



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 3 April 2014

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THURSDAY, 3 APRIL 2014



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PETITIONS

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

Toondah Harbour Priority Development Area

From 19 petitioners, requesting the House to withdraw the proposed fast tracking of the Toondah Harbour Priority Development Area Proposed Development Scheme [\[4845\]](#).

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

Mt Lindesay Highway, Intersection Upgrade

Mr Pucci, from 865 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately upgrade the unsafe, high accident zones of the Mt Lindesay Highway intersections of Wearing Road, Greenbank Road and St Aldwyn Road [\[4846, 4847, 4848\]](#).

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

Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, Mining Applications

654 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that no mining applications are granted on any part of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve [\[4849\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Emerson)—

[4850](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Emerson) to a paper petition (2224-14) presented by Mr Dowling, from 304 petitioners, requesting the House to alter the proposed timetables for TransLink routes 274 and 270 to improve bus services and allow for improved connection times with Coochiemudlo Island Ferries

[4851](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Emerson) to a paper petition (2226-14) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(3), from 312 petitioners, requesting the House to amend any permits granted to Mackay Sugar and QUBE Logistics so no cane is transported through Mount Molloy and Julatten between the hours of 9pm and 6 am nightly and no cane trucks traverse the road between Bibbohra and Mossman between 7am and 9am and 2pm and 4pm on school days

[4852](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Emerson) to an ePetition (2183-13) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 200 petitioners, requesting the House to extend the right turning lane for vehicles travelling from Logan Road onto Padstow Road and to redirect council buses so that they are able to join Logan Road/Padstow Road other than via this intersection

MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Logan (Mr Pucci)—

[4853](#) Non-conforming petition relating to dangerous intersections at North Maclean

Member for Gympie (Mr Gibson)—

[4854](#) Overseas Travel Report : Report on an overseas visit by Mr David Gibson, Member for Gympie to Texas, United States of America, 9-16 March 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sharples, Mr R



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.32 am): Mr Acting Speaker, earlier this week you advised the House that Mr Ron Sharples, senior parliamentary attendant, will commence his preretirement leave on 28 April after starting with the Parliamentary Service on 18 February 1985.

Honourable members, that means today is the last parliamentary sitting day that Ron will carry out his duties on the floor of the chamber in service to the Queensland parliament. Mr Acting Speaker, I know that you and all members will agree that Ron's service has been exemplary and his professionalism combined with his wry sense of humour have contributed significantly to the smooth operation of this parliament.

It is not just as a senior parliamentary attendant in this place that Ron has made a significant contribution. Ron is an accomplished and published photographer, and many honourable members will have viewed his inspiring works over the years while displayed in exhibitions in the parliament's foyer. Indeed, Ron's work is currently displayed in an exhibition on level 3 in the Parliamentary Annexe, and I encourage everyone, if they have not already, to view his wonderful pieces.

For almost 50 years Ron and his wife, Jan, have been renowned, avid travellers to all corners of the globe and I am sure are looking forward to more trips to come during his retirement. I know Ron is also looking forward to spending more time with his three grandchildren. On behalf of all members in this place, I wish Ron very well in his retirement and trust this new phase of his life will give him even more time to enjoy his vocations in photography, travel and of course time with family. Best wishes.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.34 am): This government is committed to providing better planning and infrastructure delivery across Queensland. We know that we need to deliver infrastructure that will contribute to growing the state's economy for the future and providing jobs for all Queenslanders. Unfortunately, the Labor Party wasted billions of dollars on white elephant infrastructure and Queenslanders are still paying the price. This government is working to clean up Labor's misguided water mess which left a trail of more than \$10 billion in Seqwater debt. The \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and the \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant are clear cases in point.

An Auditor-General's report to parliament released in June 2013 confirmed the magnitude of the problem. The report confirmed that these two mothballed water projects which were largely funded by debt are costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest repayments alone. That is \$150 million that we could otherwise be spending on schools, hospitals, police and ambulance stations, roads and public transport projects. I wonder exactly what \$150 million might mean for Queenslanders if we had it in Treasury right now. Perhaps other ministers can shed some light on what that money could buy in delivering better front-line services, better infrastructure and a lower cost of living in our state.

Over coming weeks cabinet will be looking at options for improving Queensland's position in the future management of these liabilities. Considerations will include keeping one or both of the projects for times of extreme drought and investigating alternative uses and disposal opportunities. We have a duty to look at what are the best options for taxpayers going forward. Queenslanders and those in the south-east, in particular, need to know that their water bills are so high today because we are all continuing to pay for failed Labor projects like the white elephant pipeline and desalination plant.

Queenslanders need to know that Labor's waste means they are missing out on much needed government investment in other infrastructure services and initiatives. They need to know that many of those opposite were complicit in throwing away their hard-earned taxpayer dollars, and they need to know, most importantly, that this government will continue to find the best possible solutions and sort out Labor's mess.

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.37 am): The previous Labor government failed in a whole range of public administration, but there was no greater failure than the delivery of crucial infrastructure that Queenslanders will need for the future.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SEENEY: The Bligh and Beattie Labor governments wasted billions of dollars because they did not plan properly, and the members who sit over there and interject are the same people who sat around the cabinet table and made the decisions to waste those billions of dollars. They built

infrastructure in the wrong places at the wrong time and for the wrong purpose, and there is no greater example of that than the Seqwater grid—the grid that was much trumpeted by Peter Beattie, the member for Mackay and the member for Inala and every other minister in the cabinet at that time as one of their government's greatest achievements. How often did we hear them in this place every morning the parliament sat standing up talking about future-proofing Queensland? What they did, in effect, was load Queenslanders up with debt—debt that is now a black cloud over the future of every Queenslanders. That was their idea of future-proofing Queensland.

The actions of that government ensured that the water bills Queenslanders will have to pay for the next generation are significantly higher than they should have been, and there is nothing that anyone can do about that. It is the responsibility and the fault of the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments and the members who now sit in opposition. What is even more galling is that \$9 billion that was spent is not producing a single benefit to the people of Queensland. The wastewater plants stand useless and unused. The western corridor pipeline is just wasted money. The desalination plant is mothballed. Billions of dollars of infrastructure are useless and unused because they were not planned properly and were built in a panic.

It became the subject of debate in this House over a long period of time. We became very familiar with terms like 'tender by invoice', where the tender process was just 'send in your invoice'. We became very familiar with terms like 'do it and charge me', which was the government's financial management plan—'Just do it and charge us'. That was the sort of management that was applied—'tender by invoice' and 'do it and charge'—and we talked about those things in this parliament over a number of months as the absurdity of their management of the water grid was revealed to all Queenslanders.

There was a total lack of planning by Labor resulting in a panicked response when levels in the Wivenhoe and Somerset dams started to fall. It revealed their total lack of planning for the future water supply for the people of South-East Queensland. There was panic from a government that had no other response but to waste huge amounts of taxpayers' dollars—dollars borrowed on behalf of taxpayers, all of which now have to be paid back by taxpayers.

A significant part of the black cloud of debt that hangs over Queensland is due to poor planning and infrastructure and the downright stupidity of the former Labor government, when they undertook infrastructure spending that was in the wrong place at the wrong time for the wrong reasons. The two white elephants—the \$2.6 billion recycled water pipeline that produces not one drop of water and the \$1.2 billion white elephant Gold Coast desalination plant—are costing Queenslanders \$150 million a year in interest payments and \$33 million a year in care and maintenance costs, and Queenslanders are getting nothing for that money. I repeat: \$150 million a year and getting nothing for it, and \$33 million just to keep up the care and maintenance.

Our government in contrast is determined to plan for the future infrastructure needs of Queensland. We are about building infrastructure ahead of a critical need developing for that essential infrastructure. The infrastructure that we are planning to build will ensure that Queenslanders have enough water, that Queenslanders have proper roads, that Queenslanders have quality schools and that Queenslanders have world-class hospitals. This government is working to clean up Labor's misguided water mess which left a trail of more than \$10 billion in Seqwater debt. We promised better planning and infrastructure, and we are delivering for Queenslanders in the future.

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs



Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): As Labor's \$80 billion black cloud of debt rains down on Queensland and dampens our efforts to fund future infrastructure, we should look at some of the reckless spending that left this state with a debt problem. There is no finer example of the ill-considered, poorly planned spending that Labor engaged in than the South East Queensland Water Grid. Let us remember that back in 2005-06, before Peter Beattie told us we would have to desalinate or die, the government borrowed only around a third of the funds needed to fund the state's capital projects. But by the time Queenslanders had said 'Enough' at the 2012 election, Labor was borrowing almost 100 per cent of its capital funding.

The water grid and its associated projects helped Labor plunge the state into years of deficit budgets, starting with a relatively small deficit in 2006-07 but quickly growing into billions in subsequent years. What were they funding with their extravagant borrowing? Just for a start they needed \$9 billion to pour into the water grid. Two elements of the project—the Tugun desalination plant costing \$1.2 billion and the \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme—were and

are spectacular failures. The desalination plant started rusting and cracking from the day it opened and the cost blow-outs on the western corridor were spectacular. The Deputy Premier has already highlighted some of those—the ‘do and charge’ mentality, the stories of gravel being laid on one side of the road and a new shipment being put on the other side of the road simply to get the job done.

Mr Johnson: Payment by invoice.

Mr NICHOLLS: Payment by invoice—exactly, member for Gregory. They were legendary. In fact I think most of the Toyotas that are now being driven on the roads between the Lockyer Valley and Chinchilla were paid for by the western corridor grid because everyone who could was going down to Black Toyota to get themselves a white truck, if I recall correctly.

Labor simply does not understand value for money. There was no careful, methodical financial planning when those opposite were in government—just a rush to dive into more debt so they could throw money around and look like they were dealing with the problem. It is all too clear that the money was soaked up—just like the water leaking from the desalination plant—and all Queenslanders have to show for it today is a massive debt bill and huge costs just to keep these white elephants afloat.

The Tugun desalination plant and the recycled water plant have left Queenslanders with an extra interest bill of \$150 million a year—and that is just for those two projects. We know that, in all, Labor’s cash splash has left Queenslanders with an interest bill approaching \$4 billion a year. That is money that cannot be put into the roads, the rail, the hospitals and the schools that our growing state needs. This government is determined to ensure that we can fund the infrastructure and services for the future. That is why it is essential that we act now to reduce the debt and free up the funds we will need to build a secure and prosperous Queensland—a great state with great opportunity.

Gibson, Mr R

 **Hon. IB WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (9.44 am): It is with regret that I formally inform the House of the death last week of prominent Queensland architect Mr Robin Gibson. We remember Robin today for many achievements but particularly for his visionary design of the cultural precinct. The Queensland Cultural Centre, as it was known at the time, changed the face of Brisbane forever. In 1971, the wharves and industrial sites at South Brisbane were cleared and planning began for the Queensland Cultural Centre. The state government resumed land required for the Cultural Centre, including the site of the old Cremorne Theatre, the St Helen’s Private Hospital and the Salvation Army. Robin Gibson won a competition to build the Queensland Art Gallery. Later the brief expanded to build the whole Queensland Cultural Centre which, along with the gallery, included the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, the Queensland Museum and the State Library of Queensland. The Queensland Art Gallery opened in 1982, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre opened in 1985, the Queensland Museum opened in 1986 and the State Library opened in 1988, and Brisbane was transformed with our leading arts organisations co-located in one physical space on the Brisbane river. Today the precinct is recognised internationally for being one of the few locations that co-house the state’s significant cultural infrastructure investments and demonstrates its popularity with over 4.9 million people having visited the cultural precinct in 2012-13.

Robin Gibson was an architecture student at the University of Queensland and graduated with a Diploma of Architecture in 1954. He then moved to London where he worked with leading architecture firms before returning to Brisbane where he established his own practice. Along with the cultural precinct, Mr Gibson worked on other landmark projects including the Wintergarden, Anzac Square, St Stephen’s Cathedral restoration, the Brisbane Arcade and Mayne Hall at the University of Queensland. Robin Gibson was named Queenslanders of the Year in 1982 and won the Sir Zelman Cowen Award for public buildings for his design of the Queensland Art Gallery. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1983 and the Advance Australia Award in 1988. His legacy will live on particularly through the cultural precinct, which is a tribute to his creative vision and which continues to this day as one of this country’s outstanding cultural tourism destinations.

From a personal note, I can tell the House that I was privileged to act as Mr Gibson’s lawyer in my previous life, together with his long-time friend and business partner, Sir Robert Mathers. Bob Mathers was a colossus of the business and political scene in Queensland for a long, long time. Robin and Bob were both men of great and forceful personalities, and as a lawyer it was both a challenge and a delight to act for them in their various enterprises. Robin will be remembered in prayers tomorrow at St Stephen’s Cathedral at 11 am in that beautiful space that he helped recreate.

The Premier has kindly agreed to have the flags at the cultural precinct fly at half-mast tomorrow in Robin's honour. The government will find an appropriate way to recognise and acknowledge Mr Gibson's vision and contribution to Brisbane. An announcement in that regard will be made at a later date.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (9.48 am): Friday, 4 April 2014 marks four years to go until the keenly anticipated Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games—a momentous occasion in our Commonwealth Games journey. Our games will be the biggest sports event ever held on the Gold Coast and the biggest sports event held in Australia this decade, with up to 6,500 athletes and team officials from 71 countries competing over 11 days in 17 sports and four para sports.

Plans for the 2018 Commonwealth Games are on time and on budget. The new Gold Coast Aquatic Centre will be ready for the Pan Pacific swimming championships in August and last week I joined the Premier and the Deputy Premier to reveal the design for the Commonwealth Games village, a project that will inject an estimated \$500 million into the local economy and will generate more than 1,500 jobs during its construction.

GC2018 will be a landmark event for the Gold Coast and for Queensland, a project that will deliver a lasting positive legacy. The Newman government is working hard to leave positive legacies for all Queenslanders, unlike Labor, whose years of mismanagement and incompetence have left us with the burden of an \$80 billion debt. Every single year Queenslanders are left with the legacy of a \$150 million interest bill alone for the failed desalination plant and recycled water projects rushed into by the Labor government. The good folk of Currumbin have felt the pain of this desalination monstrosity more than anyone else and have a right to be angry about this enormous waste of taxpayers' money.

The Newman government went into the last election with a commitment to make tourism one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. Yesterday's satellite data released by Tourism Research Australia said that for the financial year ending 2013 tourism directly contributed \$23 billion to the Queensland economy, a \$3.5 billion boost since this government came in two years ago. Imagine what we could have achieved if we had invested an extra \$150 million into tourism, our state's wealth generator, instead of paying Labor's interest. The amount of \$150 million in extra funding would transform our major events calendar, already the envy of other states; \$150 million would take us to the next level. Right across Queensland our destination marketing approach, from Famous for Fun on the Gold Coast, Adventurous By Nature in tropical North Queensland and Outback Queensland's Eventures, we have told the rest of Australia and the world of the great times to be had here in Queensland. While these results have been impressive, imagine our tourism figures if we had invested \$150 million into these and other campaigns. Imagine the global market that we could have reached. Instead, that money goes to pay a \$150 million interest bill. How many more international business conferences, how many more major events, could have been held?

This is the terrible price that we have paid as a result of Labor's gross mismanagement. These are the opportunities we have missed out on due to the burden of Labor's debt. Paying the interest on Labor's mistakes has robbed Queenslanders of a chance to reinvigorate their economy even faster than the Newman government is already achieving.

Sewage Treatment Plants

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.52 am): I would like to bring to the attention of the House a new and innovative approach being implemented by my department to manage discharges from sewage treatment plants. This approach provides alternative options to sewage treatment operators to meet their water discharge requirements under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 while delivering improved water quality outcomes and better catchment health. With this new flexibility, funds can be directed towards catchment protection measures that deliver better water quality outcomes at the least cost. This is another example of how the Newman government continues to deliver better planning for Queenslanders by working with industry, community and government. It is another example of us cutting the cost of living for Queenslanders through working in partnership with those bodies.

A recently commenced pilot project funded by Queensland Urban Utilities to prevent sediment and nutrients entering the Logan River is helping to manage additional nitrogen discharges from the Beaudesert sewage treatment plant, resulting from local population growth. Queensland Urban

Utilities has invested almost \$1 million to repair around 500 metres of eroded riparian corridors located close to the sewage treatment plant. The works include structural bank stabilisation and riparian planting. It is estimated that this will prevent approximately five tonnes of nitrogen and 11,200 tonnes of sediment entering the Logan River each and every year. That is the equivalent of 17 Olympic sized swimming pools of material saved from entering the river.

The nitrogen savings made through the riparian works will be used to counterbalance any potential increase in nitrogen discharges from the sewage treatment plant that may occur during wet weather events. The works will also help improve waterway health and assist landholders with ongoing riverbank erosion. These nitrogen savings will allow the Beaudesert treatment plant to continue safely at its current capacity in the short term without undertaking expensive upgrades, which were estimated to cost \$8 million. This means that the savings of \$7 million can be invested elsewhere in the sewerage network. The pilot study will run from this year through to 2019 including detailed monitoring and assessment.

Unlike those opposite, who increased Queenslanders' water bills through their poor planning and through the debt associated with the water infrastructure, as mentioned by the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer earlier today, we are cutting costs for our water utilities through innovation and through partnerships. This is a win for the environment, a win for our water utilities and a win for all Queenslanders.

Asbestos Strategy



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.55 am): This morning I unveiled Australia's most rigorous strategy for the safe management and disposal of asbestos materials, the Statewide Strategic Plan for the Safe Management of Asbestos in Queensland 2014 to 2019. I now table a copy of the strategy that we have developed in partnership with local government.

Tabled paper: Statewide Strategic Plan for the Safe Management of Asbestos in Queensland 2014-2019 [4855].

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General, through Workplace Health and Safety, will lead greater collaboration between state and local government agencies in the education and enforcement of laws surrounding the management of asbestos. Everybody knows that asbestos is a carcinogen; it poses serious health risks.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take all those interjections. The plan is an integrated strategic scheme for the regulation and management of asbestos in Queensland.

We will continue to work alongside local government agencies, businesses, workers and organisations to ensure the integrated delivery of services and ensure the safe management of asbestos. The plan will eliminate confusion surrounding the management of asbestos once and for all. It will mean safer workplaces, safer homes and safer communities. It is vital that the government has an active role in advising Queenslanders about how to best deal with asbestos and being aware of the dangers.

I thank the Sagers, who this morning told the story of their son, Adam. In 1983 they were building their own home and were sanding their walls. Little Adam, their 18-month-old son, was there collecting all the dust with his little dustpan and brush. Little did they know that some 20 to 30 years later he would die from an asbestos related disease at the age of 25 years due to exposure to asbestos when he was 18 months old. I want to publicly thank the Sagers for having the courage to tell their story and to help warn home renovators of the dangers when working around materials that contain asbestos. I say thank you to Trevor Gillmeister, who attended and spoke at the launch this morning. He is going to be our ambassador for the asbestos strategy.

I think Queenslanders can have greater confidence knowing that there is a coordinated approach between the state and local government on this important issue. Finally, I want to reiterate the importance of dealing with asbestos and that the best way to remove it from your premises is to contact a licensed professional. Do not take the risk.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. You have one minute.

Local Government



Hon. DF CRISAFULLI (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (9.57 am): Local government delivers directly to its communities but it has long been regarded by those opposite as public enemy No. 1. Projects like Hinchinbrook's Kelly

Theatre digital upgrade for around \$74,000, Yungaburra's Avenue of Honour to commemorate our fallen soldiers in Afghanistan, the CF White Oval's field lighting for Stanthorpe in the Southern Downs, the Jericho Drive-in theatre digital upgrade, the wonderful community centre at Thargomindah—these are the nuts and bolts of a community. We can do so much more for local government than just these projects. One of the frustrations they see is when time and time again money is siphoned off to pay for failed projects. For instance, there is the Betterment Fund. It consists of \$80 million worth of funding and yet there is over \$1 billion worth of applications.

Local government has a thirst to deliver more for their community. Imagine what could happen if we free them from the shackles of Labor debt.

MOTION

Amendments to Sessional Orders

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.58 am), by leave, without notice: I move that—

The amendments to sessional orders circulated in my name be agreed to, effective immediately.

Amendments to Sessional Orders to be moved by the Leader of the House

1. Sessional Order 1—Days and Hours of Sitting and Order of Business

Where occurring 'Private Members' Statements'—

Omit, Insert—

Members' Statements

2. Sessional Order 3—Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Statements

Where occurring 'Private Members' Statements'—

Omit, Insert—

Members' Statements

3. Sessional Order 5—Maximum time limits for debates, speeches and statements

Where occurring 'Private Members' Statements'—

Omit, Insert—

Members' Statements

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.58 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Education, Training and Employment is absent from the House today. Minister Langbroek is attending the COAG Industry and Skills Council meeting here in Brisbane.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Member for South Brisbane

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (9.59 am): In a recent parliamentary sitting, on 20 March, as outlined in *Hansard* on page 799, the member for South Brisbane stated inter alia—

I had a father call my office this morning distressed because his daughter requires specialist attention from a doctor who has signed a resignation letter and lodged it with the union. Why? Because they are unprepared to work for a government that is prepared to squash them like this government is. He called the LNP member for Chatsworth's office and what did he do? Nothing.

I consider it to be an absolute privilege to serve my Chatsworth electorate. Whilst one will never win everyone over politically, I pride myself, along with my electorate team, in providing the best possible customer service for anyone who contacts my office.

I have complete confidence and faith in my staff and I raised this issue with them. After extensively checking their records, they could not recall anyone calling my office with a sick daughter requiring specialist attention from a doctor, as suggested by the member for South Brisbane. I am concerned that the member for South Brisbane has misled the House, and accordingly I will be writing to the Speaker about this matter.

STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Report

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (10.00 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 37 of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

Tabled paper: State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 37—Subordinate legislation tabled between 20 November 2013 and 11 February 2014 [4856].

This report examines subordinate legislation tabled between 20 November 2013 and 11 February 2014 and has been considered by the committee. Subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 8 May 2014. The committee did not identify any significant policy issues or concerns regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles. I commend the report to the House.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Reports

Mr DAVIES (Capalaba—LNP) (10.01 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 40 of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 40—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 21 November 2013 and 4 March 2014 [4857].

This report covers the portfolio's subordinate legislation tabled between 21 November 2013 and 4 March 2014 considered by the committee. The subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 8 May 2014. The committee did not identify any significant issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or lawfulness of the subordinate legislation.

I also lay upon the table of the House report No. 41 of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 41—Inquiry into Auditor-General's Report No. 4: 2012—Managing employee unplanned absence [4858].

This report covers the results of the committee's inquiry into the Auditor-General's report No. 4 of 2012: *Managing employee unplanned absence*. The committee has made six recommendations aimed at redressing concerns identified by the committee as requiring further attention.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank the Queensland Audit Office and departmental officers for meeting with the committee and for their cooperation in providing information to the committee on a timely basis. I commend the reports to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.02 am): My question without notice is to the health minister. I refer the minister to reports that the government's recruitment plans are to fill vacant medical specialist positions with temps attracting pay rates of up to \$2,600 a day plus agency fees and ask: can the minister confirm that this report is correct? If it is, can he explain how employing less experienced doctors who work fewer hours and who do not contribute to training junior doctors will benefit patients in Queensland's public hospital system?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. The utilisation of locums, agency nurses or other agency staff in the Queensland health system is not unusual. Indeed, prior to this LNP government it was something which was absolutely endemic and completely rife across the public health system. In the time that we have been in government, some of the hospital

and health services have significantly reduced their reliance on locums to the point that some of the hospital and health services around this state now do not have any locums. But we do use them from time to time, and we will continue to use them from time to time.

Ms Palaszczuk: At \$2,600 per day!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker! Under the Labor Party, some specialists in remote areas of Queensland were paid up to \$15,000 per weekend. This has been one of the reasons we have been working in the Deputy Premier's area. The going rate currently for locums in Queensland is \$2,000 to \$3,000 per day. We have been working very hard to drive them down and reduce the requirement to have locums in Queensland.

But can I say that if Dr Tony Sara carries through on his threat to 'nuke the public health system in Queensland', then this government will make sure that there will be no breach in the continuity of care for patients in this state. Indeed, if you look at what Dr Steve Hambleton said a few days ago, the AMA does not support the interstate doctors' union approach towards nuking the system or towards mass resignation. There is no need to, because the issues which have been raised as concerns have, by and large, been addressed.

With regards to the specific firm that was mentioned today in the paper, I am not aware of any hospital and health service that has used them on the basis of what was reported there today. They have previously, as I understand it, but I am encouraged by the fact that we have so many people out there who are prepared to say, 'We will help out if need be.' That is something which I think is extremely important.

The rates which were quoted here today are unremarkable; they are currently the going rates. They are less than the rates that we inherited for a largely locum-reliant workforce when the Labor Party were in power in Queensland, and it was routinely done under them.

Queensland Health, Employment Contracts

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the health minister. I refer the minister to the warning issued by the Australasian Society for Emergency Medicine, which states—

We advise against taking up any position within Queensland Health at this stage, nor in the future until the legislation has been rescinded.

I ask: given that warnings such as this will make domestic recruitment more difficult, which overseas markets are being targeted by Queensland Health?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. There is an enormous contrast between the way that this government runs Queensland Health and the way the previous government ran Queensland Health. Our doctors are actually being paid on time, and our doctors are actually being paid what they are supposed to be paid. Contrast that to situation under the Labor Party, where they were not being paid as much as what they are being paid under the Newman government. If you look at the nurses, as of this month they are going to be paid around about 10 per cent more than what they were being paid when the Labor Party was in power—and it is being put into their bank accounts. What a stark contrast!

It is somewhat interesting, and maybe I might have the opportunity later on—oh, please—to talk about the honourable member for Bundamba, who is standing up in this place now and pleading that the private sector nurses basically be paid like the public sector nurses are being paid. Who would have thought that was a proposition which would have been put forward some two or three years ago? Because no-one wanted to be paid like the public sector nurses or health employees in Queensland!

There is no reasonable proposition that can be put forward. Anyone who reads what is in the contracts and the addendum will see that these are lifetime employment guarantees and you get the same pay, plus more. I am not sure if anyone else out there in the community has lifetime employment guarantee contracts. As one interstate doctor said to me the other day, in New South Wales and Victoria where they have contracts for their senior medical workforce they are one-, three- or five-year contracts. In Queensland they are lifetime contracts. We now have an interstate medical recruitment firm who, as far as I can work out unprompted and uncontacted, is saying, 'We would be delighted to help out in Queensland if need be.' One could only imagine that they would have a range of people that would be working for them or wanting to come and work in Queensland because the conditions and pay for our workforce is greater than what it is in other areas around Australia.

I make this point: it is an absolute offence to cast overseas trained doctors in the way the opposition and others have done. There are 3,694 specialists in Queensland Health. Of those, 1,057 received their primary qualifications overseas.

(Time expired)

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr GRIMWADE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, an Auditor-General's report to the parliament released in June 2013 outlined that Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and the \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant are costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest repayments alone. What would an extra \$150 million per year mean for Queenslanders in the Education portfolio?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for his question and recognise his interest in better educational outcomes for our kids across the school system in this state. The \$150 million in interest that is being paid on Labor's white elephant failed western corridor recycling scheme is indeed serious money—real money that could have been used in the education system. In response to the honourable member's question, let us look at what we could spend \$150 million on: four brand-new high schools to be built every year in Queensland; 2,500 extra teacher aides; 1,500 extra state school teachers; 4,500 after-school tutors to support students in the area of reading and comprehension; employing two dedicated experts in every state school to help teachers improve student numeracy skills; employing four dedicated coaches in every state school to help teachers develop tailored learning programs for students with a disability; or establishing 120 additional kindergarten services across Queensland. That is what we could do with \$150 million, but to those opposite it is just loose change. To those opposite it is just taxpayers' money. It sort of raineth from heaven. It just keeps coming because you keep milking the community by cranking up taxes and charges and fees, affecting people's cost of living. Because of their reckless spending, because they built all of these things in a moment of panic, that is why we have a white elephant of a western corridor water recycling scheme.

I remember well dealing with the Beattie Labor government in the period from 2004 to 2007 and I remember that former Labor Lord Mayor Jim Soorley said to me and my administration that he had been working for about five or six years prior to leaving office to try to convince the Labor government—the Beattie government—to do long-term planning for water, and Jim Soorley was frustrated. It is a matter on the public record. He even did a press conference with me once around about 2006 or 2007 and gave the Beattie government a huge blast for its lack of planning in water. The results are \$150 million of interest alone on this big white elephant. It is \$150 million of interest that could have gone into the education system. It is \$150 million which is just a symbol of many other wasteful projects and poor and reckless financial management. This government is now continuing with the task of sorting out the Labor Party's mess. It is a long, drawn out job. It involves a lot of difficult decisions and reform, but we will sort out the Labor Party's mess for Queenslanders.

Independent Commission Against Corruption, Grayson, Mr J

Ms TRAD: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise if, to his knowledge, his Director-General, Mr Jon Grayson, has been asked to appear before or provide information to the ICAC inquiry into Australian Water Holdings? Will the Premier ask Mr Grayson to stand aside as Arthur Sinodinos has?

Mr NEWMAN: In answering the question, I first reflect on what is going on in New South Wales. We have a commission of inquiry that is all about the goings-on of a Labor powerbroker, Mr Obeid. That is right: a Labor powerbroker who clearly appears to be totally and utterly corrupt, who sought to corrupt a Labor government and who sought to buy influence in so many ways. As I have said before, the Labor Party needs to answer some serious questions about its involvement. We know that the member for South Brisbane used to work for that Labor state government, used to work in the upper house there assisting Meredith Burgmann as I recall. What dealings did she have with the Obeids and the Obeids' fellow travellers? Why did the Labor Party take a number of donations?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left. The Premier is answering the question.

Ms Trad: With all due respect, he is not.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! I warn the member for South Brisbane under 253A. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: If I may proceed, I will answer the question quite comprehensively, but the Labor Party does not want it known that it accepted donations from Australian Water, from Mr Obeid, and the person on some of that documentation who took the donations is none other than the current member for South Brisbane. Her name is on the returns.

There were some allegations made on the ABC and by a rather green left-wing environmental group about Mr Grayson and I point to a report done—and I will table the document—by Mr Robert Cornall AO who was asked to do a full inquiry into those allegations by the federal government. Mr Cornall was the former secretary of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department from 2000 to 2008. I table this report, but it says very clearly that Mr Grayson had complied with his obligations to disclose his material personal interests in relation to the Australian Water Holdings company. Finally he concludes—

Mr Grayson has no links to the Obeid family.

Tabled paper: Report to the Chairman, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, dated January 2014, titled 'Probity and Governance Review—Jon Grayson' [\[4859\]](#).

There it is in black and white. Mr Grayson has fully disclosed everything. He has had conversations with the Integrity Commissioner and been given a clean bill of health. This is typical of the member for South Brisbane—the No. 1 raker of muck from the Labor Party, the person who ran the dirty campaign in 2012. I say this: the Labor Party needs to say why it received donations from Mr Obeid and what conversations and meetings it had. Not only does it need to explain that; it needs to explain Mr Mike Kaiser's role, who was the Chief of Staff to the Premier of New South Wales, and he met with Obeid as well.

(Time expired)

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr YOUNG: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Deputy Premier, an Auditor-General's report into the parliament released in June 2013 outlined that Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and the \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant are costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest payments alone. What would an extra \$150 million per year mean for Queenslanders in his portfolio?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Keppel for the question because it goes to the heart of the challenge that we face in delivering the infrastructure that Queenslanders will need for the future. It illustrates the extent to which that challenge has been made more difficult by the failure of the previous government. We would love to have the \$150 million that the member referred to that is currently going out the door every year in interest payments. We would more dearly love to have a significant portion of the \$9 billion—\$9 billion—that was wasted on the water grid in South-East Queensland—the folly that those opposite supported. That \$9 billion could be used to build a whole lot of infrastructure across Queensland that Queenslanders need. Of course we cannot get the \$9 billion back. If we could just get the \$150 million a year in interest, that would make a significant contribution to building the roads, building the schools, building the hospitals but more importantly building the economic enabling infrastructure that we need—building the ports and building the railways that will be the basis for Queensland's economic growth into the future. There are so many things that we need to provide in the way of infrastructure in Queensland. But for those of us who live in regional Queensland, as the member for Keppel and I do, there is no more important infrastructure than roads. The word 'infrastructure' to country people means roads, because that is the challenge for people across regional Queensland.

With this sort of money we could build the roads that we need. We could build the inland highways to take the pressure off the Bruce Highway—highways like the Burnett Highway that this lot never spent any money on for 15 years, crucially important highways to ensure that economic development and growth in Queensland can occur in the future. We could do something about the Burnett Highway itself. We could do something about the roads that run to the resource regions that the previous government ignored completely. It was happy to take the royalties, but it did not put anything back. We have turned that around with our Royalties for the Regions program.

Ms Trad: That's such a lie.

Mr SEENEY: An extra \$150 million for our Royalties for the Regions program—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Premier, could you just resume your seat for a moment. Member for South Brisbane, your interjection claiming that the Deputy Premier's statements were such a lie, I believe I heard, are unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw them.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Also, for your interjections, because you are under 253A, I ask you to withdraw yourself from the House for one hour.

Ms Trad: With pleasure.

Interruption.

NAMING OF MEMBER

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member, if you could just stop for the moment. I now name the member for South Brisbane.

MOTION

Suspension of Member for South Brisbane

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (10.20 am): I move—

That in accordance with standing order 254 the member for South Brisbane be suspended from the service of the House for three sitting days.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Whereupon the honourable member for South Brisbane withdrew from the chamber at 10.21 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Resumed.

Mr SEENEY: As I was saying, \$150 million would go a long way towards meeting some of the requests that we have had for funding from the Royalties for the Regions program. It is notable that a lot of those applications come from areas represented by the member for Mackay and the member for Mulgrave. They did not put any money back into their regions when they were in government and now they send in applications to our Royalties for the Regions program to fund what they did not do when they were in government. The member for Mackay and the member for Mulgrave sat over here as part of a government that did not spend money on regional Queensland. They wasted it on the South East Queensland Water Grid. Now, they make applications for our Royalties for the Regions program. They wasted the money. We have invested wisely.

(Time expired)

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr GULLEY: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. An Auditor-General's report to parliament released in June 2013 outlined that Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant are costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest payments alone. What would an extra \$150 million per year mean for Queenslanders if we had it in Treasury right now?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Murrumba for the question. It is an important question, because it goes to the heart of everything that the former Labor administration did wrong and that was the spending program that it embarked upon without proper financial planning that saw debt increase for the state of Queensland up to \$80 billion, that saw five years of fiscal deficits, that saw \$30 billion added to the debt that is paid for by Queenslanders throughout the state and that famously saw the end of the fuel subsidy scheme, that saw massive increases in car registration fees such that we had the highest car registration fees instead of the lowest car registration fees, that saw the abolition of the first home owners stamp duty concession—the principal place of residence concession—and that

saw 15 per cent year-on-year increases in public transport fares. That was the impact of unconstrained borrowing by the Labor government. We know that it rushed through the process for the \$1.2 billion Tugun desalination plant. It did not have a proper business case for it. It just spent and spent and spent.

Members will recall that in the early stages the member for Currumbin particularly brought to the attention of the House that cracks in the project started appearing before it had even got going. It was not just the finances that were falling apart; it was rusty pipes, faulty valves, cracking concrete. That was before they had even turned it on. That is indicative of the way in which the Labor Party goes about its projects.

There was \$9 billion invested in the South East Queensland Water Grid and what do we have to show for it? We have \$2.6 billion on the now fully decommissioned Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme, which had only two customers and only because Peter Beattie forced those two customers, Swanbank and Tarong power stations, to buy water for the scheme. Then they found out that the water that they were buying was corroding the pipes and costing even more money.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: As the Minister for Energy and Water Supply knows only too well, they are still paying for it. We also have the unmitigated disasters like \$650 million wasted on the member for Gympie's favourite project, the now fully—at least—sorted out Traveston Dam project. That debacle up there is still being sorted to an extent by the Deputy Premier at great cost to the state. Is it any wonder that Queensland is currently in the position that it is: saddled with that \$80 billion worth of debt.

The fact is that the failed investment in the water grid has cost this state billions. What would that mean for my area of Treasury? It would mean that I would be able to say yes to my ministerial colleagues. That is something that they would enjoy immensely, as would I. It is not my natural inclination to say no to any of my colleagues, but I would be able to say yes. We would be able to fund the schools and the infrastructure that we know we need in a growing state.

(Time expired)

Sunshine Coast Hinterland Connect Bus Service

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads—and if the minister does not have the information readily available I am happy for him to take the question on notice. Will the minister give an update of the future of the Sunshine Coast Hinterland Connect bus service, currently jointly funded by the state government and the Sunshine Coast Council?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Nicklin for the question. I will give a little bit of history of the Hinterland Connect trial. It was first introduced in about 2007 as a jointly funded initiative of both the state government and the local council as a trial. Unfortunately, a couple of years after that the local council decided not to keep paying its bills on that one and put that trial in jeopardy. When we came into office and this matter was raised with us we said that we would continue the trial for some time, but we needed to get the numbers up on that trial. Unfortunately, patronage is very low. We consulted with the local council and local members, including the member for Glass House, who has been a strong advocate for his local community in terms of those negotiations, and we continue to do that.

The trial is continuing. It is due to end midyear. I would have to say that at the moment the numbers are not strong. At the moment there are about six passengers per service.

Mr Powell: It's 5½.

