bestiality—“Appalling taste”: Foxtel to remove bestiality billboards.’

There we have it. The LNP plans to introduce self-regulation. That is why we put together this comprehensive package—with a lot of support, a lot of work and a lot of participation—because we could see that the placing of billboards, particularly in front of grammar schools and primary schools, was causing great concern for members of the community.

I refer to an article titled ‘Indecent exposure upsets Melinda Liszewski with this billboard outside Brisbane Grammar School’. I also refer to another article titled ‘Rip and Roll campaign draws most complaints’. A member opposite said that the LNP will deliver real solutions. There are real solutions in this bill. We have put together a comprehensive package for the benefit of Queensland. At the same time we are not seeing real solutions from the LNP. I hope that this bill passes through the House. I believe that this parliament is about passing good legislation.

I think that when many of the LNP backbenchers first entered parliament they thought that they would achieve something in this place. They thought that they would be able to stand up for their electorate and do something for their electorate. Then all of a sudden they are in a position where legislation is being smashed through the House and they say, ‘We will obey. We will do what we are told. We will listen to our leaders. We will never cross the floor. We will become yes-persons.’ Once they would say, ‘We will back any good idea. We are about looking after the interests of people.’ I heard some of those backbenchers make their maiden speeches. They got up and said, ‘We will always stand up for our electorate.’ What are they doing for their electorate? They are dodging, weaving and hiding to the point at which they are invisible to their electorate. That is why they have a 17 per cent swing against them like the member for Ipswich, like the member for Cairns and like the rest of the LNP. People want members of parliament to stand up for their electorates. People want members of parliament to get up and do something for their electorates, not point the finger and then try to pull someone down when they put up a good idea.

Self-regulation will not work. I heard the member for Ipswich say that self-regulation was working well. I refer to the article titled ‘Rip and Roll campaign draws most complaints’, which states—

Controversial ‘Rip and Roll’ ads on Brisbane bus shelters have drawn more complaints than any other advertising campaign in Australia this year.

The Queensland Association of Health Communities’ safe sex campaign was pulled by advertising agency Adshel after a wave of complaints over the image of a gay couple hugging.

...

The campaign, which drew 275 complaints, topped the 10 most-complained about ads from January to June, released by the Advertising Standards Bureau today.

This is, as the member for Ipswich says, self regulation. Every LNP member will be waiting and waiting until the review is finished. The KAP has already done that. We worked with Wendy Francis. We worked with the Australian Christian Lobby. We have already done that. We have been through it. That is why we put together this bill. I know that, when the LNP puts forward its bill, obviously the process will go back to self-regulation and it will allow the advertising companies to make decisions and nothing will change. This legislation ensures that something does change.

That is why we have introduced this bill. A lot of work has gone into the preparation of this bill. It is not something that was just dreamt up. This bill is a comprehensive package that considers the interests of children, because we heard the concerns from the parents day in, day out.

I refer again to the article titled 'Indecent exposure upsets Melinda Liszewski with this billboard outside Brisbane Grammar School', which states—

More than 500 people have signed a petition to ban strip club billboards near schools after complaints about the posters were thrown out by the advertising watchdog.

In other words, the advertising watchdog threw out complaints about a billboard advertising a strip club near a school. That is self-regulation! That is what the LNP is going to introduce.

The article states further—

Pip Douglas and Tanya Mathias started the petition after billboards promoting the clubs were erected near several Brisbane schools.

This is why we have introduced this bill. We acted on this issue 12 months ago. Yet the LNP still has not put together a bill. We are still waiting for these billboards to be classified. We tabled this legislation 12 months ago, yet the LNP is still waiting. The article states further—

She said the billboard for HoneyB's objectified women as 'headless, faceless, honeypots'.

The sign was set up close to the Brisbane Grammar School at Spring Hill.

'Unless there's some change in legislation, it'll keep popping up,' she said.

