



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## THURSDAY, 8 MAY 2014

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

### PRIVILEGE

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

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 4 April 2013 I received a letter from the member for Bundamba alleging that the Minister for Health had deliberately misled the House in statements relating to paediatric intensive care services in Townsville. I wrote to the minister about this matter who provided me with a response, which I received on 2 May 2013. I table the correspondence relating to this matter for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 4 April 2014, from the member for Bundamba, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP, to the Acting Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Dr Mark Robinson MP, regarding alleged deliberate misleading of the House by the Minister for Health, Hon. Lawrence Springborg [5029].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 29 April 2014, from the Minister for Health, Hon. Lawrence Springborg to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Fiona Simpson, regarding member for Bundamba's allegation of alleged deliberate misleading of the House [5030].

The material before me leads me to conclude that this is simply a matter for debate with various sources of evidence and differing interpretations available. I certainly see no evidence of any deliberate intention to mislead the House. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

### PRIVILEGE

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



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 9 April 2014 I received a letter from the member for Redcliffe alleging that the member for Townsville had deliberately misled the House in statements made in a second reading debate on 19 March 2014 and 1 April 2014. The allegation relates to statements made by the member for Townsville indicating there had been no reservation, objections or any negative discussion during the committee review of the Communities Legislation (Funding Red-Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. The member for Redcliffe contends that this was misleading due to the existence of a statement of reservation by the member for Bundamba contained in the published committee report.

The member for Townsville provided me with a response on 1 May 2014. Reviewing the correspondence, I do not consider that the member for Townsville was deliberately intending to mislead the House, as the statements made by him related to committee discussions and adoption of the report on 10 March 2014, whereas the statement of reservation was dated 11 March 2014. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee. I table the correspondence relating to this matter for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 9 April 2014, from the member for Redcliffe, Ms Yvette D'Ath MP, to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Fiona Simpson, regarding alleged deliberate misleading of the House by the member for Townsville, Mr John Hathaway MP [5031].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 1 May 2014, from the member for Townsville, Mr John Hathaway MP, to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Fiona Simpson, regarding the member for Redcliffe's allegation of alleged deliberate misleading of the House [5032].

As to the question raised about alleged unparliamentary language, I have considered it and do not require any further action.

## PRIVILEGE

### Speaker's Ruling, Referral to Ethics Committee

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 19 March 2014 the member for Logan wrote to me alleging that the member for Bundamba deliberately misled the House on 13 February 2014 by claiming that the member had unlawfully employed someone in 2012 and that his actions had been investigated by the Clerk and were the subject of a referral to the CMC. The member for Logan rose in the House at the time to state that the comments were untrue and offensive. The member for Bundamba withdrew offensive comments but then restated the accusation relating to the member for Logan. When raising the matter of privilege, the member for Logan identified that it is the Clerk of the Parliament who is the employer of staff and provided evidence that the Clerk did not consider the employment of the staff member to be unlawful.

Given the prima facie evidence provided to me, I have decided to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee for their investigation. I remind all members that standing order 271 now applies to the matter.

## PETITION

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

### Mining Companies, Workers

From 1,317 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure mining companies provide equal options for all workers, employing a mix of workers from the community, fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out and to ensure all workers are allowed to live where they choose [\[5033\]](#).

Petition received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie)—

[5034](#) Professional Standards Act 2003 (VIC): The Victorian Bar Professional Standards Scheme (refer to Professional Standards (Victorian Bar Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2014: Subordinate Legislation No. 52 of 2014)

[5035](#) Professional Standards Act 1997 (WA): The Western Australian Bar Association Scheme (refer to Professional Standards (Western Australian Bar Association Scheme) Notice 2014: Subordinate Legislation No. 53 of 2014)

### MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following member's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Inala (Ms Palaszczuk)—

[5036](#) Non-conforming petition relating to saving the independence of the Crime and Misconduct Commission

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Newman Government, Initiatives

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.35 am): Queensland has always been a great place to live and work. However, with growth, comes new pressures on our living costs, our essential services and our infrastructure, our roads, our police, our schools and hospitals as well as the need to create safer communities and more jobs. This government recognises these challenges. That is why we took a plan to the last election, a strong plan, that would grow our four-pillar economy and sustain it by sorting out the mess of our public finances. An uncertain outlook requires a strong team with a strong plan to invest in our future. This government team is going to stick to its plan because it is the right one. We will need to take tough, disciplined, strong decisions. We will need new ideas, realistic policies and, above all, a planned approach for the long term. We have listened and we are already acting. We have increased tourism numbers; international visitors, visitor nights and expenditure are all up significantly. We have cracked down on criminal gangs. We are consulting on

the budget. We have boosted development, infrastructure projects and jobs. More than 61,000 jobs were created in Queensland in the last year—more than double the next best performing state. We have invested in new schools and hospitals.

We are making significant progress state-wide and locally, but we are determined to do a whole lot more. Only if we stick to this plan, this strong plan, will we have the schools our children deserve, the hospitals we need and the infrastructure that we want. These things are simply not achievable without a sound financial foundation. As a result of disciplined decisions we are now on this path back to recovery. This is a government with a focus and ability to make this brighter future a reality and ease the pressure on families.

The alternative is the inexperience and chaos of Labor and the minor parties. Labor has not learned from its past mistakes and the minor parties offer nothing but political doubletalk. Those opposite in particular have chosen the same failed individuals, the same gang, the same group, who got us in the mess in the first place. They have no real policies, no way to fund them and no strong plan to take this state forward. If people are looking at them, they will see very quickly that if they were elected—if any of them were elected—they will continue to push policies to see higher debt and deficit, higher taxes and waste and inefficiency, and that would put Queensland's future in real jeopardy. A brighter future is ours for the taking, but only under an LNP government with a strong plan.

### **Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, Homeownership**

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.38 am): Today marks a momentous occasion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. After 20 years of inaction from the Australian Labor Party this government is delivering on one of its key election promises today. Under legislation that will be introduced to the House today, Indigenous Queenslanders will have more opportunities to own their own home. The bill—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** We set it up.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I take the interjections. Maybe the honourable member will point to where Indigenous freeholder homeownership is occurring, under their stewardship, in Aurukun, in Pormpuraaw, on Mornington Island, in Doomadgee or in Mapoon. Show me.

Rhetorically I say, 'Show us where Indigenous freehold land ownership has occurred in those communities.' What an empty vessel the member for Mulgrave is! What a shallow team of people they are over there!

The bill that we introduce today will provide ordinary freehold land ownership opportunities for the first time since tenures were imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the late 19th century. What a proud day this is for the Queensland parliament as we correct the dispossession and sins of the past.

This initiative will remove barriers to homeownership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is an important step and it is a vital step. It will not only give economic independence and create opportunities, but it will also provide local communities greater confidence and self-determination. This move also empowers local councils by allowing them to demonstrate leadership in the vital area of homeownership. They will be allowed to guide the future direction of their communities to a much greater extent.

The important legislation to be introduced today will give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a long-wished-for dream: the opportunity to be instrumental in shaping their communities and their families' lives in a way they have not been able to previously. It was a great experience for me to talk to Cheryl Cannon from Hope Vale last year when she became the first Queenslander to receive a Homeownership on Indigenous Land Loan to enable her to buy her own home. She was just brimming over with pride and it was amazing to see.

This is the next step along the path to giving that opportunity to all Indigenous communities. The bill does not force freehold on any community; however, it provides the power for communities which want freehold to be able to have it. In fact, Noel Pearson was quoted in the *Australian* today as saying that this is the right model for the transfer of freehold title.

We want to work with communities to identify what is best for each one and to what extent, if at all, freehold land can be made part of the community. It must be recognised that of course the provision of freehold land is not a solution in itself, but it is part of a wider strategy that the Newman government is implementing to deliver economic communities to Indigenous communities.

Again I say this is a momentous occasion and one that our Indigenous communities have been waiting a long time for, but it never came under the Australian Labor Party governments of the last 20 years. Happily, from this time today they will be able to share in an opportunity enjoyed by all of their fellow Queenslanders.

### **Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project**

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.42 am): Our government has identified the resources sector as one of the four key pillars of the state's economy, and we promised to grow the sector for the benefit of all Queenslanders now and into the future. The quarterly update on renewal released by the Premier last week shows that we have delivered on that commitment.

Our reforms to Labor's onerous approvals systems have transformed the business environment for the mining sector and, importantly, this has been achieved without any lowering of environmental standards. Projects that have languished in approvals for years are now being efficiently, yet rigorously, assessed—signalling that Queensland is open for business. We know that boosting economic growth creates jobs for Queenslanders and that growth is critical to tackling the legacy of debt left by Labor.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House of another important approval that has just been granted by Queensland's independent Coordinator-General. Late yesterday the Coordinator-General advised me that he has approved the proposed \$16 billion Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project north-west of Clermont. The Coordinator-General has approved the project subject to an extensive list of environmental and social conditions. If it proceeds, the Carmichael project would not only be the largest coalmine in Australia, but one of the largest in the world. It would also be a vital project in opening up the hugely significant Galilee Basin and providing the economic benefits and jobs that Queenslanders will need in the future.

The project has the potential to create up to 2,500 construction jobs and almost 4,000 operational jobs that would be significant to the future economic prosperity of that region and to the Queensland economy but, more importantly, to the generations of Queenslanders who will benefit from them. The approval also includes a 190-kilometre rail line, water supply infrastructure, coal handling and processing plant, and off-site infrastructure including a workers' accommodation village and an airport. The construction of the mine and rail components is expected to generate in excess of \$500 million annually in direct and indirect benefits to Queensland's economy. At full export capacity, the annual contribution to regional gross product and the state is expected to exceed \$900 million and \$3 billion respectively.

The Coordinator-General has worked closely with the Commonwealth Department of the Environment to ensure that matters of national environmental significance have been adequately addressed and all the necessary conditions have been set out in the approval. The Queensland Coordinator-General's report will now go to the Commonwealth minister for his decision on issues pertaining to the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act under the assessment bilateral agreement that we have with the Commonwealth. The Coordinator-General has thoroughly assessed all of the matters of national environmental significance issues and recommended conditions to address every one of them. The proponent will also now need to obtain a water licence, a mining lease and an environmental authority before work can proceed.

The stringent and wide-ranging conditions set by the Coordinator-General include protections for the local flora and fauna; landholders interests; groundwater resources; the quality of surface water leaving the project site; air quality; and noise and dust levels. In relation to groundwater and water bores, the proponent will be required to reach make-good agreements with all affected landholders, including the identification and provision of alternative water supplies. They will also be required to contribute to water monitoring data and funding to a Galilee regional water resource model.

The state government's commitment to streamline projects like the Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project are focused on boosting employment opportunities while balancing environmental and social issues. This decision represents another major step forward to unlocking the resource potential of the Galilee Basin for the benefit of all Queenslanders in the future.

### Strong Choices Campaign

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.47 am): The Strong Choices website is all about providing Queenslanders with the full facts about the accumulated Labor debt of the last decade and the impact that this is having on the state's finances. The 'people's budget tool' aims to give all Queenslanders fulsome information about the strong choices that are available to government as we look to reduce our \$80 billion worth of debt and the \$4 billion yearly interest bill. Those choices are: to significantly increase fees, taxes and charges; to reduce services; or to consider the sale or lease of some assets.

As this Strong Choices campaign is all about presenting Queenslanders with the facts, it is also important to correct some of the inaccuracies that have been promoted regarding it. On various occasions the member for Mulgrave, both in the House and in the media, has made assertions about a so-called \$28 billion black hole on the website. The member claims that getting private sector investment into Ergon, Energex and Powerlink will not affect the reduction in debt on the state's balance sheet. Under the option put forward on the Strong Choices website, the state retains 100 per cent ownership. Private sector participation occurs through a hybrid security interest called a non-share equity interest. This option not only removes debt from the state's balance sheet, but also sees the private sector provide funding for capital expenditure requirements, therefore providing cash injections into those businesses. So by taking debt off the government's books and by providing cash injections into these businesses, the total government debt is reduced.

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I am trying my very hardest, thank you, Leader of the House, to explain it slowly for the member for Mulgrave.

**Mr Pitt:** Patronising, as usual.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Madam Speaker, I understand that if I could use crayons and a chalkboard, it would make it a lot easier for them. But nonetheless we are relying on communication in the English language, so that is a start.

I would like to again reinforce the government's confidence in the figures as they have been presented on the Strong Choices website. They are figures which were compiled by the independent offices of the Queensland Treasury Corporation together with Treasury department staff and verified by the former Queensland Auditor-General Glenn Poole, who was appointed by the former Labor government to that position.

Both the member for Mulgrave and the member for Gaven have called into question the suitability of the \$80 billion debt figure and made statements about net debt being the most appropriate measure to use. It is important that the public understands that whenever a politician refers to net debt they are implying that public servants' superannuation assets can be used to net off the debt the Labor Party racked up in the general government sector. That is what they are saying. They are prepared to raid the public servants' superannuation fund in order to pay off the debt. Not satisfied with racking up the debt of \$80 billion, the member for Gaven now wants to raid Public Service superannuation funds in order to pay it down. These funds are the employer superannuation contributions held to meet future superannuation obligations against the defined benefit fund. To suggest that these funds can be used to pay down debt, as I say, would effectively amount to a raid on superannuation entitlements.

It is also important to look at gross debt, because that is the debt you pay interest on and the interest is \$4 billion every year. Is it the contention of the member for Gaven and the member for Mulgrave that the interest would only be charged on net debt? Try that with your bank: 'Hang on a second! I'll only pay interest on my net debt thanks very much, Mr Bank Manager.' See how far you get with that! That is the voodoo economics of the member for Mulgrave and the voodoo economics of the member for Gaven. They think that we should only pay interest on net debt. The reality is that interest is paid on the full \$80 billion worth of debt. This government, as the Premier has said, has big plans for this state. We have a vision to grow this state, but we are being held back by the \$80 billion

of debt. It is imperative that we act to reduce that debt so that we can invest in the roads, the schools, the hospitals that we know this growing state needs. Statements by those opposite and the member for Gaven show that they simply do not get it and they do not understand basic government finances. This government wants to have a mature conversation with Queenslanders about the strong choices we all face as we look to secure a stronger future. We will continue to have that debate the length and breadth of this state.

### Vegetation Management

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.51 am): The Newman government is committed to supporting and growing the agriculture pillar of the Queensland economy. In December last year my Department of Natural Resources and Mines introduced a number of new self-assessable vegetation management codes following landmark reforms to the vegetation management framework in May. These codes allow landholders to get on with the job of maintaining their properties through routine management activities such as controlling pest weeds and harvesting fodder for stock without the need to complete complicated paperwork and wait for departmental officers to consider and process them. I am pleased to advise the House that these reforms are already delivering benefits to the agriculture sector through monetary savings as well as helping farmers increase the productivity and sustainability of their businesses.

Since these codes were introduced on 2 December, my department has received approximately 520 notifications from 298 individual landholders. In the past these landholders would have to wait for a development approval which, on average, could take up to two months to process before they could carry out routine maintenance activities on their properties. This is equivalent to approximately 1,040 calendar months in waiting time that Queensland landholders have already saved under our new self-assessable codes. That is approximately 86 years in time and opportunity costs that would have been lost under the unnecessarily restrictive framework imposed by the former Labor government. Furthermore, Queensland's landholders are now no longer limited to the previous five-year permit, with our notifications lasting for as long as the landowner owns the land. This means cost savings in the order of \$650 per landholder for each five-year period, a total saving of about \$194,000 so far in six months across Queensland.

These are practical and common-sense changes that afford appropriate protection to the environment while reducing costs and increasing productive time for landowners—an important balance that did not exist under the previous Labor government. We have reduced red tape and regulation considerably, reducing the burden that previously hindered these rural industries from getting on with the job of effectively managing their properties. This initiative will also help us achieve our goal of doubling agricultural production by 2040. However, these reforms are not a green light for broadscale clearing. Instead, they safeguard the environment with strong and clear guidelines for landowners and encourage the expansion of sustainable food production. My Department of Natural Resources and Mines will continue to monitor vegetation management activities across Queensland and there will be penalties for those people who do the wrong thing.

### Newman Government, Health

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.54 am): This week our front-line nurses and midwives have been able to feel the tangible benefits of the can-do government's record investment in Queensland Health. Nurses and midwives are receiving their final instalment of an almost 10 per cent pay increase since the last election, some \$240 per fortnight for the average nurse. Next week Queenslanders will be able to analyse the latest hospital waiting list data and see how our ambulance response times, emergency departments and urgent surgery responses are performing as a direct result of this can-do LNP government's record investment in Queensland Health.

Today, in time for Mother's Day this Sunday, I can outline to women across Queensland how the can-do government's record investment in Queensland Health is delivering record results for the health of women through the BreastScreen program. The latest figures for the nine months to March show that almost 184,000 Queensland women participated in BreastScreen. That is a record result—a record year-to-date result that has been made possible by the can-do government's record investment in Queensland Health. The 184,000 breast screens performed in the nine months to March represent 13,000 more breast screens than for the same period in 2011-12 during Labor's last year in office, and I make this point because Labor allowed the health dollar to be squandered on

waste instead of being invested in essential front-line services. Also the LNP's record investment has resulted in an additional \$400,000 allocation this year to support women under 40 years of age who are at high risk of familial breast cancer.

## TAFE QUEENSLAND (DUAL SECTOR ENTITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

### FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BILL

#### Cognate Debate

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.56 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 172, the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill and the Further Education and Training Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages as follows:

- (a) second reading debate, with separate questions being put with regard to the second readings;
- (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
- (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### Member for Yeerongpilly, Traffic Incident

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—PUP) (9.57 am): Over the last two sitting days the Premier has raised the issue that I had a traffic incident on the way home from parliament in the early morning on 30 November 2012. Police attended that traffic incident in accordance with standard procedure and conducted an investigation. I submitted to a roadside breath test on that evening, and that was witnessed by many neighbours in my street. The devices are recorded. There is a GPS in the devices and it is all uploaded onto a computer and is there forever and a day. The police report was completed as per routine procedure. The police officers acted professionally and ethically. During the past two sitting days the Premier has attempted to slur and defame me over this incident. The reason why I am giving this explanation is not for my benefit but to protect the integrity of the Queensland Police Service. No other conclusion can be drawn from the Premier's comments other than him alleging that the police acted improperly.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Yeerongpilly, I remind you that I have a ruling that I have advised you about before that a matter of personal explanation regards your actions. It is not an opportunity to attack other people.

**Mr JUDGE:** Sure. Sorry, Madam Speaker, but it really was a matter that was investigated fully and properly. Really, the purpose of me giving this statement is that, in my career as a police officer, I have witnessed many traffic accidents—

**Madam SPEAKER:** I have given the member ample opportunity. I also advise the member to seek the advice of the Clerk in regard to the parameters of a personal explanation. I am going to ask the member to sit down, because I did provide him with ample opportunity.

#### EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

##### Report

**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.59 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 33 of the Education and Innovation Committee, *Subordinate legislation tabled between 12 February 2014 and 6 May 2014*. The committee has considered the subordinate legislation and found no significant concerns in respect of fundamental legislative principle or lawfulness. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 33—Subordinate legislation tabled between 12 February 2014 and 6 May 2014 [[5037](#)].

## PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

### Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner, Report

**Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (10.00 am): Chapter 13 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 gives the CMC the power to obtain warrants or emergency authorisations for surveillance devices. The PPRA requires the parliamentary commissioner to inspect the records of the CMC from time to time to determine the level of compliance with chapter 13 by the CMC and its officers.

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

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

*Tabled paper:* Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner Report on the Results of the Inspection of the Records of the Crime and Misconduct Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, dated April 2014 [5038].

## LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (10.01 am): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report No. 64, *Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 February 2014 and 18 March 2014*. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 64—Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 February 2014 and 18 March 2014 [5039].

## STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 38 of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. This report provides the committee's consideration of the *Queensland Audit Office report to parliament 3 for 2012-13: tourism industry growth and development*. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 38—Review of the Queensland Audit Office Report to Parliament 3 for 2012-13: Tourism industry growth and development [5040].

## TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 44 of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, *Subordinate legislation tabled on 11 February 2014*. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 44—Subordinate legislation tabled on 11 February 2014 [5041].

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

**Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (10.02 am): I give notice that I will move—

That the Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 1) of 2014, Subordinate Legislation No. 38 of 2014, tabled in this House on 6 May 2014, be disallowed.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Madam SPEAKER:** Question time will finish at 11.02 am

### Rockhampton Hospital

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.02 am): My question is to the Minister for Health. I table an extract from the minister's diary, which indicates that he visited the Rockhampton Hospital and met with the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Board on 7 October 2013—

**Mr Newman:** Where are your diaries?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Premier, I warn you not to interject during a question. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to start again.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Health. I table an extract from the minister's diary, which indicates that he visited Rockhampton Hospital and met with the Central Queensland Hospital and Hospital Board chair on 7 October 2013—eight months and one day ago. I ask: will the minister confirm that this was the meeting where he was advised of patient safety issues at Rockhampton Hospital and what action did he take?

*Tabled paper:* Untitled document with details of meetings between 3 October 2013 and 14 October 2013 [5042].

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** When it comes to the Leader of the Opposition the penny is dropping, but it has a very long way to drop. If the Leader of the Opposition was listening in this place on Tuesday—or indeed the following day, Wednesday—she would have heard me volunteer the fact that I had had a discussion with members of the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Board last year, around about September or October off the top of my head, where we had discussions about certain issues that concerned them. One that was indicated to me was a worry that they had with regard to an attitude around the concerns of some staff towards quality and patient safety with regard to clinical incidents. They had indicated to me that, as this matter had come to their attention, they intended to do something about it, because it had not been dealt with previously. That is a practical example of the benefits of having local hospital and health boards managing these things locally and not having them dealt with from hundreds or thousands of kilometres away in the centralised control of Brisbane, which had quite clearly failed in cases such as Bundaberg going back about 10 years ago and clearly failed in the case of little Ryan Saunders in Rockhampton a few years after that.

I also ask members to keep in mind that, when it comes to the first such clinical incident that has been investigated against the surgeon who has been stood aside, that goes back to 2011, which was under our predecessor's tenure in this place. Subsequent to that they brought in an external consultant to look at this issue. They found concerns with regard to the way that a process had been put in place after previous root cause analysis and Coroner's reports and they started addressing those matters as soon as they had that report in January or February of this year.

The real smoking gun is the Labor Party and its failure to put in place a system that properly addressed these issues over a long period of time. It keeps making excuses about how centralised control is saving people when it has caused so many incidents of failure and cover-ups of patient harm throughout Queensland over the last decade or more. When it comes to what we have put through this parliament, such as the Health Ombudsman, which will see for the first time in Australia an opportunity for us to be able to wrest back notifications about serious incidents and take sovereign control and deal with those things, the Labor opposition is opposing even that. There was a turgid process that saw the Medical Board take up to seven years to deal with complaints against doctors routinely not following their own remit and 65 per cent of matters not being properly dealt with in time.

*(Time expired)*

### Rockhampton Hospital

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My follow-up question is to the Minister for Health. The minister has just confirmed that an external consultant was put on, that a report was commissioned and was confirmed in January or February of this year. Will the minister today release that report?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Again, the honourable Leader of the Opposition fails to understand what this issue is all about. The hospital and health board has control of this matter. They said that they were doing things. This week I became aware, as many other people did on the basis of autonomy, that they had done this report and that they had started implementing those particular matters. I have not seen that particular report. I have no aversion whatsoever—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** So you haven't seen it?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** No. It is not my report. The hospital and health board has done that report. I became aware of that report this week, as all members did. I commend the hospital and health board for doing that report and taking steps. It is their property. I have no aversion to them releasing that report or any other information. It is a matter for them. The most important thing, of course, is that this is about the hospital board in Central Queensland taking steps to mop up the mess that it inherited under the previous government.

While we are talking about this issue, let us look at the reason that I went there in September 2013. One was to commend the hospital board for the work that it had done to turn around the shambles of that particular hospital and health service—the fact that it had run at a \$30 million deficit in the previous years, were able to make savings and, at the same time, had one of the best elective surgery waiting lists in all of Queensland running, at around about 100 per cent in all categories.

In addition, they have made some \$19 million in savings, met all of their performance targets and been able to invest that money in enhancing and putting more beds into the intensive care unit, more than doubling the numbers. That is something that the previous government could not do. They also had to fix up the shambles left by the previous member for Rockhampton, who had the hospital rebuilt without a helipad. How remarkable is that? It is a cross between *Faulty Towers* and *The Goon Show*, with the goons opposite overlooking *Faulty Towers*. How can you rebuild a hospital without a helipad? The board invested \$5 million in a helipad to keep the community safe, because Labor rebuilt the hospital but let off the helipad. If there was an issue, an intensive care patient had to be picked up from the airport and driven to the hospital. If the road was flooded, you had no hope whatsoever. How ridiculous is that? Those sorts of deliberate or osmosis-type acts of absolute incompetence by honourable members opposite put patient safety at risk. Our hospital board is doing a great job. They are at liberty to release what they want to release. I can say that what is in my control will be released under all circumstances, unlike those honourable members opposite.

*(Time expired)*

### Premier's Reading Challenge

**Mr DILLAWAY:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please explain to the House why the Premier's Reading Challenge and other literacy and numeracy programs for young students are so important and deserve government support?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I am extremely passionate about this particular issue, because when I was a young'un my own parents worked very hard to inculcate in me a love of books and reading. Yesterday, I was reminiscing about how each Friday when I came home from school usually sitting on my bed there would be a brand new book for me read. My late father and my mum, who is still alive, used to read to me all the time when I was a kid. Certainly I did that with my kids, even up to the ages of about 13 or 14. It is one of the great experiences of parenthood to be able to read to your children. They love it. It is something that they will remember. Let us look at what it does. A love of reading means that people will bury their noses in books and publications, and soak up the wealth of knowledge that is contained therein. It is a key building block to a great education and great opportunities in later life, getting a great job and having a rewarding and fulfilling life. We really need to work hard to get kids reading, and that starts in the young years.

When the government was devising some of its approaches towards the better education of our kids in Queensland, we took the advice of educational experts and, indeed, our principals who said, 'Isn't it interesting that we put more money per capita, per student, into high schools compared to the primary schools?' I was struck by that because all the research says you have to put it into the first few years. When the current federal government gave us significant dollars—around \$800 million over the next few years—for improved educational outcomes, we put it in to the primary schools. The lion's share of the money went to primary schools, so that schools such Oakleigh in my electorate, where I was yesterday, has an extra \$157,000 which it is spending on those first few years to make sure our kids meet the minimum national standards.

Turning to reading, we have this great challenge and we are encouraging kids right across Queensland to meet the challenge. Yesterday, the minister and I were saying that we want kids across Queensland, irrespective of their age, right through to year 7 in the primary school system, to

pick up a book and compete. The competition runs from 20 May to 5 September. We are hoping that this year almost two million books will be read by over 120,000 students. I was really appreciative of the hospitality of Peter Churchward, one of my local principals, who hosted the minister and me at his school. I thank Year 2 at Oakleigh for being a wonderful bunch of kids and enjoying the launch just as I did.

*(Time expired)*

### **Independent Commission Against Corruption, Grayson, Mr J**

**Mrs MILLER:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to evidence provided at ICAC hearings in Sydney, which I now table, and ask: what was the content of the exclusive and formalised arrangement that the Premier's director-general, John Grayson, Eddie Obeid Jr and Nick Di Girolamo arranged with CS Energy and is it still in place?

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of New South Wales ICAC exhibits nos. 3974, 3975, 3976, 3934, 3935 [5043].

**Mr NEWMAN:** We hear no strong plan for Queensland; only slur, innuendo and scary, scary music every single day. They have questions of their own to answer when it comes to the affairs of Australian Water Holdings and associated entities in the state of Queensland. They still have not answered what they intend to do with the thousands of dollars that was received from Australian Water Holdings and, indeed, Eddie Obeid's own company. The other day, we heard the member for South Brisbane on radio station 612 refusing to say whether they would hand back any money. On the other hand, we have seen that we should do the right thing and hand back the money. I am advised by the LNP that money has been refunded. However, all we hear are evasive answers from the member for South Brisbane.

Guess what? The Australian Labor Party is up to its eyeballs in this particular one. The other night they announced breathlessly that the government had to answer some questions. However, they have to know that the following names are clearly embroiled in the AWH affair: Anna Bligh, Mike Kaiser, Stephen Robertson, John Mickel, John Bradley. I will read out one entry from ICAC documents that were tendered recently. These are the abbreviations—

NAD—

I think that is Nick Di Girolamo—

EO—

That would be Eddie Obeid—

AS, TB and WM from AW—

That is Australian Water—

attended dinner with John Mickel and Stephen Robertson, Minister for Water and Energy, to promote funding model and our strategy. Positive response to both issues.

Did the donations come before the positive meeting in the Strangers' Dining Room or afterwards? What does the member for South Brisbane, who filled out the returns, whose signature is on the bit of paper, know about it? When she goes on radio station 612, why is she so evasive about the circumstances of those donations? I think the Australian Labor Party needs to come in here and make a fulsome explanation. We release ministerial diaries and you can see our contacts for lobbyists which are on the internet, but where have theirs gone? We cannot see their diaries. They do not want us to see them. They do not want Queenslanders to see their diaries, nor do we know what happened with the lobbyist registers because—scary music—they have all disappeared. We cannot find them. I think the ALP should answer a few questions about Australian Water Holdings.

*(Time expired)*

### **QCoal, Sonoma Mine**

**Mr HOPPER:** My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Will the minister please explain why QCoal, owned by Chris Wallin, one of the LNP's biggest donors, is being allowed to radically shift the line of its Sonoma Mine in North Queensland and destroy a critical waterway without an amended environmental impact study?

**Mr CRIPPS:** In the first instance, I point out to the member for Condamine that a question about why a company may or may not be allowed to divert a watercourse either in or not in accordance with its environmental impact study is not a matter that comes under my responsibilities as the Natural Resources and Mines minister. There are two circumstances in which an environmental impact statement may be required. Indeed, in relation to this matter, the Premier gave an extensive answer to a question that was asked earlier in the week by the member for Mulgrave.

There are two ministers' portfolios under which an environmental impact statement may be pursued, whether it is through the Coordinator-General's process under the portfolio of the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning or a requirement for informing the process for receiving an environmental authority or in the process of receiving an environmental authority, which is the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, funnily enough.

I am not scared of questions in relation to the issuing of a water entitlement or water licence in relation to this particular issue, if the member for Condamine would like to ask a question at a later date. What I can say in relation to that matter is that the water licence application was received by the department. There was a considerable period of consultation and discussion with the proponents. In fact, we waited to issue a water licence associated with this particular diversion of a watercourse until after we had a decision in the Planning and Environment Court and until we had information provided by the Minister for Environment and his department in relation to the environmental authority. There was nothing else that we could do to meet the due process associated with the issuing of the water licence, that is my portfolio responsibility, and the matter was appealed to the Land Court and the Land Court upheld the original decision of the department.

Due process was followed. This process has been transparent. Notwithstanding the questions that were asked by the member for Mulgrave of the Premier earlier this week and now fumbled by the member for Condamine, I expect that this project will contribute positively to the economic development of Queensland and hopefully the resources sector continues to be a strength of our economy in this state. The Newman government very much values the contribution the resources sector makes.