Mr EMERSON: I stand corrected: 5½ on average per service. I urge the member for Nicklin to do exactly what the member for Glass House has been doing and that is encouraging locals in the area to use that service. Once we get to the end of the trial we will review it, but the reality is that, as we said in those negotiations of which the member is aware of and was a part of, we want services to continue but only if we have the patronage. So let us see the results of the trial. I say again: we encourage people to use the service, as the member for Glass House has done. He has been a strong advocate for his local area encouraging people to use the service. People have to use the service to support its continuation.

In terms of broader issues relating to buses and public transport, I say to the member for Nicklin that, since we have come into office, we have introduced 2,000 additional weekly bus services, more frequent services and, of course, in terms of rail travel, 1,000 additional weekly rail services.

That has been a great result. In terms of fares, we have halved Labor's planned fare increases. The Leader of the Opposition's policy when she was transport minister was 15 per cent fare increases year after year after year after year. Labor's only policy on public transport was to increase fares by 15 per cent every year. We have improved reliability. As I said earlier this week, we have had a fourth quarter in a row of peak services in terms of reliability. It is a 10-year high in terms of rail reliability. There are 2,000 additional weekly bus services and 1,000 additional weekly train services. We have improved reliability and halved Labor's fare increases. We are committed to transport, doing exactly what Labor did not do.

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr SHUTTLEWORTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. An Auditor-General's report to parliament released in June 2013 outlined that Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and a \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant are costing Queenslanders \$150 million in interest payments alone. What would an extra \$150 million mean to Queenslanders in the energy and water supply portfolio?

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. Mr Acting Speaker, can I ask you to rule, under standing order 115, about hypotheticals? This series of questions this morning have all been hypothetical.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: In considering the point of order, I have allowed some latitude this morning in terms of the issue of hypotheticals and I am going to look at that again, but I am going to allow the question through to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply.

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question. This is a very serious issue. The price of bad government is clearly shown by what the Labor Party did and did not do in the water and power prices that we have faced in the past 10 or 15 years. Today that crisis is impacting on every member in this House, their families and people right across the state.

In relation to the spend on the water grid, we have already covered off on the desalination plant at \$1.2 billion and the corridor at \$2.6 billion. With regard to the Traveston Dam, \$715 million was spent on a dam that does not exist. The member for Gympie could tell this House how many people, how many livelihoods and how much stress was put upon the people of Gympie because of this absolutely shambolic mess that the Labor Party put onto the state. There was \$380 million spent on the Wyaralong Dam. The member for Beaudesert can tell us about that. It is a big, big puddle going nowhere. There is no pipeline. It sits there gathering water. That was \$380 million spent on an asset that is simply doing nothing at this point in time.

The worst thing about this whole issue with the grid is that it does not matter what we do, it is producing nothing. It is decommissioned. We are still paying \$150 million a year in interest. That is why this week this government has taken a very strong stand. We are looking at the long-term, actually planning for the long-term and, unlike Labor, there will be no panic. There is no self-inflicted crisis and there will be no promise of a blank chequebook for what we do in the future. The contrast between the ALP and the LNP is that the ALP will spend money at the drop of a hat and the LNP will plan long-term so that we get better outcomes for people in the south-east corner, in the regions and right across the state.

If I had \$150 million in my back pocket at this point in time we could drop the bulk water price from \$49 to \$19. That helps everybody in the south-east corner. We could also look at rolling out better infrastructure in the electricity sector. We could look at metering to help people understand how they are using electricity and save themselves money as well. We could also look at putting money into helping people understand what they can do on a long-term basis with regard to their water and power needs. We could also put money into subsidising tariff 11 for 2014-15 so that the price would be less by \$84. An extra \$150 million in my department would go a long way to helping every person across the state.

Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Grayson, Mr J

Mr MULHERIN: My question is direct to the Premier. Has Mr Grayson explained to the Premier why he set up an hour-long meeting with Eddie Obeid Jnr and Nick di Girolamo four days after he was appointed director-general in 2012 and does the Premier know what that meeting was about?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. I essentially answered the question before, but just for those opposite who did not listen let me be very clear that Mr Grayson fully declared his interests and involvement with Australian Water Holdings via the gasfields water company that he was setting up prior to being the director-general of the Department of the Premier

and Cabinet. He has fully declared those matters. He has fully outlined to the Integrity Commissioner those arrangements. While he has been in the position of director-general he has not been involved in any way, shape or form with any decision that would impact on those companies. That is the bottom line. Let us talk about the Labor Party, because again we are seeing the same sort of—

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is answering the question.

Mr NEWMAN: I can actually pronounce the name—it is Nick di Girolamo. I can also pronounce Obeid. I know that the Obeids gave donations to the Labor Party. I know who actually received those donations on behalf of the Australian Labor Party. Here is the return dated 25 February 2011—one Jackie Trad. There is a lot more. We also have here Nick di Girolamo—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Honourable members, you wanted to hear this. We have a record of a conversation in a diary note that was tabled at ICAC where Nick di Girolamo meets with Mike Kaiser, who was the chief of staff to the Labor state Premier in New South Wales. Who did they speak about? They spoke about Nick di Girolamo coming to talk to the Deputy Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh. Quoting from the diary note, 'He believes that Anna Bligh would be very receptive to what AW is trying to achieve/deliver.' Then it says, 'If we have any problems with'—some entities in New South Wales—'please call him'. 'He understands it is well under control given our discussions with the Treasurer and Kerry Schott', who is the head of Sydney Water. The interesting thing is that Mr Kaiser is actively advising Nick di Girolamo of Australian Water about how he can sell his business to Anna Bligh who is the Deputy Premier. Guess what happens next? That is right, Mike Kaiser becomes the chief of staff to Anna Bligh. That is what happens next. Through you, Mr Acting Speaker: do not come in here and throw out these accusations. Mr Grayson has clearly outlined his financial interests and that report I tabled earlier clears him of any wrongdoing.

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr DAVIES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. An Auditor-General's report to parliament released in June 2013 outlined that Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and the \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant are costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest payments alone. Can the minister outline what an extra \$150 million per year would mean for Queensland Health?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Capalaba for his ongoing interest in all matters to do with health. I am sure that he shares the concerns of all reasonable thinking members of parliament about the moribund and desperate state that Queensland Health was left in. Firstly, I point out what \$150 million means in that context. In the last full financial year of the previous Labor government, Queensland Health's underlying financial deficit was \$300 million, that is, twice that amount. Since the election of the Newman government, we have seen a significant turnaround and now we have quite a sustainable surplus position that can be reinvested back into a community dividend.

If you are a patient wanting services from Queensland Health you would be most interested to know what \$150 million would be able to buy, if it were not for the Labor Party and its financial mismanagement wasting around about \$400,000 per hour in interest alone on its debt across Queensland, not to mention the situation with the failed desalination plant. A sum of \$150 million would purchase 37,500 cataract procedures. That is an area where we have a real struggle to ensure that those ophthalmic procedures can be addressed in Queensland Health. A sum of \$150 million would purchase 638 new ambulances. It would also completely finance car parks at the Townsville, Rockhampton, Caboolture, Logan, Redcliffe and Royal Brisbane hospitals, which would mean that we would not now have to be seeking partnerships with external agencies in order to construct those car parks. A sum of \$150 million would be sufficient to build a new hospital at Kingaroy or Roma. Indeed, if we were able to do that over two years, we could construct a complete new hospital at Caboolture. One could imagine the appreciation of the people in that particular area. That would be equal to the recent expansion of the Logan Hospital and more than what was recently expended with regards to the upgrade of the Ipswich Hospital.

Let us put it in further context for Queenslanders: \$150 million is equivalent to 6,733 knee replacements, 6,832 hip replacements, 3,511 cochlear implants, 49,000 tonsillectomies, 22,000 appendectomies and, indeed, for the interest of expectant mums it is equivalent to 37,302 normal births. One can only imagine the appreciation of the public—

(Time expired)

Sale of Public Assets

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's statement in May last year on asset sales that—

There straight away is about \$20 billion in debt reduction we can achieve.

I also refer to the Treasurer's and Premier's recent statements about the Bruce Highway upgrade, the Townsville Ring Road, the Gregory Development Road, a new Townsville football stadium and eight dams now proposed to be funded from sale proceeds. I ask: is the Newman government's plan for a mass asset selloff still about paying down debt and returning to AAA or is it about funding future LNP election promises?

Mr NEWMAN: As always, there is a bit of verballing in the question, but I will not go into that. I will quote from former Premier Bligh's privatisation speech from 2 June 2009. She stated—

Our Renewing Queensland Plan and the abolition of the fuel subsidy are measures undertaken with two goals in mind: firstly, keeping our building program going to support jobs now to soften the blow of the global recession; and, secondly, dealing with the long-term reforms that will restore the budget to surplus over time and realign our finances for the challenges of the future. This is what responsible governments across the world are doing because the alternatives are too awful to contemplate.

In other words, Premier Bligh was saying that we have to invest in infrastructure and she was saying we have to be financially responsible. That is exactly what we are saying and that is what we have always said.

In relation to what is being discussed in the choices campaign, for the benefit of the honourable member for Mulgrave today I will say it all again: we have put on the table that we should have a discussion about the sale of a long-term lease for the Port of Townsville and a long-term lease for the Port of Gladstone, the sale of the industrial water pipelines of SunWater, the sale of Ergon Energy's retail business and also the sale of the large generally coal fired power generation companies. We have also said that we are looking at ways to bring the private sector in as partners for Powerlink, Ergon and Energex. Maybe that is what the member for Mulgrave has missed, because he has not asked many questions of the Treasurer over the past two years—not many at all—and he probably should have asked questions about that and explored that, because we are here to be challenged. Contrary to the malarky, nonsense and hysteria of last night, we come into every parliamentary session prepared to answer their questions, but quite frankly their questions delve right down into the weeds. They are not about how to take Queensland forward.

We want to do two things: we want to reduce debt and get the AAA credit rating back as a package, and we want to build this state. We want to build infrastructure across Queensland. It is very clear from the work that we are doing that it is possible to do both. We can do both and that is what we will do, because getting back the AAA credit rating is worth about \$100 million a year in savings on a lower interest rate. What could we do with \$100 million saved through lower interest? We could do a heck of a lot, having just heard what we could do with \$150 million. We have a twofold objective that we are going out faithfully and openly to talk about with Queenslanders. We are unlike those opposite, who sprung the biggest confidence trick of all time: they said they would not do it, but then they went and did it afterwards. What dishonesty! What a bunch of shonks they are!

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr GIBSON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. An Auditor-General's report to the parliament released in June 2013 outlined Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Water Recycling Scheme and the \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant, costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest repayments alone. Can the minister outline what an extra \$150 million per year would mean for Queenslanders in terms of his portfolio?

Dr McVEIGH: I thank the member for Gympie for his very important question. The House now knows full well that Labor has left the LNP government with a massive \$80 billion debt that robs ordinary Queenslanders of a whole range of services and projects that they could be served by with an extra \$150 million of funding per year. Of course, that sum relates to the interest bill currently being paid on the desalination and recycled water plants that were overseen by those opposite in a mad and crazy rush and a failed attempt to deliver water to the south-east.

What could we do with that additional money? In my own department, which is dealing with drought affected farmers right across the state, I can share with the House that, for example, another \$10 million to \$15 million would deliver significant support for water infrastructure on farms, so as to make them more resilient through a continuation of the current program we have been able to put in

place with available funds. That sort of money would be readily available if Peter Beattie, Anna Bligh and their useless ministers, who loved to describe dams and building new ones as 'dinosaur thinking', had not blown \$9 billion on a water grid with pipelines to nowhere and the Tugun desalination plant that never worked properly, but as I said left Queenslanders with an interest bill of \$150 million a year. That same team wanted to pump recycled sewage into Wivenhoe Dam. That is right: under Labor, dams were such dinosaurs that those opposite would have had us drinking treated sewage, blended at Wivenhoe Dam. With \$10 million to \$15 million, my department could provide critically needed research and development for our agricultural sector to help us deliver on our long-term plan to double agricultural production in Queensland by 2040.

Labor wasted billions of dollars on white elephant infrastructure and the simple fact is that Queenslanders are still paying the price. The \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Water Recycling Scheme and the \$1.2 billion desalination plant are clear cases in point. The Auditor-General's report has confirmed that those two mothballed projects, largely funded by debt, are in fact costing Queenslanders \$150 million a year, which could be far better spent in agricultural support right across this state. The money is lost because of mindless decisions taken by the former Labor government, which included some members opposite, most especially the Leader of the Opposition.

Integrated Resort Development

Dr DOUGLAS: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. This week it was announced that both the Broadwater marine integrated development and the Nerang integrated development groups were vying for casino licences, and I ask: can the Deputy Premier please explain the inconsistency between these announcements by demanding that Gold Coast councillors sign off only on the Broadwater integrated development by 5 May?

Mr SEENEY: I have to admit to being totally confused. Not only does the member mumble but he mumbles nonsense. But I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the IRD process and the progress that I announced in the House on Tuesday. I am happy to have some time to do that again.

Our government has undertaken a process to identify proponents that are prepared to build integrated resort developments that are internationally competitive. We have done that because we recognise that those types of integrated resort developments are the emerging product in the international tourism market and they have an enormous capacity to boost the economy of regional Queensland.

That is why we have earmarked two gaming licences to complement those resort developments—not give out two gaming licences, not build two new casinos, but make gaming licences available as a small part of a larger integrated resort development. We understand how important those sorts of developments could be to our tourism industry that exists in a range of places across the state.

It was pleasing for me to see a range of proponents pay their \$100,000 application fee. As I explained in this House earlier in the week, we deliberately put that \$100,000 non-refundable application fee in place to reinforce the point that this process was about establishing internationally competitive resorts—the sort of destination resorts that would be attractive to international tourism operators.

There were six proponents who put in such applications. Those applications are now being assessed under a rigid process that is being overseen by Mr Len Scanlan as the probity adviser. I can say to the member for Gaven or any other member in this House that I will not be part of that assessment process and nor should I or any other politician be part of the assessment process. I certainly will not be talking publicly about how that assessment process is going or what is being required of any particular proponent. That assessment process will be conducted with the utmost probity. Anybody who knows Len Scanlan would know that he as probity adviser would require that. That is why he was appointed. The assessment process will be undertaken with the utmost professionalism. It certainly will not be the subject of political point scoring that the member for Gaven might try to undertake even in his mumbled fashion.

(Time expired)

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr SHORTEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Minister, an Auditor-General's report to parliament released in June 2013 outlined that Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and the \$1.2 billion

Gold Coast desalination plant are costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest repayments alone. Can the minister outline what an extra \$150 million per year would mean for Queenslanders in her portfolio?

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for the question and for his great interest in supporting vulnerable Queenslanders in his electorate. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to visit some of the great disability service providers and community service providers in his local area. The member does a wonderful job in supporting those organisations deliver services in his community.

Those on this side of the House are working very hard to deliver for Queenslanders, including vulnerable Queenslanders, despite the financial mess left to us by the Labor Party. Despite this, we have committed to significant reforms in my portfolio of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. It saddens me, as the minister responsible for human services, that we cannot do more to help our vulnerable Queenslanders given the interest payments we have to make on the debt left to us by those opposite.

I was asked what I could do with an extra \$150 million in my portfolio. Where do I begin? I might start with disability services. The average disability package for a person in Queensland to access support so that they can live an included life is around \$39,000. So \$150 million would provide 3,800 Queenslanders with a disability with access to support funds so that they could live a dignified, included and supported life.

It would also support us in my communities portfolio. The budget for the communities portfolio is around \$330 million. So an extra \$150 million would increase the community services budget by 45 per cent. The community services budget supports a range of very important services like youth services, services for seniors, volunteering services and services provided by other community groups.

If it were not for the Labor Party's legacy of debt, in the very important area of domestic and family violence—which is a heinous crime and those affected deserve support—we would be able to provide 45 per cent more services to the vulnerable victims of this terrible crime. That would mean 45 per cent more services. It would mean 45 per cent more court services to support them. It would mean 45 per cent more opportunities for victims to access shelters. There would be 45 per cent more resources for the DV Connect helpline to assist these victims. Some \$150 million would make an enormous difference to vulnerable Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Ethanol

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Due to the announcement yesterday regarding the loss of 350 jobs at the BP refinery and the potential closure of the ethanol plant in Dalby, will the government now mandate ethanol in Queensland as promised by the LNP in two elections?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question. I did meet with a gentleman on Tuesday and discussed this with him. I said to him that I would consider his proposal and at some point in time get back to him. So I can say no more than that at this point in time.

I want to take the time now to go back over what this government is looking at doing in relation to both the flood mitigation issues and the proposal put on the table today concerning both the desalination plant and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. I think it is important to understand that this government has made commitments on a long-term basis to provide—

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

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, take your seat. What is the point of order?

Mr HOPPER: The question was simply about ethanol. It had nothing to do with the pipeline.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The minister has time on the clock in order to answer the question. The minister has the call.

Mr McARDLE: The comment I made was that I met with a gentleman, whom the member is quite aware of, and discussed with him the issue of ethanol. I said that I will get back to that gentleman in due course. I have dealt with the question, as far as I am concerned.

The issue is what this government is going to do in relation to planning long term for flood mitigation and ensuring we get debt down in this state. I think it is very important that we understand that Labor left us a debt of \$80 billion. That is \$450,000 per hour that we are paying in interest. I

would have thought that the honourable member, instead of supporting the Labor Party day in and day out, would actually work with us to try to resolve the issues that this state is facing. But the member does not. The member stands in this House on a regular basis and supports the Labor Party, the party that put this state into enormous debt, day in and day out. The ALP branch of north-west Queensland, the Katter party, stand behind the ALP on every single occasion they can.

This government is quite clearly focused on the future and making certain that we correct the bumbling, incredibly difficult and horrendous mistakes made by the last Labor government under both premiers Bligh and Beattie. I can recall in this House the debate regarding the western corridor recycled pipeline over and over again. The member for Currumbin raised in regard to the desal plant the fact that corrosion in that plant had commenced even before the damn thing had been turned on.

We are unashamedly focused on the future. We are unashamedly focused on planning for the future. I make the comment that the Katter party should get off their rump, get behind the government and start working with us to achieve long-term outcomes and stop asking frivolous, ridiculous questions and stop supporting the mob who put this state in the perilous position that we are in at this point in time. I would rather them work with us—I do not believe I said that, by the way—to try to get a long-term outcome for the future. Stop being the ALP branch in the north-west section of this great state and work with us for a change. Try to make a real difference. Try to do a real job for a change.

(Time expired)

Labor Government, Water Infrastructure Costs

Mr CAVALLUCCI: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. An Auditor-General's report to parliament released in June 2013 outlined that Labor's mothballed \$2.6 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and \$1.2 billion Gold Coast desalination plant are costing Queenslanders around \$150 million a year in interest payments alone. What would an extra \$150 million per year mean for Queenslanders in the minister's portfolio?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. You have two minutes.

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Brisbane Central for that question because I know he is a strong advocate for both roads and public transport in his area but also across Queensland. Given that I have only two minutes, there are so many projects I could mention across Queensland where \$150 million would make a significant difference to local communities.

I think of the members for Gregory or Whitsunday or Mirani and how much benefit the local communities would get in terms of freight from upgrading road networks in their areas, such as the Peak Downs Highway or the Gregory Highway or the Capricorn Highway. I know the member for Keppel is very keen to see some work done on that highway. The Deputy Premier mentions the Burnett Highway to me regularly. His electorate would benefit greatly from \$150 million. I think of the members for Toowoomba North, Toowoomba South, Lockyer and Warrego. Even though I know a ton of work has already been done on the Warrego Highway, even more work could be done. The member for Hinchinbrook is a strong advocate in his local area. I know that he would like to see work on the Palmerston Highway as well.

I think of my Sunshine Coast colleagues. I know that in terms of duplication up there \$150 million would go a long way. I know that is a big and expensive project, but \$150 million would take it a long way in terms of seeing that duplication that Labor scrapped after the 2009 election. The member for Cook, who has been a great advocate for his area, would love to see more money for the Peninsula Development Road, even though I know we are putting some money into it. I think of my Gold Coast colleagues as well in terms of the M1 and the Gold Coast light rail.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr EMERSON: The member for Noosa has very significant projects in his area that that money could go to. It is not just roads; imagine what we could do with our road safety campaign. We already have a \$350 million record road safety campaign; \$150 million would lift it to \$500 million. If we had that \$150 million, every school could have flashing school lights.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I ask the Clerk to read the next order of the day, the schools visiting the House today are St Ita's Primary School from South Brisbane and Baralaba State High School from the electorate of Callide.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report No. 41, Motion to Take Note

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: There being no mover, the notice of motion lapses in accordance with standing order 71.

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.04 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Acting Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

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

A Bill for an Act to amend the Adult Proof of Age Card Act 2008, the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994, and to make consequential or minor amendments of the Acts mentioned in schedule 1, for particular purposes

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 3 APR 2014

Tabled paper: Message, dated 3 April 2013, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[4860\]](#).

Introduction

Hon. SA EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.06 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Adult Proof of Age Card Act 2008, the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994, and to make consequential or minor amendments of the acts mentioned in schedule 1, for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[4861\]](#).

Tabled paper: Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[4862\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This is an omnibus bill which amends eight pieces of transport legislation and makes consequential amendments to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. The amendments in this bill support the delivery of infrastructure projects, improve departmental processes to reduce red tape and clarify existing requirements.

Firstly, I would like to look at some changes to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 that will not only reduce red tape but produce real savings for both government and industry. For example, a key amendment to streamline the delivery of transport infrastructure to enable faster and more cost-effective project delivery are the changes for watercourse crossing management.

In Queensland—as in all other Australian states—the state cannot grant tenure over a watercourse, because a body of water is not considered to be land and, when linear transport infrastructure, such as a railway, crosses watercourses, ‘gaps’ appear in the tenure of the corridor. Continuous tenure over the corridor cannot be granted to a private enterprise. Private sector rail projects have experienced difficulty in securing finance for construction on the basis that a corridor with ‘gaps’ is not considered to be a useable asset.

I refer to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee report No. 25 titled *Inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland*, where it was noted that this land tenure issue presents an investment challenge. Currently, special purpose legislation is the common solution to this issue in Australia. For example, this issue was specifically dealt with in the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Act 2012. To support the Gold Coast Rapid Transit light rail project, my department adopted an innovative approach to this problem by introducing legislation in 2011 to permit a licence to be issued for the light rail corridor, including watercourse crossings. This was a successful solution which enabled financing to be obtained at more reasonable rates.

The proposed amendments to the watercourse crossing provisions will extend the current provisions dealing with watercourse crossings for light rail infrastructure to road, rail and busway. They will also provide that the rights to construct and operate transport infrastructure can include a continuous connection over watercourse crossings. This will reduce project risk and cost to make financing easier to obtain for private sector infrastructure projects and reduce the need for special purpose legislation to support specific projects.

A key change to the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 will see improvements in how government manages statutory easement of support to provide protection for subterranean transport infrastructure. Easements over land next to transport land protect the structural and operational integrity of subterranean transport infrastructure, notably tunnels. Tunnels require support from the surrounding earth, and easements ensure that this support is maintained. An easement on the property title serves as notice to landowners about the existence of underground infrastructure.

Protection for underground infrastructure contributes to the safe and efficient operation of this infrastructure on an ongoing basis. However, existing statutory provisions and the common law principles for easements have been outpaced by modern engineering principles and government policy for integrated development around transport infrastructure. The proposed amendments modernise and consolidate the existing law to protect transport infrastructure in a more proactive and resilient way that can continue after redevelopment, subdivision and subsequent sale of the land.

These changes to the Transport Infrastructure Act and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act are the first steps in a major overhaul of transport infrastructure legislation. Later this year I will bring new legislation before the House to extensively reduce red tape, modernise legislation and provide for significant cost savings in the delivery of major infrastructure projects, such as the underground bus and train project.

To look at changes to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, an important red-tape reduction and cost-saving measure is the change to drink- and drug-driving legislation to provide greater flexibility for the laboratory testing of blood and saliva specimens collected by police. The amendments will allow a qualified analyst who is case managing a blood or saliva specimen to sign an evidentiary certificate about the presence of alcohol or drugs in a driver’s system even where another analyst undertook the actual testing of the specimen. This will streamline the testing process for the Queensland Health Forensic and Scientific Services laboratory by allowing numerous specimens to be ‘batched’ during the testing process, reducing the turnaround time for analysis and reporting, and making more efficient use of resources. It is expected that the revised procedures will lead to a reduction in the number of test runs carried out in the order of 75 per year, which equates to a cost saving of approximately \$100,000 per year.

I would like to take the opportunity to remind the House that this government is introducing a more efficient and effective method of registering vehicles, saving up to \$3.5 million a year in postage and printing costs when from 1 October this year we phase out registration labels for all vehicles up to 4.5 tonnes which account for about 96 per cent, or 4.4 million, of vehicles registered in Queensland. As we transition into this new phase, it is important to ensure that we have an appropriate level of enforcement to ensure only registered vehicles and those with compulsory third-party insurance are used on our roads. Any increase in unregistered vehicles could lead to a reduction in money available for road funding, and any increase in vehicles without CTP insurance will place more pressure on the nominal defendant fund within the CTP scheme.

Currently, enforcement action against operators of unregistered and uninsured vehicles is primarily undertaken by physically intercepting a vehicle and manually issuing a ticket. Even when an enforcement officer identifies an unregistered vehicle through technology such as automatic number plate recognition cameras, they still have to physically stop the vehicle before taking enforcement action. This process is clearly inefficient and will not provide the appropriate level of enforcement action required when registration labels for light vehicles are removed on 1 October 2014. The amendments in this bill will enable the automated issuing of infringement notices to the previous registered operator of an unregistered vehicle that is detected on the road by cameras operated by my department and the Queensland Police Service. Infringement notices will also be able to be issued for vehicles without CTP insurance. Automating this process and allowing infringement notices to be issued through the mail rather than requiring vehicles to be intercepted will improve our enforcement efforts and increase compliance.

Another area where we are looking to streamline processes relates to the requirements to report crashes and road incidents to Queensland police under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the Queensland Road Rules. The current \$2,500 threshold for reporting crashes has been in place for many years without being increased. It does not reflect the fact that a majority of crashes now involve damage exceeding \$2,500 because modern vehicles are designed to crumple to preserve passenger safety. It can actually cause uncertainty as drivers are unsure whether damage to their vehicle meets the threshold, resulting in unnecessary reports to police. The bill removes the requirement to report crashes to police where property damage exceeds \$2,500 from the road use management act and the Queensland Road Rules. Importantly, I note that the requirement to report crashes to police where a person is injured or killed will be retained. Requirements to report when a vehicle needs to be towed will also be retained. This crash data is used to identify lengths of road which have a high crash frequency and which require improvement, as well as forming the basis for the development of targeted road safety policies and programs.

Another key improvement in road use management legislation is to create a specific offence to prohibit a driver transporting a placard load of dangerous goods through a tunnel which displays a prohibition sign. Tunnels are a critical part of our transport infrastructure network, and dangerous goods being carried in a tunnel increases the risk of a potentially catastrophic incident. To mitigate this risk, it is important to have a sufficient deterrent against the transport of placard loads of dangerous goods through tunnels. Placard loads are commercial quantities of dangerous goods that require the vehicle to display a placard or sign warning of the presence of dangerous goods. To ensure consistency across all types of dangerous goods, the offence will also apply to the transport of explosives and radioactive substances.

Due to the serious road safety, environmental and public infrastructure risks of dangerous goods being transported in tunnels, the bill creates a specific offence with a maximum penalty of 200 penalty units, which is \$22,000 or one year's imprisonment. It is also planned to make the offence ticketable with an infringement notice fine of 10 penalty units or \$1,100 for individuals and 50 penalty units or \$5,500 for corporations. Because of the difficulty of conducting effective enforcement in tunnels, the offence will be detected by cameras installed in the tunnels.

If a vehicle is photographed in a tunnel displaying a placard, it will be presumed to be transporting dangerous goods, unless the driver can prove that the goods had already been delivered. Infringement notices will be issued to the person in charge of the vehicle under the camera detected offence provisions of the road use management act. The increased penalties and enforcement will assist in protecting public safety, the environment and transport infrastructure by preventing the likelihood of a serious incident involving dangerous goods in a tunnel.

I look now at a key amendment to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. Under the government's unclaimed moneys scheme, go card funds must be transferred to the Public Trustee Office after two years of inactivity on the go card. Approximately 81 per cent of these funds are on unregistered go cards and unlikely to be claimed. Under the proposed changes, unclaimed funds will be reinvested into public transport initiatives rather than transferred to the Public Trustee Office. Residential tenancies legislation contains a similar provision allowing unclaimed rental bond to be used for housing related purposes. The amendments will only allow unclaimed go card funds to be reinvested in public transport initiatives after five years of inactivity, subject to my approval. It is important to note that go card holders will still be entitled to claim a refund from TMR at any time.

This is only a brief outline of key amendments. The bill carries over 30 amendments to transport and other legislation, and continues the ongoing focus of my department to improve existing legislation and processes and reduce red tape for business and the community wherever possible. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SA EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.17 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. SA EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.18 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee report to the House on the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 30 June 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 2 April (see p. 1040), on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs OSTAPOVITCH (Stretton—LNP) (11.19 am), continuing: It is to be noted that a workplace health and safety permit holder is not an inspector and can only provide advice on health and safety matters to workers and others at the workplace. It is not likely there would ever be a situation where a workplace health and safety permit holder would or could replace a workplace health and safety inspector. Rather, an inspector would address the health and safety issues where this had not been resolved between the parties. I support the changes to the legislation.

Mr HATHAWAY (Townsville—LNP) (11.20 am): I rise today to speak on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. My contribution to this debate will be brief. However, my intent is to highlight some of the very issues that were outlined by the Attorney-General at the commencement of this debate. As we know, the bill implements the findings of the Queensland government's review of national model work health and safety laws. At the outset, can I reaffirm the Attorney-General's comment that, as a government, we are committed to having the safest workplaces in Australia.

This bill is the result of consultation with employer associations, legal representatives and the unions. During the review, the construction industry in particular raised concerns about the misuse of right of entry provisions by union officials and the impact the disruption has on business—and it is done under the guise of safety. These concerns are confirmed by the number of complaints received by the work health and safety regulator for right of entry disputes. Between 2011-12 and 2012-13, the inspectors responded to 57 right of entry disputes at construction workplaces. Most of these disputes related to entry without prior notice to inquire into a suspected contravention of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

I would now like to read from some correspondence that I received from a constituent who himself is involved in the construction industry in the Queensland, Australian and overseas markets. Indeed, this constituent is the owner of a quality, safety and environmental consultancy that provides many North Queensland construction companies with advice, planning and risk assessment and mitigation. In his correspondence he outlined—

This legislation is a great step towards stopping the unions from leveraging against 'theoretical concerns' what I would personally and professionally consider the greatest threat to sustainable construction in Queensland. The stranglehold the CFMEU has on construction in Victoria is self-evident with the dispute with large construction entities including GROCON and Boral.

As a State Government Approved Safety Auditor for construction and having conducted more than 100 site safety audits in the last 6 years union involvement and/or powers related safety has no bearing in regards to safety onsite—they use it as a bargaining tool to either stop work or get better conditions, but under the current law it is simple to stop work they just make it a safety issue!!!

A simple example is one I experienced first hand ...

CAIRNS

Abigroup were the contractor on the Hospital in Cairns—
as the good member for Cairns will remember—

and it was a CFMEU site. Just down the road another constructor was undertaking construction on a school and the local Union Representative from the Hospital site would pass the school on his way to the Hospital site each day. The Union delegate then began to stop into the school site on a daily basis and issue a 'Notice of Entry' regarding a suspected contravention of the WHS Act. So in reality the union delegate was entering almost daily to inspect the site and then essentially 'canvass for members'.

This began to get out of control and there were threats made to the site manager after refusing them entry. At this stage I was contacted and asked to attend site to review the issues. To simplify and add weight to our response to the union I called two WHS Queensland Inspectors to attend site and review the union demands. The outcome was that none of the demands had any merit and it was just to 'Stuff the builder around' because it was a NON EBA SITE.

I had discussions with the delegate (a Heated discussion) and advised him that his claims and his demands would not be met as there was no substance to them and we had it verified by the Inspectorate and that if he continued to issue notice of entry forms to the site we notify the QIRC of our issues and ask them to become involved. At this point there was further heated discussion and they were asked to leave and surprisingly never came back—they come onto site with limited knowledge of the law and try and get one over the builder using what I consider standover and bullying tactics.

This is what occurred from the simplest perspective, but the reality is that 100's of hours of valuable time was wasted dealing with what were false claims against the builder and this is not an isolated occurrence.

STOCKLAND TOWNSVILLE

Union activity on the redevelopment of the Stockland Townsville was very high and caused significant issues. On this particular site once the car park had been completed then site facilities such as CRIB rooms were placed on the top of the car park because once established there would be no reason to move them again. There were covered walkways, air-conditioned dining areas, chilled water, refrigerators, personal storage areas, toilets and showers etc. On a particular day when it was raining there was a complete stop work action onsite because between the top of the covered scaffolding and the covered walkways of the CRIB rooms was a gap of approximately 10 metres. There was a complaint made to the OHS Rep and Union Delegate and the site was shut down until it was rectified—and the reality was that 95% of all workers were working indoors and their only exposure to getting wet was walking to the CRIB Room which from a risk perspective and the risk to health and safety was negligible.

At this time Laing O'Rourke were in negotiations with the Union (BLF) regarding a new EBA and the union was not happy with a number of the provisions in the EBA relating to pay and conditions so they utilised Safety to disrupt activities.

On Another Note ...

The Union OHS Reps are taught how to manipulate the system and how to use safety as a bargaining tool.

Our changes through this amendment will return the rule of law on Queensland construction sites by aligning union right of entry laws with—wait for it, that is right—the Commonwealth Fair Work Act, which was introduced by Prime Minister Rudd and supported and further amended by Prime Minister Gillard, and by cracking down on unlawful militant union abuse. This is about restoring the balance. The government is not changing any workers' common law right to cease work if they believe there is a safety issue.

In talking to this point, I draw on my experience of 30 years in the Army where I operated in a highly complex and often dangerous environment. I have operated as an operator, as a unit safety officer as a lieutenant, as the chair of a brigade safety committee of 3,500 people and also as high up as a CO where I was directly responsible for the safety of 748 soldiers in a complex, dynamic environment. Regardless of season, weather, terrain or all night, we had to worry about the safety of our soldiers at all times. I also operated when I was a young cadet as a sentry on a range practice, so in effect I was the lowest of the low. If I saw something that was unsafe—if there were people moving into the weapons trace or the impact area or if there was an aircraft overflying—I was able to go, 'Stop, stop, stop' and that practice would cease. Safety is everybody's responsibility and that is what protects us. We do not need union representatives to stop work willy-nilly under the guise of safety.

These changes will, amongst other things, require work health and safety entry permit holders to give at least 24 hours notice before they can enter a workplace to inquire into a suspected contravention. This will align with the other entry notification periods in the WHS Act and the Fair Work Act 2009. The bill will also increase penalties for noncompliance with the work health and safety entry permit conditions and introduce penalties for failure to comply with the entry notification

requirements. It will require at least 24 hours notice before any person assisting a health and safety representative can have access to that workplace. As a government, we remain committed to having the safest workplaces in the country. Our changes will return the rule of law on Queensland construction sites by aligning union right of entry laws with the Commonwealth Fair Work Act and cracking down on unlawful union abuse. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (11.27 am): I rise to speak in support of the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The Newman government is committed to looking after Queensland employers and employees at work. This bill will ensure just that.

One of the most important issues that this bill amends is the entry powers by union officials. The misuse of these powers and the cumulative compliance costs associated with the previous legislation was costing businesses billions of dollars. Unions will now have to give 24 hours notice before entering a work site. This is an important step to allow businesses to be able to continue work without the consistent disruptive behaviour caused by unions that is costly to the business, the employees and the government. I note that the opposition members are simply not game to stand up to union thugs and bullies. They are obviously dependent on them for preselection and are unable to take the sort of visionary step that the Newman government is taking with this bill.

The bill is designed to cut red tape and reduce the burden on business while still achieving the high safety standards and the protection of employees throughout Queensland. It is exactly that outcome that regional and rural based businesses in particular and their employees want. This bill is yet another example of the Newman government's commitment to infusing common sense across this great state. The bill is designed to safeguard individual workers and to ensure the safety concerns of the individual are identified and addressed. That very important point is in stark contrast to the comments made by the opposition. The bill maintains the right to cease unsafe work and the individual worker to have that right to raise concerns with health and safety representatives.

Queenslanders deserve to be protected not only at work but also when travelling to and from work. As such, Queensland is the only state to retain journey claims. In rural Queensland, employees of primary producers travelling to and from work are often travelling long distances. So the continuation of cover for journey claims is particularly important for employees in the agricultural sector. Work in the rural sector is often seasonal. So having compensation for lost wages and medical expenses can mean the difference between employees fully recovering and employees working before they have recuperated and then injuring themselves yet again. This bill will prevent the employer having to reclaim and, as a result, the workers compensation insurance premium will be kept to a minimum. Low rates of workers compensation cover will help keep the overhead costs for primary producers and rural businesses down, which will help them remain competitive in both national and international markets.

Mr Johnson: It may help them survive.

Dr McVEIGH: I accept that interjection from the member for Gregory. In times like this they need all the assistance we can give them in order to survive. That is in the interests of the business, the employee and the local communities.

The bill gives the employer the ability to access a prospective employee's workers compensation history. This allowance to request the history from an employee will give employers the opportunity to mitigate any risk of aggravating a pre-existing injury and will save primary producers from paying workers compensation for pre-existing injuries. That is just plain common sense. The Newman government does not just want a workers compensation scheme; it is committed to having the best scheme in Australia. I am pleased to support this bill.