The Advertising Standards Board dismissed a complaint about the billboard in July last year and said that most members of the community would not find the signs to be offensive.

Collective Shout campaigns against the objectification of women and spokesperson Melinda Liszewski is also against the ads.

'How do you educate boys to be respectful of women, to try and reinforce equal relations when you've got the sex industry targeting them in this way?' She said.

I refer to another article titled 'Sexpo billboard "too close to school"', which states—

An Ipswich City councillor—

and he is a good man—

has called on Queensland Rail to remove a billboard advertising 'live porn stars' because it is situated just 600 metres from a primary school.

The Sexpo billboard, on QR land along the Ipswich rail line at Goodna, features headshots of a number of international adult entertainers.

It promises 'more live porn stars than ever seen in Australia' and is about 600 metres away from Goodna Primary School on Albert Street.

While the LNP was talking about this matter, we were doing something about it. We were putting together a comprehensive package. We were doing this over 12 months ago. The article states further—

But Councillor Paul Tully said a school principal from Ipswich complained to him about the billboard's prominence.

'Given the proximity of this billboard to the local school, I pity the parents having to answer their children's inevitable questions as they crawl along the motorway to and from school,' the school principal wrote.

Cr Tully said residents had also contacted him about another billboard advertisement for the local sex shop.

This is happening in the electorate of the member for Ipswich. He said that he has not seen these billboards, they do not—

Mr Berry: It's not in my electorate.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr KNUTH: I am very sorry. I get the electorates of Ipswich and Bundamba mixed up. I am not much of a city person. I have to get these boundaries right. It is located near the electorate of the member for Ipswich, but not quite. The article states further—

Cr Tully said residents had also contacted him about another billboard advertisement for the local sex shop.

He said the Maison Amour ad, just opposite the Goodna McDonalds store, was also on QR land and should be taken down.

'QR won't allow political signs on railway land, yet sexually explicit billboards are given the green light across the state,' Cr Tully said.

'Our railway reserves should be used for appropriate commercial advertising, not for Sexpos, sex shops, male impotence and longer lasting sex.'

But a QR spokesperson said the agency was unable to censor any content except for political and religious messages.

'QR could face a legal challenge should it pre-judge advertising without good reason,' the spokesperson said.

The Sexpo billboard gives top-billing to Belladonna, a 26-year-old porn star from the United States who has made more than 250 adult films and has a large online following.

We are acting on this by putting forward this comprehensive package. The representative from Queensland Rail more or less said that they washed their hands of this because there is no regulation. That is why we are putting forward this legislation.

The article states—

The government inquiry is partly a reaction to Advanced Medical Institute's controversial 'Want longer-lasting sex?' billboards, one of the most complained-about ads to date, banned by the industry's self-regulating body, the Advertising Standards Board, only after 18 months of protests.

...

Richard Herring, who heads the APN's outdoor businesses in Australia and New Zealand and is an OMA (Outdoor Media Association) board member, said the industry should be vigilant about rejecting ads that aimed to cause offence to attract headlines. 'We are open to suggestions of improving the system', he said. 'Our (code) is probably a little bit more broad. We're looking to tighten that up. I think we need to be very aware of the boundaries.' Issues relating to sex and sexuality often dominate complaints by the public.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media articles regarding sexually explicit billboard advertising [\[4844\]](#).

As I read these paragraphs out and have the opportunity to table what the member for Ipswich has not seen, I am very proud to introduce this bill to protect our children by whatever means necessary. This is not about politics. We are waiting for the LNP to introduce legislation that can achieve the outcomes that the KAP is trying to achieve. This legislation is in front of us now and backbenchers have the opportunity to vote for something that is going to work. The Attorney-General feels that the legislation might not be perfectly right and it should be opposed because it is not perfection. The government smashed through the bikie laws and weeks afterwards they were introducing legislation because they forgot this and they forgot that and the next minute they realise that they are smashing law-abiding bike riders.