## Economy

**Dr ROBINSON:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please inform the House of the contrast between the Commonwealth's fiscal position and Queensland's fiscal position together with the strong choices facing each government? Are there any alternate views?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I thank the member for his question. It is fair to say that there are many similarities between what the Newman LNP government inherited on coming to office in Queensland and what the Abbott coalition government inherited in Canberra. As I said in the debate on Tuesday evening, it does not matter whether it is at the federal level or at the state level, Labor always leaves a mess behind. It always has to be cleaned up.

The National Commission of Audit highlighted the problem confronting the coalition in the nation's capital. Federal Labor converted the record surpluses of the Howard government—and we all remember those record surpluses, tax cuts and a future fund—into nearly \$200 billion worth of deficit, with \$123 billion of deficit over the next four years already locked in. Unless action is taken at a federal level, debt will continue to increase over \$660 billion within 10 years. Those are the circumstances in which the federal Treasurer, Joe Hockey, has to frame his first budget.

An analysis of the figures shows that the fiscal and debt position that this government inherited was worse than that inherited by the Abbott government in Canberra.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Oh, rubbish!

**Mr NICHOLLS:** 'Oh, rubbish,' they say. The fiscal geniuses over the road there are now claiming that that is rubbish. Let me give you some figures. When we won office, Labor's fiscal deficit in that financial year was forecast to be 16.4 per cent of revenue while total government debt was forecast at 123 per cent of revenue, rising to 146 per cent in subsequent years. By comparison, when the Abbott government won office in September last year the fiscal deficit for the financial year was forecast to be 6.7 per cent—less than half the mess that was left behind by Labor here in Queensland. General government debt was forecast at 89 per cent of revenue, not the 123 per cent that Labor left us here.

While there are similarities, there are also some differences. In 2012 this government took action to fix the operating side of the state's budget. We implemented \$7½ billion in measures to stop the budget getting any worse. We are on track to deliver the first fiscal surplus in Queensland in over a decade. This is where there is a clear difference between ourselves and the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is about to commence budget repair. We have already undertaken that repair task. In effect, we are two years in front of the Commonwealth, but we still need to repair our balance sheet and pay down the \$80 billion of Labor debt.

We acknowledge that reform and renewal will continue in Queensland as we continue to get value for money for hard-earned taxpayers' dollars. Because of our actions—and in spite of revenue write-downs over the last two years totalling \$5.4 billion, we have been successful in reducing Labor's debt by \$5 billion. That has only occurred due to the planned and methodical approach this government promised and has delivered since we were elected. We will continue to make the strong choices to get Queensland back on track.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community**

**Mr KING:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier. Can the minister please inform the House what active steps this government is taking to support Indigenous communities to achieve a positive social and economic future for themselves?

**Mr ELMES:** Members of the House, today is truly a great day. Today is the culmination of a vision that the Premier had when we were first elected to government, of the hard work and dedication of Minister Cripps and his department, of the hard work of my assistant minister, the member for Cook, who has travelled around the cape and of the hard work of my department, particularly the program office in Cairns. What we have been able to collectively do is provide for a situation today where legislation will be introduced into this House that will allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have the same property rights as every single person in this House, every single person in Queensland. The opportunity to own a home, the opportunity to sell that home on the open market, the opportunity to will that home to their children if that is their wish, the opportunity as a consequence of that to go out and open small businesses in Indigenous communities and normalise, as best we can, these Indigenous communities.

As I heard Minister Cripps say before, the passage of this legislation does not create any freeholding of land. It creates the opportunity to have in these Indigenous communities a conversation and debate to see whether they want to opt into this or for the time being not. It certainly provides the opportunity.

It would not be possible, regardless of what the Queensland government might do, without having some great Indigenous leaders in this state. I refer to people like Wayne Butcher from Lockhart River and Philemon Mene and others who have been elected by their communities and are out there leading those communities. I know, because I was in the cape last week, that these people are excited about the possibilities that are opening up for them and opening up for their communities.

I see when I travel around this state great opportunities for Indigenous people. More to the point, I see Indigenous people wanting to rise up and start to play a very active role in making sure that they, and particularly their children, have the same opportunities as everyone else.

What this parliament will do is really start to put the building blocks in place that will allow that to happen. Can I say in closing, I think I am the luckiest person in this parliament because every day I get to work with and for Indigenous people in this state, and it is an honour.

### **Sale of Public Assets**

**Mr PITT:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his previous public commitments that there will be no divestment of Energex, Ergon or Powerlink in this term or the next, and ask: will the Premier again rule out any model for divestment of these businesses, including offering private sector board positions or a lien over existing assets?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for his question, but I need to correct his interpretation of what I have said. There was an interesting bit that he tacked on at the end about private sector board positions. I would like the honourable member to stand up and make a clear

statement sometime in the proceedings of when I said that. This is what they do. Because they have no strong plan to take this state forward, they deal in smear and innuendo and imputations and verballing. That is their stock-in-trade.

It is a long time now since March 2012, when they were sent a message about their failure on a policy level and on a governance level and on an openness and accountability level by the people of Queensland. It was a long time ago. It is now May 2014 and we hear no strong plan for Queensland's future. The only strong team with a strong plan is over here. That is the message I give to Queenslanders. This side of the House has a strong plan to take this state forward. Those opposite only trade in smear and innuendo and negativity.

The reason that we have \$80 billion worth of Labor debt is mismanagement—mismanagement by those opposite. What we have been saying is that, when it comes to the poles and wires businesses, we will look at retaining ownership by the people of Queensland but we will ask the private sector whether they are interested in investing in these companies. That is what we have said.

**Mr Pitt:** They won't want any board positions for that?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will take the interjection. The interjection was: 'Will they want board positions for that?' I would say, yes, I imagine they might want that if they are putting in billions of dollars. But then again the member for Mulgrave would find that rather mystifying that anybody would want to properly manage money. God help me, Madam Speaker, that if someone spends billions of dollars or makes an investment—what a revelation!—they would want to have some sort of oversight on the spending of that money.

Before I conclude, again I go back to an earlier theme. What has happened to the register of contacts with lobbyists of the previous government? It does not seem to exist. What about the diaries of the previous government? Where are they? Every minister of this government publicly release their diaries every month. I would like to correct the record from Tuesday. It is the emails from when the opposition leader was in government that they are now delaying giving us. They will not hand them over. I say today: what has the Leader of the Opposition got to hide?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Madam Speaker, on matter of privilege suddenly arising, the Premier is misleading the House. The emails are going through due consultation.

**Madam SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Due consultation—he is misleading.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition. That is not a point of order under the standing orders in the middle of question time. You know what the procedures are if you are wanting to take other issues up in the appropriate forums, and that is not the appropriate standing order. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** This is about transparency. There is transparency and openness and accountability here and none whatsoever opposite.

*(Time expired)*

## Public Transport

**Mr KAYE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please advise the House how the Newman government is planning for the future through innovative public transport infrastructure?

**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the member for Greenslopes for the question because we are getting on with the BaT project. We have had some considerable community feedback over the last two months. We have been out there with our draft reference design. I know the member for Greenslopes is very keen to ensure that we are getting the best and most innovative approach to public transport.

What we have seen in March and April is more than 3,000 people have their say on the draft project design. We have also been out there and held several community sessions. We have had seven of those, and we have had more than 300 people attend those community sessions. The BaT chat online has also been very successful and very popular. In terms of the website, it is not quite up there with Strong Choices, Treasurer, but we have more than 10,000 unique visitors to the BaT project website. What it shows is that people are very excited and very interested in this project.

Let us not forget that this is an innovative project, a project that delivers solutions for not just buses but also trains. It delivers solutions in a cost-effective way and in an elegant way. It delivers those extra stations. I was at the Gabba at the weekend and the reality was that it would be great to have a train station there. There will be a train station there and a bus station there as part of the BaT project—again, one. In terms of George Street, we see so many QUT students who exit QUT and walk down George Street to the bus stations in Queen Street Mall and King George Square. They will have a new station at 63 George Street—again, a great solution.

But let us not forget why we are doing this. We do have capacity constraints in terms of our bus system. We do have capacity constraints in terms of our rail system. As you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, this was first alerted to the previous government in 2005. In 2005 they put up a series of suggestions at the end of the day but which were never affordable—they could never deliver a project—and no-one would pay for. That is the sad thing about it. They had many years to deal with this problem and they could never do it. To see so many people getting involved and getting excited about this project is great, because it is an exciting project—3,000 people expressing interest in terms of the draft design, 300 people attending the community sessions and 10,000 people logging on, looking at the site. This is what we want to see.

We are on track. The geotechnical work has already begun. We have been in the river and we have been on the roads doing that geotechnical work. This project is going ahead. We will deliver it. It will be completed by 2020 and operational in 2021.

### Sale of Public Assets

**Ms D'ATH:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to the National Partnership Agreement on Asset Recycling signed by the Premier at COAG last week and the condition that, in order to access funds under the agreement, proceeds of any assets sales must be expended on new infrastructure, and I ask: how do these conditions reconcile with the Treasurer's repeated comments that assets sales will be used to pay down debt?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I really do thank her for the question! Let's just go through it all again. There are some young people in the gallery. They will probably be interested to hear this. Labor were in charge for about 20 years in this state, and over 20 years they essentially blew the financial viability of this state apart, particularly in the period from 2007 to 2012. We ended up on a pathway to \$85 billion worth of debt. We have managed to take the edge off that and we will pull it up at \$80 billion. But it is \$80 billion worth of Labor debt, and we will be paying \$450,000 of interest an hour to service Labor's debt.

So what has been put forward? Well, there are three choices: put up taxes, have a debt levy. We said no to those things and we said no a year ago. We can cut costs more. Well, we did cut costs but we believe we have done the responsible thing and we do not think there is much more one can do in that department. Finally, there is the opportunity to recycle assets. So what we are saying—

**Mrs Miller:** Look after your mates.

**Mr NEWMAN:**—is that we are going out in an open and transparent way, unlike those opposite—

**Mrs Miller:** Oh, yeah!

**Mr NEWMAN:** I hear the interjections. How do they come in here every day? How do they look in the mirror—these people who said, 'No. There will be no assets sales,' but then they went and actually did it? Do you know what—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order, members! The Premier has the call.

**Mr NEWMAN:** What those opposite would hate to hear is as we go around, particularly the Treasurer, and talk to Queenslanders the feedback we are getting is tremendous. Queenslanders are saying how much they respect a government that is listening to them and talking about these issues.

What I say, though, is that there will be the opportunity, I believe, to put on the table a significant program of debt reduction but also a significant plan to build the infrastructure that this state needs—the hospitals, the schools, the roads such as an inland road parallel to the Bruce Highway, making sure that we deliver important sporting infrastructure like sporting stadiums and cultural centres. We will have that plan for the next election, a strong plan to take Queensland forward. But what will those opposite have?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my left.

**Mr NEWMAN:** They do not want to cut any costs. No. They would not do that. They do not like any of the things that we are doing in terms of these assets sales. There is only one solution I can possibly see from the Labor Party but it is true to form, and that is high, high taxes and charges and huge impacts on people's cost of living. The Labor Party will never change.

*(Time expired)*

### Natural Disasters

**Mr BENNETT:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. Queenslanders have suffered more than their fair share of natural disasters over the last few years. What is the government doing to mitigate the risks from natural disasters?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** What an honour it is to receive the question from the member for Burnett. Few people in this House are as qualified to ask the question. When his community was under siege from Mother Nature and his own house was under water, he stood beside the member for Bundaberg and the Premier and was part of the leadership that community needed, and long may that contribution be remembered.

We will never flood-proof a state like Queensland—plain and simple—but there are two elements that we must do and we must continue to do better. The first is to respond when there is a crisis. By responding I do not just mean in the first window, in that time when all of the media have interest; I mean the ongoing response—the kind when you get contracts out to market not in 18 months but in a handful of months, the kind where you look at not just replacing infrastructure in the same way but a little bit better. That is the first element of any government that must respond to a natural disaster.

The second element is what can we do to mitigate against those disasters. Again, I say that you will never flood-proof a state like Queensland, but we have embarked on a journey that has been placed in the too-hard basket for far too long about providing mitigation for communities. You only need to go to places in the electorate of the member for Warrego such as Roma and St George and have a look at what can be done if you have a council with the political ticker and a government with the fortitude to back them up. There are projects that will ensure generations of people will be protected. It will ensure not only social heartache will be averted but also financial heartache for many years to come.

**Mr Newman:** We have a strong plan.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** We do have a plan. It is a plan that involves delivering things the way you say you are going to. There are times that that means the noisy minority will not like it, but good governments cut through that. Currently there are applications for the next round of funding, and I am excited at some of the projects coming forward. I have had meetings with many members in this House about projects that can provide the next generation of mitigation.

There is also a need to ensure that partnerships continue in the future. One of the things that have been flagged in the national Commission of Audit is a potential reduction in a federal government contribution. That is something as Queenslanders we will not stand for. A government should not be judged by the quality of advice it receives but by the way it responds to that advice. We have made that point very clearly: we, as Queenslanders, will always stick up for Queensland's interests first, because we saw what happens when you do not. A generation of politicians flipped and flopped and had more allegiance to their political mates in Canberra and as a result were washed out to sea.

*(Time expired)*

### Gladstone Electorate, Health Services

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. There is considerable community concern resulting from the events at Rockhampton Hospital. It should be noted, however, there are now new directors at both Rockhampton and Gladstone who have shown in a short time a genuine commitment to improving health services. Given the work being done on a health plan for Gladstone, will the minister reassure Gladstone people of his continuing commitment to improve specialist services at the Gladstone Hospital?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I thank the honourable member for Gladstone for her question. I commend her for her very strong advocacy on behalf of her community. I know that she has a very long, genuine and abiding interest in the circumstances of the Gladstone Hospital. I think going back to the very first time she stood in this place in 1995 it was something which she very passionately advocated for and she has continued to push for improvement at that hospital. I think a lot has been done in recent times to overcome some of those issues with regard to morale at the hospital, to ensure that services are improved, and the very important and vital linkages between Rockhampton and Gladstone Hospital are built to ensure we have the necessary support for the people of Gladstone but also, very importantly, the specialist support as well and specialist opportunities at the Gladstone Hospital.

Recently there has been a public announcement about a joint appointment of a specialist or surgical position between Mater and Gladstone Hospital, which is extremely positive. It makes a lot of sense. The Gladstone Hospital is interlinked with a covered walkway with Mater, but I do not think enough has been done in the past to share the opportunity to jointly recruit staff specialists in that area. That, of course, gives the added benefit of having the critical mass which can sustain specialists and provide peer support in that community. I am very confident that none of the incidents which have been publicly raised around the circumstances of the surgeon in Rockhampton in the last 10 days or so will impact negatively whatsoever on Gladstone Hospital. We will be making sure that that is the case. I am sure the hospital board will be doing that as well.

I think it is important to indicate the government's commitment to the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service Board is significant—a 7.4 per cent increase in budget since we have come to office or some \$31 million. I would like to point out the performance in Gladstone with regard to elective surgery. At the change of government, some 97 per cent of patients were receiving their elective surgery on time; it is now 98 per cent. It was 95 per cent of category 2; it is now 98 per cent of category 2 and 100 per cent of category 3. In Rockhampton at the change of government, category 1 was 76 per cent; it is now 100 per cent. In category 2 at the change of government in Rockhampton it was 50 per cent; it is now 88 per cent. In category 3 at the change of government it was 97 per cent; it is now 100 per cent. They are excellent results across Central Queensland. I can assure the honourable member we will be making sure her community is not—

*(Time expired)*

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders**

**Mr TROUT:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Can the minister update the House on what his department is doing to provide social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland?

**Mr CRIPPS:** I thank the member for Barron River for the question. The Newman government is committed to providing Indigenous Queenslanders with the same opportunities that the rest of us have always enjoyed. We recognise that Indigenous Queenslanders want to own their own homes in freehold in their local communities so they can participate in the broader economy as well as having assets to pass on to the next generation. That is why at the last election the LNP committed to providing Indigenous Queenslanders the same opportunity to own their home in freehold in the same way other communities across the state can.

It is with a great deal of pride that today I will introduce in the Queensland parliament the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Land Providing Freehold) Amendment Bill 2014 to provide the option of freehold land title in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This legislation is aimed at removing barriers to Indigenous people in 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities pursuing their own social and economic development and that of their families. We consulted with these communities far and wide to develop the bill, which aims to provide a balance of flexibility and accountability enabling trustees to provide the option of freehold in a way best suited to their community.

Removing the restrictions placed on Indigenous Queenslanders for so many years will provide greater opportunities for eligible community members to pursue social and economic development. The freehold model takes into account the unique features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the potential issues introducing ordinary freehold title may create. We will certainly not force Indigenous Queenslanders to accept freehold in their communities. That will be their choice. We are simply putting in place the mechanisms to enable the trustees of the land in consultation with

their communities to choose to make freehold available should they wish to do so. The Newman government acknowledges the importance of land ownership for Indigenous communities and recognises the connection and relationship these communities have with their local area.

I want to acknowledge the support that I have received from my cabinet and parliamentary colleagues in the government, particularly the Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the member for Cook, who has led the government's consultation process. This is another step towards delivering on the election commitment that this government made to unlock social, cultural and economic benefits for Indigenous communities across the state. As someone who grew up in a community with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, I must say that I have to admit to feeling a degree of personal satisfaction at being able to be involved in delivering this fantastic outcome for Indigenous Queenslanders.

### **Gold Coast, Proposed Casino**

**Dr DOUGLAS:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. ASF China consortium have stated that their proposed Gold Coast casino is to be operated—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Gaven, I am going to ask you to start again and speak clearly because I did not grab your first few words.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** ASF China consortium have stated that their proposed Gold Coast casino is to be operated and possibly owned by an American casino operator not listed on their website as a consortium partner of ASF. Can the Deputy Premier please inform the parliament who is the unnamed US casino operator in partnership with ASF?

**Mr SEENEY:** I thank the honourable member for the question. It is quite a treat to get a question in this place. I never get one from the opposition so it is good to get a question from the leader of the best party that money can buy. We saw in the paper this morning that it is not even Australian money—it is the best party that Chinese money can buy, the best party that fraudulently obtained money can buy, the best party that a crook using other people's money can buy. This gives me an opportunity to remind the member for Gaven that there is a probity process around the proposal that is the subject of his question, and I certainly will not be breaching the probity requirements by discussing whatever he might like to ask about it.

The proposition that the Queensland government has put forward is for a number of gaming licences to be made available to integrated resort developments that can provide a boost to the Queensland tourism industry. The first requirement is for those integrated resort developments to be able to demonstrate that they can be competitive in the international tourism market and provide that boost to the Queensland tourism industry that we all want to see—and none more so than on the Gold Coast. We all want to see those integrated resort developments happen, and our government has laid out a process that will enable proponents to put forward their propositions for consideration.

Those propositions will be considered within a structure that has been designed to guarantee absolute probity. It is overseen by a former Auditor-General, Len Scanlan—a man whose credibility is beyond question by either side of parliament. That process will determine whether or not any particular proponent is qualified to, first of all, be considered as an integrated resort development and then be considered for a gaming licence. It is about process. It is about probity. It is certainly not about the—

*(Time expired)*

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme**

**Mrs FRANCE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister please update the House on how the Newman government is progressing towards the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

**Ms DAVIS:** I thank the honourable member for her question and note her very keen interest in ensuring that people with a disability in the Pumicestone electorate have the choice over the services they receive under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Much has happened since the Premier signed the heads of agreement with the Australian government to initiate our involvement in the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and that was signed one year ago today.

The Queensland government has been working very hard to prepare people with a disability, their families and their carers to make the transition to the NDIS. However, even before signing this historic agreement, the Newman government laid the foundation by committing an additional \$868 million to fund the scheme here in Queensland. Also in preparation, I established the Queensland NDIS Planning and Implementation Group as the key advisory body on matters relating to Queensland's participation in the NDIS. This group includes consumer and service provider representatives and it considers critical issues for the NDIS transition, such as community capacity building, participant readiness and workforce issues. What we know is that at full rollout of the scheme in 2019 we are going to need around 13,000 more workers in the disability services sector to have the capacity to assist people with a disability who wish to access services.

Since signing the agreement 12 months ago, we have been progressing a number of initiatives and front-line services to prepare Queenslanders for the transition to the NDIS. We held the Disability Conference recently which saw 550 delegates come together to discuss Queensland's transition and pathway to the NDIS. We released the Queensland Disability Plan 2014-19, which aligns itself very beautifully with that transition to the NDIS. We announced in a calm and considered way the transition of AS&RS to the non-government sector over the next five years in line with the heads of agreement that was signed. That is a vital step in transitioning Queensland to the NDIS. We expanded the Your Life Your Choice initiative. I am delighted to say that we have now reached 966 participants exercising choice and control over the disability supports that they want.

I can also report that much more is happening. There are many initiatives to prepare Queensland for the rollout of the NDIS in 2019. We will continue to work hard as a government in my department and across agencies to ensure that Queensland is absolutely prepared.

*(Time expired)*

### **Water Infrastructure, Costings**

**Mrs SCOTT:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Given reports that raising the Wivenhoe Dam by just two metres would cost more than \$800 million, will the minister reveal the government's estimated cost of raising the wall by eight metres and building eight new dams in South-East Queensland?

**Mr McARDLE:** I thank the member for the question. This is an important question because it goes to the heart of trying to provide security for people in Brisbane, Ipswich and the surrounding areas in the event of large floods. This state and this area suffered significantly in 2011 when thousands of homes were inundated, thousands of businesses were lost and people's lives were destroyed because of it. This government is looking at what we can do to ensure that that event is guarded against as best as possible. We have put into the public arena what we can do as a government to assist people in those regions so that they do not have to go through those devastating events. This is a process of engaging the community. This is a process of understanding what can happen if government and community work together—unlike the Labor Party who always took the tack of, 'We'll tell them what they're going to get. We'll tell them exactly what they're going to receive.'

This government believes in cooperation between it and the community. This government believes in listening to the community and understanding exactly what we need to do to protect the community. What we need to do is listen to the community, and we are going to hold consultations in the region to ensure we hear from them. That is complete anathema to the Labor Party.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** I rise to a point of order.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock.

**Mr McARDLE:** Can you remember—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, I am sorry to interrupt you. We have a point of order. What is the point of order?

**Mr PITT:** Madam Speaker, I ask you to rule on relevance under standing order 118(b). The question is specifically about costings and the minister has not answered that issue.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Please take your seat. The minister has time on the clock. He has been talking in respect of the issues that were raised. There were also too many interjections in the chamber where people were wanting to contribute their views. I would ask members to cease their interjections. The minister has the call.

**Mr McARDLE:** As I said, this is about consultation. This is about planning for the future. This is about understanding what we can do to ensure that the events that did happen in the past, although they will be repeated, can be guarded against as best as possible. We are not going to apologise for going out there and saying to people, 'Come on board and work with us.' I can recall sitting on that side of the chamber when the then Premier, Peter Beattie, walked in here and said to local government, 'You've got no option. We're going to make you do what we want you to do.' Those days have gone.

Looking at the Wivenhoe Dam and the other dams across the south-east corner is an important process in ensuring the outcomes we need for this region. Can I say more than this? This government is committed to the four pillars in developing this state. We are committed to ensuring that we have a great state with great opportunities. For the first time in many years, this state has a government in charge that can look after the economy, can look after the people and is concerned about the inundation of people's homes and businesses as time goes on.

*(Time expired)*

### **Children, Health and Fitness**

**Mr MOLHOEK:** My question without notice is to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. Can the minister please inform the House of any new initiatives in his portfolio which give Queensland children a passport to better health and fitness and a future full of opportunities in this great state?

**Madam SPEAKER:** I call the minister for two minutes.

**Mr DICKSON:** We released a policy on the weekend called Nature Play, and the logic behind it is very straightforward. Every year the Queensland budget cops a hit of nearly 26 per cent for Health alone. What we are trying to do is break the cycle. Twenty-three per cent of young people aged five to 15 years are being diagnosed with obesity. It leads to heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes. It is a terrible situation. Just this weekend gone we released a passport for young people so that they can have a great future. We are handing these out throughout Queensland, through the education system and the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek and through all members of the parliament. I ask all members to get on board. Let us make a difference. We want young people to get out and do what young Australians used to do: build cubbyhouses, make mud pies, go surfing and walk in national parks. They are just not getting the opportunities that they did in the past. They have extremely strong thumbs from using computers, but we want them to have active minds. We want them to participate in what life has to offer because the more they get out there and the more they are active, the more creative they are. It stimulates their mind so they will grow up into healthier citizens and productive people within our community.

Our government has invested \$1.5 million over three years to implement this policy so that our young people have the same opportunities that many Australians had in the past. This is a dead serious matter that we need to get on top of. Like our Get in the Game policy, we are delivering great opportunities for young people throughout the state of Queensland. Now, I would ask each and every Queenslanders to promote Nature Play. It is an opportunity to make sure that our young people are fit and healthy and they have those opportunities that we did. It is the least we can do to look out for our younger generations so that they can have the opportunities that we had in a great state with great opportunities.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The time for questions has expired.

## **SPEAKER'S STATEMENT**

### **School Group Tours**

**Madam SPEAKER:** I wish to acknowledge schools visiting today: Lockyer District High School in the electorate of Lockyer, St Joseph's Tobruk Memorial School in the electorate of Waterford and Tallebudgera State School in the electorate of Currumbin.

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Report No. 41, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (11.05 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 41 of the Finance and Administration Committee entitled *Inquiry into Auditor-General's report No. 4 of 2012: managing employee unplanned absence*.

The FAC inquiry into the Auditor-General's report sought written feedback from departments regarding the implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations. The committee also held hearings with the Public Service Commission; the Department of Education, Training and Employment; the Department of Housing and Public Works; the Department of Community Safety; and the Audit Office. The report provides a summary of the results of this inquiry as well as six recommendations.

The inquiry highlighted a number of issues, including an increasing trend of unplanned absences across the Queensland Public Service. While no doubt many of these are the classic sickie, both the auditor and the inquiry identified a number of other issues that contribute to workplace absences. These include the type of work undertaken and seasonal issues. Also identified at the other end of the spectrum were issues of presenteeism, where people attend the workplace while suffering from a sickness or an illness. I think many of us have been in a workplace where we have come to work, or we have seen colleagues come to work, to soldier on despite having the dreaded lurgy while actually spreading the love of the sickness to the rest of the workplace.

Both absenteeism as well as presenteeism have serious financial ramifications for the Public Service, with the Auditor-General identifying that a reduction of just one day of absenteeism per person across the Queensland Public Service would save \$56 million in direct costs and up to \$200 million in indirect costs while an Australia-wide study by Medibank Private into presenteeism identified the overall cost to the Australian economy as \$34 billion. Ultimately, the major issue that the inquiry identified, which is reflected in all six recommendations of report No. 41, is the need for data and information around unplanned absences. While all departments have some level of information regarding unplanned absences, the committee is concerned that there are limitations in data collection, particularly at a whole-of-government level.

In light of these issues, the committee's report No. 41 recommends that the Public Service Commission continue to monitor and obtain unplanned absence data from the Queensland Public Service with a view to utilising the data to provide relevant information, analysis and assistance to agencies. The committee's second recommendation was that the Public Service Commission explore the possibility of obtaining more comprehensive datasets. The third recommendation was that the Public Service Commission conduct employee surveys in departments where absenteeism rates have been above the Queensland average to identify reasons for the increase. The committee in recommendation 4 recommends that the Public Service Commission examine data collection at a whole-of-government level to accurately incorporate agencies whose absenteeism rates have been previously overstated because of their rostering records. The committee in recommendation 5 asks that the Public Service Commission undertake further in-depth analysis of correlations between unplanned absences and possible reasons for these absences.

The final recommendation is that the Public Service Commission obtain an update of the trends in departments where absenteeism rates were above the Queensland average following the implementation of the Auditor-General's strategies.

In closing, I would like to thank all those from the departments who contributed and the people who made submissions to the inquiry. I would also like to thank the secretariat, which does a very, very good job. Their support of the committee is par excellence. Finally, I would like to thank the committee itself. They are a hardworking and conscientious committee from both sides of the political divide. I commend this report to the House.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (11.10 am): It gives me pleasure to rise to speak to this report from our committee. I would like to begin by thanking the staff of our committee, which does a fabulous job. As everybody in this place knows, when the committee has good staff it makes everybody's job much easier. I would also like to thank and pay tribute to our chairman, the member for Capalaba, Steve Davies, who chairs this committee like somebody who has been here for generations. We hope he will be here for generations.

This is quite an important report, and I think it is fair to say that anyone who picks it up will probably work through it on the basis that it is pretty dry—and there may be some truth in that. But since 2006-07, the cost of unplanned absences in the Queensland public sector has risen 55 per cent from \$328 million to \$509 million, of which \$400 million a year is sick leave. I am sure every one of us has the experience of ringing up somebody to do business, whether it be in a bank or the public sector, and suffering the frustration of finding that the person you expected to deal with is not available because ‘they are off today’.

The report has some very interesting data in it. We are all familiar with seasonal trends where there are spikes in the data. Back in my medical practice days I used to keep records of influenza case numbers, and the peak in Queensland was always the first half of September—except in 1988, when it was a couple of weeks early due to Expo 88. There are also trends that apply to age and occupation. Some of the important things that public sector managers need to be aware of are that a cluster of absences could reflect a morale problem or some problem under their control, and it may be that they should act promptly to deal with it.

It goes without saying that we should continue to support high levels of influenza vaccination. If you have a look across the occupations in this report, you will see that the highest levels of leave are taken by occupations that have a lot of dealings with the public or occupations whose activity is quite physical. Police take the most leave, followed by community safety, communities and so on. That is at page 12. The growth in carer leave has also been noted.

Like the member for Capalaba, I would simply add that the recommendations are principally based around the fact that current data was not found to be adequate to study and draw conclusions from so that a plan of action could be put in place for this very costly problem. Most of the recommendations relate to improving the access to data. There are many things that cannot be changed—for example, if somebody is sick or if they have a sick child—but if we are to have a chance of picking up the things that can be changed and improved, we need good data.

Finally, just for the interest of members, on page 5 there is a list of the different categories of leave: sick leave, carers leave, bereavement leave, long service, special leave, et cetera, and there are also statistics about the instances of those sorts of leave in the report.

Once again, the Auditor-General has done a fabulous and very thorough job. He is a very impressive servant of this parliament, and I am pleased to commend the report to the House.

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (11.15 am): I rise today to discuss the Finance and Administration Committee's report No. 41, *Inquiry into Auditor-General's report No. 4: 2012—managing employee unplanned absence*.

As a government, we are unashamedly committed to restoring openness and accountability in the way we carry out our responsibilities. The Finance and Administration Committee, of which I am a member, is often tasked with reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of government financial management as well as the management of government resources. In this instance, it includes a review of the management of the government's most important resource: its people.

The Queensland Public Service is a large, complex and dynamic organism, and the building blocks of that organism are its people. It is important that, as a government, we care for our people. We have already seen the level of this care by passing legislation which protects Public Service employees from civil liability when they are carrying out their duties in the course of their employment. However, it is also important that the Public Service Commission continues to monitor and obtain unplanned absence data from the Queensland Public Service.

At its core this data is a litmus test, and it is an indication of employee satisfaction rates as well as a reflection on our human resource management. Nevertheless, through its inquiry the committee is mindful of the fact that some information is better than other information. By ‘better’, I mean that certain information is more representative of a given state of affairs than others and it is more suitable for use in data analysis and in giving assistance and advice to other government affiliated agencies.