Mr Johnson: You can have a go now. Try hard.

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (11.31 am): Madam Deputy Speaker and all other members in the House, especially the member for Gregory, I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This government is committed to growing a four-pillar economy. One of those pillars is the construction industry, and that is why this government is doing everything it can to stimulate a surge in the Queensland property and construction sector. We are already seeing the results of this. Trend dwelling approvals are now at their highest levels in almost six years, having risen again by 2.6 per cent in January this year. Insurance policy data recently released shows an increase of 27 per cent in the last two years. This government has also established a new independent watchdog, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, which while only in its infancy has already gone a long way to restoring confidence in the building sector and promises to be a strong and reliable body.

There can be no doubt that the property and construction industry is heading in the right direction. Construction activity is set to boom across the state in the coming months. As a government, we need to be doing everything we can to establish an environment that is best suited to the industry surging ahead—to all industries surging ahead—while ensuring that adequate health and safety regimes remain in place. This bill is intended to do precisely that. It is directed at the microlevel of industries, especially construction sites across Queensland. It is about empowering the worker and making sure that all workers can get on with the tasks at hand efficiently but without compromising on workplace health and safety. We want to make sure that all Queensland workers can go home at the end of their shift and have a meal with their family.

As a member of the Finance and Administration Committee, we were tasked with reviewing this bill and ensuring that the bill meets fundamental legislative principles, goes about creating an even playing field for the parties involved and addresses the previous unbalance and abuse. In looking at bills such as this, we need to ensure that we appropriately manage the desires of the construction industry to operate without undue delays or disruptions with the broader interests of maintaining appropriate work site standards. During the consultation period we heard firsthand from the construction industry representatives of their concerns regarding the misuse of right of entry powers by the union officials as well as the inconsistency with entry notification requirements in the legislation. We were told of the delays that union visits create for businesses and subsequent costs associated with failing to keep up with the work site schedule.

These firsthand accounts from aggrieved site managers and foremen were not related to isolated incidents. In fact, in the last two years workplace health and safety inspectors have had to respond to 57 right of entry disputes at construction sites. Consistent with what the Finance and Administration Committee was told in submissions received, the vast majority of these arose because of the failure to give notice or a failure to give sufficient notice prior to arriving at the site to investigate suspected contraventions of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. However, in each instance none of the entry disputes presented an immediate or imminent risk to workers or anyone else on the site—that is, empirical evidence suggests that union officials have not always been using their right of entry powers in response to legitimate safety risks in the past. This means that in each instance the construction workers were being made to unnecessarily stop work.

This I think is the critical point and I would like to impress upon the House the transcendent nature of the various contractors and workers of the building sites. Contractors may only be engaged to work on a particular task for a day or maybe a few days, the foreman is running a very strict work schedule and the builders come and go from his or her site at any given time. Each delay equates to money wasted, time that must be made up and potentially may mean that new contractors must be found. That fact that this dynamic, fluid and ever-changing environment can be brought to a standstill potentially at the whim of a union official with only a few days training—that is right, a few days training—is disturbing and is a practice that must be curbed. Unless there is a real and imminent risk for health and safety at a site, work should be allowed to continue unimpeded.

It is little wonder that this bill has received resounding endorsement from stakeholders engaged directly with the industry. The Master Plumbers Association of Queensland and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland wholeheartedly support these changes, and why wouldn't they? These amendments save money for the construction industry without reducing safety standards. That is not to say that union officials do not have a place at the construction site. Unions represent the collective interests of members of a particular industry and union officials ought to be able to satisfy themselves that appropriate standards of workplace health and safety are being adhered to. However, the fact is that existing right of entry powers are open to abuse and a union official should not have the capacity to bring any workplace to a halt for any justification other than that health and safety standards have been compromised in such a way as to give rise to a serious and present risk. Officials ought not to be able to misuse their powers of entry to gain any type of political leverage, to delay completion dates for the purpose of industrial relations or to close down a work site as a means of deliberately obstructing work to which a union is opposed.

This bill will amend the legislation to require that at least 24 hours prior notice be given before union officials can enter a workplace in response to a suspected contravention. Currently, an official is only required to give notice as soon as it is reasonably practical after entering the workplace and only then if it would not defeat the purpose of entry. This is really the crux of the bill and is the difference between giving notice after already having entered a work site, as is currently the case, and giving notice before entering the site, which this bill seeks to implement. Notice under these amendments must also be given during the usual working hours to prevent the circumvention of the 24 hours minimum notice provision. It might be said that by denying union officials the right to immediately

access a work site on a suspected breach we are lowering our health and safety standards. It might also be said that we are giving site managers the opportunity to destroy evidence of a breach prior to an official arriving.

The unions would have us believe that, by passing this bill, we are giving unscrupulous builders a licence to cover up shoddy business practices. On the face of it these seem like compelling arguments. However, it must be remembered that none of the proposed changes affect the right of the government's safety inspectors to access workplaces without notice to address urgent safety matters and issues, so there should be no reduction to the safety of workers.

In fact, the committee believes that the government workplace health and safety inspectors are the best qualified to assist in resolving urgent issues. To that end, most of the recommendations put forward by the committee are centred on strengthening the powers and mobility of government workplace health and safety inspectors and ensuring that inspectors receive industry-specific training where required. Many of the government's inspectors have two university degrees in addition to extensive in-house training and broad industry experience—a long way from the two- or three-day courses that union officials have.

I am not saying that permit holders do not have any idea of safety requirements. Far from it: they do. We all have a good idea of what is safe and what is not. We started to learn this many years ago when our parents told us not to touch something because it was hot or not to run with scissors. We have all fallen over or dropped something, and we understand the effects of gravity. Furthermore, I do not know anyone who is working in any job without the benefit of some industry-specific training, whether it is through university, trade, TAFE or on-the-job training. When we asked unions at the public hearing, they noted that job-specific training is what most permit holders have along with a two- to three-day safety course, but the argument is that accidents happen. Workplaces can become unsafe if not maintained. Some questionable employers take advantage of their staff, and from time to time safety issues can be overlooked. What we need to do is reduce the risk, empower employees, promote awareness and enforce the existing rules using trained professionals.

It is very important to note that this bill does not affect the ability of every employee across Queensland to stop work if they feel they are unsafe or there is a risk of injury. This is a fair right. In the event the employee feels threatened, they can make an anonymous complaint and have a trained professional inspector from the department look into the issue while, importantly, keeping the details of the complaint anonymous.

The bill also increases penalties for noncompliance with entry permit conditions and introduces penalties for disregarding entry notification requirements. The penalties are not unduly punitive, but instead reflect the seriousness of the behaviour and the disruption to business operations. All of this will ensure that work sites cannot be impeded at a moment's notice and that foremen can make necessary arrangements to mitigate any delays in advance. While the amendments will reduce the element of surprise when it comes to inspections of work sites, it is my belief—and the belief shared by the Finance and Administration Committee—that this fact is outweighed by the desirable goal of minimising disruptions. This is particularly so when it is remembered that in most reported instances, none of the incidents about which officials were making inquiries represented an immediate or imminent risk to health and safety. Safety concerns can still be raised anonymously with the work health and safety regulator, and in any case the individual worker still has the right to cease work if they believe that it is unsafe.

However, I know the committee and I are both concerned that workers—especially vulnerable workers—may not be aware of their right to stop work in response to a serious risk. It is difficult to imagine that an unskilled migrant labourer from a non-English-speaking background and lacking familiarity with workplace health and safety laws would proactively stop work. It can readily be imagined that these workers would fear reprisal from their employer for taking such steps. There is also a possibility that during busy times, government inspectors may not be able to be on site immediately when there is imminent danger. As a solution, the committee recommended that inspectors be given the authority to allow a workplace health and safety inspector to issue an imminent cease work direction.

Addressing the issue of the misuse of powers of right of entry by union officials is not the only way we can support the property and construction industry on the ground. Without reducing our standards, we are a government that is focused on cutting red tape and regulation as part of an overall pledge to reduce red tape in Queensland by 20 per cent. However, during the committee consultations it became obvious that a number of industry representatives were deeply concerned

about the cumulative compliance costs associated with red tape. Streamlining and tidying our statute books is always a desirable outcome, and the new conditions that will be imposed on union officials as stated above will align with other entry notification periods in the Work Health and Safety Act and Fair Work Act. By the same token, the penalty regimes established under the Electrical Safety Act 2002 have also now been made consistent with the Work Health and Safety Act.

One of the other recommendations that the committee put forward, as noted by the member for Moggill, was that department investigate the implementation of a mobile application. Can I firstly thank the member for Moggill for his interest and also welcome him to the 21st century. From the discussions the committee had, he has downloaded his first application on his mobile phone.

I would also like to mention the member for Capalaba and the comments that he made in the House. I thank him for his concerns and his input into the recommendations that I put forward during our committee consultations. The mobile application is definitely an important recommendation, especially considering that most of the members in our electorates rely on their mobile phones for advice and many mobile websites are becoming more user-friendly. Having access to the right information in the right location will inevitably increase the safety of all our constituents right across Queensland.

I would also like to mention the comments made by the member for Murrumba and his analogy between the current laws and a cricket match. He referred to unions as being like the bowler in a cricket match who has the right to give an automatic out. I have a slight variance on that. I do not believe that unions are the bowler in the game; rather, they are actually the coach on the sideline who is running on to the field in the middle of the game to be giving an out, when technically that is the job of an independent umpire. In relation to this bill, that is clearly the job for the independent work health and safety inspector.

I would now like to take this opportunity to thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, for introducing the bill and for the department's responses to the recommendations that we put forward. Like some of the other members have done in the past, we would like to reinforce all of those recommendations. They all play an important role in ensuring that all of our constituents have a safe future in their workplaces. This bill will inevitably help the government make the property and construction industry one of the four pillars of our growing economy. This bill will place much needed restrictions on the right of entry provisions of union officials, ensuring that construction sites can easily get on with the task at hand.

However, the bill introduces these important changes without compromising on health and safety standards. I thank all of the stakeholders who provided written submissions in response to the issues raised in this bill and particularly the support offered by the Attorney-General's department. I thank the chair of our committee, Mr Steve Davies, for the job he did in chairing the committee meetings and listening to all members for their recommendations.

Mrs Menkens: What a good man.

Mr STEWART: A very good man. I also thank the support staff of the Finance and Administration Committee for their great assistance in going through all of the paperwork and getting the important information ready. Finally, I thank members from both sides and the Independent member for Gladstone for their contributions to the discussions throughout the process and for the work they put in to get a great report from the Finance and Administration Committee. I encourage all members to support the bill and furthermore to actively promote this bill and the requirements in their electorates.

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (11.50 am): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the Attorney-General's Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, which came about from the findings of the Queensland government's review of the national model of work health and safety laws which were enforced in Queensland from January 2012. The main objective of the government's review was to consider the impact of these laws on businesses, especially around compliance costs.

The Newman government went to the 2012 state election with a key election platform to cut red tape to empower businesses to flourish in Queensland whilst also providing the climate through these measures to incentivise and encourage small businesses to grow in this great state, as well as attracting new businesses to Queensland. Only just last week the Lytton electorate played host to the Attorney-General, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, when he spoke with a wide range of business owners and community minded members of the public about how the government is committed to cutting red tape whilst also saving businesses money.

One of the concerns the construction industry raised in the government's consultation review of the work health and safety laws surrounded the misuse of right of entry powers by some union officials and the inconsistency from other legislation with regard to entry notification requirements and how this is impacting the industry as a whole as well as businesses through unnecessary disruptions to their work life. Between 2011 and 2013 WHS officers were reportedly called out to 57 disputes at construction workplaces across Queensland. Out of these 57 reports, no cases showed workers were placed in imminent or immediate danger from issues that were identified.

The LNP government is determined to build the construction industry and property industry and strengthen it as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. However, to do so we must get the balance right. We must have the provisions in place that do protect workers' rights, which these WHS laws do, incorporated into legislation but we must also as a government provide security to construction businesses of getting on with the job without the unnecessary disruptions and burdens various unions have caused in the past around major infrastructure and construction projects that would benefit the wider community.

Yes, unions should have the ability to protect their members on construction sites and to ensure that construction companies adhere to the protocols, rules and obligations around a safe work site. However, union officials should only be granted right of entry if there is substantial concrete evidence of unsafe work practices on selected sites. If we open the floodgates and allow every union official on every construction site, we would never get any of these projects, both at a government level and in the private sector, completed on time and on or under budget as the disruptions would be incomprehensible. That would bring the construction industry to its knees and therefore there would be no infrastructure upgrades or capital works projects within all of our Queensland electorates. The Attorney-General's amendment is a common-sense approach to the debate as it will achieve a requirement of at least 24 hours notice for work health and safety entry permit holders before they can enter a workplace to inquire on a suspected contravention to align with other entry notification periods within the act.

I briefly want to touch on the member for Mulgrave's comments from last night and give the House an example of how an industry, together with a union and its members, can really benefit, and that example is one of my own in terms of my previous role working as a deli worker. When you go to the work site and clock on, you obviously have to go through the processes of getting the site up to scratch so that it is safe not just for yourself but for other workers. For instance, you would put on the right PPE before scrubbing the floors with bleach whilst adhering to the numerous regulations around dosages of chemicals and various safety procedures so that the workplace is safe.

One thing that always used to strike me as I was walking into the corridor of that supermarket was that there was an information board that showed each member on that site how many days there had been without an incident of work health and safety. That is a good way of educating younger workers in both seafood or the deli or even out on the produce floor that not only the business but also the workers want to have the safest possible place to do the work whilst also making it safe for the wider community that uses that facility to shop. In that regard, there is always information and you have to learn the different implementations that the SDA, its members and even management have fought very hard for. That is one way that industry workers and the union can collaboratively work together to make the workplace a better place without needing the right of entry notifications week in, week out.

It should also be noted that the amended bill increases the maximum penalty for offences under the Electrical Safety Regulation 2002 so that it can be no more than 300 penalty units. This replaces the current maximum of 40. This technical change will bring the penalties in line with the nationally consistent penalties for offences under that regulation. The legislative changes contained in the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 will bring a common-sense approach to assist the construction industry in keeping workers' health and safety protections.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (11.58 am): I rise to support the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, which demonstrates the government's commitment to creating Australia's safest workplaces here in Queensland. It also reinforces our resolve to reduce the burden of red tape and gives employers and employees the tools they need to work together to resolve issues and get on with the important job of building Queensland. I commend the Attorney-General for the consultation that was done with a wide spectrum of stakeholders prior to preparing this bill, which seeks to improve upon the national model of workplace health and safety laws. While I recognise that there are many pros in favour of a uniform national system, the safety and wellbeing of people in workplaces is an issue that is not to be taken lightly.

If there is an opportunity to improve some aspects of the law in relation to circumstances that exist in Queensland, it is an opportunity that we should embrace. I have worked in the construction industry for most of my adult life, firstly as an apprentice and then becoming a current licensed builder. I hold additional licences for erecting scaffolding and removing asbestos, so I understand how important sensible reforms in the industry are for the future success of the sector.

In his introductory speech the Attorney-General recognised that some of these opportunities in particular are especially relevant to the construction industry—an industry in which I have had many years of experience before being fortunate enough to be elected to represent the people of Burnett in this great place. As I have a background in the industry, it does not surprise me that all but one of the major concerns raised during the consultation process was the dispute over a union's right of entry to workplaces, specifically in cases where the outcome was completely out of proportion with the initial cause. I know only too well how projects can blow out because of the disruptions that occur when one party chooses to underhandedly use health and safety as a weapon in industrial relations. All too often in these cases good, honest, hardworking people who just want to get on with their job—safely—are the ones who are caught in the middle. I echo the Attorney-General's call for this practice to stop. People should be able to go about their work without feeling threatened by third parties. At the same time they also need to feel confident that, when they encounter a genuine safety concern, it will be dealt with promptly and appropriately.

The most efficient way to do that is through a system where employees and employers understand their mutual obligations and act together quickly to resolve an issue as soon as it becomes apparent. Queenslanders do not want a system where even the most minor issue can spark a massive disruption to work thanks to the involvement of a third party seeking to use anything that they can find to leverage for their own cause. I note as an example of that this week's court ruling of criminal contempt against a building union organisation and a fine of \$1.2 million. I note the judge's comments as follows—

... few things could be more destructive to the authority of the Court and to the rule of law than the idea that fines or similar punishment are akin to a tax that, once budgeted for, enable the use of unlawful conduct to achieve industrial outcomes.

I note that some submissions to the committee's inquiry expressed concern about the provision in the bill that will require workplace health and safety entry permit holders to give at least 24 hours notice before they can enter a workplace to inquire about a suspected contravention. The thought process of those opposed to this provision is that it takes away the element of surprise and gives the employer an opportunity to rectify the problem before an entry permit holder arrives. I guess I might be missing something, because I fail to see the problem with that. I do not see safety as being a game of cat and mouse where the goal is to catch someone out. I see it as being a responsibility where, as soon as a dangerous situation is identified in a workplace, it is up to those in the workplace to follow a sensible and practical process to rectify it straightway.

In keeping with that philosophy, the amendments in this bill will help to ensure that employers take responsibility and act quickly when a possible breach occurs. If they fail to do so then employees are certainly within their rights to escalate their complaint further. In the event that a workplace health and safety entry permit holder notifies an employer of their intent to enter the workplace within 24 hours, with increased penalties for noncompliance with workplace health and safety entry conditions, it is hard to imagine any employer in their right mind not fixing the problem straightaway and then allowing the permit holder to inspect their solution. In contrast, under the current system a problem could be allowed to go unchecked for up to 24 hours before a workplace health and safety permit holder makes their surprise visit.

It is not hard to see that it makes sense to educate employees and employers of their mutual responsibilities and empower them to work together without unnecessary interference when it comes to workplace health and safety. It is time to put a stop to allowing unions to hold workers and employers in core industries, such as building and construction, to ransom. It is time to get on with the job of building Queensland by letting good people get on with their jobs and making sure that they are safe while they are doing that.

I thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice for bringing this bill before the House. I commend the work of all of those involved in the consultation and inquiry process.



Mrs SMITH (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment 2014. At the outset, I state that workplace health and safety is the joint responsibility of both the employer and the employee. Everyone wants to return home safely after a day at work. As an employer, I was certainly very much aware of my responsibility

to provide a safe workplace. I can say that my company never had a WorkCover claim. Like many employers, I valued my staff and their wellbeing. My son who works on a construction site has independently identified some possible workplace issues and the employer has rectified that practice immediately without requiring a third party or the involvement of a union. So I completely reject any attempt by the Labor Party to imply or suggest that we are in any way compromising safety. This legislation is in step with federal legislation.

The real reason the Labor Party is opposing this legislation is the unions' objections to restricting their ability to flout this particular provision as a ruse or a guise to use as industrial action such as work stoppages, go-slows or as a tactic when agreements are bargained for or other self-interests are being advanced. I can tell members that on many occasions over many years I have witnessed firsthand how this provision has been used and abused by a number of Labor's union mates. In the meat industry, it was very common to use workplace health and safety around enterprise bargaining agreement times. One of the key principles in enterprise bargaining is to always ensure that all parties come to the table and bargain in good faith. Clearly, that is not the case when unions are pulling the workplace health and safety ban and then trying to advance their claims.

I am very keen to give members a practical example of such action. I will go back to a few years ago when a union delegate from the AWU working as a security guard for a hospital, whose care and dedication to its patients was exceptional, decided that he would slap a ban on a neonatal unit. It was a late-at-night attempt. This very same union delegate was the one who used to use intimidation—and, in fact, shakedown tactics—that seriously would make anyone think that he had watched one too many Mafia movies. He would use standover tactics towards employees of the organisation to make them join the union. He did a range of things that were totally inappropriate.

He had absolutely no authority to use a particular piece of equipment, nor did he ever use it. He had no workplace health and safety expertise and was not nominated as the workplace health and safety officer. No, there was none of that. He just decided that there would be a ban on the use of that equipment and that it would happen late at night. We found out later that it was cards night for the wardsmen on duty and they had a priority to play. But that is another story.

Members can imagine the distress of the neonatal staff and the parents of the children and babies in the ward who may have needed to use that vital piece of equipment on that evening. The management had its very own workplace health and safety officer investigate the equipment and they provided a report. I ask members to bear in mind that that person was an accredited workplace health and safety officer. That person provided a report that there was absolutely nothing wrong and that the equipment should be put back into use.

We then contacted the AWU as its members were still refusing to take off the work ban and an urgent hearing for mediation was set down. Guess who was there supporting their thug union delegate? None other than the member for Redcliffe. That is right. Let me expose the hypocrite that the member for Redcliffe is. From this day forward, never believe the member for Redcliffe if she ever states that her interests are for patients or her constituents. Let us be very clear: the member for Redcliffe's only interest is for her union mates. The member for Redcliffe was complicit in this scam—this ruse—and the member for Redcliffe was told that day in no uncertain terms that the ban should be lifted as a trained workplace health and safety officer had deemed it to be safe. But the member for Redcliffe wanted to protect her union thug mate and went on to argue that she wanted the ability for the union's workplace health and safety officer to inspect the equipment, doubting the credibility of the accredited workplace health and safety officer—again, dragging things out, wasting time and at no stage worrying about the patients' lives that they were putting at risk. That was done for the unions to advance their cause. At the end of the day, common sense prevailed. But this matter highlights very clearly the games that unions are willing to play. I could probably give members many more instances of what has occurred over the years, but I think I have made my point quite clear.

Once again, the Attorney-General has shown common sense. I thank the committee members for their thoroughness in their scrutiny of the bill. I certainly support the passage of this bill through the House.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.08 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contribution to the debate this afternoon and yesterday on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment 2014. I also want to thank the CFMEU for its latest abuse of right of entry provisions and, again, for justifying exactly why we are debating this legislation today.

Honourable members may have noticed the front page story of the *Australian Financial Review* yesterday. It is quite interesting that the day we are debating union right of entry abuses and the support that they continually get from the Labor Party, the *Financial Review* publishes an article titled 'Lend Lease blasts CFMEU's "disgraceful" safety audits'. I will quote a couple of comments from the story and table it for honourable members.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian Financial Review*, dated 2 April 2014, titled 'Lend lease blasts CFMEU's "disgraceful" safety audits' [\[4863\]](#).

It is an exclusive written by Mr Dunckley and Mr Bleby. It states—

Lend Lease has blasted the construction union's use of safety rules as a cynical attempt to advance its industrial objectives and labelled Australia the worst country for industrial relations in the world.

Chief Executive of Lend Lease, Mr McCann, stated in an interview—

The cynical use of safety as a platform by the CFMEU is unacceptable. When it's used as a tool for other purposes we think that is a disgrace; we will resist that.

Further the article states—

Mr McCann said he believed the union targeted Lend Lease partly as a reaction to the court judgement. He said changes were needed immediately to improve the industry including the reintroduction of the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

He said—

We have 500 live sites [around the world] and by far Australia is the worst jurisdiction in which we operate.

Further in the article it states—

Grocon executive chairman Daniel Grollo also reacted angrily to CFMEU's move on Lend Lease. 'This is the problem. Only yesterday when they were clearly found to be out of step with community standards and judicial standards and they were being held to account, today they go straight away to safety.

Further in the article it states—

Fair Work Building and Construction director Nigel Hadgkiss said his agency was closely monitoring the Lend Lease situation.

The employment minister Eric Abetz said—

The actions of the CFMEU leadership today, the day after it was found guilty of criminal contempt of court, suggests that it is completely unrepentant and will not change its behaviour. Bogus safety claims should have no place in the building industry.

Honourable members, if there is any indication of why we are putting this legislation into the House it is those claims. The day we start debating this law the CFMEU, having been found guilty of criminal contempt in the court, start the safety reasons again. At the Sunshine Coast University Hospital there have been issues around safety being used for industrial disputation purposes. It is one of the oldest tricks in the book for the unions.

It is interesting that the member for Mulgrave led the opposition attack on the bill that we are debating today. It is the first time in two years as Attorney-General in this government that I have seen the opposition proffer one member of their eight to talk about workplace health and safety, workers' rights and unions. I have here the speaking list from yesterday. On it is one member, the member for Mulgrave. I suspect the member for Bundamba and the member for South Brisbane have been told to not go in too hard in support of the unions in this debate. I suspect they have been told to be careful what they say. Is it any wonder when there is an article in the *Australian* titled 'Tanya Plibersek backs end to "crazy" ALP membership rule'.

We have seen the attacks on construction sites by the CFMEU—what we know as the BLF in Queensland—where valuable taxpayer money is being wasted; there was the article in relation to Lend Lease in the *Financial Review* yesterday; we have seen many cases around Queensland of workplace health and safety being used as an industrial disputation measure; and the Deputy Labor leader, Tanya Plibersek, has endorsed calls for the party to further cut ties with the union movement by winding back rules that prevent people from joining the ALP without a union ticket. The silence from the opposition on that is breathtaking.

I wonder if the member for Bundamba, a heavyweight in the union movement and a great supporter of Peter Simpson and the ETU, supports her federal deputy leader's position on the union movement. I wonder what the member for Woodridge is thinking when contemplating her retirement and Cameron Dick coming straight in without preselection. I wonder what the member for Bundamba really thinks about the deputy Labor leader's position on cutting union ties.

This legislation is about making sure that the unions stop using workplace health and safety as a means to stop construction in this state. We have a clear objective. We have four pillars of the Queensland economy. Construction is one of them. The union movement—the CFMEU and the BLF—continually stop these works progressing in the state of Queensland because of their militant thuggish behaviour.

In Queensland we are reporting some of the greatest workplace health and safety results. The unions would claim that it is because of their intervention, their involvement, their work stoppages, their illegal picket lines and walking off job sites and marching to the front of Parliament House. That is not the case. The case is that we live in 2014. Technology has changed. A lot of our old industries are now modernising the way they work and do business and the fact is that workers are safer on sites. The mechanisms and the processes that have been put in place are much safer.

This morning we released the state-wide strategic plan on asbestos risk management. I thank the member for Ipswich and other honourable colleagues who were at the launch this morning. We heard stories about how through awareness and education people can be more safe, not only in their communities but also in their workplaces. We look up to the likes of Tiffany Ward who is in her early twenties. Her arms were damaged in a factory. She is now one of our great safety ambassadors for workplace health and safety. She has a great family. They very much fly the flag for new practices and processes that businesses are putting in place.

We live in a world now where companies, including construction companies, have higher obligations and responsibilities when it comes to workplace health and safety. I see these companies on a weekly basis doing great things to improve workplace health and safety. We all want to make sure that anyone who goes to work can come home safely to their families and their friends without injury. One death in a workplace in Queensland is one too many. That is why these things have to be looked at seriously. To turbocharge and grow our economy we have to make sure that nothing is put in place to stymie development and growth. That is what unions do, particularly the CFMEU, that use militant thuggish behaviour.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the honourable health minister, who knows only too well about this in relation to issues with the Children's Hospital site. If memory serves me correctly, the taxpayers lost \$7.5 million through Queensland Health in terms of the delay in the construction of that project. There were illegal stoppages and picket lines all in the name of what the union termed a community protest. It was not a community protest. The fact was it was an orchestrated, militant union campaign with one thing in mind and that was to stop construction. Later on when some of their members were in court they stopped other construction sites in Queensland so they could march down to the Federal Court.

Mr Springborg: Standover merchants.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. So they could all march down to the Federal Court to try to intimidate the judicial officers hearing their matters with their loud protests out the front. The judicial officers will not be intimidated, this government will not be intimidated and Queenslanders ought not be intimidated by these militant union thugs. That is why this bill is so important.

I can assure the member for Gladstone that on this workplace health and safety bill—and the member for Mulgrave asked me about this—consultation has been ongoing for a year and a half. I personally chaired two industry round table meetings that included the BLF, the CFMEU and some other unions, as well as the Master Builders Association, the Property Council and other groups. I personally chaired those two round table meetings and after the meetings we held press conferences. We came forward with certain recommendations to look at the workplace health and safety laws. The reality is that the laws were harmonised by a former government, which created a lot of extra bureaucracy and red tape for business.

We have tried to look at some of the codes of practice that have not kicked off yet, how we can bring those back and whether we can stop some of those codes of practice. Certainly there was a high level of consultation, including with the unions. It is right to say that not everyone agreed with the outcome of the round table meetings, but the point is that we held round table meetings and everyone had a chance to have a say, not only once but twice. Not only did we hold two round table meetings, but also we set up little subcommittees. I recall directing the first round table meeting to create a subcommittee, including my department and union officials, to look at some of the other issues with respect to not only right of entry and what we are debating here today but also other issues on health and safety. Certainly, the unions were involved.

This morning when we launched the state-wide asbestos strategy, the unions were involved. I met the fellow from the CFMEU downstairs in the Premier's Hall, where we launched the state-wide strategy. Certainly the unions have been involved. I was not under any misinterpretation that the unions would not enthusiastically support this provision, which states that they have to give 24 hours notice. They can still enter a site, but they have to give 24 hours notice. If there is any question of an immediate health risk, Queensland Workplace Health and Safety should deal with those issues.

There has been a lot of debate about this. The member for Gladstone raised a concern about union abuse and the misuse of the entry provisions. We understand the concerns about cultural diversity amongst the workforce. I reassure her that the department has awareness and education campaigns. We can ensure that Queensland workers understand their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. Only this morning, just over 100 people attended the launch of the asbestos strategy. That is the sort of thing that we are doing. Mal Meninga is our safety ambassador and he travels around Queensland.

An honourable member: He is a great Queenslander.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes. He lost his father to a workplace incident. Mal Meninga is a safety ambassador at the Zero Harm at Work leadership forums that are operating right around Queensland. Trevor Gillmeister is a safety ambassador for asbestos and he was present at the launch this morning. There is Tiffany Ward and her tragic injury. We have videos and DVDs. The parents of Adam Sager were present at the launch this morning. A DVD about their story and asbestos risk has been released. I assure the member for Gladstone that, in terms of cultural diversity in the workforce, we have many programs operating around Queensland. We want to ensure that we use our safety ambassadors, such as Mal Meninga and Trevor Gillmeister, who go into the communities to talk to workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities in terms of worker safety.

This bill is about making sure that the state continues to grow and the economy continues to be turbocharged. Property and construction is a key pillar of the economy and that is what this government is about. I thank members for their support in this debate. I suspect there will come a time when other jurisdictions will follow Queensland's lead. It has been a discussion at the COAG meetings for ministers in industrial relations and workplace health and safety portfolios. I suspect that a lot of other jurisdictions will follow our lead. Indeed, prior to some recent elections in other states, some Labor jurisdictions were contemplating doing what we are doing. It seems that the world is moving this way and the only one not moving with the rest of society is the Queensland Labor Party.

I end where I started: if only the Labor Party Queensland division would take note of one of its federal Labor leaders, Tanya Plibersek, who has endorsed calls for the party to further cut ties with the union movement by winding back rules that prevent people from joining the ALP without a union ticket. While I live in hope, that will never get past the member for Bundamba, the member for Inala or the members for Redcliffe, Mulgrave and Woodridge. While the rest of the world, including the Labor Party at a federal level, is moving with the times and moving in this direction, unfortunately, the opposition is still stuck in the past. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 70:

LNP, 66—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, Grimwade, Gullely, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Latter, Maddern, Malone, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

PUP, 2—Douglas, Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Cunningham, Wellington.

NOES, 6:

ALP, 6—Byrne, D'Ath, Miller, Mulherin, Pitt, Scott.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

 **Mr PITT** (12.31 pm): This clause amends section 68, which imposes a significant hurdle to effective workplace health and safety protection and prevention. It will clearly reduce prevention and protection of Queensland work sites when this government imposes a 24-hour mandatory period before a registered workplace health and safety officer can access a site, even when there is a serious WHS risk or there has already been an injury or accident.

The 24-hour mandatory ban on workplace health and safety officers could allow dodgy bosses to try to hide workplace health and safety discrepancies, and do so in a manner that is itself not safe—that is, they could try to direct action be taken about an unsafe practice but without halting work for that to occur. The 24-hour mandatory ban also applies to cases where accidents or injuries have occurred. Preventing the access of WHS representatives allows a less than reputable employer to hide evidence or change the surroundings of the incident.

It is alarming that I have heard a number of times during the debate on this bill the Attorney-General say that, under the fair work legislation, if unions want to enter a construction site they have to give 24 hours notice. He said that it is ‘a copy of Julia Gillard’s and Kevin Rudd’s legislation. So if it is okay for the federal Labor Party, why is it not okay for the state Labor Party?’ The member for Capalaba said the bill is to ‘align with the other entry notifications in the Work Health and Safety Act and the Fair Work Act 2009.’

It is completely misleading to suggest that this legislation is consistent with the right of entry provisions in the Fair Work Act. This was made very clear during the committee process and it is there in black and white in the committee report, which was endorsed by LNP members. Appendix D on page 71 of the committee report is a comparison between the proposed amendments—the existing provisions within this bill—and the Fair Work Act.

The Fair Work Act sets out where 24 hours notice is not required for a WHS officer to enter a site. It says—

A WHS entry permit holder can enter a workplace where a relevant worker works to inquire into suspected contraventions of the WHS Act without giving any notice. As soon as is reasonably practicable after entering a workplace to inquire into a suspected WHS contravention written notice of entry must be provided to the relevant PCBU and the person with management or control of the workplace unless doing so would:

- defeat the purpose of the entry, for example providing notice could result in the destruction, concealment or alteration of relevant evidence, or
- would unreasonably delay the entry permit holder in an urgent case, for example if the WHS entry permit holder had a reasonable belief that workers were being exposed to a hazard that posed a serious and immediate risk to their health and safety and it was necessary to warn them.

These clear and important provisions do not exist in this Queensland legislation. So the question for the Attorney-General is: does he not realise that these provisions are not included in his own legislation or is he being deliberately misleading by suggesting this legislation matches the federal provisions?

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I rise to speak to this clause. I remain concerned that the 24-hour exclusion is inflexible. There are circumstances where assistance is needed within a 24-hour period. I believe that most employers are honest and honourable. However, I believe that there would be employers who could use that 24-hour period to reconfigure the workplace so that perhaps their exposure to fines under the Work Health and Safety Act is reduced or removed altogether.

I remain concerned about the inflexibility of this 24-hour provision. This will come up again in a subsequent clause so I will not transgress into the provisions of that clause. I acknowledge what the minister has said—that is, that he has had round table discussions. I acknowledge what the minister said in terms of not everybody being happy with the results. I think that is the conclusion of many negotiations where there are winners and losers. My concern with this clause is that the losers are going to be the workers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and workers who come into the workplace and really need assistance to understand their rights in circumstances with risk. Not all employers are risk averse. Not a lot but some employers are quite prepared to put workers at risk.

I reiterate my support for the notion that right of entry should not be used to abuse the system—that is, to use safety as an excuse for militant action. That is not why I have concerns about this. My genuine concern is for those people who are disempowered in a workplace because of their personality, their psychological make-up, maybe their mental illness, their language or the fact that they come from culturally diverse circumstances. They may not feel that they can raise safety issues themselves and rely on assistance. I reiterate that I am not interested in the abuse of the system, but I am very interested in the protection of workers within the workplace.

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Gladstone for her comments. I know that she says that she is not interested in the abuse that is happening, but the problem is that the abuse is happening on work sites. That is why we have to fix this. To the member for Mulgrave who mentions dodgy businesses, I say that the bill is about dodgy, militant union thugs which the Labor Party continues to support day in and day out because the dodgy, militant union thugs support the member for Mulgrave to make sure he still has a job in this place and in the Labor Party.

Division: Question put—That clause 6, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 69:

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

PUP, 2—Douglas, Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 1—Wellington.

NOES, 7:

ALP, 6—Byrne, D'Ath, Miller, Mulherin, Pitt, Scott.

INDEPENDENTS, 1—Cunningham.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

 **Mr PITT** (12.44 pm): This clause shows that the government is not fair dinkum about workers being protected in their own workplace. This clause significantly disempowers health and safety representatives—members of staff—in a work site. There are examples from all industries from construction sites to hospitals to supermarkets that the existing provisions provide a useful and simple tool to address legitimate workplace health and safety concerns at the coalface and in real time.

It is particularly important for vulnerable workers to have the ability of a colleague to provide this protection. This goes for casual workers, young employees, workers with English as a second language and low-paid workers whose job security and relative bargaining imbalance means that they are less likely to stand up to their employer on matters of safety. This is a retrograde step and will see workplace health and safety standards lowered and more workplace injuries to men and women across our state.

Those opposite carry on about union figures but they forget who workplace health and safety laws are actually about. Workplace health and safety protections are there to look after everyday men and women. Removing the rights of work site based health and safety representatives and opposing a 24-hour delay on entering sites will have a very real implication where health risks exist. It means 24 more hours in an unsafe workplace or 24 hours of continuation of a particular unsafe practice in a workplace and because of that, as sure as day follows night and night follows day, we will see more people injured at work.

The Attorney-General suggests that this is not about dodgy bosses but about militant union thugs. The Attorney-General must remember that this is about workers, and what he is doing, again, is using the guise of workplace health and safety to address, in his words, an industrial matter. Industrial relations legislation, the Industrial Relations Act, would have been the way to approach this, but he did not want to do that. He wanted to go in the backdoor. This is not harmonisation; this is all about the ideological approach from this Attorney-General. As it was said very early in the piece, the numbers of these incidents are not through the roof. The numbers of misuse of WHS permit holders are not through the roof. This is the Attorney-General yet again using a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I would like to place on the record my appreciation to every member of the Finance and Administration Committee. In relation to this clause, without breaching confidentiality, there was a significant amount of conversation. The conversation resulted in the following recommendation—

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.