Mr DEMPSEY: The member is being misleading in relation to the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Act and I ask him to withdraw his comments. There is not one recreational rider who has been arrested and that is a misleading statement by the member and I ask him to withdraw it. I find it offensive and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): It is not personally offensive. Member for Dalrymple, I will ask you to go to the title of the bill.

Mr KNUTH: Noel Evans was an LNP member. He resigned from the party because at his wife's funeral he was involved in a guard of honour and the cops pulled him up. This was after the laws came in. The Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is about acting early and recognising the concerns of the community. It is about having dialogue with the community and those who have great concerns that children are being exposed to pornographic billboards when they go to school, football and play in parks. They are exposed to this day in, day out.

Mr Kempton interjected.

Mr KNUTH: The member for Cook will not be here for long, and he knows that. It does not matter. I do not know if you are going to support this, but judging from your record every time something good comes up you do not support it and then when something bad is introduced by your side you back it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Dalrymple, if you could speak through the chair.

Mr KNUTH: I am very proud to have worked with the KAP members. I also thank the crossbenches for their support tonight. We are very proud to have put this together and to have introduced it 12 months ago after working with interest groups and recognising the needs and concerns of the community. I commend this bill to the House.

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

AYES, 6:

KAP, 3—Hopper, Katter, Knuth.

PUP, 1—Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Cunningham, Wellington.

NOES, 71:

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

ALP, 5—Byrne, D'Ath, Miller, Pitt, Scott.


Resolved in the negative.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (8.51 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.


Mater Hospital, Nurses Dispute

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (8.51 pm): While we have been seriously concerned about the treatment of senior doctors by this government over the past four months, there is another equally serious dispute in our health system that has been dragging on for over two years. Over the past two years Brisbane's Mater hospital has been funded by Queensland taxpayers to the tune of \$1 billion. In 2012-13, part of that funding was earmarked to pay nurses working in the Mater public hospital the same modest salary increase paid to 32,000 other nurses working in public hospitals across the state. The Mater is still holding this public money three years later. It has not paid their nurses and midwives the wages that they are owed. Nurses and midwives at the Mater public hospital are now nine per cent behind Queensland Health nurses and midwives, even though they do the same work. At the Mater hospital 2,300 staff are owed more than \$1 million. Some of those health workers are owed up to \$6,000 each. Nurses and midwives have been forced to apply to undertake protected industrial action. While they have publicly stated that they will not do anything that will compromise patient care, nurses are campaigning at the Mater hospital and with their union through the media.

But why isn't the Mater passing on this money? The Mater does not even have to pay for the wage increases. It has already been given taxpayer funding by the state government. The Mater management wants nurses and midwives to give up a whole raft of existing working conditions—working conditions that are held by other nurses in the public hospital system. Mater nurses and midwives have already voted down two substandard offers from the Mater management. Recently, staff voted to take protected industrial action. And what was the Mater's response? It hired interstate lawyers. They flew them into Queensland to stymie legitimate industrial action. The Fair Work Commission affirmed the right of nurses and midwives to take some protected industrial action subject to properly meeting the requirements of the IR Act.

Now, the Mater management has put out a third substandard agreement that it is bullying midwives and nurses to accept. The Mater has effectively gagged nurses and midwives, who are suffering from stress and anxiety as a result of this ongoing mistreatment. The QNU branch at the Mater has passed a vote of no confidence in the Mater CEO, John O'Donnell. This situation highlights a danger of government outsourcing. The LNP government has flagged that it intends to increase the provision of public hospital services at private facilities such as the Mater. The opposition calls on the Mater management and Dr John O'Donnell to stop playing games, to stop paying high priced lawyers and to simply pay its staff what they are owed.