The Finance and Administration Committee has identified certain shortcomings in the unplanned absence data and has asked the Public Service Commission to explore the possibility of obtaining more comprehensive datasets to help with analysis and assistance given to other agencies. The main problem with the reliability of the data currently used is that analysis begins at the point in time at which the data is collected and not at the time when the unplanned absence occurred. In effect, this means that the data analysis occurring in, say, January of a given year may relate to an absence taken in October or November. While this data is not wrong in its strictest terms, it may not

be representative of the current state of affairs, which influences how much reliance can be placed upon it and how the data might be used in practical ways. As such, it is my belief—which is shared by members of the committee—that the Public Service Commission and agencies relying on information supplied by the Public Service Commission would be best served if real-time data could be collected and made accessible. In addition, the quality of data may also be affected by the accuracy of rostering records, and the Public Service Commission should certainly try to ensure that absenteeism is reported by government agencies with due diligence.

However, collecting this type of data relating to employee absenteeism is largely a pointless exercise unless it is used in some practical way to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of our Public Service. There is little doubt that this type of data could potentially be extremely useful. Where data collected shows absenteeism rates have been above the average Queensland rate, the commission can identify the reasons for any increase.

We also cannot overlook the fact that caring for our Public Service employees is important. From a financial management perspective lower absenteeism rates mean cost savings for government, but we also have a higher duty to ensure that our employees are well looked after in terms of wellbeing. The data collected might well pave the way for the introduction of employee satisfaction initiatives to increase retention rates, to lower absenteeism and to improve the overall running and efficiency of our departments. It might sound trite, but happy and satisfied employees make the best workers who will be less likely to be absent unless it is completely unavoidable.

I think this is a critical aspect of the Attorney-General's inquiry and the Finance and Administration Committee's subsequent report. We need to ensure that the Public Service Commission is getting the best possible data in relation to unplanned employee absenteeism, but we also need to ensure that we are not just amassing data for the sake of recordkeeping and accountability. We need to be using the data collected in practical ways to ensure that Public Service employee satisfaction rates are high and absenteeism is kept within average rates.

Identifying that there has been an absence is not merely enough. It is only by knowing the reason for the absenteeism that we as a government can put in place policies to reduce absenteeism wherever possible. Not only is this cost effective but it makes for good governance as well. I thank the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, Mr Steve Davies, for his role in guiding committee discussion. I thank the members of both sides as well as the Independent member for Gladstone for their contributions throughout the process. I thank the administration and support staff for their valuable assistance. Finally, I thank all of those who have briefed the committee and participated in this inquiry, especially the departmental officers, the Public Service Commission and the Queensland Audit Office. I trust that the committee's report and its recommendations will be well received by the House.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (11.20 am): I rise to speak to the inquiry to consider the results of the Auditor-General's report No. 4 2012, *Managing employee unplanned absence*. The objective of the Auditor-General's report was to assess whether Public Service departments were effectively managing unplanned absence. I found this topic eye-opening as I had not considered that there are actually two sides of this debate and both of them come at a cost to government departments and consequently to the taxpayer. There is a cost of absenteeism and a cost of presenteeism. I admit that I had not heard this terminology before. Presenteeism is when people are sick but go into work regardless. Attending work while suffering from an illness or health problems can also add to costs. Employees who are unwell at work are not fully productive and of course there is the risk then of spreading disease, leading to even more people being absent. The committee was concerned that employees were going to work when they are sick with the flu. A study gave a range of reasons for going into work sick and these included work related stress and perceived workplace pressure to come to work despite being sick. It is reported to be more common amongst shiftworkers, women and those with conscientious personalities. This, combined with the pressure of facing a backlog of tasks on return to work, influences the decision to attend work whilst unwell. It is of particular concern in the healthcare industry for obvious reasons. Medibank did a study that concluded that employers can take steps to address presenteeism and improve productivity by increasing awareness, identification and education, having open and supportive conversations with employees about their health and mental health in particular, and monitoring sickness presence.

I now turn to the cost of absenteeism. The Auditor-General explained that, based on 2010-11 costs, reduction in the average rated unplanned absence by one day across the QPS would save \$56 million each year in direct costs and up to \$200 million annually when estimated indirect costs are taken into account. The audit reported that from 2000 to 2011 direct costs of unplanned absence for the Public Service were reported as \$508.8 million, of which \$397.6 million or 78 per cent was for sick leave. This is extraordinary and almost beyond comprehension. Obviously any preventative measures that can be taken would be well worthwhile. Some of these interventions could be providing yearly flu injections, early intervention and rehabilitation programs to injury related cases, workstation assessments, health week activities and other occupational health and safety practices. These can all help to reduce absences in the workplace. A survey done by DHS stated management of organisations set the rules of engagement when it comes to managing absence and effective management will create a culture of attendance, not a culture of entitlement. Management is responsible for creating the conditions to eliminate a sickie culture and to support employees who are genuinely unwell.

It appears that there are employees who use all of their sick leave with the view that it is their right to do so. Management of an organisation may inadvertently foster the culture of entitlement by failing to intervene in its early stages. The committee heard that the entitlement culture may not necessarily be widespread but is likely to be more prevalent in some departments. DHPW considers that a culture of entitlement may be attributed to two issues—to what extent employees engaged in the business feel that they are being empowered to do the work and to what extent there is of a culture in the business where sick leave is just accepted passively. The Auditor-General stated—

I think most public servants we come across are very hard working and are actually considered to be high performing. But sometimes these pockets can have a flow-on effect to those who are high performing. So unplanned absence can have a whole range of influences, not just on the people who are taking the leave but on the people who are then potentially having to back up the people who are on leave.

In closing, I quote the Auditor-General—

As a cost and a liability, absenteeism is something that needs to be managed. I think the lesson we draw from this report is that this is a classic case of if it is measured it is able to be managed and if it is not being measured and monitored it is not being managed.

The committee recommended that the PSC continue to monitor and obtain unplanned absence data from the Queensland Public Service.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (11.25 am): I welcome the Finance and Administration Committee's report No. 41 of its inquiry into the Auditor-General's report No. 4 of 2012, *Managing employee unplanned absence*, and I welcome that report as well. Employee unplanned absences are an unseen burden which cost organisations money, time, morale, poor or reduced customer service, safety issues and breakdowns in productivity. Positively tackling unplanned absences in the workplace will provide a significant saving in direct costs within the Queensland Public Service. The Auditor-General's report includes that in 2010-11 direct costs of unplanned absences for the Public Service were reported at \$508 million, of which \$397 million or 78 per cent was for sick leave. In fact, the Auditor-General estimated that, based on costs from that same year, 2010-11, a reduction in the average rate would save some \$56 million each year in direct costs and up to \$200 million annually when estimated costs are taken into account—that is, money, hard-earned taxpayers' money, could be better spent on further services for Queensland families. But this is not exclusively a financial problem; it is also a problem in endeavouring to provide a healthy, productive and positive workplace. When I came to this place after the election I signed a pledge to revitalise front-line services. The Newman government, of which I am a proud member, is seeking for the Queensland Public Service to be the best Public Service in Australia. As such, I can assure members that the Queensland government takes its responsibilities seriously as a major employer of almost 200,000 people across 16 departments and 11 public agencies. It recognises that it is also important to manage these absences in order to provide that healthy and positive workplace and to improve and revitalise the delivery of front-line services.

At this point I want to reassure the members of the Queensland Public Service that the committee does not wish to see the outcomes from this inquiry discourage genuine cases for taking sick leave and that we are mindful that coming to work sick can lead to further unplanned absences and unrecorded reductions in productivity. The Auditor-General has identified that we need further, more detailed and uniform data; to establish standard benchmarks; investigate formal reporting to management; and provide consistency in how it is managed. Simply put, it is important to analyse

absenteeism data to help identify the reasons behind hot spots and patterns of unplanned absences and to implement intervention activities. This committee's report draws attention to the main issues identified in the Auditor-General's report and I urge the House to support the six recommendations. I welcome the Auditor-General's intention to conduct a follow-up audit during the 2014-15 financial year and will be interested in the results. I thank the Auditor-General for his initiative in undertaking this review. I thank the secretariat and my fellow committee members. As always, it is a pleasure to speak on behalf of Murrumba, the Aboriginal word for good place. Queensland: great state, great opportunities.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Report No. 44, Motion to Take Note

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion has lapsed.

## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Report No. 45, Motion to Take Note

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion has lapsed.

## SUSTAINABLE PLANNING (INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.30 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 for particular purposes and to amend the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 for other particular purposes. I table a copy of the bill and the explanatory notes. I also table a copy of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation and the explanatory notes. I table the regulation and the explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Sustainable Planning (Infrastructure Charges) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[5044\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Sustainable Planning (Infrastructure Charges) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[5045\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation (No...) 2014, exposure draft [\[5046\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation (No...) 2014, exposure draft, explanatory notes [\[5047\]](#).

This bill delivers on the government's commitment to reform Queensland's local infrastructure planning and charging framework and makes essential amendments to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971. The proposed new infrastructure charges framework has been developed following extensive consultation with local governments, water distributor-retailers and the development industry.

During consultation it had become clear that there are a range of views about the best way forward for this longstanding, controversial issue. Nevertheless, the government's objective here has been clear from the start. The purpose of the proposed reforms is to deliver an efficient and effective infrastructure charges framework. This bill will, if enacted, give local governments, water distributor-retailers and the development industry the tools needed to deliver new development in a balanced and predictable manner. The bill will do this in a number of ways, including by simplifying and streamlining the operation of local infrastructure provisions in the Sustainable Planning Act 2009; clarifying infrastructure charges appeal and dispute resolution arrangements and introducing new appeal rights where they are needed; and introducing a process for converting non-trunk infrastructure to trunk infrastructure. The bill will also give much needed certainty and transparency to offsets, credits and refunds and provide for a local infrastructure planning framework that allows local

governments to plan more efficiently. The bill also aligns the distributor-retailer infrastructure charging and planning arrangements under the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 and the local government framework under SPA.

Establishing a long-term infrastructure charges framework that supports the delivery of certainty, equity and transparency for all stakeholders will, hopefully, put to bed questions about the need for further infrastructure charges reform. By doing this, we will allow local governments, water distributor-retailers and the development industry to get on with the job of delivering jobs, delivering infrastructure and providing housing and business opportunities for all Queenslanders.

As significant as the amendments to SPA and the SEQ Water Act are, it is important to recognise that they form just one part of our broader infrastructure charges reform plans. The maximum charges and a co-investment funding program are also a priority and part of the answer to this longstanding issue.

The current maximum charges will remain as they are, giving certainty to local governments and water distributor-retailers and supporting a smooth transition to the new framework. But the introduction of a new fair value schedule of charges and a Priority Development Infrastructure Co-investment Program will ensure that the right balance is struck between encouraging developments and providing a new funding stream for catalytic infrastructure. Fair value charges will be generally 10 per cent below the residential caps and 15 per cent below the current non-residential caps. Local governments and water distributor-retailers that reduce charges below these fair value levels will have access to a new funding stream to support infrastructure delivery. Those that refuse to use the fair value schedule will not be considered.

The Priority Development Infrastructure Co-investment Program is a significant reform that acknowledges the state's role in supporting the delivery of key infrastructure that will deliver economic benefits and will provide a strong incentive to local governments to reduce charges. The program is planned to be available from 1 July 2014 and will assist with infrastructure costs to enable the growth to deliver jobs, high-quality infrastructure, affordable housing and business opportunities for all Queenslanders. Funding will be available to all Queensland local governments, water distributor-retailers, developers or other state agencies that apply to deliver infrastructure directly. Co-investment by the state will also be possible, but focused on key infrastructure such as major roads, water, sewerage and stormwater management that will enable significant economic development. However, it is important to note that this program will not be a grants scheme and the state will choose which projects it will support as a co-investor based on the potential for those projects to provide opportunities for growth and economic development.

The amendments proposed in the bill to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 are necessary to give effect to the memorandum of understanding signed by the Australian and Queensland governments on 18 October 2013, which strengthens intergovernmental cooperation on environmental assessment and approvals. Both governments have agreed that, by September 2014, a comprehensive approvals bilateral agreement will be in place. The Commonwealth and Queensland governments are actively negotiating an approval bilateral agreement. The amendments will create new provisions in the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 for coordinated projects, ensuring that Queensland is well positioned to implement the approval bilateral agreement once negotiations are concluded. The amendments will create new provisions in the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 for coordinated projects that are to proceed through the Commonwealth accredited assessment process contemplated by the memorandum of understanding.

Amendments to the act will enable the Coordinator-General to make an additional declaration where a coordinated project declaration has been made; create a new authorisation process for taking an action for the purposes of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, which is referred to the EPBC Act; implement the decision-making criteria of which the Commonwealth minister must be satisfied under the EPBC Act to accredit the process; provide a conditioning power for impacts on matters of national environmental significance; and provide an expanded regulation-making power with respect of the approvals bilateral.

The draft regulation I have tabled also supports the implementation of an approvals bilateral agreement for environmental approvals under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. It is necessary that I table the draft regulation to ensure that Queensland is well positioned to implement the approval bilateral agreement once negotiations conclude. I commend this important bill to the House.

**First Reading**

**Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.37 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

**Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee**

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

**Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date**

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.38 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee report to the House on the Sustainable Planning (Infrastructure Charges) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 29 May 2014.

In moving that motion, can I say that that is a relatively short period of time, which I am sure the opposition will try to make mischief with. I just make the point to the House ahead of that anticipated mischief-making that there has been an enormous amount of consultation involved in drawing up this bill. The stakeholders who have been involved have participated in 15 different workshops. I think all of the issues have been well and truly contemplated. All of the complexities are well and truly understood by not just the stakeholders but those of us in government who have had to deal with this issue that the previous government had not dealt with. So I think the reporting date that is nominated in this motion is very appropriate. It will allow for the finalisation of this matter by the beginning of the next financial year.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (11.39 am): I rise to speak to the proposed motion in relation to the time frame in which the parliamentary committee has to report back on this substantial bill. Obviously this is not mischief-making. These are very valid, reasonable and rational concerns. This bill was presented to the House on 8 May and it is anticipated that the parliamentary committee is to come back in a matter of weeks with a full analysis of the bill, having sought submissions from stakeholders. I acknowledge the Deputy Premier's words in relation to the consultation that has taken place by his department to date. However, we are to take his word on that. As he would well know, the parliamentary committee itself has its own obligations and its own responsibility to investigate legislation brought before this House adequately and sufficiently, and not just leave it up to the executive arm of government to conduct those consultations on its own. Obviously, it is insufficient time for scrutiny of this bill and for appropriate consultation. I ask that the Deputy Premier reconsider the time frame that he has given the parliamentary committee to consider this bill.

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

**AYES, 66:**

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

**NOES, 14:**

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

**KAP, 2**—Hopper, Knuth.

**PUP, 2**—Douglas, Judge.

**INDEPENDENTS, 2**—Cunningham, Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND (PROVIDING FREEHOLD) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (11.48 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Aboriginal Land Regulation 2011, the Land Act 1994, the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Regulation 2011 for particular purposes, to repeal the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978, and to make minor and consequential amendments of other legislation as stated in schedule 1. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [[5048](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [[5049](#)].

It is with a great deal of personal satisfaction and some pride that I introduce this landmark bill into the Queensland parliament. I am delighted to be the minister responsible, with the support of my cabinet colleagues, for delivering to Indigenous Queenslanders the opportunity to own their own home in their local community in freehold for the first time.

European land tenure systems in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have a long and varied history, commencing with reserves established under the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897, the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978, the deeds of grant in trust instruments established over most communities in 1982, the Land Holding Act 1985 that provided for perpetual leases and ending with the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Act 1991, which enabled the transfer of land to entities representing people in Indigenous communities. This history shows that there has been a steady, some might say frustratingly slow, progression from state control to community control of land associated with Indigenous communities. However, at no time have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders been afforded the opportunity to secure property in freehold in their own local communities. The provisions in the bill that I present to the House today propose to change that and this opportunity is long overdue.

This bill proposes to put in place a framework to implement the Newman government's commitment to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities the same opportunity to secure freehold title that is available to all other Queensland communities and to remove barriers to homeownership and drive economic development in those communities. Let me be clear: the simple passage of this legislation through the parliament will not create one square inch of freehold land in Indigenous communities in Queensland. The Newman government will not force Indigenous Queenslanders to accept freehold title in their communities. We are simply putting in place a mechanism to enable trustees, in consultation with their respective communities, to choose to make freehold available should they wish to do so.

The bill introduces a freehold model based on the following key elements: freehold is voluntary and optional for communities; the trustee decides whether to take up the freehold option in consultation with the community; native title must be voluntarily surrendered or otherwise extinguished before freehold can be granted and the state will not pay for the surrender or relinquishment of native title; the process is self-funding, with any costs incurred by the trustee to be recovered through the freehold land purchase price; it delivers the same freehold title that all other Queenslanders enjoy; and there must be a planning scheme in place for the land being offered for freehold.

The freehold model will be an option for the 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in either an Aboriginal shire council or an Indigenous regional council. The proposed freehold model gives the trustee the power to request the minister approve the granting of freehold title to specified individuals. The basic premise of this model is that the trustee, following appropriate consultation, will make the decision on behalf of their community as to whether or not to adopt the freehold model. Whether the trustee elects to take up the option of introducing freehold title into their particular community or not, the current leasing provisions within the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act will remain available.

The freehold model takes into account the unique features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and potential issues or concerns that may arise from the introduction of ordinary freehold title. This legislation will put in place the mechanism to identify what community land should be made available for the freehold option and who is qualified under the legislation to apply for freehold.

I will now go through the freehold model in some detail. The bill provides a balance of flexibility and control which enables trustees, where they wish to provide the option of freehold, to provide it in a way that best suits their community. The key to this flexibility and control is the freehold instrument, which is prepared by the trustee and sets out where freehold can and cannot be granted and the details of how and to whom the land can be allocated.

Freehold can only be granted in a community with a planning scheme instrument in place. Once the freeholding initiative is approved, it will be attached to the relevant planning scheme and is therefore publicly available so everyone in the community knows where and how freehold will be made available. The bill prescribes what details must be included in the freehold instrument and the minimum level of consultation. The trustee must undertake appropriate consultation, including with the native title holders for the area, if they have been determined.

All other details are up to the trustees and local communities to develop, so they can decide what is right for that particular community. For example, a trustee and community can choose to make the whole township available for freehold or just certain parts of the township. They can even decide not to make freehold available at all. The freehold instrument is made up of a freehold schedule and a freehold policy. The freehold instrument must have the minister's approval before it has effect.

Following the request from the trustee, the local government will run a notification and consultation process on the freehold instrument, including consideration of any submissions received, in accordance with the approved guidelines. The freehold schedule identifies what land will be made available for freehold in that community. The freehold policy ensures decisions made by the trustee are equitable, consistent and transparent—in other words, what land will be made available for freehold and who that land will be allocated to.

A freehold policy must be prepared with a freehold schedule for freehold to be granted to an individual and must be in the approved form which sets out mandatory matters to be detailed. These include the method for allocating freehold, any additional eligibility criteria to participate in an allocation process, the sale price and costs, how the community will be consulted about the allocation process and who will be responsible for addressing any native title issues, in accordance with the Commonwealth Native Title Act.

Additionally, the bill provides for two land allocation processes. Where someone has an existing interest, for example a perpetual lease under the Land Holding Act, then only that person, provided they meet the eligibility criteria, can apply for freehold over that land. This process acknowledges that the land has already been allocated for a particular use and prevents people having the land and, more importantly, their home being sold out from under them. It also protects existing interests and uses by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments and local councils.

The other land allocation process is where there is no existing interest in the land. In this situation, the bill provides that the land must be allocated in an open and transparent manner—by auction, ballot or tender. To address concerns about possible conflicts of interest, the trustee must also appoint a probity adviser to monitor the land allocation process from collective to individual ownership.

There are always unavoidable costs in moving from communal tenure to individual freehold title. To minimise these costs the bill provides for model freehold instruments. The model freehold instrument provides a ready-made or template pathway to freehold for a community. The model freehold instrument is limited in its application to land that has been regulated and, as a result, the full community consultation process is not required. This reduces the need for additional consultation and the engagement of a probity officer. By adopting this model freehold instrument a trustee can make freehold available within their community in a timely and orderly fashion.

Not all communities will elect to take up the freehold option—that is their choice. However, this bill assists even these communities by simplifying complex, non-residential leasing arrangements that currently apply under the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act. The bill will

amend these acts to remove unnecessary restrictions on the terms and purposes of non-homeownership leasing on Indigenous land, so Indigenous communities can respond more quickly to economic opportunities as they arise.

Consultation on the provisions of this bill has been extensive, starting with the release of a discussion paper in November 2012 and followed by the release in December 2013 of a consultation draft of the bill with supporting explanatory material. In addition, the Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the member for Cook, has played a major role in leading targeted face-to-face consultation from December 2012 to February 2014, with local councils, Indigenous bodies and other interested parties.

This extensive consultation included meetings with Indigenous local councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland; the Native Title Prescribed Bodies Corporate; the Torres Strait Regional Authority and its Native Title Office; the Torres Strait Island Regional Council; the North Queensland Land Council and Yarrabah Council; Cape York Regional Organisations; and the Queensland South Native Title Services.

Fourteen submissions were received in response to the consultation draft bill. I thank those people and organisations who made submissions. As a result of consultation, the freehold model has been restricted to residential areas within townships. This should reduce some concerns that have been expressed about the potential for the Indigenous estate to be sold off and should also reduce costs in implementing the model because of the use of existing township areas.

Following a lack of support for a proposal to enable registered native title bodies corporate to apply for freehold in the initial application, only individual natural persons will be able to apply for freehold. Indigenous councils and other trustees were separately consulted on simplifying the non-homeownership leasing arrangements and these groups strongly supported the proposed amendments. Feedback from the freehold consultation has shown general, in-principle support for the proposed freehold model. There is strong support for the optional freehold model allowing individual communities to provide freehold in the way best suited to each of their communities.

The Newman government understands the challenge in changing land ownership from communal to freehold and, in particular, the sensitivities associated with alienating Indigenous land. To assist in meeting this change, my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs will be calling for expressions of interest from communities who wish to road test the freehold model. This pilot program will enable our respective departments to work closely with local Indigenous councils, trustees and communities in implementing the freehold model.

Some concerns have been raised that the existing land administration system in Indigenous communities is inadequate and may frustrate the take-up of freehold if applicants are confronted with higher transaction costs. Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities have not had the same obligations to implement land administration systems, but at the same time they have missed out on the benefits that a rigorous land administration system provides. It is now time to change this.

The Newman government is instigating a coordinated and comprehensive effort to bring the land administration systems in Indigenous communities up to date with comparable non-Indigenous communities across Queensland. Currently, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines are comprehensively upgrading the land administration systems in Indigenous communities.

This includes working in partnership with local councils to survey and subdivide all lots in townships; to prepare planning schemes compliant with the Sustainable Planning Act; to resolve road alignments and tenure irregularities, including those resulting from the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985; and to achieve Indigenous land use agreements to enable future land use, such as the grant of freehold. The end result means trustees and local councils will be better able to plan and develop their own communities and individuals applying for freehold will not have to pay for basic land administration features that other Queensland communities take for granted.

Some may argue that because, under the proposed changes, the state will not contribute to the costs of surrendering native title and also because of the costs associated with native title compensation, that there is a risk the policy will not succeed. I disagree. If a community values native title over freehold title then that community has made a value judgement, or perhaps more appropriately, a cultural judgement, which the Newman government and all Queenslanders should

respect. That is their choice. Native title holders will decide whether or not to consent to the grant of freehold, knowing that the land will go to an Indigenous person. This should be a factor in their decision. Any reasonable costs can be recovered through the purchase price set by the trustee.

This bill also proposes to amend the Land Valuation Act to allow the Valuer-General to provide valuations, for the first time, to Indigenous local councils for their use in levying general rates, as is the case for all other local councils in Queensland. To allow time for the Indigenous local authorities to be established on the valuation roll, to be physically valued and Indigenous local authorities to develop the appropriate rating systems, the first valuations are to be included in the annual valuation cycle effective as at 30 June 2016.

Subject to the amendment of the Land Valuation Act, it is proposed to consequentially amend the Local Government Regulation 2012 so Indigenous local councils have the power and are required to make and levy general rates for rateable land in their local council areas, as are all other local authorities in Queensland. It is only after this regulation is made that Indigenous local authorities will be able to levy rates. Once land in their local government area has been valued for rating purposes, each Indigenous local government will be responsible for setting the level of their general rates, taking into account such factors as land valuations, the capacity of the land to generate income and the cost of delivering services to that land.

This bill also includes a provision to repeal the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978. Unlike other local governments, the Aurukun and Mornington shire councils were established under the Local Government Aboriginal Lands Act 1978. Following moves to ensure greater consistency between the powers and functions of the Aurukun and Mornington councils and those of all other Aboriginal and Indigenous councils, redundant and outdated provisions within the Local Government Aboriginal Lands Act were removed in 2010 and the act was subsequently renamed the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978. All of Mornington Island shire lease and most of Aurukun shire lease has been transferred under the Aboriginal Land Act. The balance is anticipated to be transferred midyear, and at that time the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978 will become redundant.

The Newman government's commitment to provide members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities with freehold title represents a significant change from the existing trust and communal land tenure arrangements where land cannot be privately owned or sold. Private land ownership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will enable Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders to pursue their own social and economic interests and stimulate economic development.

I now turn to amendments to the Land Act 1994 that enable the creation of a conditional right of public access over beaches that are in private ownership. Queensland beaches are a key focal point for our lifestyle and economy. Local residents and visitors access our beaches every day, whether it is for recreation purposes or to get from here to there. Locals and visitors alike love the coast, creating high demand for freely accessible public beaches. I am sure that all Queenslanders would consider it their right to access this state's magnificent beaches.

Generally, beaches in Queensland are managed by the state or by the relevant local council. It has never been the policy of the state to grant private ownership of beaches, and generally the coastline is bordered by community purpose reserves and esplanades. However, in some instances, the separating reserve or esplanade can be lost as a result of erosion and the sea can move within the boundaries of private freehold and leasehold properties. In such cases landowners can lawfully prevent public access across the beach area. Indeed, if they do not prevent public access, they may be exposed to a significant public liability risk.

The bill proposes to provide power for the minister administering the Land Act 1994 to declare, on a case-by-case basis, a conditional right of public access to an area of beach where, through erosion, that area of beach now falls under private ownership. To alleviate any burdens to the landowner caused by the beach being within a private boundary, the state will assume the public liability risk over the beach area and will prescribe standard conditions to apply to that access. These standard conditions may also be modified to address the specific circumstances of a landowner or the nature of the desirable public access. Local councils will be provided with the opportunity to take control of the beach access area, but, if they do not wish to take control, the area will be managed by the state.

I commend the bill to the House and, in doing so, reiterate that the Newman government, particularly myself as the responsible minister, is conscious of the significant and historic nature of providing Indigenous Queenslanders with the opportunity to own their own home, in their local community, in freehold—an opportunity that the rest of us have enjoyed since European land tenure systems were established in this state. I am proud to deliver it.

### First Reading

**Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.09 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 Agricultural, Resources and Environment Committee

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

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.10 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report to the House on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 11 August 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY BILL

Resumed from 4 March (see p. 336).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.10 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In opening, I thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for its prompt consideration of this bill. In particular, I thank the committee and the chairman, the member for Warrego, for their deliberation and report on the bill. The committee tabled its report on 29 April 2014. I am now pleased to table the government's response to the committee report.

*Tabled paper:* Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 43—Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014, government response [\[5050\]](#).

I thank the Queensland Teachers Union for its submission on the bill to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee. I appreciate the time and effort taken to communicate the union's concerns and suggestions. According to the Skills and Training Taskforce, the first ever industry-led review of Queensland's vocational education and training sector, the majority of our TAFE assets are grossly underutilised. The flagship Southbank Institute of TAFE is one of the best VET facilities in the nation, but it is used only 51 per cent of the time and is a ghost town after 6 pm. Southbank TAFE is not alone. TAFEs across the state are empty 60 per cent of the time. By creating a new body to manage the property side of things, we can free up TAFE to concentrate on doing what it does best: the delivery of vocational education and training services.

In the VET sector, the ability to deliver effective training often depends on access to appropriate facilities. Those facilities are frequently out of the reach of otherwise qualified trainers. When our state's TAFE assets are empty more than 50 per cent of the time, it makes sense to make those assets available to other registered training providers, as well as keeping them freely available to TAFE.

This legislation will pave the way to allowing existing or prospective non-government training organisations to expand the availability of VET, particularly in regional areas. To that end, this bill will establish an independent body, the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority—QTAMA—to provide for the efficient and effective management of state owned training facilities primarily for the provision of vocational education and training.

This bill delivers on the Queensland government's commitment to boosting front-line services by giving all existing and prospective training organisations equal access to VET facilities. It will lead to the creation of a stronger and more sustainable way of managing our training infrastructure and has the capacity to substantially boost the availability of VET in the regions.

The committee's report makes seven recommendations and raises one point for clarification. I welcome the committee's first recommendation that the bill be passed. The establishment of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority is an important step in the move to greater contestability in the provision of training services in Queensland. It is also important in terms of bringing a more strategic focus to managing the state's valuable training assets portfolio.

I will now consider the committee's specific recommendations. The second and fourth recommendations deal with consultation by the Minister for Housing and Public Works, as the minister responsible for QTAMA, with other ministers. The bill already contains a requirement that the Minister for Housing and Public Works consult with the Treasurer and the minister responsible for the proposed Further Education and Training Act 2014 if QTAMA proposes to buy or sell an asset of a class and for more than a value prescribed by regulation. The government considers that the existing mandatory consultation provision in clause 46(1) of the bill adequately ensures that any proposed acquisitions or disposals of assets by QTAMA will be aligned with the government's fiscal objectives and its policy on vocational education and training. In addition, consultation between ministers on matters of common interest is a normal part of the decision-making process of executive government. Consequently, adding a general requirement in the bill that requires 'greater consultation' between the minister responsible for the QTAMA Act and the minister responsible for VET is unnecessary.

The committee's report also suggests that the minister responsible for the statutory body, TAFE Queensland, should be consulted, rather than the minister responsible for the proposed Further Education and Training Act 2014. I consider that the minister responsible for the Further Education and Training Act 2014 will be the appropriate minister for formal consultation on VET policy because an objective of that act is to facilitate the provision of VET that is linked to employment and is responsive to the future workforce development and skills requirements of industry. The TAFE Queensland Act 2013, on the other hand, establishes TAFE Queensland as just one of the many training providers for which VET policy is developed and administered. For these reasons, I do not support the second and fourth recommendations.

The committee's third recommendation is that I advise the House of the approximate dollar value of the proposed threshold for 'proposed significant action' under clause 46 during debate on the bill in the House. This recommendation is not supported. If a regulation is made under clause 46(1) of the bill to prescribe a threshold dollar amount for the purchase or sale of a particular class of asset, I, as the Minister for Housing and Public Works, would as a matter of course consult with the minister responsible for VET and the Treasurer. Any decision to prescribe thresholds for dollar amounts and classes of assets under clause 46(1) is for the Governor in Council to make.

The committee's fifth recommendation is that the bill be amended to include a transitional provision that explicitly ensures that the proceeds of all TAFE asset sales for the first two years of QTAMA's operation be reinvested in the VET sector and that beyond this initial transitional period the government ensure transparency in the percentage split between the return of proceeds to consolidated funds and reinvestment in the VET sector. I should point out that there are no plans for QTAMA to sell any training assets. Once QTAMA is operating, it will be able to gain a clearer picture of the extent of any underutilisation and overall need for training facilities, and will then be able to develop plans for improving the use of those assets. I consider that a legislative requirement specifying the use of these proceeds would be overly prescriptive and may result in a loss of flexibility when deciding how these proceeds may be best used. The QTAMA annual report, which will include detailed financial statements, will ensure transparency on what QTAMA will do with the proceeds of any asset disposals.