That was not to contravene the government's policy and the desire of government to address the issue of unions using workplace health and safety to inappropriately access workplaces and cause dissension. The outcome that we wished to achieve was to ensure that in getting to that place workers were not disadvantaged. The recommendation was to allow for a workplace representative to ring the regulator, explain the situation and have authority delegated to them to stop whatever work was unsafe in the workplace. This recommendation allowed me to support the report because I believed it was a very well thought out, achievable result. The minister's response states—

The recommendation is consistent with current operational arrangements under the WHS Act. If the regulator is contacted in relation to a serious and imminent or immediate risk to the health and safety of a worker, an inspector will be assigned. If the inspector agrees there is an immediate risk they can issue a prohibition notice requiring the work activity to cease until the inspector is satisfied that the risks have been adequately addressed. The Government considers this the appropriate response from the Regulator rather than attending the workplace to authorise a HSR to direct a worker to cease work.

The appropriate wording there is 'attending'. The intention of our recommendation was to allow a long distance authorisation, on the basis of a description, for the workplace health and safety representative on site to go up to a worker and direct them to cease work, but this was only on the basis of delegated authority from the regulator. That is going to go and it is going to require the worker themselves to make the phone call to workplace health and safety. Again, my concern is that many workers will not feel empowered to do that.

Division: Question put—That clause 11, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 66:

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

NOES, 10:

ALP, 6—Byrne, D'Ath, Miller, Mulherin, Pitt, Scott.

PUP, 2—Douglas, Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Cunningham, Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—

Mr BLEIJIE (12.55 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 16 (Insertion of new s 143A)

Page 9, line 7, after 'WHS'—

insert—

civil

I table the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to the Attorney-General, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie's amendments [\[4864\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.56 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.56 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 pm to 2.30 pm.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (2.30 pm), by leave: I table Ethics Committee report No. 144 titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Education and Innovation Committee on 21 November 2013 relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the Education and Innovation Committee by submitter*.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 144—Matter of privilege referred by the Education and Innovation Committee on 21 November 2013 relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the education and innovation committee by submitters [4865].

I commend the report and the committee's recommendations to the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): It is now time for Private Members' Statements.

Mr STEVENS: Excuse me, Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. They are effectively now known as 'Members' Statements', not 'Private Members' Statements'.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: My mistake. I call Members' Statements and the member for Condamine.

LIQUID FUEL SUPPLY (ETHANOL) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (2.31 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Liquid Fuel Supply Act 1984 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Liquid Fuel Supply (Ethanol) Amendment Bill 2014 [4866].

Tabled paper: Liquid Fuel Supply (Ethanol) Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [4867].

The explanatory notes are very self-explanatory. They are very easy to read. This is a very short bill. Let me say that this exact same bill was presented by the LNP to the then Labor government in the past, and I have a few quotes to read out during my speech relating to that. At that time in October 2008, now Minister Seeney said—

It is a point that has been made by other speakers on this side of the House tonight. This is the third time that we have tried to ensure ethanol is part of the fuel supply in Queensland. It is the third time that the Labor government has come in here with weak, mealy-mouthed excuses for not supporting the initiative that we have brought forward.

The Deputy Premier will have the opportunity to support this initiative when this bill is debated. I have another short quote from now Minister Cripps from the same day. He said—

This is the third time that the opposition has introduced such a bill. To that end, I have a history lesson for the member for Whitsunday. If the state Labor government does not support this bill, it will be the third time that the Labor Party has denied Queensland the opportunity to develop the commercial confidence and commercial certainty required for a strong renewable fuels industry to be established.

I would like to table a number of speeches that were made by members of the now LNP government during debate on that bill.

Tabled paper: Extract from Hansard, second reading debate: Liquid Fuel Supply (Ethanol) Amendment Bill, dated 14 May 2008 [4868].

This bill is simple. It is to mandate ethanol in Queensland. This bill is very simple and there is no cost to government whatsoever. The LNP members will have the opportunity to speak on their own legislation that they had put before the previous Labor government on three occasions. It is word for word; it is their legislation that they will have the chance to debate. If they do not pass this legislation when it is debated, it will show the House the deceit and the deception they went to the people of Queensland with on two occasions. On two occasions, they went to the election to face the people of Queensland promising to mandate ethanol in Queensland. Now that they are in government, they will have the opportunity to face their own legislation and not deny the people of Queensland. I say again that this bill is their bill word for word. It was written by them and it is now presented by Katter's Australian Party. So they will have to show the people of Queensland their absolute deceit and their absolute determination.

First Reading

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—KAP) (2.34 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND ROOMING ACCOMMODATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.34 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Amendment Bill 2014 [[4869](#)].

Tabled paper: Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [[4870](#)].

The objective of the bill is to amend the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to make provision for statutory minimum standards for rental accommodation and rooming accommodation in Queensland. This will allow the minister to prescribe minimum standards for private rental accommodation, both standard housing and rooming accommodation, by regulation in relation to matters including, for example, the following: sanitation, drainage, cleanliness and repair of premises; vermin infestation; construction, condition, structures, safety and situation of premises; and privacy and security. There are a number of other matters and they are set out more fully in the bill and the explanatory notes.

According to the 2011 census of population and housing, there were 513,415 rented dwellings in Queensland, about 60,000 more than in 2006. Rented dwellings accounted for 34 per cent of the 1,510,204 occupied dwellings where tenure was known. Queensland continues to have the highest proportion of rented dwellings of any Australian state. At the same time, public housing for low-income Queenslanders is becoming increasingly difficult to access due to a decrease in available housing stock and tighter restrictions on eligibility requirements. Low-cost private rental accommodation is increasingly filling the void this creates. Of the 513,415 rented properties in Queensland, 87.6 per cent were rented in the private sector.

In 2009-10, 60 per cent of lower income households in the bottom 40 per cent of income distribution paid more than 30 per cent of their gross income on housing. Sometimes the quality of low-cost private rental accommodation is of an unsatisfactory standard. Access to stable, adequate shelter plays a major role in the health and wellbeing of families, and in particular children, by providing a safe environment and the security that allows participation in the social, educational, economic and community aspects of their lives.

Housing issues that impact on health can include such things as structural integrity, weatherproofing, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness and hygiene, security, sanitation facilities and cooking facilities. By imposing minimum housing standards for private rental accommodation, governments can fulfil their obligations to ensure that, even at the lowest end of the rental market where renters are most vulnerable, standards are enforceable to provide that basic minimum health and safety standards apply to places where Queensland families live.

First Reading

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (2.37 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mitochondrial Disease

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (2.38 pm): On 30 January this year my little daughter had her first day of kindy. This day she was particularly excited because she was to share this experience with her little friend Ari, and a few days later she was to attend Ari's fourth birthday. Tragically, Ari never made it to kindy and we never got to celebrate his fourth birthday.

Ari is the son of Mark and Vanessa Rotolone, close friends of me and my wife. On 1 February everything changed for the Rotolone family. His parents could not have known this at the time, but on this day they shared their last words with their little boy. On this day, Ari was particularly tired and very weak. His balance and coordination had become significantly affected, so much so that he was swaying as he sat and walked. Ari had his first seizure which was to be one of many. Within hours of being admitted to the Royal Children's Hospital ICU, Ari's seizures were increasing in frequency and progressed until they were unrelenting.

Despite the efforts of the ICU team, the paediatric team and the metabolic team, Ari's seizures were not able to be controlled or suppressed without the use of medication to place him in a medically induced coma. His parents will never forget the moment they learnt that Ari's condition was being caused by mitochondrial disease, a debilitating and potentially fatal disease that reduces the ability of the body's cells to produce the energy that it needs to sustain life. When the mitochondria are not working properly, cells begin to die until eventually whole organ systems fail and the patient's life itself is compromised. The decompensation of Ari's condition progressed rapidly and within two weeks of his admission, it became clear that the degree and the rate of the dysfunction in his brain would not be compatible with life. At 3.30 pm on Monday, 17 February, Ari's parents held on to their treasured, previously irrepressible, boy as life support was discontinued and he released his last breath of air. Nothing could prepare them for the feelings of despair that followed.

During their 2½ week stay in ICU, Ari was one of three children who were taken due to mitochondrial disease with at least one other child having passed away in the month prior. Currently, there is no known cure and it is not possible to predict the future of a person with the disease, as the expression of the illness in each individual is extremely variable and difficult to assess. The confusing and variable array of symptoms in large part explains why to date mitochondrial diseases have been so often misdiagnosed, even by experienced clinicians. The need for increased research into mitochondrial disease cannot be overstated. Mitochondrial damage is now being linked to other conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, cancers, heart disease and SIDS. Nothing will ease the pain of losing Ari, but we can hope that by sharing Ari's story we can increase awareness of mitochondrial disease and encourage individuals to participate in fundraising towards researching the disease, improving diagnostic and treatment options and supporting sufferers to improve their quality of life. Please visit www.amdf.org.au for more information. Rest in peace, little Ari.

Open Data Initiative

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.40 pm): I would like to update the House, during these new members' statements, on the progress of the open data initiative with which the Premier has entrusted me. It is one of the highest priorities of the Newman LNP government and independent observers have noted that Queensland is leading the way in Australia on this important global initiative. We are in the process of engaging the three levels of government—local, state and federal—to work together and collaborate to achieve a strategic direction that has never been done before in the area of open and accountable governing through easy access of departmental government data.

Recently, the Brisbane City Council has come on board to participate in the open data industry advisory group. The Premier has been instrumental in this inclusive strategy along with approaching the federal government to get involved. We are excited about the rapid progress in a relatively short period. This year, like last year, the open data apps competition for the Premier's Awards continues. This year we hope to initiate a special format for our apps competition along with the usual areas of non-government and business, which would see the Public Service get involved. This would continue to expand the area of creative thinking in the Public Service to provide practical and useable apps that are beneficial for the particular areas that each group focus on.

I continue to meet with academia, IT and open data industry leaders, community organisations and not-for-profit groups to encourage participation in our open data journey, and they have all been very enthusiastic. I am astounded at their commitment and dedication to the government priority to make the Queensland government the most open and accountable government in Australia, if not globally. This reinforces the government's commitment to the people of Queensland and their need for government data and also reduces the need for right to information requests. Ultimately this will save Queenslanders money as, in most instances, we hope that we will have reached a stage where people will not need to submit an RTI application because the information they seek will be all there on the open data website.

While our open data process is an ongoing journey, to date we have 718 data sets, or about 3,306 resources, available on the open data website. We are strongly lobbying, both internationally and nationally, to get open data on the G20 agenda for the meeting of world leaders in Brisbane later this year. This global platform will be a fantastic opportunity to elevate our priority of open data to a world stage. I encourage all Queenslanders to visit our open data website that offers open and useable data, which is a great avenue to see and use the state government data firsthand.

Kawana Electorate, Events

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.43 pm): I acknowledge the good people of Kawana who turned out to support the Kawana Interschool Trivia Challenge last week, which I hosted with the support of Talara Primary College and my good friend the education minister and, no, I did not win. The light-hearted, oceanic theme event was a huge success, with more than 15 tables filled with Kawana community members, businesses and school groups from across the electorate going head to head in four rounds of trivia, all for a good cause. I am delighted to confirm that we raised more than \$2,500 for local children's charity SunnyKids. I must acknowledge my esteemed colleague the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, Minister for Education, Training and Employment, for accepting my invitation to join us on the night.

A government member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The minister spoke about the good work the government is doing within the education sector before answering questions from the audience. I thank the minister also for his excellent singing on the night and his colourful pirate outfit as well as his broad general knowledge, which helped our table to win two rounds. I table a copy of a newspaper article featuring the education minister and me.

Tabled paper: Article from *Kawana Weekly*, dated 3 April 2014, titled 'MPs let hair down' [\[4871\]](#).

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I was dressed up. You can see his hat. As well as a successful night for SunnyKids, the evening was memorable for the fabulous MCs, Captain and Tennille, otherwise known as Janet and David Thomas, who celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary with all of us. I am sure the funds raised will help SunnyKids continue its great work in the local community.

Also in Kawana, it was great to meet so many Aroona and Kawana Forest residents at my recent mobile office events. It was a beautiful sunny morning and a lovely backdrop to discuss a wide range of local and state-wide issues which were raised with me on the day. I like to be out and about, as a good local member should be—living and working in their electorate, raising their family in their electorate—and these mobile office events are a great way to discuss issues of concern to my constituents close to home. I look forward to the next mobile office events.

I also acknowledge today the installation of new flashing school zone lights at another two schools in the Kawana electorate last week. The lights were switched on along Sportmans Parade outside Kawana Waters State College and on Parklands Boulevard at Meridan State College as part of the government's election commitments. I thank Minister Emerson. I acknowledge him in the chamber. These signs go a long way to remind drivers that they are approaching school zones and that they need to slow down immediately. Schools have welcomed these lights to help improve safety for parents and students on surrounding roads at peak times. I am pleased that the government, through this good transport minister, is able to deliver this initiative in Kawana.

Still in Kawana, my family and I thoroughly enjoyed last weekend's March against Melanoma Awareness Walk, hosted annually by Melanoma Patients Australia. There were well over 100 people, many dressed in orange, the MPA colour, taking part in the 2.6-kilometre walk, which was great to see—and I lasted the distance. Melanoma is a topic close to my heart, having personally impacted my family as my mother was diagnosed with melanoma. So I was particularly touched by the strong turnout on the day. We enjoy lovely weather on the Sunshine Coast, but with that comes the ever-present danger of skin cancer. I and my family are pleased to do whatever we can to help spread the important sun safety awareness message. I thank all those who turned out on the day and participated in the march.

Norman, Mr G; Woodridge Electorate

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (2.46 pm): Before delivering my speech, I would like to pay a short tribute to Glenn Norman, our long-serving fire officer from Woodridge Fire Station. Glenn lost his life in a tragic accident at the Caboolture airfield along with the pilot and three others, including Joseph King and Rahuia Hohua, a young couple planning a skydiving adventure who were also from Logan. Family and friends and many fire officers gathered last Friday at the family home to pay tribute to Glenn and to comfort Linda and their two daughters, Sarah and Megan. Fireies are a special breed—brave, dedicated to saving lives and property, loyal to their team—and Glen was one of the best as well as a loving husband and father.

As we know, it has now been two years since the government changed hands and let's look at how the people of Woodridge are faring. Fortunately, many are a stoic lot and are careful with their funds and contented with their home. Many volunteer in our schools and organisations and help out their neighbours. However, the rise in the cost of living, contrary to the promises of this LNP government, is stretching many to their limits and beyond. We have suffered funding cuts in areas that have had a profound effect on many of our residents.

How many people have missed out on training and, thus, a worthwhile job because of the demise of Skilling Queenslanders for Work? The answer would be in the hundreds. How many young people have dropped out of school because of funding cuts to the Get Set for Work program? Again, there would be many. Perhaps some of those who are now causing us difficulties on our streets could have been re-engaged in schools through this program.

In our primary schools we no longer have our highly valued nurses, many of whom had 20 or more years of experience. They knew how to diagnose health issues in children, such as hearing and sight issues. In the case of one little boy, due to the expertise of the nurse, he was quickly admitted to hospital and diagnosed with leukaemia, thus saving his life.

With the demise of our Tenancy Advocacy and Support Service, there is a flood of misery through the doors of my office. Yes, they turn to us for help and I thank my staff for all they do. However, the present policies of our housing minister have brought serious issues of increasing homelessness, and it is increasingly difficult to ensure a safety net for people when the hands of those who once could assist now have their hands tied.

Our community organisations, our schools and any group receiving government funding have all had to cut back on their services and move their funding around to try to maintain all of the advances they have made in recent years. We are now seeing our maternity and child health services

centralised to Logan Hospital, making pre and postnatal visits more difficult for many of our mums. While the health minister trumpets reduced waiting times, I can verify that his figures are not borne out in practice on many occasions. Government members should be thoroughly ashamed of what—

(Time expired)

Cross-Border Policing

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.49 pm): I rise to update the House on cross-border policing activities on the southern Gold Coast. Living in a border community will always present some obstacles, especially when it involves such a high concentration of people and activity as does the popular tourist region of Coolangatta-Tweed.

On 31 January this year Geoff Provest, the member for Tweed, and I convened a cross-border meeting of high ranking police officials from Queensland and New South Wales. This was a productive meeting, with authorities from both states communicating and working cooperatively towards keeping our neighbourhoods safe.

Since the inception of Taskforce Takeback on 28 September 2013, the cross-border operations conducted between Queensland police and New South Wales police have included a traffic operation targeting the cross-border movement of criminal motorcycle gangs and the antfortification of the Nomads CMG clubhouse and similarly the Mongols CMG clubhouse. It was these cross-border activities that saw the arrest of a number of CMG members for drug trafficking, and one offender was the first person to be charged pursuant to the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Act 2014.

From 11-20 March 2014, in a 10-day joint initiative targeting criminal motorcycle gangs in the region, Taskforce Maxima joined the New South Wales Police Force's Strike Force Raptor and the national gangs squad which yielded some impressive figures: eight arrests; five firearms seized; the dismantling of two clubhouses; the execution of six search warrants; the inspection of six businesses associated with criminal gangs; and 46 traffic infringement notices. This joint operation between the Queensland police and the New South Wales police recently arrested another series of CMG members who are awaiting their fate. Police engaged in a number of discussions with members and associates of criminal gangs, providing invaluable intelligence regarding their illegal operations. This collaborative approach has enormous merit and highlights the successful outcomes that can be achieved by working together.

I commend the work of Deputy Commissioner Brett Pointing and Superintendent Jim Keogh for cracking down hard on criminals, in cleaning up our streets and throwing the full force of the law at those who choose to participate in illegal activities. In just over six months Taskforce Takeback has made significant inroads towards stamping out criminal behaviour. They have completed 791 arrests, issued 2,726 traffic infringement notices, 137 liquor infringement notices, conducted 16,728 random breath tests and generated 2,100 intelligence reports.

I also commend the work of the police minister and this government for increasing Gold Coast police numbers by 106 officers, from 681 to 787. These additional officers, combined with the necessary resources and the introduction of tough legislation, have contributed to assaults falling, robberies and break and enters on the Gold Coast are down—

(Time expired)

Graceville Railway Station Upgrade

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.52 pm): Today I rise to speak about the exciting works that are underway to improve train services in my wonderful electorate of Indooroopilly. I am proud to be delivering an upgrade which will increase accessibility to the Graceville train station as part of the LNP government's plan to target disability black spots. This government remains committed to revitalising front-line services by providing accessible rail services that allow all customers to travel safely and easily.

Graceville is one of four train stations that are receiving \$40 million worth of accessibility upgrades. Dinmore, Alderley, Newmarket and Graceville are all key stations on the network that currently have stairs-only access to some platforms. While Labor wasted money on making stations pretty, they failed to properly address access for the disabled, parents with prams and the elderly at 31 train stations across the network. There are currently several areas where up to three stations in a row have stairs-only access. This government's program delivers what is required; not just beautification.

The program will deliver lifts which will vastly improve safety and access for all, but, importantly, to those who need it the most. Work is underway on the final design and this is expected to be completed in the coming weeks, with construction expected to start later this year. Concept sketches of the proposed station upgrade are now being finalised and will be presented as part of the community consultation process this month. Feedback will be considered in developing the final design of the station upgrade. Community consultation is planned to commence after Easter from 22 April 2014 for a period of two weeks, during which time passengers and the community can have their say on the proposed design through my electorate office. Graceville was prioritised for an upgrade based on a number of factors, including current level of access, customer patronage, nearby accessible stations and facilities in the local community.

We are working closely with our accessibility reference group and community representatives to review our method for prioritising stations to ensure we get it right. This is just one part of the Newman government's efforts to improve travel for train passengers. Since coming to government we have halved Labor's fare hikes and provided free travel after nine journeys. That is a saving of more than \$400 this year for a person travelling Monday to Friday from my electorate. We have added 1,000 more services, and passengers have welcomed that with a boost of 27,000 additional rail passengers a week. This Newman government has also fixed reliability, taking it from a three-year low to a 10-year high, and signed a contract to deliver 75 more six-car trains arriving from late next year. They will be a welcome addition, particularly when our BaT project is completed. These improvements, along with our investment to improve access to these four train stations, make a better train network. It is just another way that front-line services have vastly improved under the Newman government.

Morayfield Electorate, Projects



Mr GRIMWADE (Morayfield—LNP) (2.55 pm): Over the last five years the residents in Dale Street, Burpengary, in my electorate have suffered disasters from flooding occurrences that have happened through natural disasters. Before I was a member in this place and since I have become a member, I have witnessed the horrendous situations that families have had to suffer as their houses are continually inundated by floods around that region. In 2012 I joined forces with Peter Flannery of the Moreton Bay Regional Council and Wyatt Roy, our federal member, to see if we could come up with a plan to help the good folk in that street.

Honourable members will recall that last year I announced the state government was contributing \$644,000 to the Moreton Bay Regional Council's \$5.8 million project to fix the problems in Dale Street, and it gives me great pleasure to update the House on the situation in Dale Street. Last Saturday Wyatt Roy, the federal member for Longman, joined Peter Flannery, the local councillor, and me in announcing that the federal government had also contributed around \$2 million to this project, so this project is now funded by three levels of government and will definitely progress ahead. I want to take the opportunity to thank the Premier and the minister for local government, David Crisafulli, who met with me many times to go through the details of this project. As the local member, I am very proud that we could deliver this to our local community.

On behalf of everyone I want to thank Monique Le Bars and Dan Bugden, who seem to be the local champions of Dale Street and the communication point for many. Thank you also to those who were there at the announcement. This project will be a great relief to those residents in Dale Street and the surrounding area, and it will bring great relief to their families. There were tears of joy on the day.

The next day I turned the sod on a new primary school, Carmichael College, at Narangba. This government is contributing \$1.7 million towards that project. I joined the principal of the school, Ms Margot Pinel, and she was very excited—as I was—to be turning the soil for a new school in Narangba. This private school is part of the Mueller College and is definitely a great addition to our community.

Our local *Narangba Voice*—our online newspaper that sprang up in Narangba—is also covering this story. It is doing a fantastic job with project leader Katy More. It is covering this story throughout its whole build—from the sod turning, throughout the building process and when the school opens. I pay tribute to Katy for showing her commitment to our Narangba community in offering her services to cover what will be a fantastic project in the Narangba area.

State Schools, Cleaners

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (2.58 pm): I rise to speak about the important people doing work in our wonderful state schools across Queensland. Of course we know our principals and teachers are critical to delivering the fantastic work for and education of our young students and supporting those school families across Queensland, but I also want to acknowledge the important work that is done by our cleaners in our great schools. Of course, those cleaners work tirelessly in our local schools. Currently there are over 5,700 cleaners in our state schools. Those cleaners are predominantly women, many over the age of 50—the majority are over the age of 45—and on an average have worked 10 or 15 years for the education system and some have been there well in excess of 25 years. We should certainly be valuing that contribution that is made by these wonderful cleaners.

Why is their work so important? These are the people who are first to the school and last to leave. They are the ones who are there when our children are dropped off and picked up each day. This is particularly important when children are dropped off early or picked up late from school. The children know that they can trust the school cleaners. Many school cleaners have worked at their schools for decades. Along with teacher aides, they are the constant face at the school. They work in every part of the school, including staff rooms and the principal's office. They work in areas where they have access to sensitive information, so the fact that they are well known and trustworthy is extremely important. They are on hand through most parts of the day to do emergency clean-ups, ensuring that teachers and teacher aides can get on with the job of educating children. They also help out in after-hours events like their school fetes. Unfortunately, these cleaners are very concerned about their jobs. They have been in fear of the government's agenda for outsourcing across many sectors of the Public Service. I seek to table a non-conforming petition which calls on the Queensland government to ensure that school cleaners' jobs are not outsourced. Over 6,000 signatures are on that petition alone. United Voice has collected over 7,600 signatures.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition requesting that school cleaners jobs are not outsourced [\[4872\]](#).

Government members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: I hear those on the other side laughing, which I find absolutely offensive. This government should step up and give these cleaners an absolute guarantee that their jobs will not be outsourced. Do not be tricky with the wording; do not say 'only until the agreement expires'. Stand up and give them the commitment of job security.

(Time expired)

Noosa, Koala Population

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (3.01 pm): I was disturbed recently to see in one of my local papers the headline for a story which said that the last koala may be lost. The content of the story presented a familiar enough scenario in that it dealt with the impact of land clearing on the Sunshine Coast koala habitat. The story focused on a constituent's concern that land clearing in her area would see the end to what she said was the last remaining koala from hundreds that had lived in the area until about 20 years ago. Koalas are iconic and they are listed on both the state and federal threatened species list. We must do whatever we can to protect them while balancing the requirements of development and providing housing for the state's ever-increasing population. That requires all parties involved to work together to devise strategies to support their preservation. It is just not good enough for environmentalists to say that development is bad, just as it is not acceptable for developers to push ahead with projects without considering environmental impacts.

The largest threat to our koala population does not come from reduced habitat caused by housing development. It ranks lower than death and injury from motor vehicle and domestic dogs. Most koalas hit by cars or ravaged by dogs are killed or so badly injured that they need to be put down. Those that do survive after treatment are routinely returned to the area in which they were found. It is a policy which has been in force for years. I am not sure it is the most appropriate course of action, because returned koalas are often mauled by a dog or hit by a car all over again. The second issue impacting upon koala numbers is the practice of euthanising female koalas that are found to have chlamydia. The Newman government has invested \$3.2 million into research to find a cure. In the meantime, there is no reason why treated koalas cannot be released back into the wild. Experience has shown that adhering to the policies of the previous government is not serving our koalas well.

I have talked previously to the environment minister about finding an alternate way of dealing with these twin issues which are affecting the state's koala population. I am working on an alternate strategy involving Noosa which will involve greater safety for injured and diseased koalas and improve their survival rates. Right in the centre of Noosa we have the national park. During the 1950s there was a transfer of koalas into the park organised by Dr Arthur Harold. Unfortunately, the population has dwindled over time to now just a handful, if that. The park is capable of sustaining a significant koala population. There is room, there is food and it is safe. It is early days yet for the strategy, but there are details to be discussed and I believe it offers a promise as a way forward to protect our koala population.

Mundingburra Electorate, State Emergency Service

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (3.04 pm): I rise with a good-news story that could well have ended as a bad one, and that is to inform the House that early last month I put out a call to arms to my community of Mundingburra and indeed the broader Townsville community to answer a plea from the SES—that great organisation that is always there in our hour of need—because it had seen a significant fall in its numbers to the point that numbers had gone down to about 150. In a city of Townsville, I can report that that is below what we need to have a proper functioning SES branch. The reason for the fall is pretty simple, and that is that people really answered the call to arms post 2011 when we were in our hour of need. It is understandable that as people get busy and the need for those services or the perceived need decreases people feel that they do not have to continue to volunteer. As a result, we put out this call to arms. I can report to the House that 120 people turned up for an information night and of that we have secured 57 new recruits for the SES. They range in age from between 16 and 60 but all have one thing in common, and that is a thirst to serve the great community of North Queensland.

Who are these people? Who are these angels in orange? They are your neighbour. They are your sister. They might be the plumber who comes to fix a leaky tap. They are everyday heroes and it is just so appropriate that we reflect on what they bring to our community. In the time of a disaster when these orange uniforms turn up, it is not just about moving the fallen tree. It is not just about putting a tarp on a roof; it is about bringing a sense of hope to a community and a person who is not feeling particularly good at that point in time. I have seen it after Yasi and I have seen it after the tornado that went through Vincent as the local member, but I have also seen it as the recovery minister in places like your own home city, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham, in Bundaberg, in North Burnett, right across-the-board. The sense of hope that the SES brings people is just tremendous. Whilst our numbers are now above 200, which for Townsville is fantastic, I again put out a call to arms to the community. To those who feel like they have something to give, it is a very worthwhile organisation and this is a call that we should echo across the state, because not only by joining the State Emergency Service are you helping your neighbour and your loved ones and your community but indeed you are helping yourself become a better person in the great city that you love.

Global Food Forum

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (3.07 pm): Last week I had the honour of attending the Global Food Forum in Sydney as a guest of the organisers, News Ltd, through the group's national newspaper, the *Australian*, and the packaging and container giant, Visy Industries. As I said, this forum was held in Sydney and it was the second of its type. The previous forum was held last year in Melbourne. The forum drew on the collective experience of government, researchers, agribusiness, finance and industry leaders to examine Australia's progress in capitalising on the strong demand for our food products in Asia—the so-called soft commodity boom, or the dining boom, as many people put it.

Forum delegates included retailing and food processing leaders such as the bosses of Coles; the processing giants Goodman Fielder, Simplot and Cargill; dairy organisations such as Murray-Goulburn and Fonterra; as well as, I was pleased to see, leading Queensland cattle producers Graeme Acton and Peter Hughes. Most importantly, the delegates also heard from leading agribusiness financiers—if you like, the merchant bankers who put together deals throughout Australia. The federal Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, and the shadow minister, Joel Fitzgibbon, were in attendance and I was able to represent Queensland as the only other government representative in attendance.

There is no doubt about it: opportunities are plentiful throughout Asia, India and in particular China for a whole range of products and I refer to the recent interest in dairy products, particularly infant formula, in China. The Global Food Forum focused on not only demand but also how Australia is dealing with those opportunities and our position in relation to competitiveness with New Zealand, North and South America and the EU countries. Of course, given that the World Economic Forum marks us as 23rd among other countries—New Zealand is fourth and Canada and the US are placed respectively at 14 and 15—the big challenge for Australia is to step up that competitiveness. So we have some work to do.

For Queensland, the key is how we stack up in terms of product quality, production costs and, of course, efficiencies right throughout the supply chain. The federal minister spoke about his white paper. I was very pleased to share progress with the forum about our agriculture strategy in Queensland that is focused on access to resources, competitiveness and productivity right throughout the supply chain, reducing the cost of production and market access right across the world. Despite the current challenges we face, we have a very positive future.

(Time expired)

Queensland Air Museum

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.10 pm): I rise to pay tribute to an iconic organisation in my electorate of Caloundra, the Queensland Air Museum. This proud organisation is now approaching its 40th year of providing visitors and locals to this beautiful part of the world a history in aviation like no other. The year 2014 heralds a major milestone in the history of the Queensland Air Museum—the 40th anniversary of a truly remarkable aviation precinct.

The Queensland Air Museum had its beginnings in 1973 when a group of aviation enthusiasts, who comprised the Queensland branch of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia, decided to do something about preserving Australia's aviation heritage by buying a Canberra bomber. Almost exactly one year later, the collection doubled in size with the arrival of Meteor WD647. In May 1977, the Canberra bomber was moved to a leased site at lower Nudgee where it was later joined by the Meteor and two other acquisitions. With the development of the new Brisbane Airport floodway, the QAM had to go and, after much anguish and lobbying, in April 1980 the aircraft were moved to a temporary holding area at Brisbane Airport. During the mid-1980s rental costs and other issues led to the QAM leaving Brisbane Airport. The resultant publicity came to the attention of former Landsborough shire councillor John Harrison, who persuaded the council to facilitate the relocation of the QAM to Caloundra. The offer of a modern hangar-type building at Caloundra Aerodrome was too good to refuse. So a band of local volunteer members set about preparing the collection for an opening ceremony on 4 April 1987.

A second, much larger display building—hangar 2—was opened on 3 July 2004. An extension to hangar 2, the Allan Vial Path Finder Force Annexe, was officially unveiled on 16 August 2006. On 17 May 2008, hangar 2 was officially named the Dick Hitchins Memorial Hangar in memory of the QAM's founding president. On 5 November 2008, the QAM's library storage building was officially named the Dunoon Building by the QAM's patron, Allan Vial.

I take this opportunity to recognise all the volunteers whose hard work over 40 years has made the organisation what it is today. Their work will continue into the future with the QAM commencing a new 30-year lease, which is crucial to the future of the QAM in terms of future acquisitions, tourism and certainty for locals and volunteers. What started as humble beginnings among a group of aviation enthusiasts has resulted in the QAM being widely regarded as one of the best air museums in Australia. This is an achievement that each and every dedicated member of the museum and the Caloundra community should be particularly proud of because, in 2014, I certainly am.

Perry, Mr NW

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.13 pm): It is with great sadness that I rise to inform the House of the passing of a strong local hero in the Burdekin, Norm Wallis Perry—or Norm as he was affectionately known to his family, friends and community members—who passed away on 5 February this year. Norm was a quiet achiever who gave, gave and then gave some more to his community, simply rolling up his sleeves and getting the job done without seeking any public recognition. There were not very many organisations in the Burdekin that Norm Perry had not been involved in and there were not very many people who did not know the name Norm Perry.

Norm was the firstborn child to Nell and Wally Perry. He was born at the Proserpine Hospital on 20 March 1935 and later attended Churchie in Brisbane with his brother Rae. Norm's first job was as a fitter and turner at the Proserpine Sugar Mill, where he also studied and trained to become a shift engineer. Norm met the love of his life, Maureen, who was also well known in the Burdekin for her community involvement. They married on Australia Day in 1957 and had four children: John, who sadly passed away in recent years; Lisa; Robyn; and Chris. The couple have 12 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Their family is a credit to the close love that both Norm and Maureen shared.

Norm's community involvement started when the couple became inaugural members of the Whitsunday Sailing Club. They also became involved in the local swim club, of which all four of their children were members. In 1973 the Perrys moved to Ayr, where Norm took up a position with Kalamia mill. They purchased their first family home on Beach Road in Ayr and set up Maureen's bridal and florist business underneath, later expanding to Playmates Fashion and Florist in Queen Street.

In his role as shift engineer, Norm trained mill apprentices. He was also Rotaract's district chairman. For three consecutive years the couple were youth counsellors for the Rotary Youth Exchange around Australia safari tours. He was a true mentor to many.

Although Norm retired early from the mill, he never stopped working. He always had a project on the go. He was always involved in his family's sports and activities such as surf lifesaving, swim clubs, football, church, theatre, the Rotary Club of Ayr, supporting his wife, Maureen, and her involvement with organisations such as the Catholic Women's League and fundraising for many other organisations too numerous to mention.

In 2007, Norm was named Burdekin Citizen of the Year. He also received the Rotary Paul Harris Fellowship Award and, more recently, the Sapphire Pin, Rotary's highest distinction award. This Sunday, Norm will be looking down at the annual Rotary Duck Race, which is now being named in Norm's honour. This race is being held at Plantation Park. Norm Perry enriched and touched the lives of many. He will forever be remembered in the hearts of many in the Burdekin. Norm Perry, may he rest in peace.

Harmony Day

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (3.16 pm): I rise to speak about the 2014 Harmony Day celebrations that were held in and around my electorate of Stretton. Sixty percent of the people of the Stretton electorate are first- or second-generation Aussies. I am proud to say that the people of the electorate of Stretton are a glowing example of harmony. We have dozens of cultures and dozens of religions, yet we practise peace and understanding. I have been shown by the United Peace Federation that understanding comes from conversation over the fence or over a plate of food and with understanding comes friendship and friendship changes everything. We can sing, 'We are one, but we are many' every day of the week in the Stretton electorate.

I had the pleasure of attending over a two-week period no fewer than five celebrations. There was the United Peace Federation Harmony Day citizenship ceremony that took place at the Nathan campus of Griffith University. As a peace ambassador with UPF, I was happy to participate along with my colleagues Mark Stewart and Anthony Shorten and Councillor Steven Huang.

My good Fijian Indian friend, Surendra Prasard, invited us to attend a wonderful harmony day celebration at the Spanish Centre with people from all over our world. The Taiwanese community once again put on a wonderful display of culture and entertainment and, of course, food. I commend Melodie Chen and Dana Yu from World Arts & Multi-Culture Inc for their professional organisation of the day. To celebrate harmony day in my electorate of Stretton I was fortunate to have a visit from Minister Glen Elmes to the Stretton Breakfast Club in Calamvale where 120 people representing about 15 countries joined us. The Kuraby Special School held a wonderful harmony day World Expo. Councillor Kim Marx and I were treated to different cultures and cuisines from 10 different countries that the staff, parents and students put on display. I think our favourite was New Zealand with a traditional hangi. Although I noticed they claimed the pavlova as theirs. I cannot say I think much of their deep fried bread though.

I am indeed blessed to be the member for Stretton. I can travel the world in a day without even going to an airport just by knocking on the doors in one street. May I also take this opportunity to thank the Hon. David Crisafulli for last week attending the Calamvale College Taiwan cultural exchange.

Hervey Bay, Schools

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.19 pm): While Queensland's economic growth continues to outstrip the rest of Australia I am proud to say that my electorate of Hervey Bay is riding on a new wave of financial good fortune. This government has delivered on its promise to power up the economy after two scary decades of Labor's botched economic management. We are streaking ahead of the rest of Australia at 4.1 per cent economic growth, compared to the nation's 1.9 per cent. In Hervey Bay we are powering ahead: the brand new St Stephen's Hospital worth about \$100 million is being built; the Stockland shopping centre is powering ahead; the Beach House Hotel, which was pulled down, is being rebuilt; there is continuing construction in the housing sector; the Palm's retirement village has doubled in size in the last 12 months; the Hervey Bay State High School is undergoing a \$15 million expansion; and there is additional funding from the Queensland government to Queensland state schools under the Great Results Guarantee in 2014 targeting accountable funding and empowering principals and their communities. Hervey Bay is benefiting enormously from that with the Hervey Bay Special School receiving around \$37,000; Hervey Bay State High School receiving \$88,000; Kawungan State School receiving \$214,000; Pialba State School receiving \$136,000; Sandy Strait State School receiving \$142,000; Torquay State School—my old school—receiving \$133,000—

Mr Crandon: That wasn't long ago!