Mount Ommaney Electorate, Health Services

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (8.54 pm): The electorate of Mount Ommaney is home to many wonderful people and organisations. The electorate has greatly benefited from many decisions made by the health minister and Metro South Health. I draw the attention of the House to the two


brand-new ambulances that this government has delivered to the Centenary Ambulance Station since the LNP government came into power and the publicly funded palliative care beds at Canossa hospital that the minister reopened after the fiasco caused by those opposite when they closed those publicly funded beds. Thank goodness for the common sense of our health minister, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, who stepped in to rectify that injustice. Ongoing funding for an essential service that should never have been tampered with, let alone ripped out of the community courtesy of the Bligh government, was delivered by the Newman government and the facility was reopened.

Now, the health minister and Metro South Health are delivering more services to the electorate. I draw the attention of the House to the Corinda Community Health Centre. Under the previous government, that service had the clinical capacity to provide services for 80 hours per week, but it was utilised for only 45 hours a week, so about 56.25 per cent was being used. The services that were provided at the centre essentially were provided by Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service and the Mater Mothers Hospital. I suggest that the clinic was being underutilised.

Metro South Health sensibly undertook a needs analysis. It showed that the baby clinics were being operated by at least five different pharmacies within a five or 10 kilometre radius. We all know what an excellent job those clinics do, including in support of small businesses. Mothers can have their babies weighed, have a chat to the nurse who is providing that free service and, of course, pick up some nappies or Panadol on the way.

Metro South Health found that there was a need in the western suburbs for more specialist palliative care services for families to access. I am really pleased to say that, at the end of May after renovations have been done, specialist palliative care services will be provided to our western suburbs families who need to access such vital services. We will still be providing two clinical services per week so people can access the children's health services. That is another example of this government utilising what is available and making sure that it is value added for taxpayers money.

2014 Multiple Sclerosis Swimathon

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (8.57 pm): On 15 March at the Runaway Bay Sport and Leadership Excellence Centre, the 2014 multiple sclerosis swimathon was held. I had the opportunity to participate. It was fantastic to be part of the Runaway Bay Sport and Leadership Excellence Centre team. There were 22 members on the team and together we raised more than \$4,000. I was not necessarily one of the greater contributors in terms of the laps, but what I might have lacked in speed, grace or agility in the water I certainly tried to make up for with enthusiasm, which ultimately is what it is all about.


In particular, I pay tribute to Steve Middleton, who works at the centre. He took the time to organise the team and played a pivotal role in making sure that nearly 100 people were able to participate in the swimathon at the centre that day. More than \$40,000 was raised on the Gold Coast alone. That money will go to a fantastic cause. In the Gold Coast community there are more than 300 people who suffer from multiple sclerosis and, of course, there are thousands right across this great state. Anything that we can do not only to raise awareness but also to support the cause and to provide support for those who have been recently diagnosed, as well their families, is indeed a great thing.

I would like to thank some of the members of the Runaway Bay team—the Blue Sharks. We were graced with the presence of three Olympians, whom I would like in to pay tribute to—Leiston Pickett, Melanie Schlanger and Chris Wright. They gave of their time not only to support our team but also to show their support for the Gold Coast community—a community that they, of course, call home as they are preparing for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

The person who particularly inspired me was a young girl called Olivia Sattler. Olivia is in year 8. She swam more than 100 laps and raised more than \$1,000 for MS Queensland and MS Australia. She started swimming about six months ago. For her to, over the course of about 12 hours, swim 100 laps was absolutely fantastic and certainly put me to shame.

This is all about raising awareness of the effects of multiple sclerosis and raising much needed funds. I look forward to supporting this event next year. It is a fantastic cause and I encourage all of my colleagues in this House to get behind it and support the events.