The committee's sixth recommendation is that part 7 of the bill, the transitional provisions, be amended to reflect the advice received by the committee from the Department of Housing and Public Works that the government intends to give TAFE priority access to the public VET facilities for a

designated two-year transitional period. The transitional priority access arrangements that have been approved by the government are part of its commitment to establishing TAFE Queensland as a commercially viable training provider and to ensuring continuity of TAFE courses and services. This arrangement will be documented in tenancy agreements between TAFE Queensland and QTAMA. As such, I do not consider there is a need to include this measure in the legislation.

The committee's seventh and final recommendation is that the Department of Education, Training and Employment monitor and evaluate the impact of the establishment and operation of QTAMA on VET delivery generally and on TAFE delivery specifically, and provide written reports over the first two years of QTAMA's operations to both the Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Minister for Education, Training and Employment.

I am advised that arrangements are already in place under the government's 'Great skills. Real opportunities.' action plan for the Department of Education, Training and Employment to monitor and evaluate progress on the range of reforms in the VET area and report regularly to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment and the Minister for Housing and Public Works on the effect of QTAMA on VET generally and TAFE Queensland in particular.

The committee sought clarification from the Minister for Housing and Public Works on whether the unfunded public private partnership liabilities relating to the former Southbank Institute of TAFE and now TAFE Queensland, if ongoing, will be transferred to QTAMA and, if so, how that liability might impact on strategic asset management and the payment of returns. I can advise that the government is investigating options whereby QTAMA could become involved in the arrangements relating to the Southbank Education and Training Precinct public private partnership. However, no decision has been made on that matter at this time.

In my address to this parliament when the bill was introduced I explained that the bill would lead to a stronger and more sustainable way of managing the state's training assets. The many emails, letters and phone calls received by my office and the department from training organisations interested in accessing the training spaces that will be made available by QTAMA after 1 July indicate, I believe, that we are on track to achieving that outcome. This bodes well for the state in terms of increased utilisation of its public training assets and for students and employers in terms of a more diverse range of training options.

The bill continues the government's commitment to vocational education and training reform and to making better use of the state's investment in training assets. It was developed in close consultation with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury and Trade, the Department of Education, Training and Employment, and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. I wish to thank all of the relevant stakeholders once again for their extensive involvement through the consultation process. I can assure members that plans for the implementation of QTAMA are well advanced to achieve the government's expectation that QTAMA will commence operations on 1 July 2014. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (12.21 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014. The opposition will be opposing this legislation because it is, quite simply, the creation of an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy that is designed to do one thing—commercially exploit TAFE campuses and sell them off. Since coming to power in 2012, this government has made a concerted effort to absolve themselves of any obligations they might have in vocational education and training in Queensland and continue along the path to privatising Queensland's vocational education and training sector.

In 2012 the Newman government scrapped the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative that supported 26,000 job seekers every year, despite independent analysis of the scheme demonstrating how successful the initiative has been. In the 2012-13 budget, the LNP removed \$43.9 million from the training, tertiary education and employment budget, while for the 2013-14 financial year the sector is set to lose 422 full-time equivalent positions.

In 2013, TAFE Queensland was established as a statutory entity, taking Queensland another step closer to a fully privatised VET sector. The board of TAFE Queensland was tasked with ensuring that the entity is 'both commercially successful whilst still performing the role of the public provider'. These two aims are incompatible. One cannot operate commercially while providing services that are, by their definition, uncommercial. This new TAFE entity is in a position to abandon the provision of essential public services on the basis that they are not profitable. This prioritisation of profitability over public good will result in courses being primarily focused on cost and revenue-generating capacity at

the expense of industry safety. A perfect example of this is highlighted in the findings of a recent review completed by the Australian Skills Quality Authority titled *Training for the white card for Australia's construction industry*. I table that report.

*Tabled paper:* Australian Government, Australian Skills Quality Authority, Report, Training for the White Card for Australia's Construction Industry, A national strategic review of registered training organisations offering industry induction training—the White Card, September 2013 [5051].

The review looked into concerns raised by industry regarding the quality of training and assessment provided by some registered training organisations offering the entry level occupational health and safety training necessary to attain a white card, which is a requirement to commence work on construction sites in Australia. The review found that 'training programs delivered online are largely too short and without time in the workplace for sufficient skills development'.

The skills council in the construction industry recommends that training for a white card be for six hours, but ASQA found that of all the registered training organisations offering online delivery 100 per cent had training and assessment strategies that could be completed in fewer than four hours. Some online delivery of the white card can be completed in as little as 30 minutes. This is a direct result of the push for a fully competitive VET sector and it is a serious concern. Individuals are not gaining the practical skills essential for this certification, and it is going to have a negative impact on the construction industry.

This government's changes to TAFE are ignoring the societal benefits of technical and further education. Kangan's report on needs in technical and further education highlighted two priorities for TAFE: first, produce the skilled manpower necessary to the development of the economy and, second, maintain an educational and social emphasis that would enable people to develop their potential as individuals within the realities of the job opportunities they were aiming for. This government's dogged determination to save a penny is completely undermining any efforts to achieve this second priority.

As I said, we will be opposing this bill because it continues the LNP's attack on TAFE in earnest. The Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014 establishes an independent statutory body—the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, QTAMA—to manage state owned training assets, primarily for the provision of vocational education and training. The bill implements a Costello report recommendation that training asset ownership should be separated from TAFE Queensland and transferred to a specialist commercial entity with skills and expertise in owning and managing such assets.

Under the bill, assets will be stripped from TAFEs across the state and transferred into the new statutory authority, QTAMA. QTAMA will provide access to public training facilities on a commercial basis for all registered training organisations in Queensland. Even the TAFEs themselves will be forced to rent back the very assets that they used to own at commercial rates. The supposed rationale behind this commercialisation is that TAFE assets are underutilised and that commercial operators find it difficult to compete with TAFEs because they cannot easily access training facilities.

I want to question those assumptions. Are TAFE assets really being underutilised? I would suggest that, in light of some of the statistics I mentioned earlier, the government is doing its best to create a false impression of underutilisation by cutting funding, staff and courses from TAFEs across the state. In addition, we are seeing a significant increase in TAFE course fees. The example given by the ABC news on 29 April was of an increase from \$806 in 2012 to \$7,240 in 2014 for a certificate II in auto servicing.

Consequently, if you cut staff, cut funding, offer fewer courses and increase fees, then obviously this could lead to underutilisation of TAFE assets through a reduction in students using TAFE campuses. If there is an underutilisation of TAFE facilities, it has been concocted by the LNP in order to justify the opening up of these assets to commercial operators. This is simply another step down the road in prioritising the private for-profit sector over the public sector.

QTAMA will be charged with managing the public infrastructure on a commercial basis, including implementing disposal processes for obsolete or underutilised assets. It is apparent that the new QTAMA model will provide a vehicle for the aggressive disposal of TAFE assets that are deemed surplus to requirements and for the commercial exploitation of assets by private training providers at the expense of the public sector. The commercialisation of education does not always produce better outcomes.

In their submission to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee regarding the bill, the Queensland Teachers Union outlined the shortcomings of a market based approach to training. They said—

A market based approach has:

- failed to address skill shortage areas in the labour market;
- failed to improve productivity;
- exacerbated inequities in access to quality education and training;
- left many existing workers without qualifications to adapt to workplace change;
- led to significant increases in course fees;
- significantly increased the instances of system rorting by unscrupulous VET providers; and
- undermined the capacity of the VET system to promote a planned approach to industry development, maximise quality employment and to meet future industry, labour market development and social needs.

This bill simply gives the green light for the government's agenda of secretly selling public assets without a mandate—\$11 billion in state assets have already been sold by the LNP, including schools, hospitals, motorways, Aurizon shares and government buildings. Labor does not support making it easier for the LNP to break their election commitments or making it easier for them to sell off important assets like TAFE campuses. It is clear that the LNP does not value the public education system, especially not when there is profit to be had by some.

This bill is all about flogging off assets and further commercialising the VET sector so that more money can be squeezed out of students in the name of profit. It has not been demonstrated that this proposed QTAMA model is the only way to improve the management or operation of TAFE assets. The government is just pursuing an ideological agenda that denigrates public services and promotes the for-profit private sector. As I said, under the bill, QTAMA will have the power to dispose of, and purchase, assets. I want to note that the minister and Treasurer will retain a right of veto over QTAMA's decisions to purchase or dispose of assets in what is termed a 'significant action'. I welcome that veto power, but I am certainly worried that LNP ministers in the future will hide behind QTAMA's decisions and refuse to intervene when TAFE assets are on the chopping block—when they are up for sale.

The new QTAMA will have its own board, a CEO and its own staff. It is simply a new layer of bureaucracy in the management of the VET system. I would like to know how much this new authority will cost to establish and what its annual operating budget will be. At a time when the LNP is obsessed with cutting services that people rely on, it is incongruous that they would be establishing new layers of democracy to manage assets that are already being managed.

I now want to deal with the recommendations made by the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee. The committee report contained seven recommendations. The opposition endorses all of the recommendations with the exception of recommendation 1 that the bill be passed. The recommendations were as follows. Recommendation 1—the committee recommended that the bill be passed. Needless to say we do not support this recommendation and we will be opposing the bill. Recommendation 2—the committee recommended that the bill be amended to require the Minister for Housing and Public Works to consult with the Treasurer and minister administering the TAFE Queensland Act 2013, rather than the Treasurer and the minister administering the Further Education and Training Act 2014, given that the TAFE Queensland Act 2013 is more relevant to the administration of TAFE. Notwithstanding our position that the bill should not pass, if it does pass, this recommendation makes sense and would ensure that the most appropriate minister is consulted.

Recommendation 3—the committee recommended that the minister advise the House of the approximate dollar value of the proposed threshold for 'proposed significant action' under clause 46 during debate on the bill in the House. We endorse this recommendation. If the bill is passed, it is very likely that QTAMA will be used to pursue a program of asset sales without a mandate. It would assist the House to know what the dollar threshold is for the significant action provision to be triggered for the purchase or disposal of assets by QTAMA. Once the provision has been triggered, the minister acquires a right of veto over QTAMA's proposed action. However, I do not hold out much hope that the minister will use that right of veto. The likely scenario is that the minister will hide behind QTAMA's recommendations, refusing to intervene in order to sell off assets without a mandate.

Recommendation 4—the committee recommended that the bill be amended to include a requirement for greater consultation by the minister responsible for administering the proposed QTAMA Act 2014 and the minister responsible for administering the TAFE Queensland Act 2013 and

that this consultation requirement include, but not be limited to, a requirement to consult on the draft asset management plan. As with recommendation 2, we concur with the recommendation, which would allow the most appropriate minister to be consulted with respect to the operation of the act.

Recommendation 5—the committee recommended that the bill be amended to include a transitional provision which explicitly ensures that the proceeds of all TAFE asset sales for the first two years of QTAMA's operation be reinvested in the VET sector. The committee further recommended that, beyond the initial two-year transitional period, the government ensure transparency in the percentage split between the return of proceeds from TAFE asset sales to consolidated funds and reinvestment in the VET sector. We support this recommendation subject to our strong belief that QTAMA should not be used to conduct a fire sale of TAFE assets. Should our fears be realised, it would be appropriate that any funds realised from asset sales are reinvested into the VET sector.

Recommendation 6—the committee recommended that the transitional provisions of the bill be amended to reflect the advice received from the Department of Housing and Public Works that the government intends to give TAFE priority access to the public VET facilities for a designated two-year transitional period. Again, we support this recommendation, but our preference is that the bill not be passed. In the event that it is passed, TAFE should always be given priority access to the assets that this bill seeks to strip away from it.

Recommendation 7—the committee recommended that the Department of Education, Training and Employment monitor and evaluate the impact of the establishment and operation of QTAMA on VET delivery generally and on TAFE delivery specifically and provide regular written reports over the first two years of QTAMA's operations to both the Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. This is a welcome recommendation should the bill pass. We would welcome regular reporting and evaluation of the operations and performance of QTAMA.

The Queensland Teachers Union was the only organisation to make a submission to the committee regarding the bill. The QTU strongly opposes the formation of QTAMA and the transfer of assets and responsibility to an independent authority. The QTU recommended that the bill not be passed. They further recommended that, if it were to be passed, it should be amended to provide for statutory review of the provisions as well as rigorous reporting on the impacts on the TAFE sector.

To conclude, Labor does not support this piece of legislation. It is an ideological attack on the public education system. It will make it easier for the LNP to put profits before people and for them to sell off more assets without a mandate. I promise government members that every time a TAFE asset is sold by QTAMA in our electorates we will hold them responsible. Every time students suffer because of the commercialisation of education, we will hold them responsible. Government has a responsibility to provide the best possible standards of education, whether it be at TAFE, school or university, that is accessible to everybody. This bill does not live up to that responsibility.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (12.36 pm): I am pleased today to rise to talk to the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill. This bill will make significant changes to our TAFE system in this state and certainly will progress the education of many Queenslanders into the future.

The Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill was referred to the committee on 4 March 2014 and the committee was required to report to the Legislative Assembly on it by 29 April 2014. The committee was briefed by the Department of Housing and Public Works and received one submission from the Queensland Teachers Union. The committee held a public hearing and a public briefing by the Department of Housing and Public Works on 2 April. The committee heard from two witnesses and two departmental representatives at the hearing.

The bill is a significant bill. Its objectives are: to establish an independent statutory body, the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, QTAMA, to provide for the efficient and effective management of state-owned training assets, primarily for the provision of vocational education and training in accordance with sound commercial principles; to be a specialist owner and manager of the state's training assets; to enhance competition by providing access to public training facilities on a commercial basis for all registered training organisations in Queensland, thereby removing a significant barrier to market entry; to address any public perceptions that TAFE Queensland has an effective monopoly within the Queensland VET system through exclusive access to public infrastructure; and to improve the utilisation rates by managing the public infrastructure on a commercial basis, including implementing disposal processes for obsolete and underutilised assets.

It is important to remember that the Premier and the Minister for Education established a Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce in line with the government's commitment to reform Queensland's vocational education and training sector. This had been going on for quite some time. Everybody in Queensland knew that there was an issue with TAFE. The final report of the task force made some recommendations. It was interesting to listen to the member for Redcliffe, and I am sure other members of the ALP opposition will be quite critical of this.

What they seem to forget are the sorts of things that were identified by the task force, which stated—

Problems within the current system are widely acknowledged to include its fragmented structure and nature, high cost public provision, below average participation rates, inability to resolve skills shortages, lack of industry engagement and limited client focus.

The task force considered previous Technical and Further Education reviews and they found similar issues with TAFE, so things had to change; we just could not continue on and leave it the way it was. We often have to do reviews to progress forward and find better and more modern ways of delivering services to the state.

The Queensland Teachers Union came in, and of course they were strongly opposed to the imposition of a market based approach to VET provisions, including a public TAFE system. They identified numerous problematic features of organising VET provisions on that basis. The committee noted their opposition to the bill's objectives. However, the committee supported the government's broad policy approach to reforming the VET sector. So we acknowledged that—and it is important to hear all sides of the argument—and we are happy that they did that and we thank them for that. Report No. 43 goes on to state—

At the public hearing on 2 April 2014, the Committee sought clarification from the Department about which Minister would be most appropriate to be consulted regarding management of TAFE assets. The Department advised:

*It is intended to be the minister responsible for TAFE. The definition of ministerial responsibility is meant to reflect the minister responsible for TAFE if there were a separation between the Minister for Education and the Minister for TAFE training.*

#### **Committee**

Given the purpose of the proposed Further Education and Training Act 2014, the Committee questions the relevance of administration of this Act to TAFE asset management. While the Committee understands that the current Minister for Education, Training and Employment will be responsible for administering both the proposed Further Education and Training Act 2014 the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013*, it considers the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013* is more relevant to the QTAMA Bill and should be the Act cited in clause 46(4)(a) of the Bill.

So we made some recommendations there, and the minister today has come back and has gone through in detail with a response to the committee's recommendations. Generally speaking, in summary he is really saying that the matters have been looked at and they are covered in various ways.

In relation to recommendation No. 2, the minister quite clearly said that the minister responsible for further education and training will therefore be the appropriate minister and there will be consultation between those two anyway. So that is going to happen, and we are pleased that that has been clarified.

I believe that the minister has satisfactorily responded to the other recommendations that we made. The most important thing with the committee system that we have is that we can raise issues. If those issues are not raised, then we do not have public comment on it. The minister has just made the announcement to the response, and I am sure that the opposition will read the minister's comments and understand that the concerns that we raised have largely been answered. For instance, we did make the recommendation that QTAMA keep the money for two years. However, there was consultation on that and at the end of the day it is a matter for the Governor in Council. The minister has looked at those issues, and I am certainly satisfied that the concerns that were raised by the committee have been addressed.

TAFE education in this state is a very important issue because it affects many people. I think this is a good opportunity to refocus our TAFE system and pull together a far better education option for students in the future. I certainly support the bill before the House.

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (12.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014. The establishment of a specialist manager of the state's training asset portfolio comes out of certain recommendations made by the Skills and Training Taskforce and the independent Commission of Audit, which were accepted by the government in the 'Great skills. Real opportunities.' five-year action plan.

Launched in June 2013, I was very pleased to have led the development of the government's VET action plan 'Great skills. Real opportunities.' which, as the member for Warrego was just discussing, actually managed to create a more competitive, responsive and innovative VET sector to meet the needs of individuals, communities, industry and employers around the state. As I mentioned, this bill has actually been arrived at following recommendations made by the Skills and Training Taskforce and the independent Commission of Audit, so I would like to take a moment to reflect on the considerations made by those two bodies.

In November 2012, the Skills and Training Taskforce identified the need for a more strategic approach to the management of the state's vocational and education training, VET, assets. In particular, the task force saw a need to increase asset utilisation and recommended consideration of a separate public or private entity with specialist skills and expertise in infrastructure management being charged with the efficient management of the assets. The task force considered a substantial reduction in the TAFE institute's then current infrastructure footprint and an increase in its asset utilisation as necessary for the institute's longer term viability. This was particularly the case given the move to greater contestability of a finite training dollar, as outlined in the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform.

In this context, the task force identified a capital works program shortfall of \$75 million resulting from approved asset disposals that had not been achieved and overruns in project expenditure from the Queensland Skills Plan. This is the legacy of those opposite. In addition, there was a projected and increasing deficit—nominally \$508 million over 30 years—resulting from the public-private partnership agreement for the Southbank Institute of Technology. While these issues were not considered by the task force in detail, it was considered that they needed to be factored into any future strategies designed to ensure the financial viability of the TAFE institutes.

Separately from the Skills and Training Taskforce report, advice given to Projects Queensland in late 2013 also identified a maintenance backlog of over \$100 million in relation to the training asset portfolio. This reflects the neglect of TAFE by those opposite over many years and the very real need to modernise TAFE and ensure that it remains relevant to the modern student. Contrary to the comments from the member for Redcliffe, the infrastructure footprint and, for that matter, the industrial arrangements for TAFE were established in the 1970s and reflect the role and purpose of TAFE then. They are antiquated; they are outdated; and they need to be modernised if TAFE is to survive.

What we need to do is make sure that our campuses are full and thriving. No business can survive with utilisation rates below 50 per cent. Around Queensland there are sites in which there are no students, there are sites with barely any activity and there are sites that are simply not viable. We have a beautiful facility in Southbank, one of the best VET facilities in this nation, which is modern, close to central transport nodes and the city itself, and at the time of these reviews it was used 51 per cent of the time. Between 6 pm and 9 pm, the traditional time of night classes, it was used five per cent of the time. Across the state the utilisation rate was 40 per cent.

The point that the task force made was that TAFE is spread too thin. What the task force suggested was that we sell the campuses that are not used and reinvest that money into the campuses that are. When the education minister and I have been out and about visiting TAFE campuses across this state, the common message from the TAFEs themselves is that they want to be freed from the shackles that impact on their goal, and that is the delivery of quality training to students across this state. One of those shackles is certainly the continued management and maintenance of campuses that are no longer in use, are only used by a few or, more importantly, are no longer fit for the purpose. As a result, the task force recommended that an asset management strategy be immediately set in train under a central point of government in consultation with relevant stakeholders and subject to appropriate governance and oversight.

This strategy needed to address value-added solutions to the management of existing assets and examination of leased and/or shared facilities; increased and optimal utilisation rates and accompanying incentives and capital charges; consolidation of existing TAFE campuses; strategic disposal of surplus infrastructure; the percentage split between return of proceeds from sales of surplus TAFE infrastructure to consolidated funds versus ensuring sufficient ongoing capital funding to address recommendations of recent reviews and to sustainably manage and maintain the asset

base over the longer term; the ownership, management and maintenance of the future stock of public training assets, including consideration of a separate public or private entity with specialist skills and expertise in infrastructure management being charged with the efficient management of the assets; appropriate third-party access for public training infrastructure, taking into consideration advice from private training organisations about the preferred access model; new asset acquisitions or developments consistent with training delivery models adopted in the new business model; and stand-alone versus strategic partnering opportunities with business, industry, other agencies or registered training organisations and/or schools. The task force saw the proposed central coordination approach as reflecting the fact that the assets belong to the state, institutes will not be able to afford or recruit asset management specialists of the calibre required, and there was a lack of a consistent overall vision and framework for state-wide TAFE asset management.

As I mentioned at the outset, the independent Commission of Audit also considered the management of the state's training assets with similar results to the task force. In its final report in February 2013, the commission considered that asset ownership should be separated from TAFE and transferred to a specialist commercial entity with skills and expertise in owning and managing such assets. This would have the benefit of rationalising the asset base and facilitating third-party access to these assets, thereby improving asset utilisation. Under this model, TAFE Queensland would need to reassess its use of assets as it would pay commercial rents or leasing charges to the owner for the use of required assets.

The Commission of Audit also considered that separating asset ownership from TAFE would support the skills market reform process by enhancing competition by providing access to public training facilities on a commercial basis for all RTOs in Queensland, thereby removing a significant barrier to market entry; addressing any public perception that TAFE still has an effective monopoly within the Queensland VET system through exclusive access to public infrastructure; and improving utilisation rates by managing this public infrastructure on a commercial basis, including implementing disposal processes for obsolete or underutilised assets.

The Commission of Audit saw that the separation of asset management has the capacity to improve VET outcomes, and that is something that is very much the consideration for this government in not only the south-east corner but also regional areas through a more effective utilisation of these public assets. For example, opening up access to these assets may provide better opportunities for other RTOs to satisfy training needs in regional communities.

The transfer of TAFE Queensland assets to a specialist management entity, as reflected in this bill, will enable the public provider to focus on its core role of training delivery—the one thing that TAFEs around this state have been telling the minister and I is very much their preferred focus. Public training assets being made available for use by public and private providers in new and dynamic ways will also ensure all providers have access to infrastructure that enables delivery of quality training. I am very pleased to support the passage of this bill.

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (12.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014. One of the driving purposes of this Newman LNP government is to revitalise front-line services and I will illustrate that, after careful review, consultation and planning, this bill paves the way to provide necessary support for the revitalisation of the services provided through TAFE. The result of this bill being passed today will be the establishment of a new statutory authority which will be known as the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, or QTAMA. In February 2013 the Queensland Commission of Audit recommended the following—

Asset ownership should be separated from TAFE and transferred to a commercial entity, with a view to rationalising the asset base, facilitating third party access and improving asset utilisation. This would also enable TAFE to concentrate on its core function of service delivery.

Can members imagine the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of TAFE buildings across the state which in some cases have fallen to a utilisation as low as five per cent? This is an abhorrent state of affairs and yet that is what we have inherited from previous Labor governments. In November 2013 the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce reported as followed—

The new Queensland Government has committed to growing a four pillar economy through focusing on resources, construction, agriculture and tourism, and reducing unemployment in Queensland to 4 per cent over the next six years. Strengthening our vocational education and training (VET) sector is a key part of delivering on these commitments.

...

A range of strategies will be required to substantially reduce TAFE Queensland's current infrastructure footprint and increase utilisation of assets to ensure longer term viability.

### The Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce recommended—

A strategic asset management strategy be immediately set in train under a central point of Government in consultation with relevant stakeholders and subject to appropriate governance and oversight.

### The report goes on to say—

This strategy should address:

- value-added solutions to the management of existing assets and examination of leased and/or shared facilities
- increased and optimal utilisation rates and accompanying incentives and capital charges
- consolidation of existing TAFE campuses
- strategic disposal of surplus infrastructure
- the percentage split between return of proceeds from sales of surplus TAFE infrastructure to consolidated funds versus ensuring sufficient, ongoing, capital funding to sustainably manage and maintain the asset base over the longer term
- a range of strategies for the ownership, management and maintenance of the future stock of public training assets including consideration of a separate public or private entity with specialist skills and expertise in infrastructure management being charged with the efficient management of the assets
- appropriate third party access strategies for public training infrastructure
- new asset acquisitions or developments consistent with training delivery models adopted in the new business model
- standalone versus strategic partnering opportunities—with business, industry, other agencies or registered training organisations ... and or schools.

### The report of the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce further reports on public submissions with respect to assets—

Many stakeholders perceived TAFE infrastructure as out-dated, poorly maintained, costly, inefficient and underutilised.

...

Submissions were largely united in calling for a rationalisation of TAFE assets so that additional investment can be made in revitalising institutes, infrastructure, equipment and ICT. TAFE stakeholders wanted to see assets owned and controlled by the TAFE institutes at the local level. Other stakeholders supported more effective use of existing TAFE assets and offered utilisation suggestions such as leasing to third parties and forming industry and community partnerships, particularly in regional areas.

### One such submission reads—

Consolidation of TAFE building assets to the State and in turn establishing leasing agreements for training delivery spaces will drive commercially responsive decision making and untied public assets for improved efficiency by making them available to other parties. The consolidated management of assets across the state will allow for improvement in utilisation rates through commercial leasing to third parties and encourage the sale of underperforming assets.

Since that time, the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee has done its review of this bill, with even further public hearing and consultation. I want to add my personal observations that, under Labor, TAFE grew until it became so top heavy due to all of the wins made by the unions over the decades for at least some of its personnel that it became out of touch with many Queenslanders. The previous government did not keep maintenance or management to maximise utilisation of buildings under control.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr GRANT:** Very similar. It is clear that TAFE has been out of control and unsustainable; hence the necessity for the radical surgery that we are performing today. Management of building maintenance and utilisation of buildings across the state needs new blood to pull them into line. Doubtless the new management authority that this act of parliament provides for will lay out a strategic plan that will include the leasing or sale of some buildings and will use some of those proceeds to renovate and upgrade buildings that will be retained. This is an important part of revitalising front-line services for the people of Queensland. I believe that it is appropriate for the new authority during the transition period to provide priority access to the buildings for the TAFE while also ensuring other training organisations have access to the buildings to maximise their use for the greater good of the public.

Debate, on motion of Mr Grant, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

## ETHICS COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (2.30 pm): I seek leave to table an Ethics Committee Report. Leave granted.

**Mr CRANDON:** I table Ethics Committee Report No. 146, titled *Report on a right of reply No. 26*. I commend the report and the committee's recommendation to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Ethics Committee: Report No. 146—Report on a Right of Reply No. 26 [\[5052\]](#).

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Milosevic, Mr M

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.31 pm): I rise to report the very sad news of the passing of Mr Mike Milosevic, a tireless and devoted member of the Mermaid Beach-Robina branch of the Liberal National Party and the former Liberal Party of Queensland. Mike lost his battle with cancer on Thursday, 3 April at Robina Hospital and was laid to rest on Wednesday, 9 April, at Allambe gardens at Nerang.

Mike was an outstanding and dedicated member of the LNP and had contributed to many elections over his 30 years in the party. He held many executive roles, including chairman of the Mermaid Beach-Robina SEC. On many occasions he was a delegate to the LNP convention and was never shy about being vocal about what he believed in. We will miss him as he was one of the few in the party who maintained this level of dedication and relentless commitment to the conservative cause. This dedication and commitment was shown over and over again on many a campaign, including the last three of my campaigns. On election day, Mike would be up at the crack of dawn to make sandwiches and morning and afternoon teas for over 100 campaign workers. He and his wife, Donna, would not only prepare lunch and morning and afternoon teas but also pack it all up in his car and distribute it at particular times throughout the day so that all campaign workers would be well fed and watered.

Mike was active in not only state election campaigns but also federal election campaigns and FDCs along with Gold Coast City Council elections. My federal colleagues and local government representatives have praised his help with the Gold Coast city councillors by moving a condolence motion in recognition of his hard work and commitment to the LNP. In 2013 at the LNP state convention Mike received the Outstanding Service Award in acknowledgement of his valuable service to the party, which was so deserved.

I would like to personally pass on my sincere condolences to Mike's family, particularly his loving wife, Donna, who was there by his side helping him with his volunteer work for the party every step of the way. He will always be remembered and will certainly be very sorely missed.

Mike was the main instigator in my quick acceptance as the candidate for Robina after Bob Quinn retired in 2006 at very short notice before a state election. At that time, Mike was instrumental in bringing together a lot of my branch members. We got on and won that election—and that was probably due to a lot of his help back then—and I am standing here today in this House delivering this condolence message. Mike was always a dedicated party worker. He certainly was a great supporter for Bob Quinn, the then leader of the Liberal Party. His wonderful work will never be forgotten. He will be missed, but not forgotten.

### Multiculturalism

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (2.34 pm): Queensland's vibrant culture and lifestyle is a reflection of our heritage and our ever-increasingly culturally diverse community. It is through the contributions of our migrants that Queensland has become the great state that it is today. We acknowledge that historic contribution, but it is equally important that we acknowledge the contribution being made now by people who promote tolerance and harmony within the community. The individuals who do such a great job supporting cultural diversity do not look for recognition, but that does not mean that they should not get it.

One way we are pleased to do that is through the Cultural Diversity Awards. I am pleased to inform the House that applications for this year's Premier's Cultural Diversity Awards are now open. The awards recognise the contributions of Queenslanders who support our state's cultural diversity and help build an inclusive, harmonious community. This year, there are 13 award categories, allowing recognition of a wide range of achievements in the development and promotion of Queensland's cultural diversity. Volunteers, businesses, education providers, the media, community organisations and public sector agencies will all be recognised for their achievements through these prestigious awards. This year, we have introduced a Young Ambassador Award to recognise the increasing amount of great community work that is being done by people under 25 years of age.

I encourage members to promote the awards and encourage nominations in their electorates. Nominations close on Monday, 16 June 2014. Award winners will be announced at a ceremony hosted during Queensland Cultural Diversity Week, a state-wide celebration held from 30 August to 7 September. The week is about celebrating our cultural diversity and promoting what is great about Queensland's diverse communities. Queensland has a rich and diverse cultural history and the state is all the better for it.

The state is also stronger economically for the contribution made by migrants and refugees over the past century and a half. They usually have a strong desire to succeed, having come to a land of opportunity from deprivation and often persecution. I have seen that firsthand at places such as Moorooka where migrants and refugees have started thriving small businesses. All they needed was some support at the beginning and many will be able to get that with the new Economic Participation Grants Program. The program will fund projects to help migrants and refugees find employment or become involved in business ventures. These grants are part of the government's strategy to create pathways to employment and business ownership for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Up to \$40,000 will be available for projects where a community group partners with a local council and up to \$20,000 will be available for a community group undertaking a project on its own. The program is structured to encourage councils to work with local multicultural groups to develop programs that address specific local needs and opportunities.