Mr SORENSEN: Yes, it was going back a while. Urangan Point State High school received \$302,000; Urangan State High School received \$169,000; and Yarrilee State School received \$209,000. This is a great visionary scheme which is worth \$1.4 million to Hervey Bay. There is also, do not forget, the 2013-14 school maintenance backlog allocations which helps the economy greatly. Over the last couple of years there has been around \$2.4 million spent. There are great things happening in Hervey Bay. I invite all members to come to Hervey Bay, spend your money and have a great holiday.

Gold Coast, Housing

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (3.22 pm): In spite of the statement by the Minister for Housing and Public Works this morning, there is a growing housing crisis on the Gold Coast. Owning or renting a house is becoming out of reach for an increasing number of low income households, with one independent report claiming the Gold Coast does not have a single affordable suburb. The LNP government must step in before this gets worse. Between 2006 and 2011 the median household income on the Gold Coast increased by about 15 per cent whereas mortgage repayments increased by 40 per cent and rental payments increased by 35 per cent. The property market has remained flat, but may well increase over the next couple of years in line with everything else.

There was a report done by MacroPlan Dimasi, coordinated by the Gold Coast City Council, comparing housing costs and household income in 2011. I participated, as did the member for Southport, Rob Molhoek. There was a workshop conducted last week. The report says that 43 per cent of low income households on the Gold Coast are in housing stress. Just under 70 per cent are suffering rental stress and just over 30 per cent are in mortgage stress. The report says just under 46,000 householders of a total of 240,000 Gold Coast homes are spending in excess of 30 per cent of income on housing costs but, more significantly, 75 per cent of this number are low income households meaning that they have an income in the bottom 40 per cent of Queensland household incomes and it is very close to the poverty line. As I have been arguing for some time, and the report pinpoints, there are mounting needs for affordable rental housing, beyond NRAS, and pathways to home ownership for low-income households. The areas with the highest proportions of rental stress include Robina, Coomera, Upper Coomera and Southport, where is a strong correlation with low household income and high divorce rates, higher proportion of elderly residents and high unemployment rates which are rising. These areas are in the electorates of current LNP members. It is very important that these members take this into account.

About 48 per cent of all rented private dwellings on the Gold Coast had rental repayments in excess of 30 per cent of household income in 2011. The area with the highest proportion of households in mortgage stress are in the lower Pacific Pines, Oxenford, Maudsland, Upper Coomera and moving up the M1. They have a higher percentage of dependent children, high compulsory expenditure and experienced high mortgage repayment growth between 2006 and 2011. There are high numbers of non-permanent residents, largely New Zealanders, and they keep coming. They are largely living along the major arterial road to Brisbane from the border. We need to accept that they

will keep coming and that they will need housing. This report showed that even though the assumption is that everywhere else was safe, it is not safe, and that includes in towards Surfers Paradise and Main Beach. People need to know that there is a false belief by those in the LNP that a base level of NRAS and little else will solve a very difficult problem. The population movement of the region will continue. It is a large economic driver. We need to have housing for these people and we need to understand that this is an important component of people's stories.

Cook Electorate, Napranum



Mr KEMPTON (Cook—LNP) (3.25 pm): Eric Deeral, the first Aboriginal parliamentarian in Queensland, said in his maiden speech nearly 30 years ago that the old hand-out philosophy did much to destroy the initiative of Aboriginal and Islander people and that we must try to restore their pride and initiative. There is strong evidence that by raising community awareness, providing economic opportunity and encouraging community responsibility it is possible to create sustainable change in remote Indigenous communities. The best example of this remarkable community advancement can be seen in Napranum in the western Cape York area with their whole-of-community change program. Napranum was labelled one of the most disadvantaged communities in Queensland despite being only kilometres from the Rio Tinto mining operation at Weipa. Napranum's people, like Indigenous people throughout Queensland, were overrepresented in most of the negative social indicators such as incarceration, unemployment, substance abuse, domestic violence and short life expectancy. Further, the important indicators such as numeracy and literacy, health standards and career opportunity continually fell short of national standards.

In 2011 the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council embarked on an ambitious program to turn these numbers around. The council partnered with Dynamic Exchange to build a new community through community growth and economic development. The results are both outstanding and remarkable. In just two years the community says it has experienced a 60 per cent increase in employment, an 80 per cent reduction in children attending the safe house, an 80 per cent decrease in adult domestic violence and a 50 per cent decrease in adult court appearances. They have put in for an alcohol management plan review. They say they feel respected. The oval is packed with kids playing sport and the community is happy. The council says it has increased its employees from 60 to 100, it has constructed 17 houses and 14 worker accommodation units, built an administration centre and supermarket, renovated the community hall and sports oval, erected a war memorial and established a day-care centre.

Freddie Ara, a young electrical trade assistant from Napranum, stated that this program—

... has helped us gather people and share ideas. This program has given us a reason to communicate, talk about common goals and has given us something to look forward to. I am looking forward to completing my certificate training. It is all I ever think about.

Local boys are now motivated and actively looking for work. This never happened before. We used to depend on Centrelink. But no more! The youth are seeing changes in the community and they want to contribute. There is no damage to the housing—

That is, the housing that they build—

because everybody is respecting our work. I feel great. I am focused and confident. I feel no shame.

Mr Deeral would be well pleased with this outcome.

Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation



Mr KAYE (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.28 pm): In the build-up to the Anzac centenary commemorations, now is a fitting time to honour our veterans. If we really want to show our respect and gratitude for all they have done for us, it is imperative that we prioritise caring for their health and wellbeing, as well as that of their loved ones. As such, I am proud to deliver this speech.

As the local member for Greenslopes, I am privileged to have in my electorate the home of the laboratories of the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation, which has been committed to life-changing medical research for 25 years. The Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation is a not-for-profit facility based at the Greenslopes Private Hospital. With the generous support of the RSL Queensland, the foundation has just launched a post-traumatic stress disorder initiative. This is a world-first research project into the debilitating issue of post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. It is vital that this research gets the support it needs from all of us.

PTSD is a huge issue, affecting five to 10 per cent of our population, that is, over one million Australians suffer from this illness. This covers everyone from our ambulance and fire crews to victims of sexual abuse or those affected by natural disasters. PTSD is a major issue for our veterans. In 2001-2009, more US veterans committed suicide than were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is a frightening statistic. It is estimated that at least 4,000 Australian veterans of the war in Afghanistan alone have or will develop PTSD. Many other veterans from earlier conflicts have been battling with PTSD for years. Furthermore, the figures I have stated do not even begin to cover the effects PTSD have on the families and loved ones of sufferers.

The Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation is an approved research institute and is based within the campus of the Greenslopes Private Hospital, which is a former repatriation facility and one of the largest private teaching hospitals in our country. The foundation is embarking on independent research that will grow our existing knowledge about this debilitating illness and better inform prevention and treatment. The Keith Payne Psychiatric Unit at the Greenslopes Private Hospital is recognised as a national leader in helping achieve positive outcomes for war veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Professor Bruce Lawford, one of the psychiatrists at the KPU, and his collaborators at QUT have established an exceptional reputation for research into veterans with mental health illnesses, including published work into the genetics of PTSD, addiction and severe depressions. Many of the Gallipoli researchers regularly treat veterans with PTSD and those medical professionals believe this research is of utmost importance. Furthermore, they have the support of Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology, Queensland X-Ray, the University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology.

The PTSD initiative is a great collaborative example of medical research in search of positive outcomes for our veterans. The initial 12-month focus is to better understand the genetics and long-term physical impacts of PTSD through examining Vietnam veterans. They will examine the link between genetic markers and the long-term physical impacts of PTSD. The Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation plans to continue this life-changing research in other high-risk PTSD groups, such as our contemporary veterans. The more the research progresses, the greater impact it will have on the lives of the one million Australians who are suffering as a result of PTSD.

(Time expired)

Southern Moreton Bay Islands

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (3.31 pm): Today I rise to advise the House of a meeting conducted with residents of the southern Moreton Bay islands—Karragarra, Lamb, Macleay and Russell islands—at which over 100 people participated. The issues raised included the PDA for Weinam Creek and I thank the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning for his support on that particular project. They also talked about jetties, boat ramps, roads, education, health, the cost of living, health services and law and order. It is rather appropriate that today we are lamenting the \$150 million in interest that we have to find every year, money that could have been spent on island infrastructure. They also talked about a bridge to Russell Island, which I will come back to a little later.

The SMBI community faces many challenges, not only from 20 years of Labor neglect but also because of the distance that residents have to travel every day, the separation from family and friends, the cost of living pressures that were endured by us all under Labor and limited facilities. SMBI also scores fairly low on the ABS socioeconomic profile and with limited opportunities for employment that is unlikely to change. In the conversation that I had with SMBI residents, we looked for ways forward.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr DOWLING: I ask the honourable member to remind me of that in a moment. We looked for opportunities to help the islands to realise their full potential. So where to from here? The southern Moreton Bay islands are working in partnership with the Redland City Council and this government, which provided the rollout of TransLink, and I take the interjection from the honourable member for Chatsworth and Assistant Minister for Public Transport: this is about providing certainty to that community.

As I mentioned, today we are lamenting the \$150 million that literally goes down the drain every year. We have talked about the Labor debt, we have talked about the waste and we have talked about the challenges that this government faces as we move forward. We looked at what we could provide on SMBI and the opportunities that are available. As I mentioned earlier, there was very lively debate about bridges. One island in particular, Russell Island, is very keen to have a bridge. The

other three are not quite so supportive. They fear impacts on their lifestyle. However, our conversation about bridges also reflected on our ability to service the islands and to provide services to the islands into the future. Is a bridge to Russell Island the solution? It could compound the problem. We are only likely to know if the SMBI community, the Redland City Council and this government work together to ask the questions, to do the research, to do the evaluation and to work in partnership to deliver a more certain future and a better Queensland, and a better lifestyle for the residents on the southern Moreton Bay islands.

Eating Disorders

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.34 pm): Many people will remember the story of Bronte Cullis, which was featured by Ray Martin on *A Current Affair* on a couple of occasions in the mid-1990s. Bronte was born in 1979. As a teenager, she was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa. Bronte's mother, Jan, famously said, 'Bronte didn't have anorexia—the whole family had anorexia', which was a reference to the effect of Bronte's illness on all those around her and the toll it took on the family in particular. Bronte's father had to give up work to care for her. Knowing that Bronte would die without treatment, Bronte's parents mortgaged their home, sold what they could and sent her to an unconventional eating disorder clinic in Canada. Although she has ongoing problems, Bronte is now married and expecting her first child.

Last week in my electorate, we had a *deja vu* moment with the same issue being highlighted by another young lady named Bronte. Last week members may have heard from the media that a young lady from Burleigh Heads was reported missing from her residential address. At the outset it was very distressing to hear about the situation that occurred on Wednesday last week and it was even more upsetting to hear the circumstances in further detail. Last weekend while I was at one of my many mobile offices throughout the Burleigh electorate, I ran into the father of that young lady. He detailed to me the heartache and trauma that an eating-disorder has had on his family, with the result that the situation I referred to unfolded.

An eating disorder is characterised by obsessive thoughts about food and body weight. It includes people who limit the amount of food they eat, those who eat lots of food in a very short period of time and then purge or those who overeat often. Eating disorders are estimated to affect approximately nine per cent of the population and unspecified eating disorders may account for up to five per cent of the population. Up to 20 per cent of females may have an undiagnosed eating disorder. Many people may be surprised to know that one in 10 people diagnosed with an eating disorder are male.

It was heartbreaking to hear the story of how, for the past nine years, that disease has plagued the life of that father's daughter. At his request, I bring his story to the attention of the House to raise awareness of the issue. The family was greatly appreciative of the work of the Palm Beach Police Station officers who helped them in their time of need. They wished me to express their gratitude. I made a commitment to the family to raise awareness of the issue of eating disorders and their effects. I will be raising the issue with the minister.

Smith, Mrs JL

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.37 pm): It is with great pride that I speak of the passing of the late Jean Lois Smith of Bedourie. Last Friday, I was blessed to be able to attend the funeral service of Mrs Smith at Bedourie, which was officiated by Father Mick Lowcock of Mount Isa.

Jean was born on 13 May 1926 and went to eternal rest on 14 March 2014. She was born on Ooroowillannie Station, 20 kilometres south of Mungerannie on the Birdsville-Marree track in the top end of South Australia. She spent her life working on stations in South-West Queensland and the top of South Australia. Her parents were the famous couple Alex Frederick Scobie and Francis Elizabeth Ellen Scobie. Her father was a drover. The Scobie family are the renowned whip makers.

Jean married Cecil James Smith, better known as Peter, when she was 22. Peter and Jean had five sons—Jim, Don, David, Roy and Max. They worked all their lives in the far south-west of Queensland. Only four years of their working married life was spent outside the Diamantina shire. This was when Peter managed Clifton Hills Station, in the far north-west of South Australia, from 1958 to 1962.

Always people of the real outback and people of the land, they worked mostly on stations in the far south-west of Queensland until taking up Ethubuka Station, Bedourie, in September 1962. On 12 June 1971 they took over ownership of the Bedourie Hotel. In recent times Jean ran the hotel in conjunction with her son Jim.

Jean will now be the patron saint of animals as she will be taking charge of what she loved best—her many animals. She had many goats, dogs and horses over the years. Jean Smith had a faithful dog at the end, Whiskey, who was still lying beside her empty chair at the Bedourie Hotel when I left the family and the nearly 300 people who travelled to the outback, remote settlement of Bedourie to pay their last respects to this great lady.

The west loved Jean, as did her five sons, her 15 grandchildren and her seven great-grandchildren. People journeyed from as far away as Adelaide, Quorn and Two Wells in South Australia and Toowoomba and Mount Isa in Queensland. Many station people from right throughout the south-west of the Diamantina shire travelled to Bedourie to pay their last respects to this woman who was the last of the great matriarchs of far Western Queensland.

Liquid Fuel Supply (Ethanol) Amendment Bill

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.41 pm): Today the member for Condamine introduced the Liquid Fuel Supply (Ethanol) Amendment Bill. This bill was introduced in 2008 by the member for Burdekin and debated on 12 November 2008.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Member for Dalrymple, you must remember that that bill is before the House and you cannot discuss matters contained in it.

Mr KNUTH: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Bulimba Electorate, Swim Clubs

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (3.40 pm): I rise this afternoon to talk about three of the Bulimba electorate's finest swim clubs. Over the past several weeks I have had the pleasure to attend a number of their swimming carnivals and club championships. The Cannon Hill District and Amateur Swimming Club, which is celebrating its 40th year, had a fantastic season in the pool. Not only were they able to grow their number of swimmers by a remarkable 25 extra kids, to now sit with just below 100 regular swimmers, Cannon Hill also took out two swimming carnivals during the 2013-14 year. The first was the Dobby Cup and the second was the Three-Way where they were up against Morningside and Norman Park.

At the three-way event young Tom broke the under nine 100 metre backstroke record that was set way back in 1983. That is a 31-year-old record broken. At the recent club championships Lily broke the under nine 25 metre freestyle record that was set in 1998.

We all know that swim clubs do not survive nor thrive unless they have committed volunteers, and Cannon Hill is no exception. I would like to congratulate Greg and his entire team of committee members and volunteers, but I especially acknowledge club stalwart Sandra who has been the club's secretary since 1992.

The second club I wish to highlight is the Norman Park Dolphins. Just last weekend they held their club championships where an amazing number of club records were broken—a total of 11. A special mention needs to go to Daniel who broke an amazing six—three of those were set back in 1997. He now holds some 10 records for his age at the Norman Park Dolphins. Other record breakers on the day included Shannay who broke four records and Ryan who broke one.

This is a fantastic result for the club which has seen a massive increase of 40 per cent in participation this year. Again, this can be attributed to the likes of Craig, David, Pauline and all the dedicated volunteers who ensure the kids have every opportunity to strive to do their personal best.

The third success story is the Morningside Flyers. The Morningside Flyers hosted the extremely popular and competitive south side carnival a few weeks ago. For the first time in many years they were successful in taking out the event.

I had the pleasure at both the south side carnival and the recent Morningside Flyers club championships to hand out a number of event medals. I thoroughly enjoyed the chance to hear how the swimmers just wiped many seconds off their personal best. The Morningside Flyers say farewell to three long-term club stalwarts at the end of the season—that being Janet, with six years at the helm as president, and Greg, her husband who has had a long relationship with the Morningside Flyers. Sadly, Merv, the club's long-term coach, finally hangs up the good old kickboard. Merv has been an inspiration to many of the talented swimmers of today and yesteryear.

Whilst the Morningside Flyers have been successful in recently securing Newman government funding to improve their amenities, more needs to be done. I will fight hard to secure improved facilities for all of the swimming clubs across the Bulimba electorate. Swimming is truly alive in Bulimba and I am certain that I did see the next Hayley Lewis or Kieran Perkins over the past few months. Well done and congratulations to all the swimmers and volunteers.

School Safety

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (3.43 pm): I wish to draw the attention of the House to an incident that occurred outside a local school in the Sunnybank electorate yesterday afternoon and to reiterate the importance of student safety measures in and around our local schools. Yesterday afternoon, just after 3 pm, a year 4 Robertson State School student ran across the road outside the school, not using the designated crossing. The student was narrowly missed by one vehicle but hit by another vehicle, that was luckily travelling below the speed limit.

Parents and students witnessed the incident and first aid was provided by school staff before an ambulance arrived at the scene. The student spent the night in hospital under observation. Fortunately, she has been assessed as having minor injuries and shock and was released from hospital this morning. However, I am sure that this was a very frightening experience for the student, her parents, the driver and the entire school community. I thank the school staff for their swift response.

The accident yesterday afternoon is a sobering reminder of the importance to be vigilant when it comes to safety in and around our school zones and the need to continue to promote initiatives such as the Active School Travel Program and Fatality Free Friday. Today, many of my parliamentary colleagues and I made a road safety pledge by signing an inflatable car that will travel around the state. The signing of the car is symbolic of our commitment to reducing our state's road toll and improving road safety in our local communities.

Road safety is no more important than when it comes to safeguarding our children when they are travelling to and from school. In my Sunnybank electorate there are 16 mainstream schools that collectively have a student body in excess of 10,000 students. Great work has been done by the schools and the school P&Cs in educating parents and students on the critical importance of safe road practices in and around their schools.

The government has lent a hand in these initiatives in a number of ways. In the last few months flashing lights have been installed at Warrigal Road State School, Sunnybank State School and St Thomas More College. Many of the schools have also worked in collaboration with representatives from Transport and Main Roads to adopt an Active School Travel program to educate the school community on things such as acceptable behaviour in drop and go zones, the importance of observing speed limits and in encouraging parents to ensure that their students enter the school by designated crossings.

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to thank senior advisor for road safety in the South-East Queensland region, Helen Sheehan, for her wonderful job in liaising with the school communities and working with the schools to implement programs that promote student and driver safety around our local schools. I also welcome Kim Forsyth to this position. I am sure that she will help to reinforce the importance of these programs.

We do not want accidents such as occurred outside Robertson State School to be repeated. We especially do not want the next accident around the schools in Sunnybank to be a fatality. As parliamentarians, we have today pledged to do what we can to lower our state's road toll. As local representatives of our community, we also have a duty to promote the messages of Fatality Free Friday at the local level, especially in our local schools. In the lead-up to the Easter holidays, I hope the incident that occurred at Robertson State School yesterday will be a timely and sobering reminder of the importance of road safety this Easter.

Theebine State School

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (3.47 pm): One of the most enjoyable aspects of being a local member is sharing some very special occasions with members of the community. On Saturday a week ago the small country school of Theebine celebrated 125 years of continuous education for the children of the surrounding area. There are currently 11 students at the school.

The original school building was a small square high-set timber structure which is currently used for the school library. It was constructed at a cost of £48 and the community donated their time to clear the scrub for the school site. I have to say that the buildings have been extended quite significantly since. Seeing that original building brought back memories for me. My first school was a similar type of building located out in the bush, with 13 students from seven grades—poor teacher. Theebine has a single principal/teacher, Mr Ian Marsden, who is doing a wonderful job with a group of lovely children, but he does have part-time assistance, which my teacher did not.

The celebration of the 125 years was a wonderful afternoon, with around 400 people in attendance including former students, former principals and teachers, current students, families and friends—some from as far away as Victoria. Local community groups provided food, drinks and entertainment. There was a wonderful display of school memorabilia dating from early days through to the current times including items from the time capsule from the 100-year celebration.

Two former Theebine school teachers Mrs Barbara Patterson and Mrs Kerry Carlson created a painting of the school for the celebration. Each of the current students were able to be part of this process by including an individualised small logo on the painting.

As part of the celebratory proceedings, there was a rollcall of principals. Unlike what they expected from their former students, there was a slow and straggling response from those principals to the bell. I think there ended up being around six principals, including Mr Marsden. Then there was a rollcall for the students in 10-year blocks, and this created much laughter. Everyone was in awe of the two oldest students in attendance: Mrs Doris Wright, nee Strawbridge, aged 98 and Mrs Ethel Griffith, nee Green, aged 92. They are such lovely ladies.

This was a wonderful day for all in attendance. I would like to take the opportunity to recognise the work of these wonderful small schools in country Queensland. While they do not have all of the facilities of the bigger schools, they have something very special—a lovely, small, family-friendly environment in which students can learn and grow. The teachers in particular deserve a great deal of credit for what they do. Well done, Theebine, for 125 years. May the school long continue.

Road Safety

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (3.50 pm): My family and I are deeply grateful to the honourable members of this House, and indeed to the wider community, for the condolence messages and support following the tragic death of my stepdaughter, 18-year-old Jessica Lindley-Jones, on 16 March in a single-person, single-vehicle car accident. She, like so many of her age group, was a vital and much loved part of our community, with a promising future ahead of her. Her entirely avoidable premature death reminds us just how vulnerable her age group are to road trauma and how we must take every opportunity as family members and community leaders to draw attention to and minimise those avoidable risks.

Whilst we do not know what caused Jessica's crash, it is helpful to look at research to guide accident prevention strategies in teenage drivers. One source is the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety, CARRS-Q, based at QUT at Kelvin Grove. They remind us that driver distraction is one of the main causes of road crashes and using a mobile phone while driving, especially texting, is highly distracting. A person using a hand-held or hands-free mobile while driving is four times more likely to have a serious crash. Nine-four per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds use a mobile phone. This age group is also more likely to use a mobile phone while driving than older drivers, and three-fifths of them report that they sent or received a text while driving.

According to the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds—the equivalent, when travelling at 88 kilometres per hour, of driving the length of an entire football field while blindfolded. Not surprisingly, driving a vehicle while texting is six times more dangerous than driving while intoxicated. Indeed, texting while driving a vehicle has now replaced drink driving as the leading cause of accidents and deaths of teenage drivers.

We cannot afford to lose or injure a single teenage driver, or any other road user, and the challenge for our entire community is to address the behavioural and engineering risk factors with the same vigour as we apply to legislative and policing deterrence. That risk can only be avoided by turning the phone off and keeping it off when driving, just like on an aircraft. Parents, teachers and other community leaders are absolutely vital in getting that message across and avoiding deaths such as that of Jessica.

Ministerial Industry Commission

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (3.53 pm): A strong economy is the basis for a strong Queensland. To build a strong economy, industry and government must work together to drive productivity growth and increase workforce participation. Recognising that industry and government must work together to achieve these aims, the Queensland government's action plan 'Great skills. Real opportunities' established the Ministerial Industry Commission in November 2013 by invitation from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment.

The commission is made up of members with industry, economic, marketing or communications experience and, as a genuine partnership with government, the minister invited me to chair the commission. Small, medium and large industry are given a voice through better consultation with government through the commission, which will directly influence the relative priority of every government subsidised qualification in Queensland—the key difference that other industry advisory arrangements have failed to deliver.

Earlier this week I was pleased to present the inaugural *Annual skills priority report* to the minister. Despite the short time frame for its inaugural report, the commission has received significant input and feedback from business and industry and, on 28 February this year, the commission held its inaugural industry round table to consult on the draft *Annual skills priority report*.

The 2014-15 report brings together the results of a data based projection of workforce and skill needs for Queensland, combined with qualitative information from industry stakeholders on skill requirements. The following are some of the key findings of the report. A robust rate of employment growth is expected for Queensland over the next five years, averaging 2.5 per cent per annum—around one per cent higher than other states. The number of VET qualifications held by those employed is expected to increase by 327,000 over the next five years—from 1.433 million in 2013-14 to 1.760 million in 2018-19. Employment projections by industry show strong gains over the next five years accruing to health care, construction, retail trade, education, business services and mining, led by the operational requirements of the oil and gas sector. The National Disability Insurance Scheme and other policy changes are affecting demand for skilled workers in the areas of aged care and disability services, and this demand is predicted to continue to grow. A number of industries, including mining, construction and utilities, noted a shortage of electrical tradespersons and an expectation of additional demand growth in the future.

On behalf of the commission, I would like to thank all contributors for their input into this report. I encourage the continued interest and contribution of industry and business in this partnership with government as we build a strong, resilient, four-pillar economy. The work of the commission is an ongoing process and includes meeting with and hearing from industry and business across the state on a regular basis in order to build upon this report and inform future annual skills priority reports. I encourage all members to make themselves aware of the work of the commission and encourage all industry and employers in their electorates to participate in this process. I commend this inaugural report to the minister.

Nudgee Electorate, Events



Mr WOODFORTH (Nudgee—LNP) (3.56 pm): It has been four years since I stood for a photo at the Geebung rail open level crossing. I stood there not even a member of the LNP, and obviously not preselected, but fighting for that Geebung rail overpass. I stood there with Councillor Fiona King; Mike Dowd, who was the organiser; Ron Bird from the local hardware store; and a few other members of the local area. We stood there in that photo with our arms crossed as if to say, 'Give us this overpass.' The then Labor government just kept saying, 'No, no and no.'

So, on Sunday, 23 March, just two weeks ago, it gave me great pleasure to be actually walking over that overpass that the Newman government delivered. It is quite a pleasure to think that there I was then fighting for a project and now I am a member of the government that delivered that project. It was a joint project between the Brisbane City Council and the state government—\$200 million worth. It was delivered before time and on budget. There are still some works to be done around the edges, and they will be delivered in the next three to six months.

Congratulations to the GO Alliance team, who have consistently been ahead of time, so much so that even when I turned up at 5 am on Monday the 24th for the opening of the overpass to traffic—we did the walk over the day before—they had opened it at 4.30 am. So I even missed that. That is how good this team was. This is a project that the Labor Party said it would be looking at—and I say just looking at—in 2020. So it was a project they were not even committing to. Like I said, it was a commitment by the Newman government—promised and delivered.

I just want to mention a few other things going on in my electorate at the moment. It was good to go to the Chermside Neighbourhood Watch day the other day. They celebrated Neighbour's Day at Burnie Brae. Congratulations to PJ and her team, because the weather was not forthcoming for a great day but they still put on a great day inside Burnie Brae. About 150 people turned up for Neighbour's Day, so well done to PJ and her team.

It was great to attend Toombul Cricket's end-of-season awards hosted by the great man himself Tim Farrell, Virginia State School principal, and President John Martin. I also went to the Electric Eels Swimming Club awards day with Ken Eade, the president. It was a great turnout. It took us about an hour and 20 minutes to give away 300 medals and trophies. I could not believe the numbers. It was great to attend Nudgee College Open Day which was promoted by 96.5's Liam and Vanessa. It is a great school in my electorate with some 1,500 kids. Vanessa, who runs Sandgate Parkrun, roped me in for my first park fun run of five kilometres. I think she may have me hooked.

Putney, Most Reverend Michael

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (3.59 pm): I rise today to speak briefly about Archbishop Michael Putney, who passed away on Friday, 28 March 2014. In the first instance I would like to associate myself with the remarks earlier this week by the member for Mundingburra and Minister for Local Government. I thought he delivered a wonderful and passionate description of the late bishop's life. Bishop Michael Putney was ordained a priest in June 1969, ordained a bishop in July 1995 and appointed the Bishop of Townsville in January 2001. It is difficult to explain to the House the deeply personal relationship between the faithful and their bishop in a Catholic diocese, but it is a personal relationship between their leader of their particular religion and the people who look to them for spiritual guidance.

Bishop Putney's strengths, amongst other things, were his sermons. They were passionate and gave vivid explanations of the gospel readings that had just been delivered to the congregation. He had a particular passion for education. The schools in my electorate of Hinchinbrook that were also covered by his diocese including St Clare's Catholic School at North Shore, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School at Ingham, Gilroy Santa Maria College at Ingham, St Peter's Catholic School at Halifax and St Teresa's Catholic College at Abergowrie all had a very deep relationship with Bishop Putney. Bishop Putney died peacefully in the early hours, as I mentioned earlier, of Friday, 28 March aged 67 years—far too soon for those of us who loved him here on earth but no doubt at the time of God's choosing.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH BOARDS AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 April (see p. 914).

Second Reading

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (4.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.02 pm): I rise to speak to the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill. The government has declared this bill urgent, as it has so many bills over the past two years. The latest count I think is 17 urgent bills. I would like to spend a few minutes reiterating some of the points made by the Leader of Opposition Business yesterday in opposing the urgency of this bill.

The fact that the minister has been forced to rush this bill through the House highlights his mismanagement of the issue. Let us not forget that this issue is the result of deliberate actions taken by the government almost six months ago when it introduced the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill on 17 October 2013. Yes, this was the foundation for the Newman work choice legislation. The opposition flagged issues with those amendments on 31 October 2013, but rather than address the issues the minister has chosen to allow them to escalate into a crisis of his own making.

Now here we are today debating the 17th bill declared urgent by the Newman LNP government in the last two years. This continues the pattern of avoiding scrutiny and doing all they can to be less open and less transparent to the public. Today's farce and yesterday's farce over simultaneous budget estimates hearings that has been reported all over Queensland is further evidence of this government's pathological desire to avoid scrutiny. Of the 17 bills declared urgent by the LNP, seven were debated and passed on the same day as their introduction and three were passed the next day. It is clear that a pattern has emerged during the two years of this disastrous LNP government. If they have a problem, they rush legislation through this House without scrutiny, trampling on the rights of Queenslanders and hiding the full implications from public scrutiny. This LNP government has refused to send the bill to the Health and Community Services Committee that actually met yesterday. Even if

such a referral was made on short notice, it is far from ideal and I would argue that it is grossly inadequate anyway but it would have at least provided the chance to hear from doctors as to whether the bill addresses their concerns.

Instead the minister is so scared of actually working with the doctors that he is refusing even that limited chance to ask doctors about the amendments in this bill. The explanatory notes for the bill provide evidence of no consultation beyond the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. There has been no consultation with doctors about the amendments in the bill. The minister is saying to doctors, to the Queensland public and to everyone, 'Trust me.' You know what, when it comes to this government and their handling of health care Queenslanders have made up their minds and they do not trust the Premier, they do not trust the health minister or any MP in this government.

Recent polling in the marginal seats of Cairns, Ipswich West, Mundingburra and even in the Premier's seat of Ashgrove confirmed that the public do not trust this government. More than half of those surveyed in the polls were very concerned that doctors would leave the public system and claim they were less likely to vote LNP at the next election. Across those four electorates polled, 67.7 per cent of respondents were opposed to these contracts, with just 17½ per cent in support. The people of Queensland are waiting with baseball bats on their verandas to get square with Campbell Newman and his henchmen in this government including the Minister for Health.

The amendments contained in this bill are a panicked response to a concerted campaign by senior medical officers and visiting medical officers across this state against unfair and unreasonable individual work choice contracts. This government has painted itself into a corner. It has dug itself into a hole and it has attempted with this two-page bill a half-hearted backflip with a nasty twist. There is no salvation for the health minister in this bill. The minister is in a hole that is getting deeper every day. Perhaps some of his colleagues are waiting for the opportunity to chuck him in the hole and bury him.

Despite his assertions to the contrary, the minister and this government are still not listening to doctors and their representatives. I have sat down and talked with doctors about their concerns. I have attended meetings and rallies with paediatricians, intensive care and emergency physicians, with neurologists and neurosurgeons, anaesthetists and vascular surgeons, cardiologists and psychiatrists, and I have listened to them. But has this government been really listening to anyone at all? No, because this government is too arrogant.

Like the members opposite, I have been inundated with emails and letters. In fact I have received several hundred letters and emails from doctors, patients and their families because they are bewildered as to why the government has provoked this dispute. They are absolutely bewildered as to why this government has declared a war on doctors. They are also bewildered as to why this government has not sought to resolve those issues that most concern our senior medical specialists across the state of Queensland.

The people I have been speaking with and received correspondence from are real doctors. They are angry and worried about the real issues with these unfair work choice contracts. Many of them are not union members; in fact, most of them are not even members of the AMA. Their concerns are not about their own salaries and working conditions; their concerns are about furthering their profession, the future of the craft groups and the future of our state public hospital system.

The other night we witnessed the Attorney-General whipped up in this chamber into near hysteria about so-called union thugs. In this dispute we have witnessed the AMA attacked in both the media and the courts for advocating for salaried medical officers. We have heard those opposite call the national president of the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation, Dr Tony Sara, an interstate union thug and on Tuesday the Minister for Health attempted to intimidate a respected industrial lawyer, an officer of the court acting on behalf of senior medical officers and visiting medical officers working in our state public hospitals. This vicious campaign of intimidation and bullying of doctors and their representatives is absolutely reprehensible. It also reflects a pattern of behaviour which the Attorney-General seems to excel at. Perhaps this is why the Premier still supports him when no-one else in the legal system does.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Member for Bundamba, the Attorney-General is not relevant to the debate on the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill and I would ask that you return to the long title of the bill.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your advice. But how did we get to this? The government may not have started out to create a crisis in our public hospitals but, guess what, they have achieved it. When the government pushed through changes to the Industrial Relations Act

creating high-income positions, high-income senior employees and high-income guaranteed contracts, they were not thinking of improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders. These actions are a conscious program of policies to undermine the protection of salaries and work conditions provided by collective agreements to all public sector employees. Have no doubt that Newman's Work Choices by stealth is Work Choices for doctors and will be Work Choices for all public sector employees.

While senior hospital doctors are the first occupational group to see their rights at work attacked, they clearly will not be the last. Briefings provided by Queensland Health HR staff have already identified imposing the same individual Newman Work Choices contracts on nurses, dentists, allied health practitioners and senior hospital and health service administrative staff. It is equally clear that school principals and senior teachers will be next, followed by senior police, corrections officers, emergency services officers and other highly trained professionals working in the Queensland Public Service.

The contracts developed for senior medical officers and visiting medical officers were presented to doctors and their representatives with very limited meaningful consultation, in spite of what the minister may say. In January, the minister declared these contracts not negotiable. The campaign by senior doctors has forced the minister to reopen negotiations and develop an addendum to the contract to address both the doctors' concerns and the gross inadequacy of the initial contract itself. Doctors still consider the contract addendum provisions to be unsatisfactory. They are extremely poorly drafted and will in practice be difficult to interpret or implement. Legal advice that I understand has been provided to doctors states, 'It is entirely unheard of in employment law for a contract which has not yet been entered into to have addendums attached to it which purport to be variations of the terms in the contract.'

Members should be aware that the normal process in contract negotiations is for such variations to be incorporated into the body of the contract by amending the substantive terms to which they relate to ensure that there is no uncertainty or confusion as to the interpretation of the contract. This contract and its addendums are poorly drafted and open to different interpretations. They are indeed a recipe for disaster. They reflect the ill-considered process the government has undertaken and the lack of meaningful consultation within a reasonable time frame. The amendments proposed in this bill do little to improve the conflict that this government has created in the public hospital system across the state.

But what are the doctors' concerns? Doctors have some specific areas of concern that have still not been adequately addressed by either this bill or the jumble of the addendum to the contract itself. While some aspects of the contract addendum regarding termination of employment have been revised in response to doctors' concerns, clause 21 is poorly drafted and difficult to interpret. The words 'appeal' and 'review' are used interchangeably while they have distinct and different meanings at law. The termination addendum does not provide for an arbitration to determine whether the termination was in fact harsh, unjust or unreasonable. This contract does not provide for robust arbitration processes in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission—processes which senior doctors were previously entitled to under the Industrial Relations Act and which provided for their unfair dismissal application to be arbitrated.

Doctors can no longer give notice to take a dispute to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The addendum now makes it more difficult for a doctor to request that the deputy president of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission arbitrates disputes. The power now resides with the director-general following consultation—but, note, not agreement—with the senior doctor to determine whether to appoint a deputy president of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission or 'an appropriately qualified person'. An appropriately qualified person may not necessarily be a person of the doctor's choosing or an independent arbitrator, as would be the case with access to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

Senior medical specialists in our public hospital system across Queensland and Australia regularly work 50 to 60 hours per week. This is the nature of their profession and a clear sign of their dedication to the care of their patients and to the public hospitals that have trained them. The contract addendum still does not provide any certainty in respect of the fatigue obligations of services as previously existed in the medical officers' certified agreement (No. 3).

It will be left to hospital and health services to develop and implement local frameworks for fatigue management. As doctors well know, local hospital managers often have priorities other than the wellbeing of medical staff and the care of their patients. The transfer addendum has been revised to incorporate the ability to access arbitration of dispute in the event that agreement cannot be

reached. However, the transfer provisions still fail to provide the period of notice that will be provided to a senior doctor in the event that they receive a direction from the service to transfer or are unsuccessful in resisting a direction to transfer. Again, doctors are being asked to take these work conditions on trust without the protection offered by MOCA 3.

Revisions of the key performance indicators management in the addendum now allow both the development and variation of KPIs to be undertaken by agreement. However, whilst the contract refers to two types of KPIs—firstly, the clinical and business accountability indicators and also the performance and productivity indicators—the addendum only refers to the latter. Whether this is simply a matter related to extremely poor or even negligent drafting of the addendum or that indicates that the government's proposal only applies to the performance and productivity indicators is unclear. How can doctors trust this government when so many aspects of the actual contract that they are expected to sign still remain unclear and with further uncertainty in implementation? No reasonable person would sign a binding contract that was not deemed acceptable by their legal advisers.