Apple-MaQ Lions Club


 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.00 pm): Lions clubs have a charter to assist those less fortunate, both here at home as well as beyond our borders. I recently attended a celebration of the Apple-MaQ Lions Club of Brisbane for 10 years service and 30 years for the Apple Users Group. This relatively small group of Lions members have in the last 10 years shipped 140 shipping containers to sites here in Queensland as well as around the world, wherever natural disasters have struck. They have also recycled hospital and medical equipment, education equipment such as desks, chairs, books and computers, as well as clothing, baby food, mattresses, bicycles, hand-cranked mobility transporters, farming equipment to countries such as Sri Lanka, East Timor, West Papua, Ghana, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, PNG, Philippines, Uganda, Tuvalu, Kenya, South Sudan, India, Kiribati, Bali, Laos and Bougainville. Remember, 140 shipping containers from our Brisbane Apple-MaQ Lions Club. Within Queensland, whenever there has been a disaster, be it floods or cyclones, this Lions club has been quick to respond. Because of the enviable reputation they have established, many businesses are eager to donate substantial goods to assist the victims of these disasters.

During the 2011 floods, 27 containers of goods were distributed throughout the state. Some 850 mattresses and stretchers were distributed to recovery centres, as well as doonas and pillows, new clothing and men's and women's shoes. Following Cyclone Larry, 104 tonnes of food was dispatched to Innisfail and a truckload of household goods to Tara following a mini tornado. Some 62 pallets were sent to Grantham, five pallets to Ingham and five pallets to Innisfail.

Many a time, David Phillips, the mover and shaker of this Lions club, has phoned or emailed me seeking assistance with transport by either rail or sea or assistance to locate a warehouse to house their huge amount of goods. David and his daughter Nicki, along with their other volunteers, devote a huge amount of their time to organise, perhaps have repairs done of equipment or modify bicycles, hand-operated mobility chairs and other tasks to prepare their goods for shipment. Add to all of this their work to supply palliative care equipment to those requiring specialised beds, shower chairs, commodes and the like.

The people they have helped would now be in the many thousands. I believe this small band of Lions deserve our hearty congratulations and our grateful thanks.

Jezzine Barracks

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (9.03 pm): I rise today to speak about the magnificent site of Jezzine Barracks in Townsville. The site, rich in military history, has been redeveloped and will be officially opened to the community this weekend. It has been many years in the making, including community consultation, planning and a complete overhaul and redevelopment of the military heritage site. The defence site was officially handed over by the Howard government to the Townsville City Council as the land trustees in July 2009. The brigadier's residence and the old barracks building have remained Commonwealth property. The barracks building has been redeveloped to house the North Queensland Army museum.


The Jezzine Barracks site was home to some of Australia's and North Queensland's famous military units for more than 120 years. Sites with strong military heritage values include the forts at Kissing Point, huts from World War II and the Army museum. Jezzine Barracks had for many years been home to one of Australia's oldest units of Queensland colonial forces, the Kennedy Regiment, whose lineage continues today in the 31/42 Battalion Royal Queensland Regiment. This battalion was the first unit mobilised and deployed from Australia during World War I to garrison Thursday Island due to concerns about the German military/naval threat in the Pacific.

The battalion carries 47 battle honours: one from the Boer War; 19 from World War I, including Somme, Bullecourt, Ypres, Amiens, Albert, Passchendaele, to name a few; and 27 from World War II, including Porton, the Syrian frontier, Merjayun—where I have served with the UN—and Jezzine, the site from which it draws its name. It is crucial that this site maintains this military history and, in doing so, pays tribute to the men and women who have served in our defence forces and, in particular, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and those who continue to serve today.

The state government has been honoured to be part of this wonderful project by providing financial support through a \$10 million grant. The joint partnership with the federal government and the Townsville City Council has allowed the site to maintain a visual balance of military heritage and Indigenous history. The site will also provide a venue for community events, while allowing Townsville residents to share in the sheer beauty of Jezzine Barracks and Kissing Point for generations to come.

One of the most beautiful sites is a new pedestrian connection between the Strand and the Rowes Bay esplanade along our foreshore. I would like to congratulate the Military Advisory Committee, the Jezzine Barracks Community Trust, the local community and our traditional owners for turning this historical site into a place that will be enjoyed and cherished by locals and tourists. I also encourage Townsville residents to discover Jezzine during the week long celebrations from this Saturday until Sunday, 13 April. The official opening ceremony will include a traditional owners' ceremony and the unveiling of the military interpretive elements and art.