### Sunshine Coast, Health Services

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (2.37 pm): The Newman LNP government is committed to delivering better health services and better health infrastructure right across the state. That is nowhere more exemplified than on the Sunshine Coast, with the construction of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital due to open in late 2016/early 2017 at a cost of \$1.8 billion.

In 2009, the then Labor government delayed funding for the hospital site for a period of about two years. I make this point: the LNP government made certain that that funding was in place. It turned the sod, it laid the foundations and we can now see the hospital growing out of the ground tier by tier.

**Mr Bleijie:** Six months ahead of schedule.

**Mr McARDLE:** I take that interjection from the Attorney-General—six months ahead of schedule. I have been to that site now on a number of occasions and I have seen that hospital grow. I have seen the facilities taking shape and grow out of the ground.

More importantly, that hospital will deliver better services—more services and more modern services. In particular, today I want to touch upon the issue of cancer services on the Sunshine Coast. In 2012-13, 600 Sunshine Coast residents travelled to Brisbane for cancer treatment. When the new centre opens at the hospital site, that figure will greatly diminish. That centre will provide better care and on-coast care for those who need treatment for cancer.

It is sad to say that in 2012-13 on the Sunshine Coast chemotherapy treatments totalled 4,100. That figure will grow to 10,300 by the time the hospital opens. The number of radiation treatments will grow from 5,000 to 25,000. The new centre on the Sunshine Coast will be able to deliver long-term care for those people who travelled to Brisbane on an ongoing basis.

That treatment can be five days a week, Monday to Friday, for up to six, seven or eight weeks. Treatments for such things as head, neck, melanoma, bone and soft tissue cancers will now take place on the Sunshine Coast. Contemplate the fact that many people who suffer from cancer are elderly and that that trip from the Sunshine Coast to Brisbane five days a week can be very exhausting. It is also exhausting for young people. What this hospital means is that you will live on the coast, be treated on the coast and recover on the coast. It is critical, in my opinion, that the treatment

offered to cancer patients be as local as possible. This new hospital will provide exactly that outcome. It will provide people with the facilities and resources on the coast where they live to get the treatment they need. This government is committed to providing long-term care for people on the coast and right across Queensland.

(Time expired)

### Rockhampton Hospital

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.40 pm): I would like to thank the member for Caloundra for congratulating Labor for putting in place the funding and the building model for the new hospital at Kawana.

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Pause the clock. The point has been made. I call the member for Bundamba.

**Mrs MILLER:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your protection. This government has broken its promise to revitalise front-line services. The people of Rockhampton and surrounding areas have now lost confidence in their local hospital. They are concerned that the care that they and their family will receive is not safe and that the quality of healthcare services is not what all Queenslanders have a right to expect.

This is a broken promise and a failure of ministerial responsibility, one of many such failures that the people of Queensland have had to put up with over the past two years. When people elect a government they expect it will keep its promises. The Abbott government's promise: no big new taxes and no surprises. Well, that has gone out the window. Many Australians, including the federal member for Brisbane, are surprised by Abbott's great big new tax on everybody. A deficit levy is Abbott's great big new tax on everybody and is, in Ms Gambaro's words, a breach of promise. That love affair is definitely over now. No more air kisses over fish and chips for Teresa and Tony. Remember the song *It's All Over Now, Baby Blue*? Well, let me tell members, it is all over now for the federal Liberal National Party government and for the state Liberal National Party coming up. The Abbott government is hot on the heels of the Newman government in breaking promises by cutting taxes, sacking hardworking public servants and now hiking taxes.

The people of Rockhampton must be wondering about the twisted priorities of this government and their local hospital and health services board. They dismissed the executive director of medical services and the Rockhampton Hospital director of medical services in April 2013. What else have they done? They have hired a dubious firm called Vanguard. This firm has a record of conflicts of interest and poor management. What does it do? It specialises in medical labour hire and advises on strategy. Then what does it do? It contracts itself to deliver it. It stinks to high heaven. It is a disgrace. The people of the Rockhampton area have a right to know what is going on. They have a right to know what is happening. I want to assure this House that we in Labor will make health our first priority in the next government.

### Indooroopilly Electorate, Projects

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.43 pm): Today I rise to speak about exciting works underway in my wonderful electorate of Indooroopilly. I am pleased to report that works to deliver a new noise barrier along Myla Terrace in Tennyson are underway. The noise from the Tennyson rail corridor has long been an issue for locals. When we first came into government I promised to deliver a solution. We consulted widely with the community on this issue. Queensland Rail conducted a street walk with residents, as well as one-on-one briefings and numerous letterbox drops. Last year we promised more than \$3 million to deliver the noise barrier, continuing our election promise to deliver better infrastructure and better planning. The noise barriers will be steel framed with a combination of precast concrete and timber panel construction. They will be about 4.5 metres high, cover 300 metres of the rail corridor and will join up with the existing barrier between Vivian Street and the east end of Lancelot Street. Last month when I visited the site I saw firsthand that this project is well underway, with safety fencing installed and holes drilled to start the formation. I have received overwhelming support since the start of this project and look forward to seeing it completed in the coming months.

This government continues to look for ways to deliver projects smarter and more efficiently, adding value without massive cost blowouts like the previous Labor government. As part of this project I am pleased to announce that the memorial at Myla Terrace will also undergo restoration. On 11 September 1949 weeping bottlebrush trees were planted as a memorial to honour local lives lost in the Second World War. Some 65 years ago these types of trees were planted. They were selected for their weeping branch habit to represent the tears of the mothers of fallen soldiers. Unfortunately, the years have taken their toll on the memorial. In order to return it to its former glory 14 new trees will be planted and the existing trees restored. Once construction of the noise barrier is complete, works on the memorial will begin. This will restore the integrity of the original memorial avenue and further add to the community of Tennyson.

This is just the latest project the Newman government is delivering for Indooroopilly. Work is underway to increase accessibility at the Graceville train station. We are also delivering a new \$10 million bicycle bridge over Moggill Road at the Centenary Motorway interchange, giving cyclists a safe journey between the western suburbs and Brisbane city. Work is also underway on the Western Freeway to widen it from two to three lanes in each direction between Indooroopilly and Toowong. About 70,000 vehicles use this road and when Legacy Way is open more and more people will be using the Western Freeway. This upgrade will ensure we have the capacity to support the growth that is to come. My electorate is also benefiting from the \$10 million flashing school light commitment. Six school zones in my electorate are now safer thanks to this great program. I am proud to be part of a government that listens to the community and delivers real solutions for Queenslanders.

### **Mundingburra Electorate, Community Survey**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.46 pm): When I come into this chamber it is a great honour to do so, but I do not do it as an individual; I do it as the representative for more than 20,000 people in a beautiful part of Townsville called Mundingburra. In order to be an effective representative you need to know the views of your community. You have to keep your finger on the pulse. That is why recently I embarked on Mundingburra's biggest community survey. I was absolutely floored with the response. Nearly 1,000 people took the time to give me their views. I say thank you very much to each and every one of them. There was a very great spread across that number in terms of both gender and where they live and that helps ensure that I know that it is a great cross-section of a beautiful part of our city.

The top three issues: No. 1, law and order; No. 2, jobs and cost of living; and No. 3, health. Whilst I will speak on Nos 2 and 3 shortly, I have to say it was daylight between No. 1 and the others. If there could have been a top three, law and order, law and order, law and order would have been the top three. The members for Townsville and Thuringowa know about it and we have unashamedly been on a crusade to do something about it. The changes to the act have been remarkable. This survey found that only 15.3 per cent of people thought the reforms were not a step in the right direction. That is music to our ears. We heard the cry from those opposite who voted against the legislation. We heard the cries from the minor parties who voted against the legislation because of the pressure that came from groups like Amnesty and other groups that, quite frankly, did not understand what was going on in our city.

I am not saying that one piece of legislative change can cure all ills and I am not saying that the additional 38 police officers are the silver bullet, but what a start it is. To stand on Castle Hill the other day with my colleagues and the Assistant Commissioner and see the number of homes less that had been broken into in the last 12 months—over 500—shows that we are making a difference. But there is so much more that needs to be done. When people like Carolyn of Douglas speaks about the assaults on police and the elderly and Greg from Vincent talks about his passion to see the naming and shaming of offenders to ensure that there is some deterrent, I know that we are on the right track. We will not sway from that. We will continue to push for tougher laws. We will continue to push for more police. That is what the people who put me here want and expect and that is what they will get.

In the time remaining I want to talk about the cost of living. Seventy per cent of people say that they support the measures that are being taken to get the budget under control, 19 per cent are unsure and 11 per cent are against. I thank Nicole of Ananndale for being so raw in her emotion about her cost of living. In the years ahead we will continue to fight in these three key areas to make Townsville a better place.

### Bundaberg, Anzac Day

 **Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (2.49 pm): On 25 April 2014, I was honoured to commemorate this year's Anzac Day at the Bundaberg Anzac ceremony surrounded by those in the community who humbly carry the reverent torch so we never forget. The Anzac legacy guards the values of courage, endurance, selfless sacrifice and mateship that entwine our community with a sense of identity. We are all heirs of the Anzac legacy and I take this opportunity to thank those men and women for passing that torch on to us so that we may pass it on to our future generations.

I make special mention of the President of the Bundaberg RSL subbranch, Mr Paul Trammachi, and the tireless work of the Bundaberg RSL subbranch Anzac Coordinating Committee, Tony Kimber and Wendy Morris, who assisted in staging this event with the ongoing support of the Bundaberg Regional Council's Community Coordinators, Melinda Shield and Heidi Mason. Special mention must also go to Matthew Loudon, our March Commander, and Corporal Bill Appleby from 9 Royal Queensland Regiment, who was the Catafalque Party Commander. I thank the Oakey Army Base, which did a fly-over with three Kiowa helicopters, Brian Stephens and Mark Hall, who generously provided his Mustang P-51 for the service. I congratulate Reverend Ray Nutley of the Ministers' Association who moved the Second Uniform Resolution, as well as Bundaberg Mayor Malcolm Forman, and members of the council, Deputy Mayor David Batt, Judy Peters, Lynne Forgan, Alan Bush and Vince Haberman. I thank the SES for its tireless service to our community and Ms Suellen Cusack who, along with our esteemed Municipal Band led by Mr Robert Rotar, provided the music for the ceremony. Various wreaths were laid from the many organisations and schools that embraced this day of reflection: the Bundaberg War Widows Guild, the RAAF Association, Legacy Widows, the Australian Red Cross, the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Girl Guides, the Prince Arthur Lodge and the Greek community. I thank the many principals, the dedicated parents and the young children who came to carry the torch on that day.

Anzac Day does not just commemorate those who lost their lives in the First World War but also commemorates all our soldiers, sailors and air men and women who have served abroad and put their lives at risk to defend Australia and the values that people right across Queensland hold dear. Anzac Day epitomises the community spirit. It is part of the fabric that blankets the whole of Bundaberg and makes the Bundaberg community such a great place to live and raise a family, providing a great future for young children. That future is built on values that have flowed from the Anzac traditions, particularly those of mateship and looking after each other.

### Chinese Language in Schools

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (2.52 pm): A new era is dawning in Queensland, an era that has seen and will continue to see a huge influx of Chinese tourists and investment in our state. More schools are expressing a desire to move with the times and to relinquish French and German language lessons in favour of Mandarin in recognition that South-East Asia is our neighbour and that two-way communication with China is increasing exponentially. With the rapid economy growth in China, more and more Chinese are seeking travel opportunities in Australia, with the Great Barrier Reef being one of the most popular drawcards. If Queensland children are to attain the best possible opportunity for employment and advancement in coming years, we have to adapt their education to provide the best opportunity for them to enter the workforce and thrive in an increasingly global environment. In New South Wales and Victoria, for years a number of schools have been offering complete Chinese programs. Universities also offer a degree that includes Chinese language courses.

In Cairns, Shixiang Chen is well known as a tutor and teacher of Chinese. He is the language school coordinator at the Cairns and District Chinese Association and the director of My Learning Club. He says that three years ago Chinese language learners were mainly adults from the local tourism industry, such as reef crews and city retail staff, but many parents have realised that Cairns needs people with Chinese language skills and they are seeking opportunities for their children to learn Chinese in school. With a growing market, TAFE and JCU are offering introductory adult Chinese courses. However, to have an extensive knowledge of Chinese culture and language, learners need long-term language and cultural programs from primary right through to secondary schools. Around four years ago when St Andrews Catholic College started its Chinese program, Mr Chen had just three students. With the support of the leadership team, the school now has over 60 students learning Chinese.

The Principal of Edge Hill State School, Paul Campbell, believes that second language learning should begin as early as possible and that there are many advantages in languages being taught in primary schools. He says that Chinese language provides a good example, in that the actual hours of instruction needed are significant when compared to other languages to achieve adequate levels of proficiency. Students taking Chinese language in years 11 and 12 may find it more challenging if they have not had the opportunity to have adequate hours of instruction.

For 10 years, Linda Jeffrey was the only Mandarin teacher in Cairns schools, but the past five years have seen the number of teachers grow to 10. However, those teachers are run off their feet as a result of the huge demand. This year, Yorkeys Knob State School has been trying in vain to source a Mandarin teacher for one day per week for years 6 and 7. Principal Rod Kettle reiterates the message from all over the Cairns region that, although there are several teachers of Chinese in the area, they are working to capacity and beyond.

*(Time expired)*

### **Morayfield Electorate, Anzac Day; Tulk, Ms N**

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (2.55 pm): On 25 April 2014, as many honourable members from this place would have done, I attended some Anzac Day ceremonies in Caboolture and around the Morayfield electorate. Again as most honourable members did, in the week leading up to Anzac Day I also attended many school ceremonies and services. I attended a service at Morayfield State High School where the students presented me with a little slouch hat that they had handcrafted, which I wore for the weekend. I visited the Burpengary Meadows State School, where the children had created their own wreaths in class during the days leading up to the service as part of their studies to learn some of the history of Anzac Day and what it means. I visited Morayfield State School, which had the same idea as Burpengary. The students had also made some very impressive wreaths. One of the other primary schools I visited was Jinibara State School, which I will return to in a minute because at that school I saw one of the most courageous and special things I have ever seen from a young person, who showed true Anzac spirit and courage.

On Anzac Day itself, I was very honoured to be asked by the nashos at Wamuran to be the guest speaker at the dawn service. I delivered a speech to the many people who attended. I am led to believe the attendance was well into the hundreds, if not around 1,000. On Saturday, 25 April I attended the main service at Caboolture where I was able to lay a wreath with my daughter, Ella, who accompanied me.

I wish to speak about my visit to Jinibara State School, and this is the basis of my speech today. When we speak about Anzac Day, often we speak about what it means for young children. A lot of the time we talk about courage and spirit. On that day, a young girl was asked to play the *Last Post*. Her name is Nikita Tulk. Nikita approached and I could see the fear in her eyes as she went to the lectern to play the *Last Post* in front of all her peers. Throughout the *Last Post*, she broke down a number of times and had to be consoled by her mother. I thought it was pretty courageous that she kept on going. It was not until she had completed the whole piece that her mother told me that her father, an ex-serviceman, had passed away. Anzac Day was his 12-month anniversary. That broke my heart and, I must say, made me cry. I said that I would mention in this place the courage and the spirit that Nikita showed on that particular day as a stand for her father, who was an ex-serviceman of this country. I say to Nikita, you made your dad proud; he would have been very proud of you.

### **Anthony, Reverend Father D**

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (2.58 pm): I would like to welcome to the public gallery family members of the late Reverend Father David Anthony who sadly passed away on 10 April aged 83. Welcome to his wife, June, daughter Delyse and her two children, son Philip and his wife, Kalina.

Father David Anthony was a larger-than-life character, with a great love for his family, his flock, his community and the Australian Labor Party. I enjoyed a long association with him and his family during my time as electorate officer in Woodridge where he was constantly giving and seeking help for families in need. He was also an enthusiastic participant in the local political scene. His passing has left a huge hole in the hearts of his life-long partner June, his children David, Desley, Philip, Delyse and Geoffrey and his 10 grandchildren as well as his siblings and extended family and friends. One son, John, was sadly killed in a tragic accident in 1973.

His early years in country New South Wales shaped his great love of the bush and its people, while as a young student his move to Sydney saw him involved in the local Anglican Church, sporting clubs, cubs and boy scouts, his Lebanese community, Fort Street High School and develop camaraderie with working people and in particular the Labor movement. He joined the ALP in 1949 and his enthusiasm earned him the nickname of 'Dynamo Dave'. He was later proudly granted life membership of the ALP for his lifetime of service.

While enjoying close contact with Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke and Fred Daly, he also hosted Billy McMahon and Bruce Small at events in his parish, as well as Bob Ellicott, a federal Attorney-General, to officiate at one of his legendary fundraising debutante balls. His wife June's proudest possession is a dented old teapot which poured tea for two Prime Ministers and a future Prime Minister, such was their hospitality.

While his interest in politics was strong, he felt a higher calling by God to ministry. Following his theological studies at St Francis College in Brisbane, he was ordained in 1959. His areas of ministry included Beenleigh and Woodridge, and as padre in the citizens military at the rank of captain.

His ministry was there for anyone who needed him at any time of the day or night. He baptised thousands of babies without any requirement of parental attendance at church or money in the offering plate. He strongly refused the common practice not to baptise a baby born to a single mother, saying he would not refuse God's blessing to any child. He was known as a gifted speaker.

Father David Anthony, you were truly a servant of God and of mankind, and with your parting words which were always 'God bless', we pay tribute to your genuine love and care from the needy to Prime Ministers—a man for all people.

### Cairns West State School



**Mr KING** (Cairns—LNP) (3.01 pm): I rise today to pay tribute to the little school that could. In the heart of my electorate, the Cairns West State School is achieving remarkable results due to the innovation and dedication of principal, Michael Hansen, and teachers and staff and, most importantly, the parents.

I had the great pleasure of attending the annual big breakfast assembly at Cairns West State School last Friday. During the event, I had the opportunity to speak to staff and parents about their efforts to boost attendance and literacy and numeracy at a school with one of the most complex student cohorts in Queensland.

This great little school features a diverse mix of Indigenous, Cook Islander, North African, Nepalese and Sudanese students and many others of different nationalities. The school is located in a traditionally low-socioeconomic area, where violence, alcohol and drug abuse and unemployment is well above broader community norms.

Against this backdrop, however, Cairns West State School is making remarkable progress in attendance and educational outcomes. Attendance improved to 83.5 per cent in 2013, a slight improvement over the previous year. The school is working incredibly hard on improving that rate even further in 2014, and with the support of parents I have no doubt they will continue to improve this rate.

One of the biggest helping hands this school will receive this year is through our Great Results Guarantee initiative, in partnership with the federal government. I visited the school last term to announce nearly \$580,000 in Great Results Guarantee funding, which includes the final year of national partnerships funding. The school will use this funding to improve literacy and numeracy among the early year students and introduce an attendance program.

Key to all of these initiatives is the principal, teachers and students. It is my personal belief that these outcomes will only be achieved with the dedication of parents. On this point, I would like to personally congratulate Naina Gurung, a mother and staff member at Cairns West State School. I had the opportunity to speak with Naina during the recent big breakfast and her dedication and passion for her own son, Dipson, who attends the school, and her work with around 50 refugee students is to be commended. Naina, a Bhutanese refugee, spent many, many years in a refugee camp. She expressed her love and gratitude for the opportunities her and her family have experienced in Cairns. I also want to pay tribute to young Dipson. He is a fantastic young student who did a great job babysitting my two children during our visit to the school for the big breakfast. With principals such as Mr Hansen, the incredible teaching staff and parents and students, such as Naina and Dipson, the future for Cairns West State School is very bright indeed.

### Sullivan, Mr S

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.04 pm): I rise in this House with sadness to speak about the passing of a great man and champion of the motor neurone disease cause—Scott Sullivan or Sully, as I also knew him. Scott, a sufferer of MND himself, had a fall at home and sadly passed away from his injuries in the early hours of 29 April 2014. The average life expectancy after diagnosis for sufferers of MND is about 27 months. Scott had been battling the disease for 3½ years. Scott was a resident of the Greenslopes electorate. We first met not long after I was elected in 2012.

In life you meet rare people who make an immediate impression. Scott was one such person. I was impressed by Scott's outlook on life, his love of his family and friends, his compassion for others and his passion for furthering the cause for those suffering from motor neurone disease. A recent tweet by Scott on 22 April summed up Scott's outlook. It read, 'Diagnosed with #MND 3.5yrs ago today. It certainly hasn't been boring!! #everydayachallenge.'

Many in the House would be aware that I have spoken about Scott and MND previously and that I determined to raise awareness of this disease. Some facts about MND are that there is no known cause, there is no effective treatment, there is no cure, the average life expectancy after diagnosis is 27 months, there is a death from it every 12 hours in Australia and it is 90 per cent random.

Scott, a former Suncorp executive, was well respected by all who knew him. Indeed, there are members of this House who knew Scott, with at least one member having worked with him. On 22 October 2010, Scott and his family's lives changed forever when they received the diagnosis that he had motor neurone disease. For some people this may be the end, but for Scott it was just the beginning. With determination and the support of his wife, Sarah, and two children, Abbey and Charlie, Scott began the journey on a number of fronts. This involved raising awareness about MND, helping others suffering from the disease and their families, fundraising for vital research and the commencement of the MND and Me Foundation.

I have been told that, in terms of fundraising, Scott and his team of supporters have raised over \$2 million since Scott's journey started. Scott brought together many different organisations and thousands of people in the process. Events such as Million Metres for MND and Muscle Up for MND, along with others, have not only raised money for vital research but have also raised valuable awareness of this disease. Scott, along with MND and Me, also purchased a building at Coorparoo, which is currently undergoing a transformation. This building is the Queensland MND and Me centre and will be the hub for the foundation to provide respite and services to sufferers of MND and their families.

I attended Scott's funeral, along with the member for Bulimba, on Tuesday this week. This happens to be the Australian MND Week. The funeral was one of the largest funerals I have been to and was a testament to the high regard in which Scott was held. I would like to sincerely commend Scott Sullivan for his contribution to the MND cause. Scott was a true community champion who will be missed by many. As a result of his passing, four people also have a chance of a new life thanks to Scott's generosity in donating his organs.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my sincere condolences to Scott's loving wife, Sarah, and his children, Abbey and Charlie. One thing is for certain: Scott's legacy will live on. I will continue, as will many others, to help in that regard wherever I can. Despite Scott's life being tragically cut short, the world is truly a better place for Scott having been a part of it. Rest in peace, Sully.

### Acton, Mr G

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.07 pm): It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise to speak today about the serious injury that was sustained by Graeme Acton of Paradise Lagoons at the Clarke Creek campdraft, Rockhampton, at about 2.30 last Friday afternoon. Graeme is a great iconic Queensland champion. He was seriously injured while participating in this campdraft.

On Saturday morning I had a phone call from the Premier. The Premier said to me, 'Vaughan, have you heard about Graeme Acton?' I said, 'Premier, I have not. What has happened?' He told me. I said, 'Premier, that could not be true.' I doubted him. Then I had to make my own inquiries. The Premier said to me, 'Mate, it is true.' It was a shock that has gone right across rural and regional Queensland and remote Queensland.

Graeme has beside him at the RBH here in Brisbane his wife, Jennie, their four adult children—Tom, Victoria, Hayley and Laura—along with Graeme's brothers Allen and Evan and their families keeping vigil. I spoke with Ian Lovegrove, a family spokesman, today. The latest health bulletin on Graeme is from his brother Allen at 11 am today. There has been no change in his condition in the past four days. We all take solace from this. The latest bulletin says that he is stable.

Graeme is one of those blokes who is a larger than life figure, a man amongst men and a gentleman amongst women. He has a passion for making a difference in everything he takes on. Along with his brother Evan they have shown drive and determination to build their cattle and property empire of Acton Land and Cattle, thus Acton Super Beef. Graeme was critically injured, as I say, in a campdraft last Friday. We all have a passion for something. Graeme Acton's passion was certainly campdrafting, and the family built the magnificent facility at Paradise Lagoons at Rockhampton, and it is a feature of campdrafting in this nature.

Graeme is also the deputy chair of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach. The whole of rural and remote Queensland and regional Queensland are praying for you, Graeme. They are praying with the Lord for you to have a speedy recovery. We are all anxiously waiting to hear your familiar gravelly voice again. Our sincere love and prayers and support are with Graeme, his darling wife, Jennie, and his family.

Queensland needs men like Graeme Acton. Old mate, we are riding stirrup to stirrup beside you and waiting for you to return. It is people like Graeme Acton who are seriously hurt from time to time, and at this particular time we offer our thoughts and prayers to all of those families out there that need our support at this time.

### **USQHub@Maryborough**



**Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (3.10 pm): I am sure that I am like most other members in this House. We chose to put up our hand to be a member because we saw local issues which we believed needed attention. One of those issues that bothered me was the fact that there was no direct access to university education located in Maryborough. All the other regional towns in close proximity each have a university campus which allows residents in those towns direct access to university facilities without the need to travel. My research had shown that a high proportion of Maryborough students do not go on to university studies after completing year 12. Many of those who do go on to university have to go elsewhere or have difficulty in attending USQ in Hervey Bay if they have to depend on public transport.

I was absolutely thrilled last week with the announcement of the location of the USQHub@Maryborough facility. This is the first step towards easily accessible university education for all residents of Maryborough. This facility will be located between the Maryborough State High School and Central State School in a very central part of Maryborough. The state government has contributed to this project by providing support in the form of a three-year lease for the building at a peppercorn rent. The space will be shared with the Institute of Professional Learning, an arm of the Department of Education, Training and Employment. I offer my heartfelt thanks to Minister Langbroek and the departmental staff in enabling this kind of support to USQ.

The USQHub@Maryborough facility will commence offering headstart courses for year 11 and 12 students in nursing and engineering in July. There will be 20 places in each course. These courses are the equivalent of a first-year subject in the engineering and nursing degrees and offer the opportunity for year 11 and 12 students to have a direct path into those degrees with one unit already completed.

The other component of the USQHub@Maryborough facility is the offering of a tertiary preparation program. This is a pathway for residents looking to take up a university course but who do not have the prerequisite qualifications. Once students have successfully completed the TPP, they could then be offered a place in most degree programs. TPP is ideally suited to mature age students. The USQHub@Maryborough will also offer learning support and career counselling.

I am most grateful to Mr Brett Langabeer, USQ Fraser Coast Executive Manager, who understood my concerns and vision for the provision of locally based tertiary education and has worked to deliver these opportunities. Applications for these courses can now be made with the university, and I urge year 11 and 12 students and residents to take up the opportunities which have now been provided.

### Advanced Breast Cancer Group

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (3.13 pm): This Sunday is Mother's Day and, like thousands of other women and men, I will be participating in the Women in Super Mother's Day Classic taking place in my electorate, amongst other locations. This is Australia's largest breast cancer fundraising event. It is a day when people come together to run to raise money for breast cancer research or to walk in memory of a loved one who has passed away from breast cancer.

An organisation in my electorate that supports women across Queensland who have a terminal breast cancer diagnosis is the Advanced Breast Cancer Group. The Advanced Breast Cancer Group has been supporting Queensland women with a secondary breast cancer or metastatic breast cancer diagnosis and their families throughout the state since 1999. For most of that time, this group has been funded a modest amount of \$150,000 annually by Queensland Health to provide psychosocial support to women and their families as they deal with their terminal diagnosis.

Recently the Newman government has advised the Advanced Breast Cancer Group that it will not be providing it with operational funding into the future. It has also been advised by the department that it may find funding success through the corporate sector. The callousness and heartlessness of this government really knows no bounds.

In March this year I attended an Advanced Breast Cancer Group workshop and met with women from Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Bribie Island, Sarina and Brisbane. Every woman I spoke with impressed on me the importance of the service and care they received from the Advanced Breast Cancer Group in assisting them and their families to confront the challenge of a terminal cancer diagnosis.

For many of the regional women, the Advanced Breast Cancer Group is their only contact with a support organisation and other women with a similar diagnosis. To be clear, this is the only service of its kind delivering psychosocial support to women who have a secondary breast cancer diagnosis. Admittedly, there are many support services for women with a primary diagnosis where chances of remission and recovery are very high. However, they do not cater for women with a secondary breast cancer diagnosis, where there is no prognosis of recovery.

Without this unique service, Queensland women, particularly rural women and their families, who are living daily with the challenge of a terminal diagnosis, will not only be disadvantaged but also be abandoned, as many of them told me. All governments—even the Newman government—have a responsibility to the sick and the dying. The Advanced Breast Cancer Group has a distinguished track record of supporting women with secondary breast cancer, providing emotional care and sustenance to women across Queensland, particularly those who are isolated and removed from services. I call on the Newman government and particularly the health minister to reinstate funding to the Advanced Breast Cancer Group so that it may continue to provide crucial support to women with a terminal breast cancer diagnosis and their families.

*(Time expired)*

### Hillier, Dr D

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (3.16 pm): I rise this afternoon to inform the House of the sad passing of Dr Doreen Hillier on Friday, 2 May 2014. Dr Hillier's life of almost 86 years was, it seems, spent in constant and dogmatic pursuit of service to others. I have received numerous testimonials outlining the care and professionalism of Doreen, spanning more than half a century.

Her long journey of dedicated service in the fields of gynaecology and obstetrics began in England around the end of the Second World War where she was to attain her degree prior to immigrating to Australia. Upon arrival, she set about continuing her career progression, and the progression went so well that in 1960 she set up her private practice on Stanley Street. In 1972 Doreen was joined by Dr Robyn Forsyth, and this partnership proved to be successful and rewarding at both a professional and personal level. It has been said that from the early days of the 1960s Doreen had become the doctor of choice to the nuns of the Mater Hospital, some of whom are still there today. About five years ago, she assisted with the birth of a child, of a child, of a child she had delivered at the Mater many years ago. Her referral network is testament to the level of admiration and respect for Dr Hillier.

Sadly, Doreen was diagnosed with breast cancer in July 2005 and, following surgery on a Friday, she tenaciously returned to the service of her patients the following Monday. She combatted the disease through a course of oral chemotherapy. However, in 2009 she was diagnosed with

terminal ovarian cancer. I note that today is World Ovarian Cancer Day and almost a quarter of a million women are diagnosed every year. Three minutes cannot do justice to the years of dedicated service that Dr Doreen Hillier has given to the many thousand families, the Mater Hospital and the wider community.

I have been contacted by people in recent times who express a hope that a ward at the new Lady Cilento Hospital, with whom she had once occupied the same surgery, might be named in her honour. I will make representations on their behalf in an attempt to see this through to fruition. Doreen is survived by her second husband of 54 years, Jack, who lives at their much loved home at Mount Nebo, which is in my electorate. While they have never had children together, they raised a family of four sons who have provided them with five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Her brother Peter lives in Buderim. A long-time friend and neighbour, Julia Chew, many years ago assumed the self-proclaimed title of 'foster-daughter', perhaps to provide some balance to the family's male domination. I will close with a quote of Helen Bray, a patient of Dr Hillier's over the 50-plus years: 'Dr Hillier was certainly a lovely lady, a doctor of distinction who has devoted her life to the care and wellbeing of her patients.' May Dr Hillier now rest in a well-deserved peace.