The doctors who have written to me about this dispute have spoken of their distress, of sleepless nights and of daily anxiety about whether they will be able to continue in a job that they love. I have spoken with numerous doctors right across the length and breadth of this state. I have also spoken to their spouses and family members. Senior doctors dedicate 20 years of their life to training to achieve the highest possible professional standards to provide specialist care to patients in our public hospitals. Our senior medical officers and visiting medical officers choose to work in Queensland's public hospital system when often they could earn higher incomes with less effort in the private sector. Doctors have told me that they want to stay public because they want to help people who cannot afford private health care, and I say, 'Good on them!'

These doctors revel in the challenge of treating patients with highly complex illnesses, people who would certainly die without their intervention. This complexity in treatment means public hospitals face challenges often not seen in private practice. This keeps our senior doctors at the top of their game in their chosen specialty. Doctors have told me that their work is not about the money; it is about the challenge of their jobs; it is about giving something back to the public hospital system; it is about giving something back to their colleagues, particularly their junior colleagues whom they teach and train; and it is about also giving back to community members. This is a motivation that clearly this government does not understand. This LNP government simply does not get it.

Senior medical doctors are very concerned about the impact this dispute will have on the training of the next generation of medical specialists. College training programs have very strict supervision requirements. Insufficient supervision of trainees means that it is unlikely they will achieve the qualifications that we, the people of Queensland, need to ensure that there are sufficient specialist medical services available right across the length and breadth of our state. As we speak, there are junior doctors across Australian states, in New Zealand and overseas who are watching this dispute and listening to the advice of their professional associations and colleges about whether to even apply for training programs in Queensland.

The Queensland Committee of Medical Specialist Colleges has written to me expressing their concerns. They state that 'the current protracted negotiations on senior specialist contracts may have an adverse outcome for training and the quality and safety of the health system in Queensland'. Before I table the letter, I state that the Queensland Committee of Medical Specialist Colleges includes the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, the Australian College of Dermatologists, the Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists and the College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand. That covers nearly all the Australian colleges. I would like to table that letter for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from Dr Bernard Whitfield, Chair Queensland Committee of Medical Specialist Colleges, regarding negotiations over senior specialist contract [\[4873\]](#).

I have received further correspondence from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists expressing similar concerns. I would like to table that particular correspondence for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 28 March 2014, from Dr Murray Patton, president of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists to Mrs Miller MP regarding training of Psychiatry Registrars in Queensland [\[4874\]](#).

In its letter, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists states—

Demand for mental health services in the Queensland public health sector is at an all time high.

... There are currently more than 280 psychiatry trainees working in the Queensland public health sector. Their five year training requirements include frequent meetings and oversight by Consultant Psychiatrists. If this cannot be provided they will require transfers to where supervision is available—most likely in the private sector or in other states.

... It is our view that the sustainability of public and private mental health services in Queensland is at risk as the potential large-scale resignation of Senior Medical Officers rapidly threatens the stability of the future workforce

I would like members to read the entire document. I understand as well that the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has written last week to the Premier conveying similar concerns in the strongest possible terms. Make no mistake: these are very serious issues for the future of our public hospital system. I table for the benefit of members of the House the letter from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 31 March 2014, from A/Professor Michael Hollands, President of the Royal Australasia College of Surgeons to the Premier, regarding its concerns of impending resignations of surgeons [4875].

I would just like to quote from this particular document. Associate Professor Michael Hollands states—

The college is aware of actual and impending resignations of surgeons across many hospitals and across many specialty areas, in the Queensland public sector and the situation is critical. Such resignations will leave the Hospital system unworkable and training of surgeons perhaps impossible.

It goes on—

The College needs to state its concerns in the strongest terms. Specialist surgeons are highly skilled and require many years of very specific vocational training. This needs to be under the close supervision of experienced surgeons. Recruiting specialist surgeons from overseas to fill service gaps is not easy, nor a speedy solution. Standards differ, cultures differ and the surgical care required by the community is not always transferrable. Queenslanders particularly have an extremely high profiled awareness of this. It is just over ten years since the appointment of Dr Jayant Patel to Bundaberg Hospital. This was possible through the creation of shortages of surgical specialists within Queensland and inappropriate reviewing of standards by the regulators of the day. Since then, it has taken many years for Queensland Health to restore its integrity and commitment to high quality surgical services, and to rebuild the trust of the public and the surgical profession. It is irresponsible to suggest that the Queensland government will now disregard all of this.

I will continue quoting from the letter. It says—

The College of Surgeons urges you—

that is, the Premier—

to find a resolution to prevent the loss of your absolutely key personnel in your hospitals and health department. Destroying their commitment, and trust thus forcing them to leave your health service will only be detrimental to the health services of the people of Queensland, and most likely take many years to recover.

That was signed by Associate Professor Michael Hollands.

The health system that this government holds in trust for the people of Queensland is now in chaos. The potential for mass resignations within the next month is very real. The loss of trainees to refresh our medical specialist workforce is happening now; in fact, it is happening today. A hospital with no doctors is not a hospital at all; it is a building with beds. It may as well be a motel, because it will not be a hospital. It may take years for our public hospital system in Queensland to recover from this disaster, which is a disaster of this minister's own making.

But this is more than just a loss of trust between the government and senior doctors. The mass resignation of anaesthetists will mean no surgery, elective or otherwise, and it will mean no pain management for mothers in labour—there will be no epidurals. We cannot afford to lose intensive care and emergency physicians. We already have workforce shortages in psychiatry and oncology. The actions of this government are undermining a decade of hard work to improve specialist clinical services across this state.

For this Premier and this minister to say that doctors who resign will simply be replaced by overseas doctors is disgraceful. This is both naïve and ignorant of the facts. In this country it takes 20 years to train a senior staff specialist. To recruit an overseas trained medical specialist can take two years from the initial expression of interest to accreditation in a public hospital in regional Queensland. Specialist trainees in other states and in New Zealand have already been warned against working in our hospitals in Queensland because of the unfair and unreasonable Newman Work Choices contracts proposed by this government.

In speaking with many of my local constituents, I can tell this parliament that they want Queensland and Australian doctors in their hospitals, and they will not tolerate a government stepping aside and allowing SMOs and VMOs to resign due to ideological stupidity and pig-headedness. Quite frankly, constituents are scared witless about a repeat of the Dr Patel disaster and a repeat of Bundaberg. Constituents are scared witless about the world-class hospital system we have in Queensland being turned into a Third World system like Africa. Constituents are scared witless about having a heart attack or a stroke and there being no senior medical officer and no visiting medical officer in their time of need.

They are scared witless doctors will have to cost the procedure or cost the treatment that they want to prescribe based on clinical need, yet they cannot prescribe it as it may affect the profitability of the hospital and health service. They are scared witless that if a treatment is deemed too costly, for example, like at Ipswich Hospital, they may be referred to the Princess Alexandra or the Royal Brisbane Hospital; in other words, they will shift the patient and they will also shift the cost somewhere else. They are scared witless that older Queenslanders may be given limited treatment due to the necessity of profit before the care and treatment of patients. They are scared witless that they are being punished because they cannot afford private health insurance. They are scared witless that they are going to be turned away from their local hospital because there will be no doctors there.

Let us turn now from 'keep our doctors' to 'save our hospitals'. No doctors mean no hospitals, and no hospitals mean no medical care in an emergency and no operations. We need to save our hospitals from the incompetent fools sitting here opposite. We need to not only keep our doctors but save our hospitals from the reactionary right-wing Newman Work Choice contracts that are an abomination not only to the doctors but to ordinary Queenslanders.

While Campbell Newman and this LNP government is in power, never again will Queenslanders be able to take our public hospital system and our doctors for granted. Why? I can tell this parliament why: because the LNP government does not give a stuff about the average Queenslanders, the average family, the sick, the poor and the disadvantaged! They do not care about the doctors, the nurses, the allied health professionals, the carers who care for people in their time of need, and they do not care about the training of the next generation of senior medical officers because to them it is market economics. They will simply purchase them. They will 'buy' them in, and we will have doctors from Third World countries—who need their own doctors anyway—and it is disgraceful and it is immoral.

I will be moving amendments to this Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014 that this health minister should have done months ago, and I table the amendments and the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014, amendments to be moved by Mrs Jo-Ann Miller [\[4876\]](#).

Tabled paper: Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Mrs Jo-Ann Miller' amendments [\[4877\]](#).

I will be seeking leave to move amendments that will solve this dispute today if the Premier, the minister, all ministers and LNP backbenchers support it. I will be seeking the leave of the House to move the amendments, as they fall outside of the long title of the bill. I will be moving amendments that the doctors know are fair, equitable and reasonable. This will be a test of whether the LNP members support their local hospitals, local senior medical officers and the doctors that reside in their local communities. I believe that the vote on this amendment that I will be putting forward today will be historic in this Queensland parliament for all MPs. Each and every MP can keep their doctors and save their local hospitals by supporting the amendments that I have tabled here earlier, and each and every MP can keep their doctors caring for their patients—which is all that they want to do. Think carefully about the way members vote. I will be particularly watching the way that Dr Chris Davis and Dr Bruce Flegg vote. If they put their position as an LNP MP above their community, I believe that their communities will condemn them forever. My challenge is this: does any LNP MP have the ticker?

Getting back to the bill, I ask members to note that, despite the amendments proposed in this bill, section 193(2) of the Industrial Relations Act still empowers the government to change the conditions of high-income guarantee contracts by regulation. The amendments proposed in this bill attempt to assure doctors that the conditions of their individual work contracts and the addendum to that contract cannot be overridden by a health employment directive issued by the director-general of the health department. However, the proposed amendment contained in clause 3 is only relevant to inconsistencies. This would allow a health employment directive to be issued which deals with the matters not presently contained in the contract or to supplement existing terms. There is no

requirement that such a health employment directive needs to be developed by consultation and agreement or that it cannot disadvantage a senior doctor. Further, what constitutes an inconsistency is difficult to define.

On one view the amendment to section 51C(3) of the Hospital and Health Boards Act will only be effective in circumstances where the health employment directive is directly inconsistent with a term of the contract—that is, where it would be impossible to comply with both the contractual and health employment directive obligation. This means that terms that the parties have intentionally left out of the contract can be regulated by a health employment directive without any inconsistency arising. I am particularly concerned that key performance indicators, particularly business accountability indicators, may be intentionally left out or worded such that doctors may be forced to accept business processes such as the profitability of their health services that put the care of patients at risk. I read these amendments as meaning that a health employment directive can introduce new requirements or obligations into the senior medical officer or visiting medical officer contracts which are not presently contained in the contract as no inconsistency will arise.

I will now talk to the amendments that I have circulated today and their explanatory notes. The amendments insert a new proposed clause 69C with the purpose of ensuring senior health service employees employed under a high-income guarantee contract enjoy conditions no less favourable than under the current medical officers' certified agreement (No. 3). Specifically, proposed section 69C(3) addresses unfair dismissal, arbitration of disputes, rostering and fatigue management, transfers and key performance indicators. I particularly wish to highlight proposed section 69C(3)(e) that empowers senior medical officers and visiting medical officers to dispute management instruction to put service profitability before safe, quality patient care. I find it abhorrent that a senior doctor in a Queensland public hospital can be dismissed without an adequate process of appeal for putting patient care ahead of the profitability of a hospital and health service in which they are employed. This is abhorrent to the patients and to the doctors and to every single person in Queensland.

The parliament may well ask: why am I doing the health minister's job for him? The answer is simple: because I care about the hospitals and health services of Queensland and because senior medical officers across this state have asked me to. They have requested me to. It is also because I care about people, I care about patients and I care about the carers who help other people—the people of Queensland. I care about the doctors, I care about the nurses, the physios, the speech therapists, the radiologists. I care about the administration staff and the wardies. I care and we in Labor care, but those opposite in the LNP—the LNP members and ministers—do not. Why is that? Because the LNP means profits before people.

I listened to the patients and the doctors. We in Labor all listen and I am passionate—absolutely passionate—about keeping our doctors in Queensland and saving our Queensland public sector hospitals. That is why as shadow minister for health I am doing the Minister for Health's job for him—something that he should have done months ago. This is a solution. The amendments that I have tabled today are a solution to the crisis that this minister has made.

I implore every single LNP MP and the crossbenchers to vote for these sensible amendments—to vote for keeping our doctors and to vote for saving our Queensland public hospitals. We will hold every tory LNP MP accountable for their vote on these amendments. I know that the Assistant Minister for Health, Dr Chris Davis, the current member for Stafford, has stood up publicly for his colleagues. I know that, and I note that Dr Davis is in the House. I believe that he has stood up in the party room to try to protect our public hospitals, including the Prince Charles Hospital, which I understand he loves so dearly, and I accept that. But I call on the member for Stafford to vote for these amendments for the sake of his colleagues and for the sake of his local public hospital.

This lazy and incompetent LNP government could solve this dispute today by voting with the opposition. Our amendments to this bill have been prepared in less than 48 hours by the opposition and it could have been done by the government over five months ago. But this government does not appreciate our senior doctors, it does not listen to them and it does not take their concerns seriously. If the MPs opposite value their local doctors and if they value their local hospitals, I call on LNP MPs to vote for these sensible amendments. If those MPs opposite value the Cairns Hospital, I call on the member for Cook and the members for Barron River and Cairns to vote for these amendments. If the members for Hinchinbrook, for Thuringowa, for Mundingburra, for Burdekin and for Townsville value their public hospital doctors and value their hospital service, they will vote for these amendments. If the members for Whitsunday and Mirani support the senior medical officers and the visiting medical officers at Mackay, they will vote for these amendments.

If the members for Keppel and for Gladstone and for Callide support the senior medical officers and the visiting medical officers at the Rockhampton and Gladstone hospitals, I call on them to vote for these amendments. I call on the members for Bundaberg, Burnett, Maryborough and Hervey Bay to vote for these amendments if they appreciate the doctors and also the hospitals providing services in Bundaberg, Maryborough and Hervey Bay. I call on the members for Mount Isa, for Dalrymple and for Gregory to vote for the amendments that will support the public hospital doctors and also the hospitals in Mount Isa.

I also call on the members for Gympie, for Noosa, for Nicklin, for Buderim, for Kawana, for Maroochydore, for Caloundra and for Glass House to support the amendments, because if they value the senior medical officers and visiting medical officers in their local communities they will want to support the Queensland public hospitals located in Gympie, Nambour, Maleny and Caloundra. If MPs opposite value the Toowoomba Hospital and even the Stanthorpe Hospital, I call on the members for Condamine, for Warrego, for Toowoomba North, for Toowoomba South and—yes—the minister himself, the member for Southern Downs, to vote for these amendments.

To my own local community in terms of the Ipswich Hospital, I call on the members for Lockyer, for Nanango, for Ipswich and for Ipswich West to join with me in saving Ipswich Hospital. I could go on and on in relation to Caboolture, Redcliffe, Prince Charles, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. I also call on the members for Pumicestone, for Morayfield, for Murrumba, for Pine Rivers, for Ferny Grove, for Kallangur, for Everton, for Aspley, for Sandgate, for Nudgee, for Clayfield, for Brisbane Central, for Mount Coot-tha, for Moggill, for Indooroopilly and—yes—for the Premier's seat of Ashgrove to vote for these amendments.

If they value the Princess Alexandra, QE II, Redlands, Beaudesert and Logan hospitals, I call on the members for Mount Ommaney, for Yeerongpilly, for Greenslopes, for Bulimba, for Sunnybank, for Stretton, for Algester, for Logan, for Waterford, for Chatsworth, for Mansfield, for Beaudesert, for Capalaba, for Cleveland, for Redlands, for Lytton, for Springwood, for Coomera and for Albert to vote for these amendments. If they value the senior medical officers at the Gold Coast University Hospital, which was built by Labor for the people of the Gold Coast, as well as the Robina Hospital, I call on the members for Gaven, for Broadwater, for Southport, for Surfers Paradise, for Mudgeeraba, for Mermaid Beach, for Burleigh and for Currumbin to join with me and to vote for these amendments. The only member who really understands the hospital and health system at the Gold Coast is the member for Gaven. I know that he has been in touch with the senior medical officers and the visiting medical officers at the Gold Coast and I know that he has an intimate understanding of the issues. I call on all members present to support our doctors and our public hospital system by voting for the amendments that I will be seeking leave to move later.

In conclusion, I think that it is very important for people to understand how dire this situation is in Queensland. We are facing an absolute crisis where doctors right across this state have already signed their resignation letters, because in all good faith they cannot accept this amendment and they cannot accept Newman's unfair Work Choices contracts. It really worries me that I am talking to SMOs who are crying on the phone to me. I am talking to visiting medical officers who cannot understand where this government is coming from. They have said to me that they will never vote for the LNP again. You are crucifying your own heartland.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Bundamba, I would ask that you direct your comments through the chair.

Mrs MILLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for your direction. The SMOs and the VMOs cannot understand why they are being put on a cross by this government. The doctors generally support the LNP. They never, ever thought that this government would do such a thing to them. Not even Joh Bjelke-Petersen did this. He never got in the gutter the way this government has.

I go back to an email that I have received from the wife of a senior medical officer. In that email she states—

I am writing you to express my extreme anger over the Senior Medical Officer contracts with Queensland Health. It is 11.42pm at night and whereas I should be sound asleep with not a care in the world, I've been tossing and turning for the last two hours, overwhelmed by the stress that this process is placing on our beautiful family and the very real implications this may have on us in 3 months time.

She goes on to say—

My husband is one of the people who these Senior Medical Officer contracts is impacting on. He is an Anaesthetist ... We have been together since he was 22 years of age. He is now 38 years of age and in the time that we have been together, he has been studying at a tertiary level for 14 of these years. 14 years is a long time to be studying, but this is what it takes to become an 'expert' in the field.

What has this 14 years included? She goes on to say long trainee and consultant shifts, including many, many night shifts, many, many weekend shifts and unsociable working hours and a three-year period working in Mount Isa. She goes on to say further—

Numerous sacrifices, missed wedding anniversary dinners, children's birthday parties, BBQ's and social gatherings with friends and family. LOTS and LOTS of study beyond mid-night. ALL because at the end of the day, my husband, along with each of his colleagues want to be the best Doctors that they can and will always put the optimal care of the patient ahead of their own personal interests.

She goes on to say—

I am trying to paint a picture of our ordinary family who has a 'Senior Medical Officer-Doctor' as a Dad, Husband and bread-winner. An ordinary guy who still lives like a student, wears t-shirts that are 5 years old, thongs on his feet ... an ordinary guy who was able to enjoy the rewards of all his hard work in his new home for about the month of February until the news of the contracts broke!!!

The email goes on. This is what she says—

I actually feel sick in the stomach as I write this email as we really don't know what our future now holds. My husband has submitted his resignation as part of the mass strategy with hundreds of other consultants across the state. This action is VERY real and its really happening. If the Government doesn't slow this process down, change legislation and negotiate properly with my husband and all other consultants across the state, he will resign and unlike what Mr Newman and Mr Springborg believe—these amazing Doctors aren't as 'replaceable' as they are trying to convince the public It is NOT acceptable that the Government can bully real people ... into signing these contracts that takes away all of their basic rights as employees.

She says—

In SUMMARY, when you are sitting in Parliament and Mr Newman and Mr Springborg are convincing you that the whole Doctor 'issue' is Unions speaking ... believe me, it's not. !!!!

...

Please read my letter and digest the content, in 6 hours time I will be waking up to get my 3 little girls out the door for the school run. We won't get to see my husband, he will have already left for work. I will be tired tomorrow, very tired, BUT if just one of you reads this letter with empathy and listens to my real story, a story of a normal everyday family and does something productive with the contents, then my bleary eyes tomorrow are worth it.

I implore the members of this House to please vote to allow the amendments that I have tabled in this parliament today. I am begging members to vote with the opposition to stop this public hospital crisis in Queensland. I have spoken to doctors right across the length and breadth of Queensland. I have spoken to nurses and other public hospital officials and professionals right across this state. I say to members: please put whatever ideology and please put whatever pig-headedness that you have aside and keep our doctors and today save our public hospital system. I implore you and implore Campbell Newman the Premier and the Minister for Health to please stop putting the advertisements in the *Courier-Mail* and right across the state, which are simply wasting Queensland taxpayers' money in trying to fight an ideological dispute with the doctors.

All our doctors want is a fair go. They want a fair contract. As they have said time and time and time again, they already sign contracts in the Queensland public hospital system, but these contracts are absolutely and utterly unfair. That is why they have taken such a strong stance.

I would also like to say that the members of the hospitals and even the members of the AMA and some members of the union have pointed out to me that there are a lot of public hospital doctors who have never joined a union before and never joined the AMA because they were treated so fairly beforehand. But now they are joining because they know that it is important for them to be able to get the wisdom of the collective legal advice that they are getting.

I would like to say in this parliament today that we have heard it all before about so-called union thugs and all the nonsense that this government goes on about. I went to the meeting at the Pineapple Hotel. I was across the road at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre where there were 1,470 doctors. There were 200 doctors at the Cock & Bull Tavern in Cairns. Every single one of those doctors are professional and if I was ever in need of medical help I would be very happy for any one of them to treat me in my time of need. The people of Queensland have faith in their public hospital doctors. They knew, up until this crisis of the health minister's own making, that there was always going to be a doctor in the emergency department to treat them if they were brought in by an ambulance. They always knew that there would be a nurse there to triage them and that they would be dealt with within the appropriate times. They always knew that if they had a stroke, a heart attack or an appendix erupt they would be able to get their surgery at a public hospital in this state of Queensland and that the doctor would be fully accredited.

The point I make is that members of the public of Queensland no longer have any trust in this government to run public hospitals. There is no trust anymore. This started with the issue of employment contracts for doctors in Queensland public hospitals. It is about time that this LNP government started treating doctors with respect. It is also about time that the health minister himself got out of Charlotte Street and went to Cairns, Townsville and all the other hospitals around Queensland because the doctors are telling me that they want to talk to the organ grinder and not the monkey. It is not good enough to send the director-general of Health on an excursion away to give them a set example of what these contracts will or will not do.

Furthermore, the doctors are telling me that in Charlotte Street and around Queensland TVs, which are supposed to give out public health messages to people, are now on a loop with the health minister and the director-general talking about contracts. This government is destroying the public hospital system in Queensland. It is a disgraceful situation. I say to Campbell Newman and the Minister for Health, 'Shame, shame, shame. Please support the amendments that I propose today.'

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (5.02 pm): I have only been in this House for two years but I think that if I am in this House for 20 years I will never again see someone speak for an hour on two paragraphs. I rise to speak in favour of the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014. Firstly I want to state in this House that I have the utmost respect for those who work in the medical profession, especially those who study and train for decades in their pursuit of becoming a specialist in different knowledge areas. As a veteran of 15 operations that required me to put my complete trust in a team of doctors and nurses while I was unconscious on the table, I know only too well the responsibility they have when we place ourselves and our loved ones in their hands. I respect their efforts and expertise. Let there be no mistake at the level of respect I have for doctors, nurses and others in the medical profession. My mum was a community nurse. I and my siblings spent many years as we grew up helping her treat the sick and injured in our home in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

With that as a backdrop I now address the circumstances surrounding the measures proposed in the bill. I speak from a base of understanding after talking to many different people on this issue. I would appreciate the minister's interjection if I get this wrong. This bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. The effect of the bill is to amend the operation of health employment directives which can be issued by the chief executive of the Department of Health. Under the current act, the chief executive of the Department of Health could potentially issue a health employment directive that would override an existing contract of employment for a doctor. That is possible now and has been possible for years, but there has been no mass demonstration of outrage until now and I would ask why because I am a little bit bemused with this. I am not being obnoxious. I genuinely do not understand why this is an issue now when it has not been an issue for years.

I understand this power of the director-general to alter contract conditions has been the major concern most recently raised by senior medical staff regarding the implementation of new contracts. The amendment provides that the existing contract of employment prevails over a health employment directive in the event of inconsistency. The bill also outlines that increases in remuneration for doctors, such as annual pay increases or other benefits, can be passed on and are deemed not to be inconsistent. The bill also prevents regulations made under the Health and Hospital Boards Act and/or the Industrial Relations Act from overriding contracts of employment. This bill, as I understand, comprehensively addresses the concerns raised by senior medical staff and I would be pleased to understand what issues are still unaddressed amicably.

I have worked under work contracts for most of my adult life. I have employed many people under contracts. From my perspective the terms and conditions in these contracts are favourable to doctors. I think this has a lot to do with the level of respect that the government has for doctors. The Labor opposition often claims this government does not consult. That simply is not true, especially in this instance. Again, Minister, please interject if I get this wrong. Initial consultation started in August last year and conversations were held with doctors' representatives in over 35 meetings up until around some time in late February. For whatever reason, the doctors decided that they wanted to change those representatives negotiating for them and identified six to seven issues they wanted more clarity on.

I understand that the minister and the director-general went back to the table with a new set of doctors and formed the SMO task force. This task force included representatives from the AMA, the AMAQ, ASMOF, Together, four senior medical officers and Luke Forsyth, who is legal counsel to ASMOF. It is my understanding that after several weeks this task force got to the point where all parties were able to agree to solutions to the particular concerns that doctors had raised. I believe this

occurred just before the meeting of doctors here in Brisbane on or around 18 March. Further, it is my understanding that the director-general spoke in meetings across Queensland to approximately 800 staff. I also understand that the director-general met staff in the Clinical Senate and in the clinical networks.

I understand in recent days the president of the AMA has indicated his support for the current contracts and addendum and that he was party to those negotiations. My understanding is that this bill enacts one of those recently agreed solutions and in my observation the minister is acting in good faith as agreed to during the recent negotiations. From my perspective this minister has acted in good faith right through this whole process. If doctors have concerns they should be taking it up with their representatives because, as I understand it, it is their representatives who agreed to a series of solutions some weeks ago. I know this minister—I have known him for years—and never in this time have I seen him act in any other way but with integrity. From my perspective he has acted in good faith. I respectfully ask doctors what possible motive does the government have in driving our highly skilled doctors away? The answer is none. I support this bill, especially the manner in which it is presented—in good faith.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (5.09 pm): There is a wonderful saying that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. So it is with this legislation, which is the health minister's response to a reasonable request by those doctors being compelled to sign new contracts. The legislation is not just too little too late but also gives scant regard for addressing the major concerns that doctors have about the contracts in general. Rather than have anyone say I have not considered this legislation on its merits, I inform the House that yesterday I joined the opposition at a joint briefing from the department when the legislation was abruptly moved forward. I thank the health minister and members of the committee for helping me to achieve that. I also thank the shadow opposition spokesperson who allowed me to participate in her briefing. I could not have fitted it in, otherwise.

I am very concerned about this legislation having listened to what the chair of the health committee has just stated. He said he did not know or understand why, after many years, the doctors are now concerned about the director-general's capacity. I am not going to be too critical, but that trivialises their concerns. He misses the context of the doctors' argument. The bill has three provisions that primarily relate to the director-general's capacity that was identified during some of the belated negotiations that have only occurred since the minister was pushed. These provisions are contained within the legislation. Firstly, the director-general's capacity to override the terms of the contract is removed. Secondly, the overriding Public Service demand regarding the pre-eminence of industrial relations law has itself been overridden. That is a worry because it may not be held to be bound in the future. Thirdly, wage rises can occur and can be passed on with new contracts. All the formerly six and now eight demands have allegedly been met within the addendum, but that is not within this. No-one other than the Premier, cabinet and Justice and Attorney-General have been consulted outside the corporate part of Queensland Health. No stakeholder consultation has occurred nor has there been any independent legal review of the legislation being debated today. That is a mistake. It is a critical mistake.

This is inherently a problem because all these provisions would seem to be capable of challenges by the government, too. I consider that these differences will probably raise far greater concerns than either the government or the ministers have considered. The doctors think ahead, as they are trained to do, and they are raising these points as they legitimately should. The legislation presented is fine, but it is a solution being proposed, in part, largely by regulation and not legislation. This is a small piece of legislation. Many members here do not understand this issue and probably do not accept the medical profession's reluctance to sign on because it reeks of nudge-nudge, wink-wink as opposed to coming from a position of trust. Once lost, trust is hard to recover as the minister, the Premier and government members are now discovering to their eternal grief.

On Tuesday, the AMA president stated that the rollout of the contracts should be stopped and the minister should start again. He said this because the weight of doubt about contract security outweighs the weight of confidence in the contract. That has been a consistent statement by all parties. These decisions are ones doctors have to make regularly and they do so with great skill. They reduce their mistakes by regularly making good decisions, which gives rise to a pattern of better decisions as you go along. If you make good decisions, that tends to lead to better decisions. I see the former acting director-general. He would know exactly what I am talking about. The doctors say that these contracts are offensive, flawed and instil no confidence.

I dispute the statements that have been made here by various members and that have been made previously about what has been going on. With respect, I back the doctors because I say that they are correct and the minister and the health department are wrong. The weight of evidence would suggest that they are right and the department is wrong. No amount of legislating parts of a complex agreement will change that.

Mr Rickuss: Are you talking about the long title of the bill?

Dr DOUGLAS: The member for Lockyer would not understand this. The health minister falsely believes that this is a kind of industrial relations campaign that is being conducted by those ideologically opposed to the LNP. It is not. The minister initiated it and justified it by saying that it was needed because of the newly constituted health and hospital boards. This is untrue because we have existing MOCA 3 contracts that, at the earliest, will end in 2015.

Like all other members, I have received a flood of letters from senior medical officers. That is in contrast to what has been stated repeatedly through interjection by a variety of members, particularly the member for Southport, who I know has been getting the same emails that I have been receiving because he is on the email trail. I would like to share with members some of the passionate letters that I have received. They put a human perspective on the minister's political spin. Late yesterday, a respiratory physician informed me that, with regard to this legislation, he is concerned that many in Campbell Newman's cabinet appear hell-bent on further confrontation rather than looking for meaningful solutions. He said that the response of the government to constructive criticism is not reflection and thoughtfulness but rather attack. Many of his colleagues are concerned that the Newman government and its members have lost their moral compass.

To treat this very large group of senior medical professionals in this way is absolutely insulting. Ultimately, it drives down confidence in the government and its members. It gets worse, because the LNP government is running a case in the Federal Court that is costing the taxpayers, the members of the AMA and a variety of others an enormous amount of money each day. In the doctors' case it is allegedly in the order of \$200,000. Can you imagine how many barristers and solicitors are going in this case—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Gaven, I ask you to direct your comments through the chair in future, please.

Dr DOUGLAS: I thank you for your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is allegedly costing \$200,000 a day—the first day cost them a lot more and it will keep on going. Do members know what it is about? It is about a consumer restriction of information case. They are trying to use federal consumer law. This is against the AMA. Can members imagine what is going on across the nation? Can they imagine what people think? Has anyone thought—

Mr BERRY: I rise to a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order, member for Ipswich?

Mr BERRY: The matter is in court, as I understand. It is sub judice and it is irrelevant.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Ipswich, I am receiving advice on that matter presently.

Mr BERRY: I am sorry.

Dr DOUGLAS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I can move on.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Gaven. Member for Ipswich, with regard to your point of order, I am instructed that the sub judice rule comes into effect once a jury has been empaneled. At this stage, no jury has been empaneled.

Dr DOUGLAS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As for the appalling latest action, remembering this contract issue started nine months ago, the health minister, Mr Springborg, has misused an Auditor-General's report into private practice by doctors working in Queensland Health public hospitals. He then sought to unfairly smear large numbers of hardworking doctors who do not earn anything like the sums the minister continually reels off here in parliament and at his incessant media conferences. He also tried to smear them with false claims about the actions of a very small group of rorters. That has incensed them enormously, because the vast majority of people have no contact with that and earn nothing like that kind of money. They are hardworking and decent people who want to look after their patients.

The wife of a Gold Coast anaesthetist wrote to me and put a very different slant on this. Her 38-year-old husband has spent 14 years studying at university to become an expert in his field. She says the public is being misled by blatant lies told on the government's behalf. She says that to read in the papers that her husband is earning \$400,000 is excruciating, as he earns significantly less, with almost half going in tax and a large chunk going in further study. She says her husband is an ordinary guy who loves working in the public health system and was excited by the prospect of working there for the next 20 years. That was the case when the news of the contracts broke.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: The member for Ipswich has just made a comment. These are the people who are working in Queensland Health facilities in places like Ipswich, and they expect him to support them.

Government members interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: They are exactly the same. This is replicated with other people. Unlike what the Premier and the minister believe—and obviously the member for Ipswich—this lady says that the amazing doctors who always put the optimal care of patients ahead of their own interests are not as replaceable as people are seeking to convince people they are. She is pleading with me and most members. She wrote that when you are sitting in parliament the Premier, Mr Newman, and the Minister for Health, Mr Springborg, are convincing you that the whole doctor issue is the union speaking. It is not; it is all those people who many ministers would place their absolute trust in. You need, we need and I need them. I just heard the chair of the health committee say that he had had 15 operations. What do you think these people are thinking?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gaven, I have asked you already to direct your comments through the chair; please do so.

Dr DOUGLAS: Thank you for your guidance. These are largely people who, like nurses and medical ancillary staff, are nurturers. They are not combative. They have more than earned your support and respect. They are not getting it. All LNP members should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves as they, on the one hand, champion all the good work of what public medicine is and does deliver but, on the other hand, dismiss their reasonable claims. This legislation is in part an insult to their reasonable claims, not their ego nor their intelligence.

In another letter a specialist said that, despite the addendum and its recent amendments, the contracts are still able to be changed unilaterally by the employer, meaning that they are not contracts at all but an instrument of control in the hands of managers who often have questionable track records. He said that it placed her as a doctor treating patients in a situation where she may be forced to put the needs of the service above the needs of the patient. She would rather resign from a job she loved than sign a contract that is so fatally flawed and destroys the conditions she works under.

As I have stated earlier, this legislation we are considering today relates primarily to the actions of the director-general. It is just as well, because the current director-general is not a medically trained person. Generally, it is better if they are, but I accept it is not essential. The legislative amendments will address some of the concerns of doctors regarding proposed contracts. It does not then follow that the vast bulk of doctors working for Queensland Health will agree to the addendum and a variety of the other regulatory instruments that are being placed upon them in an attempt to entice doctors to sign contracts.

For those members who are, even at this point, being swayed by the minister's claims today or before that by inference that this is an argument about money, I point out that clearly this contract issue is not about money. He further inflamed those currently considering the options. The member for Bundamba correctly said that I am talking to doctors. I am a doctor and there are other doctors here. They are trying and sending emails to most members. The minister said today that there are doctors earning \$2,500 a day and at least one case of a doctor earning \$15,000 for a weekend's work. That is what the minister said. But what he did not say is where this person was, what they were doing and how many other people were working on that day.

The minister repeatedly fails to understand that it is his own offensive statements that cripple his attempts to solve this problem. It is the minister's responsibility to use discretion with regard to the words he uses because people are listening to everything that is being said, moment by moment. That is the world we live in now. If this is the health minister's response then he commits a form of political suicide for no-one's benefit other than his own. He refuses to acknowledge that it is his own fault. He says that it is everyone else's fault. I say that that is the last refuge of the scoundrel. This legislation was defeated before it starts because of the very words used by the minister in his statements this morning.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014. There are great concerns in the community about the senior medical officer issue and our hospitals among patients and people right through Queensland. There is a ripple effect right across Queensland at present. When the LNP made these changes they felt that they were riding on a big high and believed that Queenslanders still loved them. They believed they could continue on in their arrogant way and bring in forced contracts for senior medical officers. They had targeted everyone else. When I put a question to the Premier and he basically said that doctors are happy.

What a great concern it is that the Premier of Queensland does not have a good understanding of the situation. I do not know who was advising him on the seriousness of this situation. In parliament we were trying to express to the government the concerns out there. It was disappointing to see more than a thousand senior medical officers turn up at the Pineapple Hotel. The Deputy Premier tried to do his best to convey the perception that this was a union organised rally. They were hoping that in the minds of the people of Queensland there was some doubt about this rally and that it may have been a union rally. The fact was that this was not a union rally. These were honourable, hardworking senior medical officers who were greatly concerned. They had an enterprise bargaining system that they were quite happy with. They work for Queensland Health because they want to not because they are desperate.

As the previous speakers said, some of these people have spent 14 years getting to these senior positions. They are professionals who can get jobs anywhere in this country. They are working for Queensland Health because they believe in the public health system.

At present I notice that the government is talking about building dams and infrastructure. It is trying to divert attention from what has been going on with regard to rushed through laws that attack motorbike riders. Likewise, the workplace compensation legislation was smashed through.

When Peter Beattie was dealing with the 'Dr Death' issue he bought up the Bradfield scheme as a distraction for Queenslanders. The focus changed from 'Dr Death' to the Bradfield scheme. That is what the LNP is doing at present. They are looking for a distraction away from the seriousness of the senior medical officer situation, the possible collapse of our health system and their advertising for doctors from elsewhere. They know for themselves that this is a serious situation.

When the government changed the legislation to force contracts on senior medical officers they presumed that it would go through and nobody would say anything. That is not the case. As previous speakers have said, the reality is that a lot of those senior medical officers are working for Queensland Health because they believe in the public health system.

It is really insulting that it has come to this. The government have given the perception that they are not backing down. It is not about backing down. We just hope that they can venture out of their subterranean existence and have a look at the real world and see what is really going on here. But they feel that they have trapped themselves and they do not know how to get out of it. I will read an email that was sent to me today from a constituent in my electorate. It reads—

Hello Shane—

As a recent retiree, I am very concerned as to developments within the State's hospitals at present. Apparently this week all the anaesthetists and most SMO's at Cairns base hospital have resigned. According to one member of staff from that hospital, if a patient is admitted with a serious condition, nurses and junior doctors are in the unenviable position of having to treat that person without adequate assistance from senior medical officers after the end of this month.