Ipswich, Floods

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (9.06 pm): The people of Ipswich have had their fair share of suffering the ravages of floods. This suffering has been shared over many generations. The catastrophic floods happened in 1824-25, 1841, 1893, 1974 and 2011. It seems that these floods are consistently spaced throughout the brief European settlement in Queensland. The spacing is about 37 years.

While there is a predictability about floods, nonetheless, they are still unpredictable in terms of the intensity of their effect. Size and duration are the two factors to consider. However, Europeans have adjusted. Our forefathers have built their important buildings on high ground, built their houses on stumps and wherever possible built away from creeks and rivers. This was at a time when there were neither dams nor water diversionary systems in place. The European settlements around Queensland, and in particular South-East Queensland, settled with all those solutions in mind.

While flooding is predictable—that is, that we have had them in the past and we will continue to have them—our European history only extends as far back as 200 years. Evidence of earlier flooding was chronicled by explorer John Oxley and Major Edmund Lockyer. In 1824 John Oxley chronicled in his diary a severe flood in the area of the junction of the Bremer and Brisbane rivers. John Oxley estimated the flood to have been about 50 feet above the river's normal level of flow. In 1825, a year after John Oxley's observations, Mayor Edmund Lockyer mentioned evidence of a flood around the Mount Crosby pumping station. Debris lodged in the tree branches led the major to believe that this flood was about 100 feet above the river's normal level. The flood of February 1893 was considered to be just as great as the floods chronicled by Oxley and Lockyer.


There are still many of us who so vividly remember the Australia Day flood of 1974 not only for its devastations but also for the clean-up which seems to have lasted a particularly long time. I understood the mental anguish of those people who were involved in this flood, particularly having their homes inundated and having to clean up, and the depth of depression that seemed to permeate our suburbs.

The point of my speech is that our brief history has not until today been addressed. It requires a government to act on all of the available evidence and neither have a knee jerk reaction nor wither on the vine of complacency because we have dams in place. History tells us that there will be another flood. The question will be: will we be ready? Will we have the infrastructure in place? Will the people be ready? Will the lessons learnt earlier be remembered? Maybe and maybe not—who knows.

I am proud to be part of the Newman government which plans to minimise the impact of flooding in Ipswich and Brisbane. This is a vision because it is about the longer term plan for South-East Queensland and, in particular, the people of Ipswich. We must support the Newman government investigate all available options to limit the devastating effects of floods.

(Time expired)

Cairns Electorate, Achievements

 **Mr KING** (Cairns—LNP) (9.09 pm): In my inaugural speech just over two years ago I spoke about my priorities for the great electorate of Cairns. In that inaugural speech I outlined the three key issues I pledged to tackle. Those key issues were youth crime, our underresourced hospital and the local economy.

For too long under Labor Cairns suffered. Youth crime was out of control, ambulance ramping and waiting lists dogged the hospital and the economy was in the doldrums. Now, after the past two years, the latest statistics show crime is being reduced, the hospital is meeting national targets for the first time in a long time, the tourism industry is firing and the broader economy is on the road to recovery. None of this has happened by accident. A relentless focus on tackling crime; significant funding boosts for the hospital; attracting new investment for major projects; and record funding for tourism marketing, events and new flights are achieving results.

Key highlights over the past two years include a new headquarters for the Cairns SES and the hardworking volunteers, a brand-new flexible learning centre at Manunda to cater for kids disengaged from the mainstream education system, the Lake Street upgrade in the CBD and a new block of classrooms at Cairns State High School. New funding has also gone to schools in my electorate to clear their entire maintenance backlog and the comprehensive process to dredge Trinity Inlet is well underway.