### Sandgate Electorate, Fishing Industry

 **Ms MILLARD** (Sandgate—LNP) (3.19 pm): I rise in the House today to address an issue that I have learnt a lot about as the Sandgate electorate's political representative, and that is fishing. But today I am going to focus on the commercial aspects of the state government's current fishing review rather than the recreational aspects, though for many of my small players in the electorate there is a fine line between the two.

I have been discussing the issues facing our local fishermen and prawn trawlers since before the 2012 election, which was during my earliest campaigning days. I want to thank the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for joining that discussion last week during a visit to my electorate. I thank the minister for asking our local fishermen for their input on the government's long overdue overhaul of the commercial fishing industry—for being the one to throw the line to our local fishermen.

Picture this: a fisherman operates a small trawler anything from three to six days a week. He started out as a deckhand in his early teens. Thirty years later, having led a life on the water doing what he loves and earning a living selling fresh prawns, he is wrestling with a 900-page piece of legislation driving a list of regulations that are long, confusing and almost whimsical. The previous Labor administration had not touched an outdated 1994 Fisheries Act in all that time, let alone all the other arrangements from unsubstantiated green zones to licensing arrangements that have made the fishing industry a labyrinth of inefficiency. How do 1,500 commercial operators in Queensland, already working out of one of the most sustainable fishing environments in the world, prosper? Labor had built a house without foundation and consequently Queensland's fishing industry has suffered. Thank goodness the house of overregulation is coming down. It is high time that someone tackles the monolith of the previous misadministration which the 1994 Fisheries Act represents. This government will be doing just that and via a very thorough, consultative, representative committee process.

It is no ordinary committee process. We are talking about an industry rebuild, not an industry renovation. The Newman government is already well on its way to establishing a solid framework and mandate from Queenslanders so it can start the painstaking process of working on the detail. If I may remind you all that Shorncliffe's fishermen are the small guys in this world of commercial operators. During the minister's recent visit, they made it clear to us that what they need is better industry representation, more information and certainty, and special consideration when it comes to the regulations and costs that they are simply not big enough to wear. As their proud MP, I ask you to remember my local prawn trawler fishermen. Next time you are in my electorate, head to Shorncliffe, Cabbage Tree Creek along Sinbad Street and buy some fresh prawns—not frozen but fresh—straight from our trawlers. After all, it is one of the few places left where you can.

### Southport Electorate, Achievements

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.21 pm): It is my great pleasure to rise in the House and provide an update on all of the great things happening in my electorate of Southport. The Newman government is getting on with the job of delivering better front-line services. A testament to this is some of the statistics we are seeing in our health services and the department of housing, and the figures we are seeing in respect of jobs and the economy. My congratulations go to the Minister for Tourism, Minister Stuckey, on the tremendous statistical growth we are seeing in visitor numbers to the Gold Coast.

For the 12 months to December last year we have seen a seven per cent increase in international visitors to the Gold Coast. It was my great pleasure today to host yet another Chinese delegation for lunch here in parliament. Last year we saw 792,000 international visitors come to the Gold Coast. That represents an estimated expenditure of some \$916 million and it is believed that is about a 10 per cent increase over the previous year. We are also seeing tremendous improvements in our health system. With the opening of the new Gold Coast University Hospital, 78 per cent of patients leave the emergency department within four hours compared with the statistics we saw under the previous government—just 63 per cent two or three years ago.

What a pleasure it was last week to receive an email from the head of the emergency department at our local hospital congratulating us as a government and the health minister on the expeditious and sensitive way in which he dealt with the SMO contracts. His colleagues were pleased that the matter had been brought to a resolution and that we as a government had been prepared to compromise and meet them part of the way. They were absolutely delighted.

I am sorry that the Minister for Housing is not here today, but I congratulate him also. In my electorate of Southport the waiting list for social housing as of February this year has gone down 61 per cent on where it was just two years ago. Two years ago when we came into government we saw some 400 people on public waiting lists for housing and now that is down to under 150 people. This is all testament to the fact that the Newman government is getting on with the job of delivering better services.

In closing, I want to congratulate Carol Baker and Wendy Bennett from the Gold Coast Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Group for their outstanding work in raising awareness of this issue. All members would have received this morning a purple ribbon to be worn on 12 May, and I am pleased to see some of my colleagues in the House already wearing the ribbon. I was a bit worried about the purple clashing with the red, so I do not have both on today. I note the Minister for Tourism has but it does match your top, Minister.

*(Time expired)*

### Wind Farms

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.24 pm): Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney has written seeking my opinion on the government's calling in of the wind farm's development application. From the language the Deputy Premier has used, it appears he wants this project to go ahead. The reality is that most residents in the Range View and Walkamin communities do not want this massive wind farm project, and many are questioning its viability and health risk compared to the Tully hydroelectric scheme that receives strong local support in the Ravenshoe-Mount Garnet region.

We have to point out that significant contributions to this wind farm development come from the federal government's grants for clean energy which will not stay with the local economy but will be taken offshore by a large Thai based company, and all turbines will be shipped from overseas while taxpayers and energy consumers will pay for this. I would like to point out a statement made by the Minister for Energy and Water, Mark McArdle, who said that the renewable energy target is increasing Queenslanders' electricity bills by \$81 per year. Mr McArdle said that renewable energy was important, but the challenge was making it cheap enough to compete with traditional forms of electricity. The energy minister has pointed out that he supports renewable energy. However, one must ensure the viability and cost of the energy schemes.

I have also taken heart from a speech Senator Ian Macdonald made in the Senate last February when he raised concerns about the health impacts of wind farms as well as being an eyesore. Senator Macdonald suggested hydroelectric schemes such as the Tully-Millstream were more viable alternatives. The former state government has already invested more than \$72 million in developing a Tully-Millstream hydroelectric scheme involving a series of dams and tunnels. The project was also designed to prevent flood mitigation which would help resolve flooding in Ingham and other low-lying areas. The reality is that the hydroelectric project would generate 600 megawatts while the wind farm would generate only 60 megawatts in real terms. The hydro scheme would create 700 jobs for seven years and will provide a massive boost to the Tablelands economy and produce everlasting clean energy for many decades to come while removing the need to transmit power at a higher cost from the south.

We must be prudent and question the viability of the \$550 million Mount Emerald wind farm operation which will increase electricity cost. As pointed out by Liberal senator Ian Macdonald, wind farms are a health risk and an eyesore. If we compare this to the \$700 million Tully-Millstream hydro

scheme that has local support, will deliver massive job creation, provide unlimited cheap and clean power, will help expand the mining and agricultural industries and assist flood mitigation, this is a project worthy of government support.

I call on both the state and federal government, the energy minister, Mark McArdle, the Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney, and Senator Ian Macdonald, who has already expressed great concern about wind farm projects, to review the health effects from the wind farm and initiate a cost-benefit analysis to identify the viability and benefits of the Tully-Millstream over the Emerald wind farm.

*(Time expired)*

### **Brisbane Roar; Safe Night Out Strategy**

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.27 pm): I rise to report to the House—even though I already know all honourable members would be aware of this—that on Sunday night one of my favourite sporting clubs in my electorate and fine purveyors of the world game, the mighty Brisbane Roar, defeated the Western Sydney Wanderers in the Hyundai A-League grand final at Suncorp Stadium. The Roar once again delivered the excitement, speed and exhilaration that has long been associated with their brand of football, staging once again a trademark second half fight-back after the Wanderers took the lead midway through the second half. The effervescent Besart Berisha equalised for the Roar with less than 10 minutes to go of ordinary time. With the score locked at 1-1, the teams headed back out for 30 minutes of extra time. After 15 minutes, the teams swapped ends, leaving the mighty Roar facing towards their beloved and now famous Den at the northern end. The stadium erupted when Henrique, the pocket rocket, slotted home a goal in the top left-hand corner to take the lead 2-1. The crowd remained on their feet as the final whistle went, and the Roar once again were crowned victors.

I would like to place on the record my congratulations to coach Mike Mulvey, to the brilliant and hardworking CEO Sean Dobson, to the commercial director David Poudre and to captain Matty Smith for his leadership on and off the field. Their focus, determination and sportsmanship are the reason they are admired and loved by fans and held up as heroes. The Roar has earned their rightful place in football history with three premierships in five years.

At the Wickham Hotel on Monday night, I was pleased to host my LGBTIQ Safe Night Out forum. With over 100 attendees from the LGBTIQ community and other stakeholders, the forum was held in conjunction with the Queensland AIDS Council and allowed me to further consult on the government's Safe Night Out Strategy. All enjoyed robust debate, discussing community and personal safety, police procedures, liaison officers and the importance of having a comprehensive, multifaceted plan of addressing alcohol and drug related violence in our community. I wish to especially thank John Mikelsons, the CEO of the Queensland AIDS Council, for his efforts throughout and the expert guest speakers—Dr Shirleene Robinson, who addressed issues relating to homophobic and transphobic abuse; and Mr Clinton Kempnich, from the Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre, who discussed issues of alcohol and drug misuse in our community. The first guest speaker of the evening was Acting Senior Sergeant Mel Cowie, an LGBTIQ police liaison officer. Mel discussed the programs and procedures that Queensland police provide to the community for safe nights out and for the overall building of relationships within the community.

This forum once again demonstrates that the government, through me as the local member, is engaging and listening to every part of the community. Each of us deserves to be able to go out and enjoy ourselves and feel safe. Only this government has a plan to make this a reality. I look forward to working with the community as we roll out our Safe Night Out Strategy in the coming months.

### **Queensland Police Service, QP150 Celebrations**

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (3.30 pm): On 15 April it was my great pleasure to be invited to attend the official unveiling of the QP150 artwork. This was a piece commissioned to celebrate and commemorate 150 years of policing in Queensland. I believe it is a stunning and appropriate tribute to our Police Service and the brave men and women, be they operational staff or officers, who have contributed to or will contribute to the protection and safety of our communities.

The magnificent artwork is a large triptych that now takes pride of place in the foyer of Police Headquarters on Roma Street in Brisbane. Twelve months in the making, it was a labour of love by renowned local artist Donald James Waters. Don is an established artist with a career spanning over three decades. Don is a contemporary artist with a passion for bold and bright colours as is often

evidenced in his work. Indeed, I have had the pleasure of making some small contribution on canvas—barely more than a scribble—and watched with some fascination while Don transferred my scribble into an incredible painting.

It is not often my practice to speak of a person's trade, but indeed today I speak of my good friend Don not because of his incredible talent with a brush but because of his passion for community. While Don is in fact a resident and constituent in the wonderful electorate of Coomera, he is a great friend and supporter to the city of Logan and my electorate of Waterford. Having donated pieces for various community initiatives, Don has raised many thousands of dollars for local charities. Given that his artworks can fetch tens of thousands of dollars at auction, it is certainly a generous contribution. As the president of his local progress association, chairman of the Beenleigh PCYC, chairman of the Advisory Council on Environmental Education and editor of his local monthly community newsletter, he is a man who is passionate about his community. It is for these reasons that I could not think of a more appropriate person or artist to contribute to such a significant anniversary for our Queensland Police Service.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge Commissioner Ian Stewart and the work that he and his officers and staff at the QPS undertake day in, day out. It is also appropriate that I recognise Don's wife, Margaret. I sometimes wonder whether or not she may be a long-suffering wife, and I say that with affection as I suspect life with an artist is never a straightforward one. Nonetheless, I also know the valuable contribution that both his wife and his beautiful daughter make to our community in their own right.

The success of a community can be measured by the collaboration between government and community with a view to ever improving the living standard of our constituents or residents. This will be an outcome that requires champions. I am ever thankful for the community minded people who are prepared to give of themselves for the betterment of others.

### **Toondah Harbour Priority Development Area**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.33 pm): The Toondah Harbour priority development project has reached another milestone and is now approaching an exciting stage. Along with the Weinam Creek PDA, this is the most important project in the Redlands for 20 to 30 years. Recently, the Redland City Council approved a revised scheme that is now with EDQ for preparation for the expression of interest. The councillors from Redland City Council voted 10-1 to support the revised scheme which was the result of a substantial consultation process and community feedback. Over 2,000 people from the Redland city area provided feedback in some form—mostly positive—showing high levels of community awareness and strong levels of support for the project. Stakeholder groups, including those representing community, business and environmental interests, have also had their say and have been largely positive.

Ten expert reports have been published by Jones Lang LaSalle, Cardno, Deicke Richards, BAAM Ecological Consultants, frc environmental and Engeny. These reports considered the Toondah Harbour upgrade with respect to the local ecology, economies, stormwater drainage, traffic, water and sewers, and they informed what will be the new development scheme. The state government now has the task of working within this revised framework to ensure that the project attracts suitable investors and provides the greatest public benefit and economic opportunities for the residents of Cleveland and Redland city. In the EOI stage, development applications will have to demonstrate how building structures will protect views, provide open space for the public, achieve good urban design outcomes and provide new recreational opportunities and better access to the foreshore, among other outcomes. As I have previously stated, any proposal to dredge or develop a marina would be strictly governed by the Marine Parks Act 2004, which requires detailed environmental assessment, mitigation strategies and environmental offsets to ensure any marina development does not detract from environmental values.

In conclusion, the LNP government is committed to finding the right balance, the right fit, for Toondah Harbour for locals and visitors alike and a world-class gateway and transport hub to Moreton Bay and North Stradbroke Island. This project fits our commitment to transition North Stradbroke Island to a non-sandmining future. Further, Toondah Harbour fits the LNP government's commitment to support economic development and development for community purposes. We are serious about working in partnership with local governments and ensuring they are empowered to plan for their own communities. I commend our government and the council for this partnership and for the leadership that has been 20 years in the making.

### Sonoma Coal Project

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (3.36 pm): In April 2005, a report from McCollum Environmental Management Services to the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act on the Sonoma Coal Project noted that—

Coral Creek is a sizeable watercourse ... a tributary of Pelican Creek which flows into the Bowen River ... The Bowen River is the nearest semi-permanent watercourse in the region.

It commended features of the project including—

- The construction of:
- flood control levees alongside Coral Creek to prevent ingress of floodwaters to pit operations;
- environmental and cultural heritage buffer between Coral Creek and the mining operation ...

In 2006 when the Sonoma mine was first proposed near Collinsville, QCoal acknowledged the environmental and heritage value of Coral Creek and said it would build a buffer zone to protect it from the mine. Yet when the company proposed diverting the creek in 2010, the state government told QCoal it did not require an environmental impact statement.

The creek diversion, which will see QCoal mine underneath the riverbed and divert Coral Creek by 1.2 kilometres, was not part of the initial plan for the Sonoma Mine. QCoal owner Chris Wallin is one of the biggest donors to the LNP, giving \$120,000 through two of his companies just before the 2012 state election. QCoal says the mining of coal underneath Coral Creek will extend the life of the Sonoma Mine by six to eight months.

In April 2010 QCoal pulled out of Queensland Coal Industry Rail Group's plan to present the state government with an alternative to the planned \$3 billion float of Queensland Rail's freight business. Farmer Garry Reed tried to stop the diversion of Coral Creek, saying that the waterway supplies half his water, damages the aquifer beneath and damages rare remnant vegetation. He said QCoal had promised to protect the creek in 2012.

Reed challenged QCoal's creek diversion approval in the Queensland Land Court, lost and had costs awarded against him, meaning he could lose his farm. How would honourable members feel if they were a farmer and a coalmine came along and did not do what it said it was going to do? This farmer then had to take the coalmine to court. He was awarded costs and now he is going to lose his farm purely because a mine that cannot be trusted plonked down beside him—and it is the biggest donor of the LNP. What is going on here? This sickens me. It is possible that we will have no EDO in Queensland, creating a severe imbalance between big business, big companies and the community. That is what this is about. This is liberalisation—big business, big companies and the community is separate.

In December 2012 the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development, responding to a request from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, noted—

... the proposed extension of the Sonoma mine is relatively small scale when compared to the existing mine, and therefore, the potential impacts from this extension on water resources are anticipated to be minor.

Honourable members can tell the farmers who are using those creeks to water cattle south of that mine that it is minimal. They have lost their water and now they have to pay for the court case that they lost as well.

### Anzac Day

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (3.39 pm): Last month I had the privilege of attending Anzac Day commemorative services at many schools and retirement villages in Stretton. Calamvale Community College, Runcorn Heights State School, Islamic College of Brisbane, Warrigal Road State School, Runcorn State School and Carramar Retirement Village held their services during the week. All the services were beautiful and very moving.

I wish to point out to the House that the memory and consequent respect of our Anzac soldiers is not upheld by just Australians and New Zealanders, but also by both the Chinese community and the Turkish and Islamic College communities that make up a large part of the multicultural demographic of Stretton. It is a little known fact that Australians of Chinese origin participated in both World War I and World War II and conflicts ever since. The Turkish-administered Wisdom College in Calamvale will hold several competitions to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Anzac, culminating in a journey for about 10 children to visit Turkey during Anzac week and homestay with

Turkish families for an authentic experience. I think the participation of non-Anglo-Saxons is a wonderful and touching token of our newest Australians to show their appreciation of the men and women who laid down their lives to make Australia the free and democratic country that it is today.

Sunnybank RSL held a service at 4 am to commemorate the landing of the little boats at Anzac Cove, followed a few hours later by a marvellous parade leading to their outdoor service and the laying of the wreaths. I was astounded by the number of people willing to sacrifice a little sleep to show their appreciation of those who sacrificed everything. Between those two services I also attended the dawn service at Cazna Gardens RSL Retirement Village. I was moved watching the very elderly residents and returned service men and women, some of whom could hardly walk, bend down with great difficulty to lay their wreaths at the memorial of their fallen friends and comrades. Let us ponder this quote I found, 'Soldiers go to war not because they hate what is in front of them, but for what they love that is behind them.' Lest we forget.

### Ipswich Show

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (3.41 pm): It is certainly a pleasure for me to be able to stand up and talk to Ipswich and all my colleagues about the Ipswich Show 2014. For those who want to make sure they get in early, it is being held on Friday, 16 May, Saturday, 17 May and Sunday, 18 May. The gates open at nine o'clock. Be sharp or you may not be able to get in.

The Ipswich Show actually commenced in 1873, a long time ago. I cannot tell honourable members how many people have attended the show, but I can tell them that in 2014, more likely than not, 30,000 people will attend. So make sure you get in and see Mr Kite. The position is that these 30,000 people will see as many as 20,000 individual exhibits. It will be so exciting. For my part, I do like the woodchop. It is fantastic. I love the woodchop and I love the cattle.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr BERRY:** Indeed. I also love Billy Seng, that piston head who runs the small engines. I say, 'Billy, I'll be down there to give you a hand. I have an idea of what to do.'

I would like to thank President Marcia Cruickshank, Vice-President Darren Zanow and—rusty by name and rusty by nature—Rusty Thomas, the two hardworking vice-presidents. The committee comprises about 40 committee workers who give up their time selflessly to work for their community. I know honourable members will particularly want to know that my wife, Karen, and I are judging the Miss Show Girl 2014 contest. I know very little about it, but I know my wife will help me out.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr BERRY:** I have now gained the skill to work out who wins without having to make a decision. The Ipswich Show Society ought to be known for more than just the Ipswich Show because of its work during the 2011 floods. This organisation located on the top of the hill really helped people out. With an hour's notice, they were able to accommodate 1,600 people from those floods. They were able to house, feed and store their personal possessions. It is a stalwart organisation within the community of Ipswich. The Ipswich Show is not only involved in promoting industry and enterprise; it also has other functions as well. Quite frankly, the 141st Ipswich Show is an appropriate time for the whole of Queensland to understand and know that this is the show to attend. Be there or be square.

### School Bus Routes, Safety

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (3.44 pm): Among the many joys of serving the people of Logan is the feeling I get when something for which I have been fighting comes to fruition, especially when it involves our younger generation. For many areas within the community public transportation is scarce, if not, non-existent. In areas such as Greater Flagstone, Greenbank, Logan Village and Yarrabilba, the only form of public transport that is available caters for the needs of our school-age children, and this is something the government needs to address. That said, students sometimes face treacherous road conditions in an attempt to reach their respective bus collection and drop-off locations. Whilst our government is committed to ensuring such a risk is either removed or considerably negated through the safe routes bus program, there are times when more action needs to be taken.

I was approached by two constituents, Nick and Michelle Brown, from North Maclean who, after several months of dealing with various transportation agencies, felt like they were treading water. I had the opportunity to join Nick and Michelle at their home where I inspected the environment surrounding the collection point. Without doubt, that point was in an unsafe location and posed

serious risk to not only the students, but also other motorists travelling along Teviot Road, which has a posted speed limit of 80 kilometres per hour. This danger was further escalated as the bus service was dropping off students in an overtaking lane as a result of a lack of a designated drop-off/collection point. Realising the serious risk of having primary age students cross an unmarked main arterial, I knew that it was imperative that action be taken as soon as possible to adequately protect the safety of our students before a serious incident occurred.

Over the past several weeks it has been my pleasure to work with the Bus Queensland staff located in Park Ridge, to come together to produce a viable solution to reduce the risk posed towards our students. I would like to commend the efforts of Mr Paul Davies, General Manager of Bus Queensland, for his assistance and quick response to our community's call for action. As a result of our joint efforts, I am pleased to announce to residents living near Teviot Road and Gracelands Drive that the current school bus route will be amended to allow the students to board and disembark safely.

While this collection point has been changed for the better, many locations across our state may remain potential hazards. I call on local councils to take advantage of the support our state government is offering to improve student travel. By working together, we will ensure that our students are provided with the safest of environments possible as they travel to and from school. Providing students with a safe means of travel is only part of the solution. The other element is driver safety and awareness. We do our utmost to protect our children. However, as it is in their nature, our children can often be unpredictable. As motorists, we too play a part in student safety. By remaining vigilant of the road conditions and environment, we can help eliminate the risks to other motorists and pedestrians alike. Working together, we can maintain a safe Logan whilst we keep charging ahead.

### Inland Highway



**Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (3.47 pm): I rise to speak about the inland highway. About two years ago, early into my term in office, a local transport operator in my region who had about 38 triple road trains said to me, 'You've got a problem. They're not keeping up with the maintenance on the Bruce Highway, so you're not going to see enough maintenance on the Flinders Highway.' He said, 'But I've got an answer for you: make them open the inland up to triples. Most of that road exists already. They've only got to finish off a bit, and you can take triple road trains on the inland. Its 90-tonne capacity will take two B-doubles off, or 45 tonne.' What a cost-effective solution!

I must commend the Premier for finally recognising the inland highway situation, which he addressed recently when dealing with flooding from the recent cyclone. I am very pleased, and I commend him for being so open-minded about this. It has since been taken up by many others. I must acknowledge, with humility, that the US army built that road in World War II. They saw it as a strategic backup to the coastal highway; 70 years later we are giving it the same recognition. One property up on the Hann Highway 10 years ago used to take 10 to 12 hours to truck cattle to nearby Hughenden. With the upgrades on that road, it now takes five hours. If you multiply that by the thousands of cattle properties in that area, you realise what sort of advantage you have.

In the Cairns-tropical coast-Tableland area, some five years ago it was estimated that 400,000 tonnes per annum, requiring about 50 trailers a day—or 100 back-and-forward movements—was needed to go along the Bruce Highway. It is estimated that about 25 per cent of outbound freight from the same area could be diverted over the inland route, generating about 12 long-distance movements a day. Companies like Blenners Transport or Mackays Bananas—which have now moved into Lakeland Downs—must be licking their lips at the prospective cost savings and competitiveness that this sort of scenario will provide to all businesses that exist in the north. The inland highway can save two days of travel and will have the capacity to save 800 kilometres on the journey from Cairns to Melbourne, which is why Advance Cairns included this concept as one of its top five priorities before the last state election.

The cost of maintenance on the inland highway will be significantly smaller than the Bruce Highway once it is established because the same standards needed on the high rainfall areas of the tropical coast are not required. The only sections of bitumen that remain to be completed between Cairns and Melbourne are about 100 kilometres on the Hann Highway and 34 kilometres on the Torrens Creek-Aramac road. A lot of money has been spent on the Hann Highway, but none of that benefit will be realised until that bitumen sealing is finished. There will be many other advantages if this work is completed: stock freight movements are big; there will be a strategic benefit in getting away from those highly flood-prone areas; it will provide employment to inland councils; and there is an opportunity for an inland logistics centre, stopping bottlenecks in the city.

### Sarina Skills Centre

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (3.50 pm): I was both honoured and humbled last Thursday on 1 May to welcome the Hon. JP Langbroek, the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, and John McVeigh, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, to my electorate to dedicate the skills centre that I have spoken about many times in parliament: the Sarina Rural Skills Centre, which is attached to the Sarina High School.

More than 70 people turned up to that dedication, and it was very heartening to see the number of community people that came along to the dedication of the centre. The centre started in 2004, a community board was formed, and in 2008 it became incorporated with an inaugural membership of eight: Max Wilmot, chairman of the board; cane farmer Ron Gurnett, deputy chair; Karen Farrell, secretary treasurer; Bill Pickering, high school principal; Jon Eaton, head of department; Royce Bishop, engineer; Ashton Solli, school student representative; and myself. Going into the AGM in 2014 were: cane farmer Ron Gurnett, chair; former mayor of Sarina Shire Karen May, deputy chair; Karen Farrell, secretary; former principal Bill Pickering, treasurer; principal Bruce Heggie; agriculture and engineering heads of department; Michael Cunningham, Sarina High School P&C president; Paul Marsh, beekeeper; Tony Dwyer, manager of the Mackay Landmark franchise; Rob Sluggett, agricultural engineer; Malcolm Langdon, cane farmer; Len Caruana, engineer; and Sam Raciti, CEO of the Mudth-Niyleta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation.

The executive manager of Education Queensland, Wayne Butler, had a huge impact on the creation of this centre and is now the assistant director-general of state schools operation in Queensland. Many local communities contributed to this great skill centre in Sarina.

I have not mentioned this, but I am humbled that the skill centre is now known as the Ted Malone Sarina Rural Skills Centre.

### Brisbane Inner North Sporting Community

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (3.53 pm): It was a pleasure to introduce the Hon. Steve Dickson MP, Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, to representatives of local sporting groups during his recent visit to the Stafford electorate on Tuesday, 29 April. The opportunity for better linkages between community sport, preventative health and recreation policy frameworks was highlighted by the local sporting club representatives.

The Brisbane Inner North Sporting Community (BINSC), as the representative for six different sports, shared their vision with Minister Dickson of a prevention centred model for healthier lifestyles. This model would see greater alignment within the community, built environment, sport, health, tourism, transport and recreation, with the key role of sporting and recreational clubs focusing their resources on avenues of preventative health care delivered through sustainable community sport. Funding is intended to support a prevention focused model, with the Stafford electorate as a healthier lifestyle precinct.

With great pressure on volunteer organisations, it was also identified that there is indeed a need for volunteer managers, coaches and administrators to be supported and readied to meet the expectations of their associations—and indeed, the government—that we actually deliver on the sport of choice within the community. Community clubs do need that support in training, recruiting and maintaining volunteers. Specific training would also see mature age volunteers upskilled.

The opportunities for an increase in sport and community wellness and social and recreational activities would see an expansion through the sharing of club facilities. The clubs also discussed the need to further develop forms of self-sustainability through better utilisation of their facilities and the adoption of space-sharing models so that we see better outcomes for the community.

The interactions on the visit allowed the ministers to engage with representatives from local clubs and, indeed, take on board their key issues. Minister Dickson reiterated the Newman government's support and commitment to enabling more Queenslanders to get involved in sport and recreation, with outcomes that include a healthier lifestyle and stronger and more vibrant and productive communities.

The clubs were encouraged to apply for funding through the Get in the Game funding initiatives, and my office is looking forward to assisting in that regard. On behalf of the Stafford sporting community, I thank the minister for his visit and indeed thank all of the community representatives, particularly Mr David McKellar from BINSC, for facilitating such a useful and productive afternoon.

### Redlands Electorate, Anzac Day

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (3.56 pm): Today I rise to reminisce and to acknowledge and pay my respects to the people who organised and ran the Anzac Day ceremonies right across Redlands. Redlands is quite different to many electorates. I understand the pressures that all members have in trying to get to all of the ceremonies across their respective electorates, but there is nothing quite as haunting as a dawn service at Redland Bay with the tide in and barely a ripple on the water. There was a cool chill in the air, which is a far cry from the scenes that confronted our troops in Gallipoli all those many years ago.

My only contrast to that is the fact that I cannot get to all of the dawn services. My ability to attend all of them is not something that I can achieve. Each one has its own charm and its own character. As I have mentioned, Redland Bay is quite possibly the primary service in terms of attendance and community support. When I look across to Coochiemudlo Island when standing there looking to the south, with Stradbroke Island across to the east and Macleay Island directly in front and a glimpse of Redland Bay lighting, it is a waterfront dawn service attended by those on the island who are very passionate about their remembrance ceremony. Lamb Island also has its own service, as does Russell Island in the shadow of Stradbroke Island. Watching the sun rise from the cenotaph in front of the RSL club is really quite momentous. Macleay Island has a service which looks to the north. We stare into Dunwich; we look across at Horseshoe Bay. Again, that still harbour with the inky black water as the dawn slowly rises really is a fitting place to pay tribute and to pay homage and to remember the Anzacs. Then there is Karragarra, which always likes to do things a little differently. It has an afternoon service. Again, you look across the channel at Macleay Island and it is done in a very fitting and reverent way.

I also give my thanks and pay my respects to all of the schools that are helping to keep the service alive—that Anzac spirit as we approach the eve of the 100th anniversary. I was able to attend Sheldon College and Faith Lutheran services. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend all of the other schools such as Victoria Point State School, Victoria Point State High School, Redland Bay, Mount Cotton, Macleay, Russell, Carbrook and St Rita's and colleges such as Kimberley, Calvary, Chisholm and Carmel. I also pay special tribute to all of the many cadets who attended the catafalque parties, the members of TS Diamantina and TS Norfolk for their contribution to the services, and most of all the various RSL subbranches—Coochiemudlo Island, Russell Island and Redland Bay. I thank them most sincerely for their support and contribution to those services and ceremonies.

## ETHICS COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (4.00 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That this House notes report No. 146 of the Ethics Committee and the recommendation of the committee that a right of reply be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*; and
- (2) That the House adopt the committee's recommendation and incorporate the right of reply into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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RESPONSE BY MR IAN LANGDON, CHAIR OF THE GOLD COAST HOSPITAL AND HEALTH BOARD, TO A STATEMENT MADE BY THE MEMBER FOR GAVEN (DR ALEX DOUGLAS MP) ON 4 MARCH 2014

On 4 March 2014, the Member for Gaven made the following statement in the Queensland Parliament:

The local boards have appointed bullies to engage in none-too-subtle coercion tactics. At this point I will name Dr Will Butcher at the Gold Coast Hospital as engaging in such activity, and I call on the minister to suspend him immediately for doing so.

The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Board did not appoint Dr William Butcher to be a bully nor to engage in coercion tactics. There is no evidence to suggest that bullying and coercion tactics by Dr William Butcher have occurred.

An assertion that the Board made such an appointment is false and offensive to the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Board.

## CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.01 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, the Bail Act 1980, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002, the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003, the Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1984, the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, the Evidence Act 1977, the Justices Act 1886, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and the Youth Justice Act 1992 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2014 [\[5053\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[5054\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2014 which provides miscellaneous amendments to a number of criminal law and criminal law related statutes. The bill represents this government's ongoing commitment to get tough on crime in Queensland to make this state the safest place to raise a family. I want to briefly outline some of the more significant amendments. The bill amends chapter 68 of the Criminal Code to retrospectively apply the exceptions to the rules against double jeopardy. Queensland's double jeopardy exception regime will apply to all acquittals of a relevant offence, irrespective of when the alleged offence was committed and the timing of the acquittal. Queensland's double jeopardy exception regime allows for the retrial of a person acquitted of murder if there is fresh and compelling evidence. It also allows for the retrial of a person acquitted of an offence carrying a maximum penalty of 25 years imprisonment or more if the acquittal is a tainted acquittal. However, the exception regime only applies to acquittals for relevant offences where the acquittal occurred on or after the commencement of the exception regime on 25 October 2007.

There are compelling reasons why we should amend the Criminal Code to apply the exception regime to all relevant acquittals, no matter their timing. The other Australian jurisdictions apply their exception regimes retrospectively. Queensland is inconsistent in that regard. It can be argued that the current Queensland approach draws an arbitrary distinction between persons acquitted before and after 25 October 2007. Victims of crime and the community can be justifiably outraged where new evidence in an old case is obtained and the double jeopardy exception regime would otherwise have applied but for a mere accident of timing. Advances in forensic and scientific technology and the high quality and reliability of subsequent evidence means that, without retrospectivity, the potential advantage in applying new and advancing technology to old cases is lost. We must have regard to the extremely serious and dangerous nature of offences covered by the double jeopardy exception regime. There is a strong public interest in pursuing convictions for the most heinous unsolved crimes, in particular the offence of murder. Importantly, all of the existing protective safeguards under chapter 68 continue to apply irrespective of the timing of the acquittal. In order to present a new indictment against an acquitted person, the Director of Public Prosecutions must apply for approval to the Court of Appeal. The bill also introduces new criminal offences and amends some existing offences.

Queenslanders love their sport and sport betting is a rapidly growing part of the billion dollar per year wagering market. Unfortunately some people, including those in criminal gangs, try to corrupt sport for their own profit. This bill introduces six new offences into the Criminal Code that target match-fixing conduct which reflect the government's commitment to the national policy of match-fixing in sport. These new offences will protect the integrity of sports betting and address conduct if a person engages in, facilitates or conceals match-fixing conduct; uses information about match-fixing conduct; or uses inside information for betting purposes. Cheats who interfere with sporting events will face a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment for the match-fixing conduct offences and two years imprisonment for using inside information.

The bill inserts a new offence into the Criminal Code of serious animal cruelty. The new offence will target those persons who intentionally inflict severe pain and suffering on animals—in effect, their torture. This type of offending is abhorrent and, to ensure offenders are appropriately punished, the new offence carries a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment. The government shares the community's frustration when offenders who have done terrible things to animals walk free without any jail time. This new offence sends a clear message that animal cruelty will not be tolerated in

Queensland. The bill also amends the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 to give animal welfare officers greater powers to investigate the new offence of serious animal cruelty. These amendments will ensure alleged offences can be appropriately investigated and offenders are brought to justice.

The bill amends the existing offence of stealing by looting in the Criminal Code to ensure the increased penalty applies to an offender who steals property from a declared area under the Disaster Management Act 2003, including when the theft occurs immediately after the declaration ends to ensure victims are appropriately protected until they return to their property. The amendment implements recommendation 2 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee in its report No. 40, which was directed at the Queensland government. The amendment acknowledges the particular vulnerability of a community affected by the making of such a declaration. Opportunistic offenders who steal during times of disaster must face strong punishments.

The bill increases the maximum penalty for the offence of procuring engagement in prostitution in section 229G(2) of the Criminal Code where the person procured is a child or a person with an impairment of the mind. Offences that come to light have generally been of a shocking nature and understandably attracted significant moral outrage and denouncement. To ensure the adequate punishment of offenders who prey and exploit the young and the vulnerable in our community, the maximum penalty is increased from 14 years to 20 years imprisonment and the offence is added to the schedule of serious violent offences in the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992.

The bill strengthens Queensland's community protective regime provided by the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003 by creating an increased penalty for the offence of contravening a condition of a supervised release order. The increased penalty will apply where the contravention involves the dangerous sex offender removing or tampering with a monitoring device such as a GPS tracking device which the offender is required to wear. The interference with a monitoring device by a released dangerous prisoner strikes at the heart of this protective community protection regime and mandates strong penalties to condemn and deter such a serious contravention. Where a dangerous sex offender removes or tampers with their monitoring device, they will now face a much higher maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and will be required to serve a mandatory minimum jail term of at least one year in prison.

The bill also extends the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act to include child sex offences that involve a fictitious child. The amendment addresses a legislative gap resulting from the Court of Appeal decision in *Dodge v Attorney-General for the State of Queensland* 2012 QCA 280 and will mean that the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offences) Act will apply, for example, to the offence of using the internet to procure a child under 16 for sexual activity which involved a covert police officer posing as a child.

The bill also provides a number of amendments to clarify or otherwise improve the operation of criminal laws in this state. The bill strengthens Queensland's bail laws to require a court or police officer to consider imposing a special condition for the surrender of a defendant's passport when granting bail to a nonresident. The bill also provides that where such a condition is imposed in relation to a defendant's bail, irrespective of whether or not they are a nonresident, the defendant must be held in custody until their passport has been surrendered. These provisions will ensure that accused persons cannot use their passport to flee the jurisdiction to avoid the prosecution process.

The bill amends the Evidence Act 1977 to establish a rebuttable presumption that an expert witness is to give their testimony in a court proceeding by audio or audiovisual link. This amendment aims to encourage greater participation in the justice system by skilled witnesses and may reduce the cost and disruption to them caused by providing their time to assist in court proceedings. Amendments are made to the Evidence Act 1977 to replace the current complex and outdated computer evidence provision in section 95.

The bill also makes several amendments to the Justices Act 1886. Amendments are made to complement the implementation of a web based portal for electronic pleas of guilty in the Magistrates Court. This amendment is consistent with recommendation 123 of the Queensland Commission of Audit report and improves the efficiency of the courts in dealing with pleas of guilty for simple and regulatory offences. The report also recommended that electronic pleas of guilty be introduced for minor indictable offences. I wish to advise the House that the government will consider expanding the availability of electronic pleas of guilty to minor indictable offences in the future. Amendments are made to set the position with respect to the extent a court may rely upon a prior conviction at sentencing where a notice of intention to allege a prior conviction is not served in accordance with

section 47 of the Justices Act. Finally, amendments are made to provide the Attorney-General with standing to appeal simple offences disposed of summarily. This amendment is complementary to the Attorney-General's existing appeal powers.

The bill amends the Penalties and Sentences Act to ensure the confidentiality and protection of informants who significantly assist law enforcement agencies with their investigations but fall outside the ambit of an existing provision in section 13A of the act. Protecting the safety of an informant and the confidentiality of the information provided is vitally important to encourage others to cooperate with law enforcement agencies and to not jeopardise ongoing investigations.

The Drugs Misuse Act 1986 is amended to allow the minister to recommend the prescription of a substance in the Drugs Misuse Regulation without considering all the matters listed in section 134A of the act where it is necessary to regulate the substance as a matter of urgency.

To support the government's commitment to taking the profit out of crime, the bill amends the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002 to remove the requirement that interstate restraining orders and pecuniary penalty orders be based on a criminal charge or conviction. Serious criminal activity operates across state and territory borders and this amendment is vital to proper interstate cooperation on confiscation matters.

The bill amends the Youth Justice Act 1992 to address two technical matters and an emergent issue following the commencement of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014 on 28 March 2014. To better protect staff, offenders and property at the Lincoln Springs sentenced youth boot camp centre, youth detention centre workers will be engaged in supervising young offenders at this centre. In order to properly equip these staff to enforce the centre's safety and security and to manage young offenders, the bill amends the Youth Justice Act 1992 enabling these staff to use, if necessary, practices such as use of force, restraint, separation and personal searches. The use and recording of these practices will be governed by clear regulatory guidelines inserted into the Youth Justice Regulation 2003 similar to those governing the use of these practices in detention centres. The government is committed to fundamental reform of the Queensland youth justice system and ensuring the efficient and effective running of the youth boot camp program is one part of this process.

The bill also amends the Youth Justice Act to ensure the Children's Court, when sentencing children for offences in open court, is able to receive information identifying children as subject to the child protection system. Restrictions under the Child Protection Act 1999 on the publication of this information will remain in force.

The bill also amends the Acts Interpretation Act 1954 to allow chairs of various government boards, tribunals and similar entities established under an act to choose their preferred title, whether it be 'chair', 'chairperson', 'chairman' or 'chairwoman' or another similar title irrespective of what chair title is used in an act. The amendment also applies to deputy chairs. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.14 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

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

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.14 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill by 28 July 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1445, on motion of Mr Langbroek—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (4.14 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014. I want to start by thanking the secretariat and staff who helped the committee throughout its inquiry and arranged for all the stakeholders to be able to be to be present and those who made submissions on behalf of their authorities.

As most members in this place would know, education services in my electorate is an area that I am very passionate about. It is in line with this government's mantra of crayon-to-career. The TAFE sector—or the VET sector about which we are talking at the moment—is a very large part of the education sector, particularly for those people in year 10 and above as they leave high school and embark on a career. In my electorate alone, there has been a heavy focus on providing new kindies. In fact, a \$1.25 million kindy has just been built. There has been a focus on the early years of children, with the provision of prep teacher aides in all of our schools. Also, currently, the construction of the new Burpengary high school is underway. That is another piece of vital infrastructure for a growing community such as my local area.

This bill is pretty straightforward. I have listened to some of the comments made in this debate by members, particularly our committee chair, Howard Hobbs, who made some very relevant points in regard to what this bill is about. I have also heard some of the points made by the Labor Party in this place with regard to the bill being about asset sales and all of that sort of nonsense. This bill is about establishing an authority to manage the training assets. One of the recommendations of the independent Commission of Audit was to ensure that those assets that are currently operated by the education sector can be managed by a separate authority to allow the training mechanisms of the VET sector to continue to flourish. The member for Redcliffe mentioned selling assets and closing down TAFEs. To be quite frank, that is just nonsense. This bill is about ensuring that someone has the capacity to officially manage the assets of the VET sector.

I want to make the point to all honourable members in the parliament that, as the minister said in his introductory speech, it is important to note that a lot of the assets—particularly those TAFEs around town—are well underutilised. Throughout the inquiry into this bill we heard from stakeholders and the department that some of these TAFE facilities were 50 per cent to 60 per cent underutilised for a large portion of the time. As you would expect, a lot of that underutilisation centred around night-time—from 6 pm onwards—where some TAFEs were 80 per cent to 90 per cent underutilised. I have a background in hospitality—and I will touch on that shortly. I have conducted a lot of traineeships in my family business, which I operated for a long time, and I have a bit of experience in regard to the utilisation of TAFEs after hours.

I make the point that this bill, besides setting up an authority to manage the assets, allows government owned assets—current TAFE and VET service facilities—to be utilised more by non-government organisations and private companies. Throughout the Queensland Plan process I found it interesting that we have a number of facilities—including our schools—that taxpayers pay for, costing hundreds of millions of dollars, sitting around with nobody in them. They are underutilised and not being taken advantage of. It is critical to ensure that these assets that the taxpayers have paid for are utilised. It allows organisations, whether it is a non-government organisation or a private sector firm, to utilise those facilities to deliver their services which will revitalise those front-line services through government or non-government third-party companies.

My sister was a product of TAFE. I remember fondly going with my father in the car to pick her up from the local TAFE. My father was a boilermaker. My brother was a boilermaker. A lot of us went through that sector. I was a product of TAFE myself, undertaking a bakery traineeship at the age of 14 and obviously having experience through the local pizza shop. This is not, as the Labor Party says, about selling off assets. It is not throwing these assets into the scrap heap and trying to close TAFE down. It is an important part of the curriculum, in the crayon-to-career approach, to have a strong VET sector. People who go through grades 9, 10 and 11 have the option of an OP qualification and going on to university, but some people do not choose that path. That is certainly not the path I took. I went through the VET sector. Having a strong VET sector is absolutely critical. The bill does

not deal with the VET and TAFE sector training mechanisms: it is in relation to the assets, but by removing the management of those assets and letting a separate authority manage them allows the training providers to concentrate on revitalising and delivering world-class training.

Throughout the last couple of years we have seen a reduction in the number of employers wanting to accept TAFE qualifications as an appropriate mechanism for them to hire staff. The reason for that is that there are a lot of TAFEs where people undertake a qualification that seem to be more focused on getting a government subsidy or another student through the system rather than concentrating on the outcome. We have experienced this through our own pizza shop. I have a number of friends and colleagues who are TAFE lecturers and tutors. They have told me that by taking asset management away it will allow the TAFE and the VET sector to concentrate on delivering learning outcomes for their students. When students qualify with good operational, hands-on skills, which is what the TAFE and VET sectors are all about, they are able to utilise those skills. It gives employers confidence that those qualifications are up to scratch when they have people who are highly skilled and I think overall it revitalises the sector.

I support the QTAMA Bill. I support QTAMA being set up to manage these assets. I am sure that throughout all our electorates, including mine in the Moreton Bay region, those facilities will be better managed and those that are underutilised will be utilised fully by other parties to ensure that people are receiving the qualifications that they need with that crayon-to-career approach leading to a good career after school. I support the bill tonight.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (4.24 pm): The Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014, which was introduced to the parliament on Tuesday, 4 March 2014, seeks to establish an independent statutory body, the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, to provide for the efficient and effective management of state owned training assets primarily for the provision of vocational education and training, VET, in accordance with sound commercial principles. However, the asset management arrangements to be ushered in by this bill have not to date been established in any other Australian jurisdiction and there is therefore no track record that can be examined to assess their likely effects.

This bill as tabled identifies a number of commercial objectives for QTAMA but is silent in relation to the potential effects on the range, accessibility and quality of VET delivery generally or on the operation of TAFE as the public VET provider. In its submissions to the inquiry on the bill by the parliamentary Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, the Queensland Teachers Union expressed concerns about the potentially negative effects of stripping Queensland TAFE institutes of their assets, selling off some TAFE campuses in part or total and opening up TAFE campuses for use by private for-profit providers. There is the potential for abandonment or significant downsizing by TAFE of provision of certain courses and in certain geographical areas and there is no guarantee that community services obligations—student support services, counselling, literacy and numeracy support—will be provided.

The Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's report on the bill includes several recommendations which are designed to address and allay concerns about the potential negative impact of the legislation on VET generally and TAFE in particular. These recommendations should be adopted.

This is a sale of assets, there is no doubt about it. I have written to the department and had it confirmed that the money will be going into consolidated revenue. We certainly will not be supporting this bill tonight. I will be moving amendments to try to get some common sense put in place.

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algeria—LNP) (4.27 pm): I rise tonight to make my contribution to the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014. I am a member of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee that was tasked with investigating this bill. The Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014, or the QTAMA Bill, as it is commonly called, was referred to the committee on 4 March 2014. We were briefed as a committee by the Department of Housing and Public Works and we received one submission from the Queensland Teachers Union. The committee held a public hearing and a public briefing by the Department of Housing and Public Works on 2 April 2014.

The objective of the bill is to establish an independent statutory body, the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, or QTAMA, as I have said, to provide for the efficient and effective management of state owned training assets primarily for the provision of vocational education and

training in accordance with sound commercial principles. By establishing QTAMA, the policy objectives to be achieved are: to be the specialist owner and manager of the state's training assets; to enhance competition by providing access to public training facilities on a commercial basis for all registered training organisations in Queensland thereby removing a significant barrier to market entry; to address any public perception that TAFE Queensland has an effective monopoly within the Queensland VET system through exclusive access to public infrastructure; and to improve the utilisation rates by managing the public infrastructure on a commercial basis, including implementing disposal processes for obsolete or underutilised assets.

In June 2012, the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce was established by the Premier and the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. It was established in line with the government's commitment to reform Queensland's vocational education and training sector. The task force considered previous technical and further education reviews, which had found that the utilisation of TAFE Queensland's assets is low, the asset base is relatively small in comparison with other jurisdictions and at significant risk of degradation, that a major asset review is required and that there is a shortfall in ongoing capital funding without the ability to invest in new infrastructure. In its final report, the task force recommended a range of strategies that will be required to substantially reduce TAFE Queensland's current infrastructure footprint and increase utilisation of assets to ensure longer term viability. Earlier in the debate today, the member for Morayfield mentioned that some TAFE utilisation rates are shocking. After six o'clock, some TAFEs stand empty 80 per cent of the time. That is ridiculous. You cannot have an empty room. Unlike the Labor Party, we want value for money from our public assets and we will not throw good money after bad.

The task force recommended that the strategic asset management strategy be immediately set in train under a central point of government in consultation with relevant stakeholders and subject to appropriate governance and oversight. It recommended that this strategy should address value-added solutions to the management of existing assets and the examination of leased and/or shared facilities; increased and optimal utilisation rates and accompanying incentives and capital charges; consolidation of existing TAFE campuses; the strategic disposal of surplus infrastructure; and appropriate third-party access strategies to public training infrastructure. In its response to the task force's final report, the Queensland government stated—

The challenge now is to rationalise assets that are no longer required and reinvest in modern, attractive and welcoming learning and training environments for students.

Although we are speaking about further education, this does hark back to what this government had to do when we came to office, particularly around our primary and secondary schools. The Labor government had let the maintenance backlog blow out. Schools had peeling paint and things were falling down. In my local schools some of the problems were quite atrocious. It was a failure of the Labor government and the then education ministers to address that problem.

The Queensland government has clearly articulated its objectives for the VET sector in its reform action plan 'Great skills. Real opportunities.'. The three principle planks in that action plan are: engaging industry and employers in a partnership to match training to employment, ensuring that it is accessible to all Queenslanders and providing quality training linked to employment outcomes. In the committee hearings, concern was raised around access by the public to the facilities of TAFE Queensland. As stated in the committee report—

The Minister for Housing and Public Works and Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education, Ms Saxon Rice MP, have both stated that TAFE will be given priority access to facilities in the first instance:

Ms Rice said she expected TAFEs to have "first dibs" on the assets ... TAFEs would have "first access" to the facility they required, with private training organisations able to bid for leftover facilities, she said.

When the proposal was flagged last June, the government said TAFEs would have "first dibs" on the assets. Mr Mander's spokesman said they would have priority access until mid-2016 "to honour commitments to existing students".

At the public hearing on 2 April 2014, the Department advised:

It is probably worth noting ... that for the first two years after the implementation of QTAMA there is going to be an arrangement whereby TAFE will have preferential access to the training space. This was a recommendation that was made by the Commission of Audit in order to, if you will, ease TAFE's way into full contestability. So, assuming the bill passes as expected, that would run from July 2014 through to the end of June 2016, which is a considerable period of time, I would think, for TAFE to adjust to the altered circumstances that exist. That is the primary mechanism for smoothing the passage, if you will, of TAFE into the fully contestable world that it is entering from 1 July.

I put on the record my thanks to members of the secretariat who worked very hard for the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee. They are a wonderful group of people. Without them, I am sure we would be like a boat in a big ocean, floating around and not knowing exactly the direction in which we need to be going. I also put on the record my thanks to the other committee members, particularly the chair, the Hon. Howard Hobbs, the grandfather of the House. I am very privileged—and I know that the other members of the committee feel this way as well—to have a committee chair with such vast experience in all things parliament and who is very understanding of processes and personalities. I find it an absolute honour and a privilege to serve with him.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (4.35 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution on the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014, which has been referred to in contributions on the debate so far as the QTAMA Bill. It will come as no surprise to most people in the House that the flagship TAFE institution in Queensland, the Southbank Institute of TAFE, is in my electorate of South Brisbane. It is quite a large facility and my contribution largely focuses on concerns I have for that training institute under the new arrangements that will be brought about by the QTAMA Bill.

There is no doubt that the purpose of this bill is to consolidate the assets base of the TAFE training sector in Queensland and to pursue an aggressive disposal of TAFE assets that the board deems surplus to requirements. There is also no doubt that this bill will lead to the full commercial exploitation of the assets that are currently held in public trust for TAFE training for the provision of adult skills and trades training throughout Queensland. There are very real concerns about what that will mean for the provision of public adult training programs at TAFE into the future.

I seek the indulgence of the assembly to read from the submission provided by the Queensland Teachers Union to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee inquiry into the bill. The Teachers Union stated—

The effect of this Bill is to strip Queensland TAFE institutes their assets, and open up TAFE campuses for use by private for-profit providers. Additionally, some Queensland TAFE campuses will be sold in part or total. The potential for abandonment or significant downsizing by TAFE of provision in certain courses and in certain geographical areas is significant. There is no guarantee that community service obligations—student support services, counselling, literacy and numeracy support—will be provided.

I have a very deep concern in relation to the future of the Southbank Institute of TAFE. Is part of it to be sold so that it can fill the coffers of the government, as so many other education assets in South Brisbane have been to date? Under the portfolio of the Minister for Education and Training, in South Brisbane already three large parcels have been sold to developer mates with no thought for the long-term provision of additional education facilities in the South Brisbane electorate, while many thousands of new residents come in under a higher density local neighbourhood plan. This is not good policy. This is not good governance. I think that the eventual outcome of the QTAMA Bill will see the same and I am particularly fearful for the future of the Southbank Institute of TAFE.

I would like to point out that many contributors from the other side of the House have today talked about the underutilisation of TAFEs throughout Queensland. They say that if we were to go there after 6 pm we would find them empty. If we were to go to a state school after 3 pm many of them would actually be empty. If we were to go to a university past 7 pm or 8 pm we would find most of the campuses—

**Mr Davies:** QUT is open until late. I studied there at nighttime.

**Ms TRAD:** I am sure the member for Capalaba will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate. He can actually put his name on the speaking list.

As someone who has been on university campuses at night, I can tell members that I do not have to study at night to know that a vast majority, a vast percentage, of university campuses are not utilised at night. This is not an argument to consolidate university campuses and part sell them or fully exploit them commercially in order to get a buck in the door. It is nonsensical.

What we have seen from this government from its first day in office is a government coming in and vilifying the TAFE training sector. They have done so because, quite frankly, it has been one of the flagships of Labor government and Labor policy at a federal and state level for many decades. We on this side of the House actually do believe in the provision of adult education.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** I will repeat that because those opposite have been heckling quite rudely. We on this side of the House can be very proud of our achievements when it comes to opening up education for all—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** We on this side of the House can be very proud of our legacy of opening up higher education to people from all walks of life. We can also be proud of the fact that we actually established and progressed the higher education TAFE sector in this state and throughout this country. Labor established the trades training centres that the Howard government then removed. Sorry, I think that is wrong.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** I am sorry; the trades training centres were abolished by conservative governments. Quite frankly, we have a very good track record when it comes to this. What has happened is that those opposite have come in, vilified the TAFE sector, vilified TAFE teachers and used any excuse, like they have with other things. Whether it is the CMC or public education—whatever the sector is they dislike and does not fit with their value set of dealing with the big end of town, they come in and vilify. Ultimately, they will open them up for full commercial exploitation.

I am very fearful of the long-term consequences of the QTAMA Bill and what that means for the Southbank Institute of Technology. I would like a commitment from this government and from the minister that that campus will not be petitioned and will not be sold off in part and that all of the programs—all of adult literacy programs that are currently provided, all of the specialist adult education classes that are provided—will continue into the future. I am very fearful that they will not.

Quite frankly, I find it absolutely astounding that a reasonable number of recommendations of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee were rejected by this government, apart from the first one which is that the bill be passed. I do not understand what the problem is with having a review period in relation to the success of the QTAMA Bill. What is the problem with that? What is the problem with having some sort of threshold over which the disposal of assets should be considered? Why not be transparent about that? What is so abhorrent about those two recommendations that they should be rejected by the minister? There is no sense rejecting the very sensible recommendations that were made by an all-party parliamentary committee that has investigated this bill.

Quite frankly, I think the only reason they have been rejected is that the Queensland Teachers Union's fears and the fears of those on this side of the House are actually the hidden agenda of those people opposite. That agenda is the full commercial exploitation of TAFE and the selling off of major educational assets. My electorate has already seen the disposal of significant education assets to developer mates. As the member for Redcliffe said, every time one of these assets is sold in their electorates we will absolutely make sure that people know and that members are held accountable for their actions.

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (4.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014. The implementation of this bill will create QTAMA, which will be under the authority of the Minister for Housing. QTAMA will provide for the effective and efficient management of state owned assets, predominantly providing vocational education and training. The streamlining of the asset management of the Queensland vocational education and training sector is a clear indication of this government's commitment to improving front-line services.

The Queensland government is committed to improving the use of the state's training assets. Therefore, based on these recommendations from the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce, as well as the independent Commission of Audit, the Queensland government released the 'Great skills. Real opportunities.' five-year action plan to revitalise Queensland's vocational education and training sector, the VET sector. The 'Great skills. Real opportunities.' action plan provides clear guidance on the future role and strategic direction of the sector, including better access to training, increased pathways from school to work, increased utilisation of existing facilities, optimised training delivery, reduced paperwork and improved arrangements for apprentices and trainees.

To address these challenges, the Newman government developed the QTAMA initiative which will deal with the issue of asset utilisation. On 1 July 2014 the ownership of the state's training facilities and equipment will transfer to QTAMA—a new specialist, commercial asset manager. The transfer of ownership is about increasing training infrastructure utilisation to meet the needs of students, local communities and industry.

QTAMA will manage and operate these assets, providing non-discriminatory access to the state's training infrastructure for all private, not-for-profit and public sector training organisations. The Queensland government encourages smarter approaches to investing and managing government training assets. This is part of building a stronger training sector that is more responsive to the skills and training needs of students and industry. The establishment of QTAMA will not mean a reduction in training services. Arrangements will be in place between QTAMA and TAFE Queensland to ensure continuity of all training services currently delivered by TAFE Queensland.

The Newman government is dedicated to the economic and social prosperity of Queensland and the Nudgee electorate. This QTAMA initiative is about building the capacity and sustainability of Queensland's training sector and increasing training access and choice across the state, including in regional and remote areas. The state requires skilled workers to support the four pillars of economic growth—tourism, agriculture, resources and construction. QTAMA will deliver better value for taxpayer dollars invested in training assets and provide a stronger, more sustainable and more equitable way of delivering training infrastructure.

The establishment of QTAMA will be another important milestone in the delivery of reforms to the state's further education sector which aims to provide opportunities for Queenslanders to develop the skills that deliver real job outcomes and economic growth.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferry Grove—LNP) (4.48 pm): I rise in the House today to make a short contribution in the debate on the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014. I will begin by reflecting back to a time when I undertook my trade training and my visits to TAFE colleges, which were eventful to say the least. Parking was at a premium due to the sheer number of enrolled students trying to get into particular courses. This occurred well into the evening, with attendance declining little over the transition from the business day to the evening courses.

The labs and practical course work environments were considered leading edge by industry, and to be the very best environments to expose apprentices or other trainees to the technologies that would frame our futures, and were simply not able to be replicated in training environments throughout industry due to the cost of deployment and the capability of the instructors to remain abreast of leading edge industrial changes.

I undertook training in communication electronics, and the industry was transitioning from valve technology to solid state. The labs were fitted out with training workstations highlighting the junction characteristics of PNP and NPN solid-state devices. We were able to perform fault-finding techniques and learn about the new digital age, new test equipment types and explore all of this within a safe and controlled environment. Of course, the provision of the latest test equipment, the new lab stations and having instructors with current knowledge all come at a significant cost. Typically this cost was borne by governments all around the country and TAFE campuses grew in number and size, bolstered by attendance numbers that ensured assets were typically employed throughout the day and well into the evening.

This industry changed rapidly and, as devices become smaller and smaller, solid state became surface mount and the capacity for component level repair faded. The cost to repair devices became prohibitive and technicians dwindled. They became more box-swappers than fault-finders. The end of 'hands-on' fault-finding and a lessening of the skills required by the craftsman all spelt the beginning of the end of evening classes and the demand on TAFE assets began to diminish. This scenario is replicated throughout many other industry areas.

Queensland is no different in many regards to other jurisdictions throughout Australia, where government owned training assets are now often underutilised and, while the public must continue to maintain the asset, the return on their investment is continuing to diminish. Pure economics says that, without demand, the ability to supply and the cost of supply will become prohibitive.

What is important to know is that this bill is the result of the strategic review and a number of other previous reviews and plans over a number of years between 2005 and 2012. Unsurprisingly, the previous administration failed to act upon any of the information they had at hand. Within a short period of time following our government's election, and on the back of information within the Commission of Audit report, we commissioned the Skills and Training Taskforce which identified impediments to the competitiveness of the current system.

First identified in the 2005 Boston Consulting Group review of the TAFE sector, the separation of asset ownership from service provision will enable the TAFE institute to reduce their costs of operation through the reduction of ongoing rents. This will be achieved through either vacating buildings that are no longer required or through subleasing assets across the sector that will allow more efficiency and effective asset utilisation.

There has been over a number of years an increased level of competition within the training environment. The smaller, more agile competitors have continued to grow and adapt their delivery models, whereas TAFE, with the overhead of assets, has neither the ability to modify delivery methods or to redirect efforts quickly to meet marketplace demand.

The establishment of QTAMA, with its experienced board, will achieve the following policy objectives. QTAMA will be the owner and manager of the state's training assets which will free TAFE to focus upon the delivery of course content rather than the maintenance of their assets. The transfer of ownership of assets will increase competition by both ensuring the assets are not an overhead of TAFE and are accessible to all RTOs at commercial rates. This will also significantly increase the return on our investment across the sector.

It will provide a 'level playing field' which is often a criticism levelled at governments when competing for delivery of training services to the market place. This will also ensure that over time assets are regenerated and renewed to remain in step with industry demand and training delivery methods. If assets become obsolete or become too expensive to maintain, they will be disposed of under QTAMA.

In my local area, physically located on the boundary of my electorate and that of Minister Mander's, is the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, Grovely campus. They are known for their delivery of floristry, horticulture and veterinary nursing and are a world-renowned leader in greenkeeping courses, with their graduates sought after for placements overseas at a number of the world's leading golf resorts. The campus also provides courses in animal grooming and English as a second language. I left the site after a tour I undertook of the campus last year with a feeling that the site is both a little tired and well underutilised. That said, the courses they undertake there, while not in huge demand, are a skill that, if lost, would be difficult to re-establish.

I know that, with the successful passage of this bill, campuses such as that at Grovely TAFE can have confidence that they can, as a completely unencumbered business, face the market and know that they will now have the capacity to innovate, adapt and meet the demands of the market on a truly level playing field. Like any business, their long-term viability will now rest in the resilience of their strategy plan and their capacity to remain relevant in a competitive market. Importantly though, what this bill will also provide is opportunities for other service providers to look at how they can expand their services to meet the needs of the community, utilising assets that were previously out of reach and untouchable. I know a couple of organisations that are already exploring their opportunities, and we might well see an increased service offering from within the disabilities sector and the youth services sector at the Grovely campus within the near future.

I was about to wrap up at that point but, having listened to a number of submissions by those opposite, particularly from the member for Redcliffe, who actually criticised this bill and the approach our government has taken, branding it simply an ideological approach, I do not think we on this side of the House should feel any sense of embarrassment or shame whatsoever in our continual pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness in our government sector to enable us to deliver sufficient returns on the investment of the tax dollars which hardworking Queenslanders contribute towards maintaining assets such as this. The member for South Brisbane actually referred to it as an exploitation of assets. I would think that any business operating effectively would not see it as an exploitation of assets but merely as an effective and efficient utilisation of assets which the shareholders of any business and the shareholders of this business, the taxpayers of Queensland, not only would like us to deliver but actually expect us to deliver on their behalf.