Junior doctors have to be supervised by SMO's who will no longer be available for this task. The few SMO's who are left (I presume overseas doctors) will be completely swamped with extra duties.

Many Tableland residents with complications that cannot be treated at Atherton Hospital are transferred to Cairns Base—does this mean that this will no longer be an option, and prospects for adequate care will be at a minimum.

As my member for this electorate, I would like to ask you to 'bring to the table' at Brisbane or via communication channels within Parliament, my feelings of apprehension at this development. I thought it was 'Government by the people for the people' rather than an attack on the health system. I realise that doctors and staff have resigned for substantial reasons.

Yours Sincerely, Liz Vermaas, Herberton

The Labor Party closed maternity services at Emerald and then likewise at Moranbah. At that time a place called Tieri was in the paper as having more births per population than any other place right across Australia. Most of those women at that town—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Member for Dalrymple, is this relevant to the bill?

Mr KNUTH: Yes, it is relevant.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will let you go on, but it does not sound like it to me.

Mr KNUTH: Most of the women from Tieri would go to the Moranbah Hospital to give birth. But when Labor closed down the Moranbah Hospital, there was an influx of women going to the Mackay Hospital to have their babies. Then there was a cost involved with the patient travel subsidy. Then there was an article in the paper about Mackay Hospital not being able to keep up with the pressure of all of the women from Clermont and likewise Emerald, likewise Tieri, likewise Moranbah, having to go to the Mackay Hospital to have their babies and spend three weeks in hospital.

Where I am coming from is that this lady has written to me expressing great concern for the hospitals in rural and regional hospitals, because the senior medical officers will be pulled out of areas such as Atherton and Mareeba, and patients will be transported to Cairns as a matter of urgency, leaving our local hospitals in a situation where we do not have senior medical officers. These are the issues we wanted to bring to your attention, Mr Deputy Speaker. I hope that the LNP will continue to listen. I take that back. I hope that the LNP will do as the Premier said, and that is, 'We are now going to listen to all Queenslanders.' I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (5.33 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014. The focus of my very serious concern is for the continued training and education of the junior doctors in the Queensland public health system. For months now, the public has been privy to the health minister's mismanagement of the introduction of contracts for senior medical specialists. His appalling efforts have resulted in a crisis of his own making, with thousands of senior doctors on the verge of resigning from our public health system. I think most people understand the serious ramifications that this may have on existing patient care and health services in our hospitals. But I also want to alert them to the longer term implications of this contracts crisis.

This crisis will also have a massive impact on junior doctors across the state. Junior doctors currently working in our public hospitals must now consider whether they will apply for training positions in Queensland. Why? Because without senior doctors to teach them, their continuing education and accreditation will be catastrophically affected. This adversarial LNP government do not appear to have any grasp of the ramifications of their war on doctors for Queenslanders. Let me explain this so the government can understand their folly.

Supervision by senior doctors of junior doctors is required for two very good reasons: patient safety and the accreditation of training. The impending resignation of senior doctors, including surgeons and anaesthetists, will have a devastating knock-on effect in our hospitals. We will face a dearth of potential junior doctor trainees. Our specialist doctors of the future will not be there when we need them. The Premier has threatened to use doctors who have not been trained in Queensland, and we also know that private providers are quoting day rates of up to \$2,600—plus agency fees—to supply doctors.

These are foolhardy attempts at brinkmanship—to use a word used by the Minister for Health—by the Premier, rather than considered serious negotiations held in good faith. Threats of replacement only serve to inflame the situation. The highly specialised medical professionals who may effect a mass resignation are not so easily replaced, as the health minister claims. They spend years of their lives training in their chosen field, followed by years of vocational training under the supervision of experienced specialists. And, once qualified, they give back to the public health system by providing the required supervision and training for the next generation of junior doctors for their accreditation as specialists.

This war on senior doctors by the Newman government will leave the Queensland public health system broken and the training of future specialists impossible. This war will cause irreparable damage to Queensland's public hospital system from which it will take years to recover, if ever. It is imperative to retain the current specialist doctors and rely on their commitment to train the future medical specialists that Queensland needs. Unfortunately, we have already seen the damage done by getting rid of the experienced nurses across our health system, leaving the more junior nurses coming in without that mentoring and experience behind them.

I can inform the House that recently the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists has been contacted by psychiatry trainees across Queensland, expressing their serious concerns about the implications for their training as a consequence of this war on doctors by the LNP government. Demand for mental health services in the Queensland public health sector is at an all-time high. There are currently 280 psychiatry trainees working in the Queensland public health sector. Their five-year training requirements include frequent meetings and oversight by senior

specialists. If this cannot be provided, they will require transfers to where supervision is available—most likely in other states or the private sector. This dire situation extends to all specialists working in our public hospitals. Specifically, I am worried about Redcliffe Hospital, Prince Charles Hospital, Caboolture Hospital and the Royal Women's and Children Hospital.

The member for Bundamba has called on numerous members of this House to stand up and support their local hospitals. I certainly call on those local members for those hospitals to stand up and support the amendments tabled by the member for Bundamba if they actually have the interests of the senior medical officers in mind.

Government members interjected.

Ms D'ATH: They can turn this into a big joke, but this is a serious matter. This is a crisis for our health system, a crisis that this government does not want to acknowledge exists. The Premier and his health minister's complete ignorance of the downstream effects on our hospital system is appalling. There is no plan—just blind stubbornness. Long after Queenslanders have relegated this hopeless rabble to a footnote in history, the implications of this war on doctors will still reverberate through our once world-class health system. I would like to end my contribution to this bill quoting a local resident in the electorate of Redcliffe who states—

Who am I

In October 2013 the Queensland Attorney General tabled legislation in parliament the effect of which has been to deny me personally a number of rights and protections afforded to other members of the Queensland community. The statute enables my employment to be proscribed by others without my consent, and denies my right of access to independent binding arbitration. The political justification for the imposition of these draconian measures is that a few individuals, with whom I maybe associated with, have allegedly been engaged in fraudulent and criminal activity. I am not entitled to openly or freely discuss issues that of public concern without fear of retribution. My rights of association are constrained by law. I am being threatened by an executive arm of the government to sign legal binding document agreeing to abide the imposed conditions or otherwise be "fined" and face financial penalty. I have broken no law.

Who am I—I am not a bikie—I am a public hospital specialist doctor.

I heard the Minister for Health scoff at those comments, but this is one of his own specialist medical officers in the Queensland system and these are his views and his concerns and they should not be dismissed so readily by the health minister. It is in the best interests of this specialist medical officer and the medical officers across Queensland and it is in the best interests of my local community that I will be opposing the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014 tabled by the Minister for Health and I will be supporting those amendments tabled by the member for Bundamba.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (5.40 pm): I rise to speak to the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014. Clearly, I am strongly supportive of this bill, and I want to point out that it displays and should be taken to display good faith on the part of the Newman government and the minister in dealing with the medical professional workforce. In some respects, it should be seen as an olive branch, indicating the willingness of the government and the minister to make concessions in an effort to limit any harm to our public hospital system that could potentially arise from the current dispute.

When legislation was introduced last year to pave the way for individual work contracts, some important dynamics changed. Previously, the power that a work directive overrides any inconsistent clause in the contract rested with the Public Service Commission. Incidental to the changes last year, this power was changed to rest with the director-general, which was a much closer place to the employees and created a lot of concern. That is being corrected in this bill and is part of the good faith being shown by the government.

A number of events that flowed consequentially from the much needed reforms that went through last year have progressively added to the concerns of SMOs. Changes to the IR Act stripped out some income that was previously paid under what perhaps infamously became known as option A. I have had many discussions with medical professionals about the current issues, and every one of them have unanimously said that they saw problems with the system but it was one that was imposed on them by the previous government and when they came to work they were told to tick option A or option B and that is all that was in it. It should be noted that the minister has gone a long way to making sure that their pay has not been disadvantaged by those changes. They have, in fact, been a victim of a broken system imposed on them by the previous government.

In essence, legislation came over the top that changed the pay and conditions. There is considerable concern among SMOs that standard contracts have been used. There were concerns about a lack of binding dispute resolution. There were concerns that there could have possibly been

unilateral changes to rosters, to moves to other hospitals or to KPIs. These issues have been largely addressed by the government, and that is the message that the minister has been trying to put out there. There is a prevailing view from a lot of people that this is a poisonous legacy from the previous government—a broken pay system, a loss of trust that we saw with the Dr Patel issue and the payroll fiasco.

I want to declare some things at the outset. Firstly, I am a member of the AMAQ and have been for some years. Secondly, I have known Dr Steve Hambleton for many years. In fact, we were friendly rivals running medical centres long before I entered this place. In case it helps people on either side of the argument, I am more than happy to stand here in parliament and say that having known Steve for such a long time I have an enormous respect for him. He is a person of great intellect and great reasoning ability and logic. He is a person of the utmost goodwill. He is a person for whom the welfare of his patients and the constituency of his doctors in the AMA come first. He is not tarred with excessive ego. I encourage both the medical practitioners—who, along with their patients, have so much to lose if goodwill does not prevail—as well as the government to try to work constructively with somebody of Dr Hambleton's ilk. I also to a much lesser extent am acquainted with Dr Nick Buckmaster, who heads the Queensland branch of the Salaried Medical Officers Federation, and similarly I believe that Nick is a person of goodwill.

I want to say clearly that we are getting towards the eleventh hour in this dispute before it will cause significant harm to the Queensland public hospital system. This is a great system which this state has been very proud of for a very long time. Having worked most of my adult life in low socioeconomic communities in Queensland—communities that had low levels of private insurance—I can say that it is a system that is of critical importance to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders. We cannot allow intransigent positions or inflammatory language to damage this system.

At the centre of this dispute, I think there has been a loss of trust, in amongst some language perhaps on both sides. But I do want to say that, as a backbencher whose main involvement to date has been rigorously representing the many medical practitioners in my electorate who have come to me as their local member, a simmering concern exists in Queensland among doctors—and I would say it is a legitimate concern—that the balance of power, influence and decision making between bureaucratic administrative staff and clinical staff is a very dangerous balance that needs to be preserved. None of us can forget the Bundaberg Hospital fiasco and the role of Leck and Keating.

A landmark report in Britain prepared by Robert Francis about the health services in Mid Staffordshire highlighted exactly how cost, convenience and bureaucratic decisions overruling clinical judgement kills people. I want to remind everybody in this House of one fabulous Queensland doctor—Dr Con Aroney, a hugely respected cardiologist who at one time, until he could no longer work under the Beattie Labor government, headed up a terrific public cardiac service at the Prince Charles Hospital. In order to contain costs in that service, bureaucrats decided that Dr Aroney's unit could only use a certain number of cardiac catheters per week and they actually locked the rest of them away so that a well-meaning clinician seeking to save somebody's life could not get them and blow the quota. That was a quota that cost quite a number of Queensland lives. People lost their lives, including I recall one of my own patients.

The very first time I ever spoke to Dr Aroney was when I rang him in his capacity at Prince Charles about my patient. That is when I learnt the information about how costs were contained by limiting the number of cardiac catheters the doctors could get their hands on. At that time, the waiting list at Prince Charles was nine months and one per cent of those on the waiting list died every month. That means almost 10 per cent of the people having an angiogram at the Prince Charles Hospital at that time died while they were waiting, and it included the patient whom I rang Dr Aroney about.

If honourable members get the impression that I am siding with doctors or that in some way I am siding against the government, they should think again. The sort of inflammatory language that we have seen from the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation interstate I believe has been very damaging and very unhelpful. I believe we could get a better outcome for everybody concerned in this state without what is, in essence, a union trying to insert provisions that strengthen its own industrial power. That is what I understand is happening at the present time.

Let's be clear that we are at the edge of something that will damage clinical services, and I take the point from the member for Redcliffe—about the only point I would take from what has been said on the other side of the House—that training is one of the critical issues that needs to be considered and if a resolution is not found, it could be at risk. This damage could last for a very long time to come, particularly in those very difficult to supply specialist areas and in regional centres such as

North Queensland. The sorts of areas that I would be concerned about and I think are of particular concern would be thoracic surgery; neurosurgery; hand surgery; ear, nose and throat surgery; intensive care and anaesthetics. I for one would be deeply saddened if we were to see the current dispute go along the lines of the pilots dispute, a famous dispute in this state in which people locked themselves into irreconcilable positions and the state of Queensland and the people of Queensland suffered greatly and for a prolonged period.

Let me also say as somebody who has worked as a hospital doctor but has also been an employer of doctors and had practices that heavily depended on public hospitals and the skill of public hospital staff that doctors are not lawyers: they do not like contracts; it is not where their talents and interests lie. The change to individual contracts is a significant change for many of them. As I have said—and I am sure the minister will confirm this—my role has been to advocate on behalf of individual constituents of mine. However, I do want to take this opportunity to encourage both sides to understand that there are difficult issues for both sides. If we want to get a good outcome we need to understand those issues that are difficult for the other side. I know there are still some outstanding matters, but I believe that they are matters for which resolution does exist. In fact, the government has met many—in fact, I will go further; the government has met most of the things that have been put forward. I believe on that basis there is a consensus that could be attained. I urge those whose job it is to find that consensus to act in good faith and with humility.

One of the sticking points for doctors has been the enormous steps that the government and the minister have taken—and they have gone well over halfway on any reasonable reading of the facts, but those concessions are contained in an addendum to the contract. I understand that in the minds of some and on the basis of some legal advice that has been given there is concern that the addendum is not as effective as if those provisions were to be contained within the contract itself. I have no doubt that, if that is put forward in good faith, the government would respond to it equally in good faith. There is no way in the world that I think something like that should become a sticking point that prevents a resolution. It may well be a case that the lawyers for both sides need to be locked in a room together and not allowed out until both sides can agree on getting the technicalities right.

I also understand that the union is now seeking to inject itself into future negotiations if there are future iterations of this ongoing contract or for individual variations of the contract as if it were a collective bargaining situation. This is something that would be hugely difficult for the government to accept, particularly so given that we have seen the behaviour of not just some of the unions in the medical dispute but also other unions in this state. Again, if it were put forward in good faith, in a reasonable way, particularly dealing with Queensland based representatives in a package, then I think the government would also respond in good faith as they have in other things.

The concessions that have been sought here have largely been delivered. So there should now be a basis on which people of good faith can get a solution. I think that what is standing in our way is, in fact, process. I am sure that if people of goodwill on the doctors side are prepared to put forward a single proposal—we have too many cooks here. We have people from various unions, from interstate, all of whom seek to move the goalposts. There is no possibility at the moment of the government being able to see clearly what would be acceptable to the reasonable doctors on the hospital floor under these sorts of circumstances. So we need a single set of negotiating positions. The difference is not great, but we cannot have the goalposts continually being moved. None of the matters that I have mentioned that I understand are on the table at present would be sticking points, I believe, in that setting.

Let me also say to my former professional colleagues that the idea of signing resignation forms as part of an industrial campaign and handing them—

Mr Rickuss: Undated.

Dr FLEGG:—yes, undated—is not an original tactic. Members may recall that it has actually been done before. Handing them to a bunch of union officials, who will never stand to lose their job, and allowing themselves to be used as an industrial pawn for unions who want to broker more power for themselves, I am sorry, but that is a dumb idea. It is an idea that will not help a satisfactory resolution to be achieved. In terms of process, I think we are very close to a point where a single set of goalposts put forward by reasonable people in good faith could mean that we do not see the damage to our public hospitals that I for one really fear because I know what the effect would be on the people of Queensland.

I know that people like Alex Scott and Tony Sara want to harm the government. They want to entrench union power. They want to build their own power. They want to justify their huge salaries. They will never be at risk of losing their jobs, but they do not have the interests of Queensland

patients or Queensland doctors at heart. I encourage doctors to ensure that they allow people who care about the patients and who care about the wellbeing of the clinicians to be the ones who represent them. They should not fall into the trap that nurses and teachers have fallen into of allowing themselves to be used as industrial pawns that have little relevance to the professional standards of the profession that they proclaim to be a part of. Teachers and nurses have lost so much standing because of the way they have sold themselves out to industrial unions. I sincerely hope that doctors do not do that. I can understand their clinical concerns, but that is not a way that will advance either their patients' or their own interests.

In summation, most of the concerns have been met. The pay issues have pretty much been taken off the table by the minister, and they are substantial concessions under the circumstances. The problem about the unilateral imbalance of power is being addressed in part in this bill that we are discussing—the ability to vary contracts unilaterally to the disadvantage of doctors. These things have largely been taken off the table. Let's seek a resolution. I strongly believe that there is a resolution to be had if those process matters can be sorted out and if doctors can present with a single voice and one set of goalposts. They should not let unionists damage our hospitals by making it impossible to achieve a deal by continually moving the goalposts. Give the government a chance to settle this in good faith based on the good faith that has been shown by the debate we are having here today and the other concessions that the government has made.

Public health and public patients have been my entire life. I am a passionate supporter of the public hospital system. I understand the huge difficulties in running it, particularly when it has been so trashed over the years by the Labor Party, but I appeal to all concerned not to allow this system to be harmed. This is not something that should be for union power or political points. This is something that should be there for the lives of Queenslanders and it is awfully important.

I just want to make a couple of very brief comments about other comments that were made tonight. To my colleague from Gaven I would say with respect if I may—and it is certainly said with respect—that getting up and siding with the doctors is not the way. This needs to be resolved by mutual good faith, and taking sides will not resolve it.

To the member for Bundamba I would say that this matter now is one of good faith. It will not be solved by amendments or further legislation. This legislation we are debating is an act of good faith in itself.

Finally—and I think it is appropriate for me to say 'finally'—my colleague Dr Chris Davis, who is a person of the utmost integrity, who has a real passion for the welfare of the public hospital system, for his patients and a healthy concern for his professional colleagues, has put himself out there to try to seek a resolution, and I think his efforts should be praised and acknowledged.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (6.01 pm): I rise to speak to the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill 2014. I would have to say that most people in the community have been very concerned about events over the last couple of months and they would be confused. If you are trying to form an opinion from media reports, it is very difficult to peel away the politics and sensationalism to ascertain the facts of the matter. It is regrettable that many people in the community may have the wrong impression of what's been going on. Their fundamental desire is to see a strong, accessible health system. They want to know that if they or their children or their aged parents get sick, they can go to a hospital and receive good care.

The Gladstone Hospital has been a matter of some concern to me for 19 years, and it is regrettable that there are still problems there I have been unable to resolve. I know that the doctors who work there do their very best to provide a good service even though they are understaffed and underresourced. They do not have the facilities that they need to provide services to a growing town, and I would hate to see those doctors feel devalued because of the ongoing process over the last couple of months.

I think it has been tragic in these circumstances that issues of such importance have been politicised by both sides. I very much appreciate the fact that the minister has brought this legislation to this House. We have already had the debate about it being emergent legislation. I think the situation and the length of time between this sitting and the next justifies it being dealt with as an emergency. Indeed, as all sides have expressed, it is an emergency in terms of our medical and health system. I appreciate too the minister's provision of a briefing on the bill which I received this morning, and I would like to thank Mark and Michael for providing that briefing.

I believe that this bill in great measure settles some of the concerns that doctors have, one of which is that DGs cannot change pay rates or pay scales arbitrarily. There will be a process that must be followed, any change must have the consent of the doctor and the changes must be beneficial. It

is interesting to note that early negotiations were supported by the ASMOF and the AMA in Queensland. The initial intention was that the contracts that were being offered were framework contracts that allowed each health and hospital board to add the detail; however, that generalisation created a great deal of uncertainty in the minds of doctors, who work long hours and, as I said, sometimes in less than favourable conditions. They wanted some certainty and some peace of mind, and that is what this legislation was proposed to do.

I note the full page ad in today's *Courier-Mail*. It is a copy of a letter signed by the Director-General of Health, Ian Maynard. It states—

... the state government has developed solutions to all of the key issues put on the table by your representatives.

It goes on to say that there are eight key issues—

1. **Contracts cannot be changed** without the doctor's agreement, except for pay increases which will be automatic.
2. If rosters are changed, **consultation and agreement to work the roster will be sought from the doctor**—patient care and fatigue management are our total focus.

It was interesting to note that previously even if the local doctors agreed with the change of roster, it still had to have the sign-off of the unions and the Industrial Relations Commission even though the doctors had all agreed to it. Whilst doctors may not be lawyers or industrial relations experts, they can look after their own interests. They are very articulate and intelligent people. The new structure allows for doctors to be more in charge of their own future.

3. **Doctors cannot be transferred anywhere in the state**—as they can now. Transfer within a doctor's local Hospital and Health Service requires the doctor's agreement.

That reminds me of the old QR principle that workers could not be transferred if they did not want to be. When the train lines were sold under Labor there were workers sitting around with no jobs, but their EBs said they could not be moved anywhere. It will be interesting to see what issues that throws up in the future.

4. Termination of employment can be appealed to an independent arbiter.

I think that is reasonable and a fair and just system.

5. A **Contracts Advisory Committee** including representatives of senior doctors must be consulted before any changes to contracts can be proposed.

I think that is an in-built consultation. I do not think there is a problem with that.

6. The **Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 will be changed** to protect doctors' contracts from being altered without their agreement.

I see some of these conditions being as a result of the health minister really working and being very giving in the negotiations in order to achieve the confidence of the doctors in this dispute.

7. **Disputes can be independently arbitrated**, with all parties bound by the outcome.

At the end of any disagreement there has to be a point in time where somebody outside of the disagreement arbitrates and all parties agree to be bound by that final decision. It happens in IR and it happens in WorkCover. We are not always happy with the result, but at some point there has got to be a full stop at the end of a sentence, and that is what point 7 is proposing.

8. **Key performance indicators** will be set and varied by agreement between the doctor and their Health and Hospital Service.

KPIs have been adopted in all modern workplaces. We have a KPI here: it is called an election. If we do not measure up, we are out on our ear. I do not think most doctors would have a problem with KPIs. Most doctors that I know work well above and beyond the call of duty, and they expend a lot of energy in getting the best outcomes for their patients. Is it 100 per cent? No. For two reasons: firstly, doctors are human beings; secondly, human beings make mistakes and are a very diverse group of people.

From the briefing that I received, I believe that those eight points have been agreed to by the doctors. It is my understanding that not all of the issues of concern that the doctors have identified have been addressed, and I wish the minister every success in finalising those outstanding matters.

I note that the member for Bundamba has circulated an amendment. Whilst I have not had a chance to get a full understanding of it, the member for Bundamba's explanatory notes state that the amendment is consistent with fundamental legislative principles in that the rights of individuals are protected. The estimated cost for government implementation is zero. As the explanatory notes state—

There will be no costs associated with implementation of the Bill.

As this is an amendment, I am assuming that that is what that relates to. The explanatory notes continue—

Consultation on the amendments has occurred with Senior Medical Officers, Visiting Medical Officers and their representatives.

I read that and thought that maybe this is part of the next step in resolving those unresolved matters that the Minister for Health is still facing. The explanatory notes go on, without going into detail because this is the bill in its entirety—

Amendment 1 ... sets out the 'no less favourable provision for senior health service employees' provisions. This section provides that the conditions of employment applying to the senior health service employee under the high-income guarantee contract must not be less favourable than the conditions that currently apply to the employee.

It seems contradictory that the high-income guarantee contract could be less favourable than the conditions that currently apply to an employee, but apparently that is what the doctors are concerned about. If that is the purpose of this amendment, I cannot understand that there would be a problem with the amendment per se. On that basis, I look forward to hearing any further comments from both the member for Bundamba and also look forward to the comments from the Minister for Health in relation to the proposed achievements the proposed amendment will achieve. My quick look at it indicates to me that it would be an amendment that I would support. It deals with things like fatigue, unfair dismissal, notices of a dispute and unfair rostering, which is already covered in the agreement that is covered in this legislation that we are debating. It goes on to deal with other matters that all appear to me to be very fair. So I will be most interested in the minister's comments both in his summing-up and also when we deal with the amendment during consideration in detail.

It is very important for us as a chamber to be willing to listen to all contributors to this debate. It is a very serious one given the matter at hand. We are not debating, dare I say, daylight saving. We are debating people's lives. We are not debating something that is trivial. We are debating the peace of mind of people all across Queensland to know that they have a health system on which they can rely. It seems unusual to me that the Premier and others have stood in this place and said, 'If the doctors quit we'll just replace them.' I have been screaming for specialists in Gladstone for nearly 19 years and have been told by Wendy Edmond and subsequent health ministers and health ministers before her, 'You know, Liz, there's a worldwide doctor shortage. We just can't get those sorts of specialties. They don't just fall out of the sky.' If we end up with a lot of doctors and specialists removing themselves from the public health system, I do not believe replacing them will be as easy as we are being led to believe. Having said that, I do not believe that gives doctors or unions the right to railroad the people of Queensland. We can play games in this place. We can play political point scoring in this place, but we need to always remember we are here, privileged as we are, to represent the people of Queensland. It might be good for the ALP to get a few points and it might be good for the LNP to get a few points so long as the people of Queensland do not miss out on any points. They do not deserve it. They deserve a health system that is reliable. They deserve doctors who are valued and providing an excellent service, and I will support anything that will achieve that.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (6.14 pm): In speaking to the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill, I understand that the purpose of this amendment bill is designed to ease the concerns of the senior medical officers employed by Queensland Health, and I honestly wish the minister luck. The SMOs raised concerns that the terms and conditions of individual employment contracts could be overridden without the agreement of the employee, and the minister has produced an amendment to protect existing agreements from being overridden by directives issued by the director-general. The bill does grant the holders of existing agreements a sweetener which guarantees SMOs a flow-on of benefits while under the current employment agreement.

History has shown us that workers, which include SMOs, only have one commodity which they can sell, and that commodity is their labour, and governments, industrial capitalists and capitalists in general buy the labour from the worker as a means to their ends. Since the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century, history tells us of the decentralisation and mass migration of populations from agrarian societies to a centralised industrial capitalist system which placed many members of societies as free slaves. The SMOs, like many other workers, are actually free slaves. These people have to enter into negotiations with the health minister and his department to bargain for a price for their labour, therefore giving them enough money to meet their subsistence and make some economic rent from their labour to increase their standards of living.

I suspect the underlying reason for the minister and his department introducing individual employment contracts is to undermine and destroy SMOs' ability to join a union and collectively bargain for wages and conditions. It is obvious that the minister and his neo-Liberal government know that the best way to drive down wages and conditions is by placing competition amongst the SMOs.

Individual employment contracts will grant the minister and his departmental heads the power to dictate to the SMOs what wages and conditions they will receive without really considering what the SMOs may want. I encourage the SMOs to keep rejecting the minister's call for individual employment contracts because we saw what happened when we lost our farming cooperatives over the years in Queensland. Collective bargaining and arbitration gave our cooperatives a fair price for their labour. When farmers, for example sugarcane farmers, came together collectively, they had a greater power to bargain for a fair price. Senator Ron Boswell and I brought collective bargaining into the dairy industry, so I know all about collective bargaining.

However, I want to acknowledge that competition based individual employment contracts are not the brainchild of the LNP. Rather, they have come in on the back of the Labor Party's National Competition Policy, which was introduced in the nineties by Paul Keating. It is hypocritical tonight to listen to the Queensland Labor Party bang on about this issue when it introduced the National Competition Policy in the first place. It is only logical that National Competition Policy would impact on workers' rights to collective bargaining and arbitration.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Member for Condamine—

Mr HOPPER: This is about doctors and SMOs wanting to get a fair wage.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is all right. I just need for you to relate the National Competition Policy to the long title of the bill. I will give you some grace on that.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. In speaking to the Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill, I also have to refer to the Premier's comments—this bill is about doctors—that the government will fly in 457 visa doctors from other countries to fill the spots of our doctors—our doctors who are fighting for their right to collective bargaining and arbitration. That is what we have heard our Premier say—that we will fly in doctors. For goodness sake! This is an LNP government that the people of Queensland put their faith in and put in charge of their state. It is disgusting.

I would like to say that the Labor Party also stands guilty for supporting and advocating the continued use of workers on 457 visas. It would be very awkward for them to argue against the Premier's comments of flying these doctors into Queensland. But we in the KAP will fight tooth and nail for the SMOs and workers in general to maintain and secure their right to collective bargaining and arbitration. We understand that the SMOs and workers in general have only one commodity to sell and, as I have said before, that is their labour and, in the case of doctors, also their intelligence. We are here to protect their right to collective bargain for a fair price.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (6.20 pm): I rise to participate in the debate. Over recent weeks we have seen the government's dispute over doctors' contracts drag out until we could now be looking down the barrel of significant resignations of good Queensland doctors preparing to leave our public health system. Some doctors will sign the contracts under duress, because they do not have any alternative. But what this government has done with its heavy-handedness is destroy any goodwill that previously existed and was so important in maintaining our public health system.

The main thrust of the stand-off is that the doctors do not trust this Queensland Liberal National government led by Premier Newman. They do not believe the assurances that they are hearing about these contracts. Yes, we have a bill before the House and we can all read the clauses, but I do not blame them for not trusting the government, because the government already has a track record of why we should not trust it. The doctors know that, by signing these contracts, they will be putting themselves at the mercy of the government and that this government has a proven track record of sacking anyone who disagrees with it. The government has taken to abusing and criticising anyone who dared to speak out against it to a new level. We only have to look at the way in which it has treated the justice system to realise that this government has no respect for anyone, be it judges, doctors, nurses, ambos, firies and the list goes on.

Why would expect our doctors to sign contracts, relying on the government to keep its part of the bargain? We have heard about goodwill, but can I say that, in the two years it has been elected to lead this great state, this government has shown no goodwill. I ask members to look at its track record. I was sacked from my position on the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee because I dared to criticise the government's chosen person. That is the story that goes right across Queensland since this Campbell Newman Liberal National Party government was elected to Queensland. They abuse and attack anyone who dares to have another view.

I can understand why doctors do not want to have their rights to decide the appropriate treatment of their patients taken away and handed to a bureaucrat who is more concerned about saving money than saving lives. Will the future of medicine in this great state of Queensland be down

to the quickest and the cheapest that can be found and decided by a government bureaucrat? I can also understand why doctors do not want to be tied to timetables that will make the provision of the most efficient care impossible to achieve. I can understand why many doctors would rather resign than work under the draconian regime of this Newman Liberal National Party arrogant government. But it is Queensland that will be the biggest loser if the doctors leave, because the public health system that we have taken for granted will be no more. We will see the biggest privatisation of public health by stealth this country has ever experienced and this government will be laughing all the way to the bank.

There is no longer any trust. They will be outsourcing doctors' jobs to private operators who will have only one thing in mind and that is making money. So we will see our public hospitals staffed with second-rate overseas doctors, many of whom lack English and knowledge of surgical procedures that will be tendered by private sector operators. It will be so much of, 'What's the quickest?' and forget about the post-operative care. There is no doubt in my mind that this government is creating what could be an American model of health in Queensland. Under my expectation of where this Newman Liberal National Party government wants to go, if people do not have private insurance, God help them because this Liberal National Party government certainly will not.

It certainly was not that long ago that we had doctors in our public health system who had major difficulty speaking English. After we complained, the next minute they were moved on. I believe that this government has done the sums and has decided that it is easier to get rid of doctors because it is cheaper to outsource their services. This could be the single biggest catastrophe that our public hospital system has faced. Forget about the Patel episode. That is small fry by comparison. If this bill goes ahead I believe that we will see our public hospital system down on its knees. In Queensland, graduating doctors will have to head south—go to New South Wales, go to Victoria—or go to Western Australia to get training. Anyone who is aiming to be a specialist doctor will find it almost impossible to train in our great state of Queensland because it costs money to train specialist doctors. Private operators do not train doctors. They are about employing skilled doctors who are already trained, because it is cheaper. The Queensland public health system will be the loser. It will lose valuable doctors and we will be set back decades.

Realistically, you cannot make a profit from caring for our sick and aged and frail and disabled. But that is exactly what our private medical operators have as their mandate. What happens if the proposed provision of care is not viable? The prospect is so horrendous that it does not bear thinking about. Although the government may say that it is committed to the public health system, we only have to reflect on the Premier's comments of, 'We'll just get them from overseas.' It was only on Tuesday of this sitting week that I asked the Premier if he would remove the end of April deadline for doctors to sign the contracts or resign and allow a further reasonable time for negotiations between the parties to continue. What was the Premier's answer? The *Hansard* record shows that his short answer was no and then he waffled on about all the other additional—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Nicklin, you really are outside the long title of the bill. I ask you to return to the bill.

Mr WELLINGTON: I will return to the bill. In other words, it really is about doctors having to either sign or resign. If they do not accept the contract by the due date, they go somewhere else for employment. I hope that our doctors do not do that. I hope that common sense prevails.

I am very concerned about the track record of this government in the way in which it has treated Queenslanders. I will be supporting the amendments proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. I believe they have merit. I will be interested to hear what the Minister for Health has to say. Before I resume my seat I thank the health minister for inviting me to be involved in a briefing on the bill. I genuinely appreciate that. It is a pity other ministers do not offer similar opportunities.

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (6.27 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contribution to this debate. Obviously, there have been many passionate views expressed during the course of this debate. There have also been lots of things said that were extremely misleading. There was a lot of emotion and a lot of things said that I do not believe do anyone any good in regard to the difficult issue that we face.

For some time we have indicated our desire to move towards individual contracts for the high-income employees of the state government. They are those people who are on more than \$129,000 per year. That is a matter of public policy. It is a matter that this parliament voted on last year. It is indeed a matter that was supported by the members on this side of the House. The other issue that is vitally important to consider, which seems to have been lost in this process, is that, if we

move towards these contracts, we can establish a direct relationship between the doctor and the doctor's employer. That is the hospital and health service that is overseen by a statutorily independent hospital and health board with direct accountability to their own local community.

Another underlying issue that drives us towards these contracts is that at the moment in Queensland we have a spaghetti maze of complexity with regard to the various awards and entitlements in this state. There are some 4,500 award variations and 24,000 pay combinations. At the end of this process we will have a much simpler and much better system for doctors to be able to operate in.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Member for South Brisbane

 **Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have become aware of some media reporting today in which the member for South Brisbane was quoted. Upon reading these reports it could appear that the reason for the member being asked to withdraw from the Assembly was for saying, 'With pleasure.' This is not accurate. Prior to being suspended from the Assembly, the member had been disrespectful of the chair and been warned under standing order 253A. The member then repeatedly interjected and then interjected with unparliamentary language. At this point, the member was required to withdraw from the chamber for one hour under standing order 253A.

At this point, the member then made comments which, in both the context of the situation and the way in which they were made, were clearly disrespectful of the chair in contravention of standing orders. It was the totality of repeated interjections, disrespect of the chair and unruly behaviour that the member was then named under standing order 254 and it was this that led to the member being suspended for three days. I will give further consideration to the matter after viewing all of the material and I will refer the matter to the Speaker.

Sitting suspended from 6.31 pm to 7.30 pm.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH BOARDS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed, on motion of Mr Springborg—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (7.30 pm), continuing in reply: If I can recap what I was talking about before the dinner break and go through why these contracts are indeed very necessary, if not essential, basically it is about simplifying the industrial relations framework. We need to do that because, as we know, one of the real reasons that Labor's Health payroll system failed was because of the award complexity. There are some 4,500 award variations and some 24,000 different pay combinations. The framework that we are putting in place here simplifies things for senior medical officers who will be moving towards these individual contracts. It creates a performance-driven health system. That is something that all patients in Queensland deserve.

The health system we have today compared to the health system we had two years ago are poles apart. No longer do we see the day-to-day controversies around patient care. No longer do we see pictures in the paper around ambulance ramping at our hospitals. No longer do we see the stories of woe and misery in our newspapers or in the electronic media of the person who has died in the back of the ambulance because there was routine ambulance bypass. That has been banned. No longer do we have hidden waiting lists to get on the waiting list. That is all transparently disclosed. We have the most improved hospitals in all of Australia in the area of emergency department performance. In all of our hospital and health service areas our urgent category surgeries have improved and in many of them 100 per cent of urgent cases are having their surgery done on time and in many others 100 per cent of semi urgent cases—that is, requiring surgery in under 90 days—are being dealt with on time. We are now working through category 3. And, members, look at what is happening with dental waiting lists as well. It is a completely different health system.

There was always going to be an element of controversy around further industrial relations change. There is no doubt about that. We saw that in 2006 when there was a mass resignation campaign from doctors and the previous government then brought in the failed right of private practice scheme which by and large is another reason why we have moved to this framework. We cannot ignore what was recommended to us by the independent Auditor-General. Indeed, in the last sitting week of this parliament every single member voted to support what was in those two reports of the independent Auditor-General. The only way to get around this—and it cannot be done because the parliament voted last year to move our high paid employees onto individual contracts—is to repeal the Industrial Relations Act. To see out the remaining part of the MOCA3 agreement we would have to put in place a very onerous and difficult process of accountability for those people who wish to be paid to treat private patients in public hospitals. It was the Auditor-General who pointed out that under the current system public patients are missing out because private patients are being treated in preference to them in public hospitals. The Auditor-General said that we needed a greater accountability around that.

The Auditor-General also said we needed more flexibility with regard to rostering because it was an inflexible system. If we look at the way the rostering was done, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday patients get sick just as they do on Friday, yet more doctors seem to be rostered on that day. On Friday, when we still have the same number of patients presenting, we have a spike in overtime as well. We need to have more flexibility in the system. The only other way to do this without going to contracts for the existing period of MOCA3, which expires on 30 June next year, is to bring in a whole range of other processes which doctors themselves would not appreciate, such as how we register conflicts of interest. Ethics training was also recommended and further auditing going on around Queensland.