Just today, we have had three significant announcements regarding great results for our local and state economy. Firstly, the Queensland tourism industry contributed \$23 billion to the state economy in 2013—an increase of \$3.5 billion since the 2012 election—and tourism jobs increased 13 per cent over the past two years. That is an outstanding result, and I credit the tourism minister and the cabinet for their dedication to one of our government's four economic pillars. Secondly, the latest statistics show building approvals in Cairns continue to rebound, with the latest trends showing that building approvals in Cairns have increased 30.6 per cent over the past 12 months. Finally, the latest research shows that house prices in Cairns increased by 3.6 per cent over the past 12 months. This is a steady and strong result for our local real estate industry after—and I have to remind the House of this point—so many long years in the doldrums under Labor.

To sum up, our government has made tough decisions, and those tough decisions were necessary to put this great state back on the right track. At the same time, we have also been a can-do government that has achieved great results for our great city of Cairns. While there is still much work left to do, I look forward to working with the local community and local stakeholders to continue the great results we have already achieved.

Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal



Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.12 pm): I wish to speak about the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal findings that have resulted in massive pay increases to members of parliament—so massive the average person would not even earn in one year what some MPs received in this pay increase. This could not come at a worse time for the people of Queensland.

On 24 June 2012, right from the outset of his term, the Premier told the people of Queensland, 'Just like your family budget, we need to tighten our belt and find ways to cut our spending.' From the moment they were elected, this government embarked on a slash-and-destroy program terminating 14,000 public servant positions, cutting services to pensioners and people with disabilities, and removing health services from rural and regional areas, amongst other things—all in the name of Queensland's dire financial position. Our rural firies were told that they would lose funding, and staff and residents and small businesses were slogged with massive levy hikes which do not even go to local units but are fed back into consolidated revenue—all in the name of Queensland's dire financial position.


Now, the Treasurer is uniting with a federal Liberal government to convince Queenslanders that the government has no choice but to select which assets they will sell—all in the name of Queensland's dire financial position. When this slash-and-burn approach was criticised both in the House and in the media, the Premier and his cabinet consistently painted a doom-and-gloom picture of Queensland's economy and said that they had no other option but to sack Queenslanders, remove services from the bush and take lawn-mowing vouchers away from the elderly and disabled.

When the issue of MP pay increases came up last year, the government accepted it rapidly without question or consideration of the implications for the rest of Queensland. They were hoping no-one would notice, but people did and their response was understandable outrage. So the Premier set up an independent tribunal to assess remuneration for parliamentarians. At the time I had legislation drafted that linked MP wages to Public Service certified agreements under the Industrial Relations Act 1999, because I could not see why the police, ambos, firies, nurses and employees in the Public Service should get a two per cent pay increase and politicians a 40 per cent increase. MPs are public servants. Queenslanders should not have to fork out for an independent tribunal when there is already a body that determines public servant award wages.

Queenslanders are fed up with politicians putting their snouts in the trough while they lecture from on high that everyone else should tighten their belts and make sacrifices because of decisions made by politicians. This government has smashed through bill after bill, bypassing the parliamentary process again and again. I find it unbelievable that the Premier expects us to believe that he cannot exercise executive powers to reject this pay increase when to do so is in the best interest of Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Burnett Electorate, Sir Anthony's Rest

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (9.15 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to share a very important Queensland Heritage Act declaration in the electorate of Burnett. I have been working with the local landowners and South Sea Islander community on the ongoing preservation of an icon called Sir Anthony's Rest. A dry-stone platform, Sir Anthony's Rest was constructed during the visit of the Governor of Queensland, Sir Anthony Musgrave, to Bundaberg in 1888. Using South Sea Islander labour, a lookout was constructed for the Governor and his party facing east, with a view over the cane fields of Wongarra. The area was part of the highest geographical point in the area, known locally as 'The Hummock'.

South Sea Islanders had been working on sugar plantations in the Bundaberg district from the mid-1870s. It was during this time that the Governor of Queensland, Sir Anthony Musgrave, undertook a northern tour and visited a number of towns, including Bundy. Musgrave was considered to be a very popular Governor of the day, undertaking tours to northern ports and inland in 1883, 1884, 1887 and 1888.


Anthony Musgrave was born in the West Indies in 1828 and was educated in the West Indies. He became the Governor of South Australia in 1873 and later the Governor of Jamaica. In 1883, he became Governor of Queensland. It was an auspicious day when Musgrave opened the Queensland parliament on 8 November 1883. Musgrave was the sixth Governor of Queensland and held the position from 1883 to 1888. He was big on making himself as visible and approachable to as many people as possible, which were key factors in obtaining and maintaining his popularity as the Governor in Queensland.

From the earliest days of colonial Queensland, the Governor's tours were more than familiarisation tours of the areas. The tours were both practical and ceremonial and received great coverage from all concerned. Musgrave and his vice-regal party arrived in Bundaberg on the steamer *Lucinda*. On their first day, the party travelled to Millaquin plantation and later drove around the town. They probably used a horse and dray. Following a procession in Bundaberg, they headed out to Mon Repos and to 'The Hummock' and the dry-stone platform called Sir Anthony's Rest.

The construction of Sir Anthony's Rest is similar to the construction of a number of dry-rubble boundary walls which were constructed in the area using South Sea Islander labour. These walls were constructed in layers, with larger stones placed around the outside and smaller stones used for the infill. This seems to have been a common construction method in my part of the world. We welcome any further heritage listing of these very important icons for us and, of course, for the South Sea Islander community.

Usually the crowds wishing to gain a view of the vice-regal party were very large. That is why Sir Anthony's Rest was built where it was, and it is still visible from Bargara Road. We welcome the continuation of working with the Queensland Heritage Act to maintain this very important part of history for Queensland.

Toowoomba South Electorate, Garden City Mosque

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.18pm): It is my pleasure to share with the House the honour that I had just this past weekend in representing both the Premier and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs at the official opening of the Garden City Mosque in Toowoomba on the corner of Stephen and West streets in my own electorate of Toowoomba South. This was a very significant occasion in which I joined with the federal member for Groom, Ian Macfarlane, and a number of religious leaders from across our region—in particular, my own bishop, Bishop Robert McGuckin, the Catholic bishop of Toowoomba—to welcome and mark the occasion of the official opening of this mosque.

We had as guests in Toowoomba representatives of Muslim communities right across Australia, and we joined with Professor Shahjahan Khan, a friend of mine and President of the Islamic Society of Toowoomba, in marking the occasion of the opening of this mosque. At the particular occasion we had representatives of not only religious leaders, as I said, but also community leaders right across Toowoomba. I think it underpinned the fact that our community in Toowoomba is a most welcoming, harmonious community focused on peace and tolerance. It draws our attention to the efforts of the Pure Land Learning College in Toowoomba as well run by a local Buddhist community—a community that is focused on ensuring that Toowoomba is recognised worldwide as a model city of peace and harmony.

Mr Watts interjected.

Dr McVEIGH: I accept the interjection, although he is not sitting in his own seat, from my colleague the member for Toowoomba North in recognising the Pure Land Learning College is located in his electorate. My good friend and colleague the member for Toowoomba North and I had the honour of being guests of the Pure Land Learning College on the Australia Day weekend where we celebrated not only Australia Day but also the Chinese New Year.

I think the efforts of that community—as I said, the Islamic community growing as it is in Toowoomba, particularly through the University of Southern Queensland and the diversity that it brings to our community—are all focused on this harmonious approach in our community. To join with the mayor and my friend and colleague the member for Toowoomba North on these occasions is most significant. I wanted to share with the House that the Garden City mosque on the weekend was opened by Uncle Darby McCarthy in welcoming us, as he did, to the occasion on behalf of the Jarowair and Giabal people in our community. This is the sort of approach that we all need to take right across the state.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.21 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