In relation to the issue of fatigue management, fatigue management does not only apply in our public hospitals. At the moment we can manage fatigue because we know it is fundamentally a part of the policies of our hospitals. Nothing changes under this. It is fundamentally an important part of what happens every single day. We can manage fatigue at the moment. We know what is going on. We still need to make some improvements. But we have no way of managing what happens if a doctor who works for us for 40 hours a week then does private lists in another hospital on contract or a fee-for-service arrangement for another 20 or 30 hours. They can be turning up in our hospitals tired. We cannot manage that. That has not been talked about as a part of any discussions by the opposition or anyone who is opposing what we are bringing in here. Fatigue management, as a fundamental essential requirement on our hospital and health services, does not change. Nothing we are doing changes that. In actual fact, we can probably manage it better through a better system of rostering.

We cannot ignore the recommendations of the independent Auditor-General in Queensland. Every member of parliament says that we cannot do that. What is Labor's health policy? We have actually heard a bit from them in the last two years, but the only policy they have is to run health exactly the way they ran it before which brought the former Anna Bligh to say that it was so dysfunctional the whole thing should be torn asunder. We did not tear it asunder, we kept it together and said we need to run it differently and get better outcomes by empowering our clinicians. It is a fundamentally different health system that is now performing better than any of its comparators in other states as far as improvements are concerned. It is about time those opposite fess up what they are going to do rather than a health version of Groundhog Day taking us back to the past.

The only reason we are bringing this to the parliament is very simple: it is because the doctors have asked for it. Indeed, over the last couple of weeks either myself or the director-general have met with some 800 doctors around Queensland individually or collectively. The shadow spokesperson asked why I do not go out to places. I went to Townsville the other day to hear for myself from staff specialists if what I was being told was exactly the same thing as I was being told by the doctors I was meeting individually. There were the same seven to eight issues and we went through those solutions. I said we were going to bring in a ministerial directive that will ensure that the director-general will be unable to change their contract without their consent in a detrimental way. They said that might be okay, that it is better than what they have got. Then they asked, 'What about legislation?' I said we did not have legislation at the moment, the director-general has an unfettered power to change the current employment agreement for health professionals in Queensland, a power that existed, prior to the director-general having it, for some 13 years under the previous Labor government. This power has existed for 15 years and those opposite did not do anything about it. They were happy for employment agreements to be changed at a whim by either the Public Service

Commissioner or, more latterly, through the Hospital and Health Boards Act by the director-general. There was nothing said about it. When I raised this with clinicians in Townsville and said that this power has existed for 15 years, they said, 'Yes, that's probably true, but we didn't know about it. We are concerned about it now and we recognise that they want changes. That is why we have introduced this Hospital and Health Boards Amendment Bill which quite categorically states that the director-general does not have the power to change a high-income employment contract which in any way is detrimental to the doctor. The only way that he—or she if we have a director-general of a different gender in the future—can change that will be to the benefit of the doctor. That is, increasing superannuation or increasing wages or contract payments in the future. That is quite clear in this amendment.

We are giving doctors and any other public sector employees who may be on a contract in the Queensland public health system a protection that currently does not exist for them and will not exist for their work colleagues. That is a pretty significant concession from the government, but this opposition does not want that solution. The opposition wants to keep playing games. The Fair Work Act also states that high-income government employees who are earning more than \$129,300 a year should be on contracts. This simply reflects the reality of the amendments to the Industrial Relations Act that the parliament passed last year.

Let us also look at what Kevin Rudd said as he was heading into his original and successful run for Prime Minister of Australia. In 2007, in its Forward with Fairness policy implementation plan, Labor stated—

Labor has listened to the views of employers and employees about who needs the protection of Labor's new award system.

Labor has concluded that minimum award terms have less relevance to those employees whose salary exceeds \$100,000.

Indeed, their aspiration is to take it below \$129,000 to \$100,000. However, we have never heard that from those opposite and, indeed, I have seen nothing that reveals that policy platform.

ASMOF has absolutely no skin in the game. Dr Tony Sara, who is making extremely outrageous rants from New South Wales, has no skin in the game and is not going to lose anything. He will not be the one resigning out of this, because he sits a long way away. The Queensland union bosses do not have their resignation letters ready to go. There is a difference between putting forward a notice of intention to resign and actually resigning. We have doctors saying to us, 'We don't mind being a part of this campaign and we have written a letter, but when push comes to shove we're not going to resign because we have nowhere else to go and we don't want to go there'. As the honourable member for Moggill said earlier, they are able to play, with genuine concern, Queensland Health employees as some form of a pawn in an antiquated industrial relations battle that probably would have a better place back in the 1850s than it does in the 21st century.

We are not scared of working with doctors. We have faced them. I have been out there myself. We have asked them what they want. Hundreds of doctors have asked for this. Indeed, the other day I met with the senior specialists who chair our clinical networks. They asked for exactly this. The Clinical Senate has asked for this. The colleges have asked for exactly this. In discussions that I have had with Dr Steve Hambleton, he has asked for exactly this. The SMO task force, in whichever iteration, has held 37 meetings over eight months. The last one concluded two weeks and three days ago. I offered this to them. This is why the opposition's amendments are really irrelevant. This was the only one that required legislation, because it was agreed that all of the others would be part of an addendum. It is a significant concession that has been given.

The problem we have is that the goalposts keep changing. It is like running onto Lang Park—I am supposed to say 'Suncorp Stadium' now, but I will call it Lang Park—for the State of Origin and the goalposts keep changing. You are running towards the goalposts, but the next minute they are over there and then they are behind you. That is what you get when you sit down with industrial organisations that have absolutely no interest in bringing things to a conclusion, unlike the professional organisations.

These contracts will professionalise the relationship between Queensland Health and our senior employees. Before negotiations were even concluded in January of this year, the ASMOF president from New South Wales, Dr Tony Sara, the alleged representative of these people who has no skin in the game, was reported to have said, 'This game has to be played to the bitter end'. That was only a week or so before negotiations actually concluded. He went on to say, 'Why are you people agreeing to this up there? There must be something in the water in Queensland'. Can members imagine a maroon being told by a cockroach that there must be something in the water! He went on to say, 'This has some months more to drag out, which is in all your interests'. They planned

to keep sabotaging the process. The coup de grace came the other day when he stood in front of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, before he slunk back to New South Wales, and said, 'When we get enough resignations, we will use them as a nuclear weapon to attack the Queensland public health system'. It has not been us using that sort of intemperate language; it has been Dr Tony Sara.

We have resolved the issues. We started with six issues, we ended up with eight issues and we resolved those particular issues. It was agreed. I went along and we agreed to a solutions document. No-one had any problems with it. We started with six issues and it came to eight issues. In the addendum we addressed another issue ourselves as a consequence of that, which is the issue around intellectual property. We have done those sorts of things and there was an agreed solution.

There is another thing that people do not know and it comes back to the whole issue of trust. Trust is a two-way thing. I have a creed that comes from the land: when you shake someone's hand, you stick to it. When you shake hands with the likes of Dr Sara, you count your fingers because you will lose them one by one. As a part of that, he said, 'We should seek to have this out by Wednesday, before we have the meeting at the Pineapple Hotel'. This was on Monday afternoon. I said, 'Fine, that suits me. Why don't we form a working group so we can have all of the issues legally worked out in a document'. He said, 'Oh no, we don't want to do that'. We said, 'Well, we'll do it. We'll send it to you'. We did that on Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday, we started ringing, asking, 'Are there any issues? Let us know'. Their lawyer, who is well known to the honourable member opposite, said, 'No, we can't comment on it'.

This is about honour and trust it and works two ways. You go in with six issues, you escalate it to eight, you deal with those issues and you have an agreed process going forward. Then we have had a process of frustration from the industrial players, not the professional players such as Dr Steve Hambleton, who has reasonably said that the government entered this reasonably and has put up reasonable solutions and doctors need to look at what is on the table. It really is a two-way thing, but that has not been coming from the other side.

Contracts are about performance accountability and better patient outcomes. Those are the sorts of processes that have allowed us to be able to transform Queensland Health in the past two years. The only intimidation I am aware of is the intimidation faced by doctors who have signed contracts. They have been rung up and called scabs. Members would not believe the appalling intimidation that they have faced. I am also aware of some emails that have been sent to very senior and respected doctors of many years standing, which are probably going to go to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, to determine whether it was appropriate for one clinician to do that to another clinician. There has been bullying and intimidation, but it has not been directed at those people who are being asked to sign contracts; it has been directed at those people who have actually signed the contracts.

As I have said, there has been a process of ongoing consultation to address issues. Even yesterday I sat down with the AMAQ. I thank them very much. The issues discussed were basically around implementation, a little bit of clarification and who may actually go on to make up the director-general's advisory group on contracts.

Let us go through some of the issues of concern. This needs to be put on the record: if a doctor is terminated for an invalid reason, such as standing up for patient safety, they can go straight to the Industrial Relations Commission. Any doctor who is terminated for an invalid reason, such as based on their sexuality, their age, their ethnicity, based on standing up for patients—whatever the case may be—they can go straight to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, no ifs, buts or maybes. If they are terminated for a valid reason, that is, around their performance or lack of performance, they are able to escalate that right through the process. If they cannot resolve it locally, they can choose to go to the deputy president of the QIRC or appoint someone as an agreed mediator, which will provide a binding outcome that the hospital and health service must stick to. The honourable shadow minister said that it is terrible because it is not the QIRC deputy. This was asked for by the doctors. They said, 'We may not necessarily want the deputy president of the QIRC. We might want a clinically qualified person to arbitrate that dispute'. We said, 'Fair enough. You choose. So long as the person is qualified, you choose'. It is up to them.

The honourable shadow minister, who has spent most of her time as shadow minister worrying about frozen peas when asking questions of me, would not have a clue about that. We have gone through and addressed the hours of work issue. The fatigue management policies do not change. We continue to be worried about doctors who may be fatigued because they are working extensive hours outside before they come and work with us. But that is a different issue. Disclosure around conflicts of interest may actually help us address that issue in the future.

The honourable member for Gladstone summed up the transfer issue. We are actually putting in place a less flexible system than we have at the moment. At the moment, a senior medical officer can be transferred anywhere in the state. That is what happens without the agreement processes we have put in place. Under this legislation they can only be transferred within their own hospital and health service, which is a much smaller collegiate area, and only by agreement. The same sort of thing applies when it comes to rostering. I would ask as we move to this new rostering environment that we have some good grace from doctors, and I am sure we will, that reasonable requests cannot be unreasonably denied because we do need flexibility in the system.

With regard to KPIs, key performance indicators, the specialist groups are coming up with more stringent and stretched KPIs than the hospital and health services. But, anyway, it is two years before those KPIs can be used to decide tier 3 remuneration—that is, what the remuneration impact is for someone for not meeting their performance agreement? It will be 30 June 2016 before that applies. That is lots of time for us to be able to bed that particular system down.

We really wonder what is going on in the heads of those in the opposition and others who are not looking at these things. Training is actually protected. The only threat to training that currently exists is if Tony Sara carries on the way he has been and gets people to resign by giving him undated resignation letters, which is very dangerous. There is nothing that we have put on the table which impacts upon training. Indeed, we have been doing a lot more around training. If we look at the monitoring of the clinical workforce in Queensland, we find that we now have far fewer adverse events per capita than we had a couple of years ago. That includes everything up to mortality amongst our patient cohort. We take these things very seriously.

There is no change in pay. There is actually going to be an increase in pay for these people as a consequence of this. It is a job for life. In other states of Australia—in Victoria and New South Wales, for example—they are one, three or five year contracts. These are contracts for life. Who else actually has those? Our clinicians should be able to expect that because we value them.

The honourable member opposite talked about Dr Patel. That actually happened under her watch. The person who oversaw that, Gordon Nuttall, was found to have lied to parliament. Some members opposite came in and exonerated him, including the member for Bundamba, of a criminal offence. Imagine if Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen had done that? There would have been a hue and cry from members opposite and almost everyone around the state.

The member for Bundamba said that if we cannot keep our hospitals open they will become motels. She would know about that. When she was the assistant minister for health in Queensland the Caboolture Hospital shut its emergency department. Does that mean by extension that it turned into a motel? They brought in Aspen to sort out the problem for them.

Mrs Frecklington: They couldn't sort out the problem.

Mr SPRINGBORG: They could not actually sort out the problem. We have no aversion to working with partners. We do not say one thing and then do another. 'Let us not deal with the private sector,' says the honourable member, but let's go wink, wink, nod, nod to Aspen and wink, wink, nod, nod to the likes of the Mater. Last night she had the audacity to stand up and say, 'The Mater is an example of this government's terrible outsourcing plans.'

Under the Labor government, in 2002 the Mater Hospital received \$167 million in outsourced contracts. In the last full year of the Labor government it was \$485 million. So it is almost a threefold increase in 10 years—\$167 million to \$485 million. Under this government, this year it is \$538 million. That outsource arrangement continues as it has done since 1911.

We need to look at the nonsense in relation to overseas trained doctors. That is a terrible slight on doctors in Queensland. I will give members the figures. Of the 3,694 senior staff specialists, we are talking about here, 1,057 received their primary medical qualifications overseas. That equates to 29 per cent. Are they all Dr Patels? Most of them were employed by the honourable members opposite. No, they are not Dr Patels. They are highly qualified, highly valued, highly respected clinicians. That does not include the other residents that we have in the system. That does not include our interns. That does not include our VMOs which make up almost another 5,000 doctors in our workforce. It does not include 10,000-odd doctors who work in the private healthcare sector. It does not include the tens of thousands of doctors around Australia, many of whom have qualified overseas. That is another appalling slight from an appalling opposition that simply seeks to get into the gutter and go to the lowest denominator to unnecessarily concern the people of Queensland.

The shadow minister stood up and said, 'I care.' Did she care when the doctors and nurses were not being paid? Did she care when people were dying in the back of ambulances because of ambulance bypass? Did she actually care when people were dying while on hospital waiting lists? Did she care about a mortality rate of around seven per cent for people waiting for endoscopy procedures after initially being identified as being of concern after bowel screening? No. They had to wait over two years. Now in some places they wait only 19 days. Did she care at all? Did she care when people were waiting 13 years to have routine dental treatment? No, she did not. Today in Queensland we have reduced that number from 65,000 to just over 3,000 in just over a year. There are so many issues where they were wrong.

I do agree that there is an issue of trust. We have to rebuild that trust. But trust is a two-way thing. It is also about telling the truth. It is about telling the truth about what is on the table. That is what we have been seeking to do. We went into those negotiations and discussions and addressed all of those issues. This is part of what people wanted us to do.

Many said they were happy with the directive to curtail the DG's powers. I have said that legislation is better. This is the legislation that we have here today. Legislation has not curtailed those powers in 15 years. It is a complex system; there is absolutely no doubt about that.

I will comment on some of the other issues that were raised during the course of the debate. My apologies to those members whose contribution I do not get to touch on. The honourable member for Moggill raised some concerns about the way managers can manage the system. I agree with him. The issue with Dr Con Aroney goes back to 2005. I think at that stage that the honourable shadow minister was probably the sidekick to Gordon Nuttall. That is when that went on.

As I have gone around Queensland and spoken to doctors I have asked about the directive. They have said, 'Yes, we trust you. What if you are not there?' I have said, 'Put it in legislation.' In Cairns they raised concerns around incidents that they had with managers in 2008. When we go around to other parts of Queensland people raise historical issues that predate the election of this government. There is a real issue of trust. Trust has to be rebuilt amongst the VMO and SMO workforce in Queensland.

We not only have to rebuild trust but make sure that we put our actions into words. That is why we are legislating this in parliament tonight. The advice that I have is that this particular amendment fixes all of those issues and curtails the powers of the DG. The other things the shadow minister seeks to do are already contained in the addendum.

(Time expired)

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.



Mrs MILLER (7.59 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

AYES, 12:

ALP, 5—D'Ath, Miller, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Scott.

KAP, 3—Hopper, Katter, Knuth.

PUP, 2—Douglas, Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Cunningham, Wellington.

NOES, 54:

LNP, 54—Barton, Bennett, Berry, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cripps, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, Krause, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Pucci, Rickuss, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Symes, Walker, Young.

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (8.06 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (8.06 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (8.07 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 6 May 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (8.07 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Southport Towards Twenty 18



Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.08 pm): In the *Sunday Mail* last weekend the member for Southport responded to questions about a publication called *Southport Towards Twenty 18*. That publication targeted advertisers who were asked to pay anywhere between \$7,500 and \$30,000 to be featured in the book supposedly promoting Southport in the lead-up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games. A flip through the books shows ad revenue of almost \$230,000 could have been achieved if all advertisers paid the full rates being charged. In the *Sunday Mail* article the member for Southport claimed a Gold Coast advertising agency commissioned the book. In that case, I wish to raise several issues in relation to the book.

I would like to know which ad agency commissioned the book and what its financial involvement has been. I would also like to know, if an ad agency is responsible for the book, why are there strong links to the member for Southport and his electorate office? I note the member for Southport signed a letter to potential advertisers touting the book and seeking their financial support for it. Who paid the book's production costs? Was it the ad agency the member mentions? Can the member for Southport say how much the book cost to produce? Perhaps he could ask the ad agency.

Can the member have the ad agency produce invoices to show 50,000 copies of the book were printed, as advertisers were promised? Can any evidence be produced to support claims that 40,000 copies of the book were distributed domestically and 10,000 were distributed internationally—once again, as advertisers were promised? How much in gross advertising charges were raised? Can the member or the ad agency say? What happened to that money? Did it go to the ad agency or elsewhere and, if so, exactly where? Can the member say if any funds and how much went to the Molhoek Family Trust? What will those funds be used for?

It seems to me that with a number of large government or semi-government agencies as advertisers—including Griffith University, Gold Coast TAFE and the city council—some might see the book as being at least partly funded by taxpayers. That means it is important that we know who profits from what the profits are used for. While we are at it, if an ad agency is responsible, why is the website www.towardstwenty18.com.au registered in the name of the trustee for the Molhoek Family Trust? What role did the Southport electorate office staff play in the production of the book? These questions deserve full answers and I hope the member for Southport can assist.

Everton Electorate, Events

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (8.11 pm): I rise in the House tonight to speak about some of the great things that are happening in the electorate of Everton. One of the things I want to mention is the Blackwood Street Chamber of Commerce. I have mentioned them before and I am sure most members would remember that. The Chamber of Commerce plays a major role in promoting businesses in the Mitchelton area and also creating great community spirit. One of the things they have tried to do over the last couple of years is have a steam train day where they hire the steam train from the Department of Transport and Main Roads—and I want to thank the minister for allowing this to happen—and sell tickets to raise money. It is a great day and a great community event and they raise good funds from that.

This year the Chamber of Commerce has distributed those funds to a number of organisations in my electorate. They gave \$1,000 to the Picabeen Community Centre, which is actually in the Premier's electorate but it services a couple of neighbouring electorates. They gave \$1,500 to Youth With A Mission, which is a great organisation of young people from all around the world that serves the community, so that is a great cause as well. They gave another \$1,500 to Picabeen to run a neighbourhood day, which unfortunately was postponed last week because of the rain. That is one of the things that has come out of the Queensland Plan to promote community in the local area. They also donated \$1,500 to Help Enterprises to purchase musical instruments to enhance the lifestyle and independence of people with disabilities in my area. I want to congratulate the Chamber of Commerce. They do a fantastic job. They promote business and they have created a great little community in that street. This is just one of the many things they do.

I also want to report that last week I went to Albany Creek's longest dinner to raise money for school chaplaincy in the area. This has become a tradition over the last few years where the chaplains of the local area come together and raise money. It is great now that we have chaplains in most of the state schools in my electorate, and we have a new one now at Everton Park State School.

Mr Elmes: A great school.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the minister for Aboriginal affairs and Thursday—no, Aboriginal and Thursday Island Affairs. Is that it? It is close to it—and the minister assisting the Premier.

Mr Walker: You're 80 per cent right.

Mr MANDER: Oh, 80 per cent right. Sorry, I am losing my track. I will get back to the point. The chaplaincy work is fantastically received in the electorate and it is great to see that we have so much support for it. I remind members that there is a High Court challenge again that is being placed against chaplaincy. We have to make sure that we tell people how much we value chaplaincy and not let a small minority get their way in the High Court. Let us hope we get a great result there.

Murrumba Electorate, Events

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (8.14 pm): Talofa lava. It was an honour and a privilege to recently celebrate with the Samoan community their 10th anniversary of Maota Fono in Deception Bay. The Maota Fono, or 'the meeting house', plays an important part in the lives of the Samoan community in the wonderful place that is the electorate of Murrumba. The Maota Fono is a place that is used not only by the Samoan community but by members of the wider multicultural community. The Samoan and Pacific islander residents of my electorate help make Murrumba a diverse and culturally rich place in which to live. A special acknowledgement needs to go to the community members of Aiga Samoa Brisbane North Inc.—Mr Lemalu Roy Slade and Elizabeth Hunt—along with the many Samoan elders and various multicultural community leaders who attended the wonderful occasion.

Last week I had the privilege to attend the Deception Bay Flexible Learning Centre, an Edmund Rice education facility, in support of their Walk the Line Program. I enjoyed meeting a great bunch of young people who are proactive about acquiring skills to assist in their future endeavours by participating in the Walk the Line Program. That program includes completing a nationally recognised qualification in their RSA—the responsible service of alcohol—certificate. The Walk the Line Program, which is an alcohol harm minimisation program, is about informing and providing young people with the necessary skills to make the right choices and understand the pros and cons of drinking alcohol. I would like to acknowledge their great staff, Michelle and Dave, for organising the group of learners and I would like to thank the presenters, Russell Steele and Paul Stanley.

This week I was excited to learn that 213 North Lakes families have bought their first home with the help of the \$15,000 Great Start Grant. I acknowledge the presence of the minister assisting the Treasurer, who is not looking this way. This represents the second largest number of payments to any postcode in Queensland of people who have used this opportunity to take advantage of the grant. The take-up of the grant is a positive indication that many homebuyers find it attractive to live in the Murrumba electorate. The grant has not only been a terrific boost for homebuyers in the area; it has also played an important role in creating jobs and boosting construction, which is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. I thank the House for letting me speak on behalf of Murrumba—the Aboriginal word for good place. Queensland is a great state with great opportunities.

Ipswich City Council, Parking Fines

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (8.17 pm): Many residents of the newer suburbs within my electorate, like Springfield Lakes and Augustine Heights, are complaining bitterly about being fined—and repeatedly fined up to seven times—for parking in front of their own homes by the Ipswich City Council. The council seems to be revenue raising by trawling suburban streets seeking out vehicles in an ANPR car. Due to poor town planning in these new suburbs, residents are forced into parking partly on the footpath outside their own homes as there is not enough room to park elsewhere as parking fully on the road on either side of the road would block the traffic. Time and time again, residents have approached councillors and the council to rectify the matter, but it is passed on as being a state government issue as they were unwilling or unable to acknowledge the fault of the Ipswich City Council. I table for the House section 66(3) of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act, which states that councils may make laws in relation to parking. I also table council local laws No. 5 and No. 5.1, which prove that it is in fact a council law.

Tabled paper: Extract of Chapter 5, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 [[4878](#)].

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled, 'Ipswich City Council, Local Law No. 5 (Parking) 2013' [[4879](#)].

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled, 'Ipswich City Council, Subordinate Local Law 5.1 (Parking) 2013' [[4880](#)].

Part 2(6) of law No. 5 outlines that the Ipswich council can issue a permit for a permit regulated activity authorising a person to park 'in a designated parking space where parking is restricted to permit parking'. Further, in the Subordinate Local Law 5.1 (Parking), it states under part 2, 'Permits', at section 7(d) that council has the power to grant a permit to 'a person who resides in the street or immediate vicinity of the place for which the permit is granted or is a visitor to the premises'. Schedule 2, 'Information and permit conditions', sets out how council can facilitate this for residents. The Ipswich council can instigate declared traffic areas as per schedule 3. This will allow residents to come home from a hard day's work and relax without worrying if they are to be fined by the stealth of the Ipswich City Council automatic numberplate recognition car because poor town planning did not allow them to have adequate space.

So council can fix this mess—unless, of course, it is true that it is a revenue-raising exercise and the council may, in fact, be broke. Council can declare whole suburbs a traffic area as per schedule 3 and give residents a permit to park outside their own homes. I have had the library do some research in relation to councils using automatic numberplate recognition system cars. I understand that Ipswich is the only council in Queensland that has an ANPR car. No wonder this is the No. 1 council issue in the suburbs of Ipswich because some of these new suburbs have narrow guttered roads as a result of poor town planning practices. The council must fix this issue now.

Logan Electorate, Sporting Clubs

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (8.20 pm): Every weekend footy fields, soccer fields, netball courts and the like are alive with energy and excitement across our Logan community. As athletes of all ages come together, the sense of community pride along with healthy and active living is reinvigorating a generation of talented sportspersons to get in the game. Local clubs across our great state may face challenges that, at times, prove troublesome. Realising the special significance that local sporting clubs play within our community, our government has committed itself to the successful implementation of the Get in the Game program. The impact that the Get in the Game initiative is having on local clubs by breathing new life into them is tremendous. It is developing the athletic ability of the younger generation whilst also providing constructive social outlets and infrastructure that, ultimately, adds to the cultural development of our community.

Earlier this year, the initiative came to fruition for several sporting clubs within Logan such as the Park Ridge Pirates junior AFL club, which secured funding for much needed lighting fixtures. The funding will provide the Pirates with an added advantage of extending their training hours after dark

as well as facilitating more teams on their training grounds. It was rewarding for the Pirates and the greater community to see this funding support for our local clubs. As I have been working with the clubs over the past 24 months to secure this funding, it is great to see our efforts pay off.

Our community is also home to new codes that are fostering the next generation of stars. Recently, I had the privilege of representing the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, the Hon. Steve Dickson, at the jersey presentation for our state's gridiron team, the Queensland Sundevils. We have men and women gridiron teams, the Logan City Bruins and the Logan City Jets, that train and compete in our community at Hyde Park in the suburb of Regents Park. The rise of the code is providing our youth with even more opportunities to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

I believe it is important to support our youth by providing them with opportunities to achieve their full potential. Part of this support is meeting the needs of our growing community. Suburbs such as Logan Village, Yarrabilba and Flagstone are growing. Whilst my campaign to ensure that issues such as public transport and infrastructure remain front and centre in the minds of ministers in this government, we cannot afford to neglect the social and communal obligations of any community. This is why I welcome the newest addition to our local sporting community, the Flagstone Phoenix Junior Rugby League Club. I am proud to sponsor this club. Fielding teams in the under 6 and under 8 competitions, the Phoenix are providing a wonderful opportunity that is taking local children off the couch and getting them onto the paddock. Spurred on by parents and volunteers, our newest club will help in the development of the greater Flagstone community in the years to come. I look forward to continuing my support and strong relationships with not just the Phoenix, but all of Logan's local sporting clubs as, together, we will keep Logan charging.

Ferny Grove Electorate, Achievements

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (8.23 pm): I rise in the House this evening to give a bit of an update on what has been delivered throughout the fine electorate of Ferny Grove during the first two years of a can-do Newman government. It gives me great pleasure to report that each of the pre-election commitments that were made in the Ferny Grove electorate has, in fact, been delivered. They start with the delivery of the new set of traffic lights, which deliver far safer pedestrian and traffic interfaces at the entrance to Keperra Sanctuary. We promised to deliver flashing light zones at schools, our safety zones. I am proud to report that four schools out of the eight state schools within the electorate of Ferny Grove now have these. They are Grovely State School, Ferny Grove State School, Ferny Grove State High School and Patricks Road State School.

We have also managed to deliver great outcomes in terms of Get in the Game grants. New lights have been delivered at the Pine Hills Football Club, which is right on the boundary of my electorate and Minister Mander's electorate of Everton. We have delivered \$960,000 in the Great Results Guarantee to our schools and over \$1½ million of Advancing Our Schools maintenance money, which has made great inroads into delivering maintenance benefits to all state schools to help overcome the appalling legacy of required maintenance that was left by the Labor regime. No doubt, that goes some way to explaining what the \$80 billion of Labor debt could have helped us address. Only today we heard about the \$150 million in interest each year, of wasted moneys on the water grid. I look forward to the way in which the Treasurer may distribute those sorts of funds to the electorate of Ferny Grove in the future.

One of the main advantages that has been delivered to the electorate of Ferny Grove in the last year is in the area of rail infrastructure and transport. We have delivered on a trial of 15-minute off-peak services, which has now been extended into the early evening. We now have seven- to eight-minute peak services running out of Ferny Grove in the morning service, which delivers an extra 110 additional services over the course of a week. Over 3,000 additional journeys per week have been undertaken since the 20 January train timetable adjustments. In the morning there are 18 extra carriages through five additional services. This is a fantastic improvement on the Ferny Grove line rail service. It is great to see that the commuters are voting with their feet, making their way down to the newly developed Ferny Grove station and undertaking many more public transport trips over the course of a week.

Cooroy State School; Halls Creek

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (8.26 pm): Last week I had the privilege of visiting Cooroy State School. I congratulated students, parents and staff on the school's efforts in raising over \$600 to assist the plight of drought affected farmers and graziers in Queensland. Media coverage of the drought in Central Queensland touched the hearts of many students at our school, with some school

families also being directly affected as they struggled with lack of water and having to handfeed their own cattle. The money was raised through a 'dress like a farmer day' where staff and students got in the act and dressed up in their best farm gear and brought a gold coin donation to school for drought relief. The response from students and staff was absolutely terrific. Special mention goes to Georgia from year 1 and Jim from year 7, who also had a big, fake, grey beard.

The community involvement of Cooroy State School does not end there. Students also recently held a care and share morning where they entertained over 40 elderly people in our community. The entertainment consisted of song, dance and music followed by a wonderful morning tea. But there is more. Staff and students were involved in Clean Up Australia Day and this year 22 school students from Cooroy State School, their leaders, will attend the Anzac service at Anzac Square here in Brisbane. Our students will also participate in our local Cooroy Anzac Day service ceremony. On behalf of our whole community I say thank you to our new school principal, Mr Des Deighton, for allowing our students to reach out to others in our community so that these students can also learn how good it feels to help others.

Whilst I am on my feet I will also use this opportunity to speak on behalf of many Sunshine Coast residents and call on the Deputy Premier to withdraw a requirement for council to include for future urban investigation a 1,400 hectare parcel of land locally known as Halls Creek. This land needs to remain as it is currently proposed in the council planning scheme, which is as an interurban break between the residential development that is planned in that area. I use this opportunity to call on all government members on the Sunshine Coast to join me in sending a strong message to our Deputy Premier that the Halls Creek land needs to retain its protection status as an interurban block. We need to support our council in making sure that Stockland is not able to develop it in the future. We need to ensure that the Deputy Premier does not simply pander to the calls and the whims of Stockland developments.

Charities

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (8.29 pm): I rise this evening to explain why I have a pile of empty milo tins stored in my office. Just like we do at my local Rotary club meetings, at each breakfast, lunch or dinner function that I host we pass around a milo tin and collect loose coins and spare notes in support of local charities and youth organisations. Over the past two years we have raised almost \$70,000 for local charities. Recently, we raised just over \$10,000 for Bravehearts and Musgrave Hill early childhood development unit. Penny O'Connor from the Musgrave Hill early childhood development unit came to see me at the start of this year about their desperate need for a new bus to transport children to various activities. The unit supports families with preschool age children with a disability and significant development challenges. Their current bus, which recently died, is almost 20 years old. The replacement cost of this bus is \$90,000 and so far they have raised \$31,000. With the generous support of my many colleagues and friends through the last milo tin appeal, we will be adding another \$6,000 to that total.

I am pleased, however, to report that last Sunday, in response to the *Sunday Mail* article that the member for Mackay mentioned, David McDonald, the CEO of Variety Club Queensland, contacted me and has offered to work with us to find the balance of funds required to purchase a new bus through their Sunshine Coaches program. I cannot wait to see the children who will benefit from the new bus when I next visit them. What a fantastic result!

I mentioned earlier that over the last two years we have raised more than \$70,000 through the Milo tins, and some of the causes that we have been able to help are: the Kids in Care Christmas Appeal; Parkwood Sharks Junior Rugby League; YHES House in Southport, Youth Health and Education Service; Bravehearts; Paradise Kids; Compassion Services; Gold Coast Stroke Support Group; and FSG, which supports children and adults with disabilities.

A government member interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: Yes, I believe the member for Mackay has done a bit in that area as well, but I am not sure.

On Tuesday I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the new FSG HUB in Southport, and I am so excited that this weekend I will have Vicki Batten, their CEO, speak to my Young Leaders mentoring program. Vicki is a great motivator and innovator. Her passion for the dignity of others and her focus on ability rather than disability is inspirational. I know she will really fire up my young leaders on Saturday. They are a phenomenal bunch of young people, and I was particularly proud of them last year when they responded to the Premier's Flood Appeal and raised \$14,000 through their own efforts for the people of Bundaberg.

Speaking of young people, I was pleased to have student leaders from Southport State High School here at parliament this week. The principal, Steve McLuckie, is doing an amazing job at the school and putting it on the map, and this year they have had record enrolments.

Asset Sales; Putney, Most Reverend Michael; Smith, Ms J

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (8.32 pm): I would like to answer the question that the Treasurer has posed regarding Queensland asset sales when he said, 'What other option do we have?' Allow me to have a crack at this.

To consider this we have to consider the two separate economic ideologies that I and the Treasurer represent. The Treasurer represents the mainstream position of monetarists and supply-side economics, and I might add that this is the prevalent ideology driving both LNP and ALP policy. I believe that the mad obsession with this position is driving us in the wrong direction and denies the state the development opportunities that it deserves. I suggest that the Treasurer spend a little reading time with Keynes versus Hayek to see that there is in fact some alternative policy direction.

The state's wealth that we have lived off for the past 30 years was driven by a government not driven purely by fiscal balance but also by economic policy that focused on creating jobs. Under the National Party this state was under enormous debt burdens. However, the debt was continually directed towards industry-building infrastructure: regional roads, rail lines, power stations and transmission lines. This government is obsessed with fiscal balance but has poorly addressed economic or industry policy. We have roads, rail, water and transmission lines infrastructure going backwards at present in resource-rich areas. We have abundant farmland still rigidly bound up in bureaucracy in the mid-west and Gulf regions that also requires surrounding infrastructure.

Spending money in these areas will have the following effects: it sends the message to Queensland that the government is serious about investing in industry and will provide that incentive for business to move ahead; and it makes our big industries more competitive. Our great mines and primary producers are suffering from infrastructure underinvestment not keeping up with the drive for development. Thirdly, it provides a stimulus in the short term, putting money and real jobs into the economy.

An honourable member: What money?

Mr KATTER: I will address the statement just made, 'What money?' The situation when Joh Bjelke-Petersen came into government was 300 per cent gross debt to revenue ratio. It is now at 150 per cent. He got it down to 40 per cent. There is still latitude. I will table this document.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled, 'Research Brief' regarding Bjelke-Petersen Era government debt and revenue levels [\[4881\]](#).

Ken Henry, the former head of Treasury, says that it is acceptable and a good policy direction in these times to use public debt to build industry-building infrastructure. He specifically adds to stop building tunnels and direct it towards strategic industry-building infrastructure. We have a lot of large nation-building projects on our doorstep that can help generate this sort of revenue, but we are obsessed with fiscal balance.

I would also like to use this short time available to pay a quick tribute to Bishop Michael Putney, a great man who recently passed away. He had an immense impact on me personally, and I sincerely believe he may be one of the most intelligent men I have ever had the privilege of sharing company with.

I also recently attended the funeral of Jean Smith in Bedourie with the honourable member for Gregory. It was also a pleasure to attend the funeral of such a great outback woman.

Lytton Electorate, Achievements

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (8.35 pm): It is with a great sense of pride that I acknowledge some great local achievements in the areas of sport, education and community support in my electorate during the past fortnight.

On Friday Megan Turley, who works at Darling Point Special School, was accompanied by the school principal, Charmaine Driver, to receive a national award at the ASG NEiTA Awards through her work with students with disabilities. The national awards event was hosted in Melbourne, so when I heard of the news I personally rang Charmaine and Megan to congratulate them on behalf of the Newman government, as did the education minister later that day. On Monday it was great to get down to the school and speak with the teacher and principal personally about this achievement.

Another organisation that succeeded in their field the following weekend was the mighty Manly Dragons Boat Club, which won gold in the Senior B Women's 500, 200 and 2,000; Senior B Mix 500 and 200; Premier Open 200 10s; silver in the Senior A Women's 500 and 200; and the Senior A Open. In two weeks time the mighty Manly Dragons will defend their sixth national title in Kawana. I am sure they will do Lytton and Queensland proud, and they will be up against Brisbane and Currumbin in those events.

The last achievement that I want to talk about is the fundraising effort of Tom Andrews from the Wynnum Manly Chaplaincy Group, which conducted a very successful chaplaincy dinner function which raised over \$18,000 for chaplains in the local schools in the Lytton electorate. On that night it was wonderful to host a table of local residents as well as provide an auction prize donated by the Queensland Reds and to make a financial pledge on behalf of my table to this organisation. Every school in the electorate now has a chaplain who works with communities by providing support, including grief counselling for school students where a teacher had lost their life in the first term, as well as help a child with a disability integrate into the community. The event was heavily attended with over 250 locals supporting a great cause. I thank the Darling Point Special School, Manly Dragons Boat Club and the Wynnum Manly Chaplaincy Group for the work that they do in making our community a great place to live.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 8.36 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, 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