**Mr Ruthenberg:** Just like they said in the Queensland Plan.

**Mr SHUTTLEWORTH:** That is exactly right. I will take the interjection. In the Queensland Plan there were ongoing discussions over many of the interactions about the better utilisation of these assets throughout all of Queensland, not just Southbank, which has been mentioned several times today as being an outstanding campus, but certainly throughout the regional areas of Queensland as well. In closing, I congratulate the minister for the preparation of this visionary bill and I support its passage through the House.

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (4.56 pm): It is my pleasure to rise and support my colleague the Hon. Tim Mander on the QTAMA Bill, which is a very, very important plank of this government's reform of the VET sector that we have outlined in our action plan 'Great skills. Real opportunities.'. The Skills and Training Taskforce recommended that we establish a separate specialist entity with expertise in infrastructure management to be charged with the efficient management of TAFE assets, and that is what we are doing today. The recommendation was made so that TAFE Queensland could focus on its core business—the delivery of quality training—and not be limited by the responsibilities for assets. QTAMA will enable TAFE Queensland to be more competitive, responsive, innovative and flexible.

I wanted to rise and speak to this bill because of the importance of TAFE as part of the VET sector in Queensland and because of the contribution by the shadow minister in her first serious contribution to a bill in this place and that of the honourable member for South Brisbane, with her concerns about Southbank. The general attitude from those opposite is that this government is selling off assets via this bill, when what we are actually focusing on is making sure that we are going to make the best use of the training money that we have to make sure we get the best outcomes for the economy. That is something that those opposite are unable to understand. In the case of the member for Redcliffe, having just come here from Canberra, where she did not have responsibility in this area but rather had responsibility in an area like ethics, where she was able to use that great power that she had to exonerate Craig Thomson, I do not think that is any great recommendation for her coming in here and making the contribution—

**Ms TRAD:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I fail to see how the minister's comments are in any way relevant to the title of the bill.

**Ms D'Ath:** They are also misleading.

**Ms TRAD:** I ask you to rule on relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! You have stated your position. If you do not mind, can I now do my business? Thank you. Minister, you are within the bounds of relevance, but it is getting close to the border. So, if you would not mind, keep relevant.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Thank you. If I am allowed to continue with the point I was making, I will say that the area the member was responsible for when she was in Canberra has no relevance to the area she has been given responsibility for here. She has come in and given a speech and demonstrated that she has absolutely no knowledge about this at all. That is the point I am making.

We had an accusation about what we are going to be doing, and I am happy to provide the honourable member for Redcliffe with information on what we are doing. She was part of a team which had five different ministers in a year and a half when we were trying to talk about this vocational education and training reform. When I became the minister, the federal minister was Chris Evans, then it was Chris Bowen, then it was Sharon Bird or Craig Emerson—no-one was really quite sure in the government, and the member for Redcliffe was a member of that government—and then we ended up with Brendan O'Connor. Members may remember that, in the lead-up to the federal election last September, the proposal from the former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, was that he and the federal government would have a takeover of TAFE. The former member for Petrie, who lost her seat at that election, was happy to be a part of a government that said they were going to take over TAFE.

We had negotiated a national partnership on skills reform that saw us come to the position we are at today. That position is that, if you have limited training dollars—because the former federal Labor government wasted so much money so we do not have as much money as we used to have—you cannot put those dollars into skills that will not lead to real jobs. That is what we are asking TAFE to do. There will be no diminution in money that will actually go on training—from around \$600 million—but, thanks to the Labor government at the state and federal levels, taxpayers can no longer subsidise courses that people might want to do just because they like the idea of doing them. We can no longer keep letting people do a certificate II after a certificate III or a certificate IV that does not lead to a real job because of the financial irresponsibility of the former Labor government at the state level. Over a number of years, the government let the utilisation rates in their outdated infrastructure and their outdated enterprise bargain get to a situation where we were spending 60 per cent of money on administration and 40 per cent on teaching. Is that appropriate, Mr Deputy Speaker? I repeat: 60 per cent on administration and 40 per cent on teaching.

Our government's priorities are to get to a four per cent unemployment rate and to support the four-pillar economy. This is not about students only studying subjects at TAFE or university that will lead to qualifications in just those four fields; we want to support front-line services and make sure we

have an open and accountable government. That is what we are doing here. We are saying that we do not believe TAFE should be concerned with maintaining their assets. We believe it should go to someone with some commercial acumen to make sure they can focus on the training.

We only have to look at our students. We only have to look at the very thing the member for South Brisbane advocates—that is, she looks to the past and talks about when she was at university or when she may have been to university and what the utilisation rate may be or is going to be or will be in the future. The bottom line is that in Queensland in the 1970s you could not go shopping after 11.30 am on a Saturday but we now allow people to shop at different hours.

Our young people want to train in the best facilities. When they are doing their training, they want to go to registered training organisations or TAFE, but TAFE has to be allowed to compete with those registered training organisations. These people want to go out of hours. The member for Morayfield made the point in his contribution that utilisation after hours between 6 pm and 9 pm is five per cent. Everyone knows that TAFE originally was a night school. If we are asking people to upskill or reskill and they are actually working in a job already, surely the time they will want to go is the time that may not fit with the 9 am to 5 pm during the week or the 9 am to 1 pm on a Saturday—even though they may have been the examples in the past at TAFE.

We need to put TAFE in a position where it is able to compete with private organisations, because from 1 July those organisations will increasingly be able to access these training dollars because of a national partnership that is happening in every other state. Do you think the federal government would have allowed us to sign off on a national partnership if it was not going to force us to make the training sector better? The federal Labor government had five different ministers in a period of about six months—Chris Evans, Chris Bowen, Craig Emerson, Sharon Bird and Brendan O'Connor—because of the government's absolute disarray. We had to sign a national partnership that was also subsequent to \$50 million being cut from the Productivity Places Program, which was another federal program where the federal Labor government had given us this money and then took it away.

So they are the circumstances that this government finds itself in. That is why we are setting up QTAMA and that is why we want to make sure we have people training for things that will lead to real outcomes. Industry has to be able to have a line of sight so they can give us advice on where those training dollars should be placed. That is what we have said. If you want to do photography or fitness training and you already have a degree, you might have to pay more for those courses because the taxpayers are not going to subsidise them if you already have a bachelor's degree. But if you are a student who has come out of year 12 and you do not have a certificate III, we will give you a certificate III guarantee. Those people will get subsidies for their courses.

Let us have a look at the misrepresentations from those opposite. The member for Redcliffe again spoke about fees going from \$800 for a certificate II in auto servicing in 2012 to just over \$7,200 in 2014. That \$7,200 is if you have another degree or a qualification, but it is still subsidised if you do not have a degree or a qualification. So it was \$800 in 2012, and if you do not have a qualification already and you are a grade 12 person who wants a certificate III then we will do it for you at TAFE for a thousand dollars. That has gone up \$200 in two years, but there are more modules in that course so wouldn't that be seen as a good thing? We are giving you more and we are charging you a couple of hundred dollars more but it is still subsidised.

I ask honourable members to consider the misrepresentations of those opposite, and they have been doing it everywhere and they do it in education all the time. We are pouring more money into education but we are not just pouring it in the way that Labor does, which is to say, 'Look, we are spending more so that must be a good thing'; we are actually saying we want to focus on the outcomes that we get. Do not believe those opposite because that is not how they carry on, and do not believe the union that claims it represents TAFE and claims it is interested in the best outcomes for students. Kevin Bates recently lamented on ABC radio that popular courses such as personal training will attract less government funding, but he also said in the same interview that 'Popular courses are not necessarily those that will support the Queensland economy.' I repeat: 'Popular courses are not necessarily those that will support the Queensland economy.' So even Labor are confused—whether it is their unions or them as a party in this place just arguing about something. They want their TAFEs to be stuck in the seventies, whereas we know that TAFE is big business. TAFE will stay the leader in the market because we have established a commercial board and they are about to make big announcements about why they want TAFE enhanced and why we know it is going to be better.

There are more people who train in TAFE than there are at universities in this state—180,000 students a year. Why would we want to see fewer students? We want to see more students doing it. We want people to value the TAFE courses they do. We have passionate trainers and I meet them wherever I go, including those in Foundation Skills in Maryborough whom I met a couple of weeks ago and those trainers elsewhere across the state. We want more studying in TAFE with a better enterprise bargain so we can get a better future for Queensland.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.07 pm): I am very happy to support the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill. I also want to commend Minister Mander for introducing this legislation. I would like to pick up on some comments that Minister Langbroek just made and some comments from the member for South Brisbane. I used to teach at TAFE quite a few years ago and I taught at night. I spent three nights a week teaching at TAFE for three hours a night and we would go home at about 10 o'clock at night. I taught working people in diploma level classes, and that was the time they would come in, but guess what. Labor ripped the funds out and that Burdekin TAFE did not have enough money to pay for security to stay open at night so those courses all folded. They no longer existed because Labor took the funds away and there was no money to keep the lights on at the Burdekin college. I could speak a lot more about this but I might get a bit angry so I will not.

The objective of the bill is to establish an independent statutory body—the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, QTAMA—to provide for the efficient and effective management of state owned training assets, primarily for the provision of vocational education and training in accordance with sound commercial principles. 'Efficient' and 'effective' are not words that those opposite are akin to, especially when it comes to managing this state's assets, services and finances. There have been a number of reviews into the Queensland VET sector under Labor. Previous reviews of TAFE under Labor have all highlighted the need for strategies to improve the efficiency of Queensland government VET investment. In October 2005 the Efficiency and Effectiveness Review of the TAFE Sector by the Boston Consulting Group effectively looked at asset sales—yes, those dreaded two words, the words that suddenly cause those opposite to lose all recollection of their very own asset sales.

For the benefit of those who do not recall, the 2005 review considered the separation of asset ownership from service provision would enable the TAFE institutes to reduce their operating expenses through lower rents achieved either by exiting non-required but commercially saleable buildings or by subleasing underutilised buildings to third parties. This would have created the necessary financial incentive for more effective asset utilisation. The very next year, in 2006, the Queensland Skills Plan was released and Labor went on a spending spree. The comprehensive Capital Works Program refurbished existing buildings, constructed new facilities, acquired land for future development and implemented a property disposal program. Yes, there were asset sales. In 2010 the Queensland Post-Secondary Education and Training Review was undertaken and identified the need for significant reform and flexible asset management arrangements for the TAFE institutes. These reviews were all under the previous Labor government.

In April 2013 the independent Commission of Audit recommended that training asset ownership be separated from TAFE Queensland and transferred to a specialist commercial entity with skills and expertise in owning and managing assets, and this makes sense. Let the teachers teach and let the others with skills and expertise in owning and managing assets do so. It is all about the effective use and management of these facilities.

In considering this bill, the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee was briefed by the department and received just the one submission, from the Queensland Teachers Union. Sadly, and in rather typical Labor fashion, the response was simply to oppose, submitting that the bill be withdrawn. Again, we are hearing Labor scaremongering. In 2008 the Burdekin TAFE staff and students were reeling after learning that their art and hairdressing classes would be axed at the end of that year. We found this out and a couple of days later the then education minister, Rod Welford, announced that the government would spend \$280 million over the next four years to continue to modernise TAFE facilities. They slashed and they burnt. It is a sad fact. I know we certainly did not see any money spent on TAFE in the Burdekin, where once glorious facilities were left to rot and decay. Labor does not care about TAFE in Queensland and those opposite are only in the business of opposing. They are not about managing our state's assets, which are the good people of Queensland and our infrastructure.

The LNP government understands that in order to build a four-pillar economy and to pay back the debt from Labor's years of mismanagement, it is vital that the skills of Queenslanders are also driven forward with our economy. This bill comes from the first ever industry-led review of

Queensland's vocational education and training sector. Yes, we have listened to those who are in the industry. The Skills and Training Taskforce found that there was significant room for movement in the way VET is provided in this state. There are no surprises there. Specifically, it was found by the experts that taking on the role of managing Queensland's TAFE buildings and facilities along with delivering training reduced TAFE's competitiveness. Leave the teaching to the teachers and the managing of assets to those who specialise in the field—something that makes sense.

The majority of our TAFE buildings have been grossly underutilised for some time. TAFEs across the state are 60 per cent empty. In many cases, they are empty because training is offered in different formats to the old 'chalk and talk'. For years TAFE in Queensland has been very much in need of a huge restructure, and both sides of government have recognised the need for reform. That the previous Labor government knew it for years and chose to turn a blind eye to it is sad. They should be ashamed about turning their backs on skilling our Queenslanders. Under Labor's 20 years in government, the Burdekin TAFE campus was allowed to fall into a parlous state of disrepair and schools maintenance was allowed to slip. Some areas of the Burdekin TAFE campus are not safe and there are many buildings that have not been used for a long time. As many honourable members in this House are aware and as I said earlier, I am a former Burdekin TAFE teacher, and it is a subject that is extremely close to my heart and that of others in the Burdekin. There are many couples in the Burdekin who were married in the grounds of the Burdekin TAFE and have used its once glorious function facilities. How Labor ripped the heart out of the Burdekin by allowing our once vibrant TAFE college to become so underutilised and did not keep up the maintenance or the marketing and did not keep it moving with the times by offering relevant courses can be described in one word: pathetic.

Along with other members of the Burdekin community, I am extremely proud of the Burdekin TAFE's achievements over the 19 years since it was built. It was a sad day, indeed, when I recently toured the facilities with other community members to see how run-down this once prized Burdekin asset had become under Labor. But politics aside, the people of the Burdekin all have one common goal and that is to ensure that training will continue. I know that under this government training will continue. The Newman government wants to ensure that the quality training that is the hallmark of TAFE's vocational training in this state remains. In order to do that, it all comes down to proper management. Nobody wants to see white elephants. If TAFE facilities are able to be shared with other RTOs to fully utilise this and deliver effective training, that makes sense; bring it on.

This bill creates a new body to manage the property side of things, effectively freeing up TAFE to concentrate on doing what it does best: delivering vocational education and training services. I wholeheartedly support this bill. I am looking forward to the implementation of this and the effective management of VET and TAFE in the future.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.16 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill. There is great concern with regard to selling off TAFE campuses, particularly the opening up of campuses for the use of for-profit providers. As all honourable members would know, TAFE has always been a wonderful training institution, particularly for rural and regional Queensland. We need to focus on ensuring that we do have a TAFE in those rural and regional areas and, likewise, that that community service obligation exists. In the past it has always been the nature of governments to not look after those rural areas due to the cost factor. One reason that rural Queenslanders are always very concerned about the privatisation of any asset is probably due to a concern that there will not be a community service obligation. I am concerned about the LNP's privatisation agenda. Little by little the LNP government is looking at assets to sell. It is trying to find means and ways to hoodwink the people of Queensland as to why we have to sell those assets. I believe that the first-term backbenchers could not have foreseen being put in this position. They believed that it was only the 'baddies', the ALP, that would be selling off our assets. It is going to be detrimental to Queensland that we find ourselves in this situation.

I am very concerned now that we are talking about selling off TAFE. We can look at what happened when the Commonwealth Bank was sold. We are talking now about opening up the TAFE campuses for the use of for-profit providers, and I think there are good private providers out there. However, since the privatisation of the Commonwealth Bank, we have seen a \$5 billion profit and a \$6 billion profit and we have seen the banks ripping off consumers right across Australia. We saw similar things with regard to the sale of Telstra.

This is why I am concerned for rural and regional Queensland. At present people at the TAFE at Charters Towers are on edge about what is going on in relation to this bill. I do not say that they are the only ones in Queensland who are on edge. The public servants are on edge. The doctors are on

edge. The nurses are on edge. The firies are on edge. The motorbike riders are on edge. They are all on edge. The people at Charters Towers TAFE are on edge especially in relation to issues such as the student support that they give, have always given and that we are hoping they will continue to give.

They are very concerned about what is going to happen in regards to the privates that coming in because they have to make money in return too, and the only way they are going to do that is through a massive cost to the users who are going to seek that training. That is where TAFE comes in: to benefit areas in rural and regional Queensland.

I cannot speak on behalf of the cities because I am not quite sure, but we have seen the privatisation of the State Government Insurance Office, SGIO, and what did we get? We got massive insurance hikes. It was supposed to bring about competition. I have always heard about the benefits of privatisation and how it will increase competition, but we are not seeing it. When our retail energy assets were privatised we were told it was going to increase competition, and it has not. We have seen energy prices double, if not triple, over the time when this parliament agreed to privatise the retail arm of our energy assets. We keep hearing so much about the benefits of the private sector, but I do have great concerns about it.

As we have seen with any asset in rural and regional Queensland, if it is lost there is a massive flow-on effect of rural decline and we see job losses, station closures, courthouse closures and DPI closures. Twenty people are a lot in rural and regional Queensland. We have seen what has happened in Charters Towers, where we are losing over 37 staff as a result of privatisation. We have seen both the Labor Party and the LNP government sell off almost all of the remaining shares in QR National and when it comes to saving those jobs, the transport minister says, 'I wash my hands. There is nothing I can do about this.' I also have a great concern in regards to the privatisation of TAFE and opening up good, valuable land. We are already training those customers, and yet we are now going to open the campuses up for the use of profit providers, when we already have it in the first place.

I know how the backbenchers feel at this present moment, because you thought you were going to contribute to Queensland. You thought you were going to do something good for Queensland, and you did not believe that the hierarchy of the LNP is frothing at the mouth to sell off these assets in desperation. If you do not believe me, read the Treasurer's speech in the Assets (Restructuring Bill) 2006 when he was desperate to have all of our energy assets sold: wires, poles and generators. I am not just saying this; it is in *Hansard*. What you have is already there in front of you.

I think Queensland and the wonderful TAFE institution feels gutted right at this present moment. There is no community service obligation provided in this bill, and I know that my electorate will support me in opposing this bill.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (5.23 pm): I rise to participate in the debate currently before the House. I heard members speak about the need to be more competitive in this field of training in Queensland. Can I say that my experience with some of our private training organisations leaves a lot to be desired. In the past I have raised concerns about the appropriateness of the training and the speed with which some of the students have been trained and awarded their certification so they can go out into the private world to work according to their qualifications. There have been real concerns about their fitness to do the work under the qualifications that they have received from some of our private training organisations. When I have raised these concerns with the various departments, quite frankly it just gets lost in the mire. Whether it is as a result of the federal or the state organisations which are supposed to police and monitor these private training organisations I do not know, but the experience has been that there has not been proper monitoring and scrutiny of private training organisations. I suppose that is because it costs money to employ people to do the monitoring, and the private training organisations are basically businesses which are focused on making money. It is all about making money.

I have listened to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment speak with passion in his heart about how he is so committed to trying to get the best outcomes. My concern is: where will this lead? I understand the intent of the legislation—I am not silly—but my experience with this Newman-led government is can this Newman-led government be trusted? Will this simply be another step towards further asset sales of significant valuable pieces of land because someone else has their eye on it? Will it be the first step so that we can progressively move towards having someone managing valuable parcels of land? Where will this eventually lead? Who knows, the next step might

be some of our significant state schools. Is it so far off the equation that when this gets through, in the next minute we will have another task force that will say, 'We need to have someone who is going to be able to better manage some of the strategic parcels of land that our schools are operated on' and who will come up with more options about the future?

I have real reservations, and I suppose it is because I do not have confidence in, or trust, the Newman leadership team. I do understand what is contained in the committee reports and in the various bills before us; I simply put those comments on the record as to the reason why I will not be supporting the bill when it comes to a vote.

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (5.26 pm), in reply: I thank the honourable members for their interest and contributions to the debate this afternoon. In particular, again I acknowledge the members of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee and thank them for their diligence and the hard work they have put into examining this legislation. I would also like to thank those that made submissions to the bill and took the time to present their arguments before the committee at the hearing held on 2 April 2014.

I will just briefly address some of the comments that were made during the debate, and if I can initially go to the member for Redcliffe. I thank the member for her contribution; however, I need to state once again that this bill is not about selling assets. This bill will not lead to any reduction in training services. As to the rest of the member for Redcliffe's argument about the quality and cost of training provision, I think that the Minister for Education, Employment and Training put those ridiculous misrepresentations to bed and just totally made a mockery of that argument.

This bill responds to the demand from training organisations across the state to access valuable facilities and boost the provision of VET state-wide by properly utilising assets that have been running on empty long before this government came to office. QTAMA addresses the low utilisation rate of Queensland TAFE assets and provides a practical and workable solution to the deplorable legacy of inefficiency and wastage of resources left by the previous Labor administration. The creation of QTAMA will allow our TAFEs to do what they are supposed to: deliver high-quality vocational and educational training across the state.

I once again thank the member for Warrego for his informed and intelligent contribution to the development of this bill and his leadership in its preparation through his role as chair of the parliamentary committee. The satisfactory response to the committee demonstrates the important due diligence work that they have conducted to support this bill. In particular, I am grateful for the member for Warrego's far-sighted support for the provision of vocational education in this state.

I thank the member for Mount Coot-tha and Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education for her passionate and committed role in the development of this bill. Her depth of knowledge and grassroots involvement on this important issue is clearly apparent. She mentioned the \$75 million capital works shortfall and overexpenditure by the previous government that the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce identified. This is ample evidence of the former government's mismanagement of these valuable resources. The member is as committed to seeing through the successful reforms of the VET sector as I am. I thank the member for Springwood for his contribution to the debate, especially his recognition that this reform will revitalise VET services, allowing TAFE to focus on the core business of providing vocational services. As the member correctly suggested, QTAMA will allow for greater use of state owned training assets in regional Queensland, allowing private training providers to use facilities that were previously for the exclusive use of TAFE Queensland. I thank the member for Morayfield for his informed contribution to the debate. I especially appreciated the personal and family experiences in the VET sector that he shared with the House as part of his resounding and compassionate support for QTAMA. I acknowledge the member for Condamine's contribution and particularly note his comments that no other jurisdiction is doing this and so there is no track record to measure this against. That is true and this government is proud to be leaders in the reform process.

**Mr Rickuss:** That's why the member for Condamine is not with us anymore. He couldn't stand the change.

**Mr MANDER:** I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. The separation of infrastructure assets and service provision is widely used across a whole range of different sectors, including the telecommunications, transport and energy sectors, and this bill will prove that it can work in education as well in the VET sector. I acknowledge the member for Algester's contribution and clear explanation of QTAMA's background, history and goals. I particularly appreciate the member's reiteration of the preferential access TAFE will receive in the use of the infrastructure.

I acknowledge the member for South Brisbane's contribution to today's debate and note her concerns for the showpiece TAFE college in her electorate, the Southbank Institute of TAFE. Interestingly, this flagship of VET learning is used only 51 per cent of the time and at night is empty 95 per cent of the time. As the Southbank TAFE, it has been classified at the moment as a distressed asset as it has long-term contractual obligations, has fallen short of initial financial performance targets and has cashflows of \$1.3 billion over the remaining life of the agreement to 2039. In fact, the QTAMA board's commercial acumen will be directed at reducing rather than eliminating the facility's drain on the state's resources by managing project costs, using revenue earned from TAFE and third parties and identifying and facilitating opportunities for the state to improve financing arrangements. Just as well for QTAMA, this bill is sorely needed to pull this flagship out of the financial shipwreck it is heading for. The bill is not about asset sales, as I have repeatedly stated. The government remains committed to establishing TAFE Queensland as a viable training provider and ensuring the continuity of TAFE services into the future. In fact, the establishment of QTAMA as a separate asset manager allows TAFE Queensland to get on with the business of delivering quality vocational education and training across Queensland.

I thank the member for Nudgee for his contribution tonight and appreciate his support for this important bill. I also thank the member for Ferny Grove for his contribution and particularly his appreciation for the variety of training services at the Grovely TAFE campus—a TAFE campus that is in my electorate and borders the electorate of Ferny Grove. His support for the government's pursuit of efficient and effective management of these assets is appreciated. I am very grateful for the contribution from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. He is obviously a passionate supporter of VET training and his speech acted as a myth buster to some of the misrepresentations that came from those opposite. I appreciate the member for Burdekin's contribution as a former TAFE teacher who has a hands-on knowledge of what goes on in these colleges. I think her summation sums up the bill very well—that is, let us let the teachers and the experts teach and be involved in education and let us let the experts in asset management go about doing their role. I also note the contributions from the members for Dalrymple and Nicklin. In conclusion, I simply want to thank members for their contributions to the debate this afternoon.

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

**AYES, 58:**

**LNP, 57**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Kaye, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Newman, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Watts, Woodforth.

**INDEPENDENTS, 1**—Cunningham.

**NOES, 14:**

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

**KAP, 3**—Hopper, Katter, Knuth.

**PUP, 2**—Douglas, Judge.

**INDEPENDENTS, 1**—Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 38, as read, agreed to.

Clause 39—



**Mr HOPPER (5.44 pm):** I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 39 (Preparation of draft plan)**

Page 21, after line 23—

*insert—*

- (2) The Minister must consult with the Minister responsible for administering the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013* in considering the draft asset management plan.

**2 Clause 39 (Preparation of draft plan)**

Page 21, line 24, '(2)'—

*omit, insert—*

(3)

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Mr Ray Hopper's amendments [\[5055\]](#).

Recommendation 4 of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee report No. 43 on the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill was to insert a new paragraph 2 saying that the minister must consult with the minister responsible for administering the TAFE Queensland Act 2013 in considering the draft assets management plan. Why did the minister not take that recommendation? Can he tell the House whether he will support this amendment?

**Mr MANDER:** I addressed that issue in my second reading speech, as I addressed every other issue that will come up with the amendments that the member will have for the rest of the bill. So there is nothing else that needs to be said.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! I remind members that the standing orders do not allow for members to be provocative or threatening in the parliament and I will not tolerate it tonight.

Non-government amendment (Mr Hopper) negatived.

Clause 39, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 40 to 43, as read, agreed to.

Clause 44—



**Mr HOPPER** (5.47 pm): I move the following amendment—

**3 Clause 44 (Minister may require information)**

Page 23, after line 19—

*insert—*

- (5) The Minister must consult with the Minister responsible for administering the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013* on a regular and ongoing basis regarding the effects on the VET sector generally, and on the TAFE sector specifically, of the performance of the functions of QTAMA.
- (6) The chief executive of the Department of Education, Training and Employment must—
  - (a) monitor and evaluate the impact of the establishment and operation of QTAMA on VET delivery generally, and on TAFE delivery specifically; and
  - (b) provide regular written reports during the first 2 years of QTAMA's operations to—
    - (i) the Minister for Housing and Public Works; and
    - (ii) the Minister for Education, Training and Employment.

Once again, our committee has recommended—and we have put this in this amendment—that the minister consult with the minister responsible for administering the TAFE Queensland Act 2013 on a regular and ongoing basis regarding the effects on the VET sector generally and on the TAFE sector specifically of the performance of the functions of the QTAMA; that the chief executive officer of the Department of Education, Training and Employment must monitor and evaluate the impact of the establishment and the operation of the QTAMA on VET delivery generally and TAFE delivery specifically; and provide regular written reports during the first two years of QTAMA's operations to the Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Minister for Education, Training and Employment.

The committee asked the minister to put this safeguard in place. There is really no reason not to support this amendment. I really wonder where our committees are going. They put in so much work and spend so much time putting forward recommendations. That is why the committees were formed in the first place. Yet the recommendations are just thrown out. So the scrutiny is done by the committees, the recommendations are put before the House, yet those recommendations are seldom taken and put into legislation. Can the minister explain to the House his thoughts on that situation?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Mr Hopper's amendment be agreed to. Those of that opinion say 'Aye'; those against 'No'. I think the 'noes' have it.

**Mr HOPPER:** Divide.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! Order!

**Mr HOPPER:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What is your point of order, member for Condamine?

**Mr HOPPER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I was totally being abused at the time of the division. As you had just warned the members previously—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Condamine, we are trying to establish whether anyone from your party called out. I did not hear anything. So if you give us a moment we will establish whether you did or not. No-one here has heard that you called when you should have. Therefore, there is no division.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is there a point of order?

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Yes. I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What is the point of order?

**Dr DOUGLAS:** There is a persisting problem with claims that when we speak from this point that we cannot be heard. I have been to the Speaker with regard to this and got an audio—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can I suggest you follow that up with Madam Speaker. If a member calls out clearly and especially if they mike it, I will hear very clearly your calls at the back.

Non-government amendment (Mr Hopper) negatived.

Clause 44, as read, agreed to.

Clause 45, as read, agreed to.

Clause 46—



**Mr HOPPER (5.51 pm):** I move the following amendment—

**4 Clause 46 (Proposed significant action)**

Page 24, lines 21 and 22, *'Further Education and Training Act 2014'*—  
*omit, insert—*

*TAFE Queensland Act 2013*

**Mr HOPPER:** This is just another simple recommendation put forward by the committee. The clause says 'Further Education and Training Act 2014' yet it is recommended to be changed to 'TAFE Queensland Act 2013'. Why did that recommendation come about? Can the minister explain to the House what the difference is there?

Non-government amendment (Mr Hopper) negatived.

Clause 46, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 47 to 80, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Mr HOPPER (5.53 pm)** I move the following amendment—

**5 After clause 80—**

Page 45, after line 16—  
*insert—*

**81 Transitional and ongoing provisions—asset sales**

- (1) For the first 2 years of the operation of QTAMA (the *transition period*), all proceeds from the sales of assets must be reinvested in the VET sector.
- (2) After the transition period, the Minister must provide an annual report detailing the relative percentages of the returns from TAFE asset sales paid to, or invested in, the following—
  - (a) the consolidated fund;
  - (b) the VET sector.

**82 TAFE priority access**

For the first 2 years of the operation of QTAMA, TAFE Queensland must be provided with priority access to public VET facilities.

**Mr HOPPER:** The minister is certainly paid an enormous amount of money to represent the people of Queensland and debate in this chamber. As elected members we have the right to ask questions and we expect answers to be given by the minister. I would like the minister to tell us why we cannot add to the clauses another two clauses. The first amendment I move is in relation to transitional and ongoing provisions for asset sales and it proposes that for the first two years of operation of the QTAMA, the transition period, all proceeds from the sales of assets must be reinvested in the VET sector. We know that this is a sell-off to the state of Queensland. We know that for a fact. We have heard the speeches tonight where members have hidden behind statements such as, 'We are rebuilding TAFE'. The fact is that this is a sell-off. Someone has to bring this to the attention of the public.

The other amendment I propose is that after the transition period the minister must provide an annual report detailing the relative percentages of the returns from TAFE asset sales paid to, or invested in, the consolidated fund and the VET sector. Further, for the first two years of the operation of the QTAMA, TAFE Queensland must be provided with priority access to public VET facilities. That is just common sense. That is a protective mechanism for the people of Queensland. It is asking the minister what he is going to do with the money from these sales. I would like the minister to speak on that.

Division: Question put—That Mr Hopper's amendment No. 5 be agreed to.

**AYES, 15:**

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

**KAP, 3**—Hopper, Katter, Knuth.

**PUP, 2**—Douglas, Judge.

**INDEPENDENTS, 2**—Cunningham, Wellington.

**NOES, 56:**

**LNP, 56**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Kaye, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Newman, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Watts, Woodforth.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Hopper) negatived.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

**Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (6.02 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. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (6.02 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.

## TAFE QUEENSLAND (DUAL SECTOR ENTITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

### FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BILL

TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill resumed from 4 March (see p. 333) and Further Education and Training Bill resumed from 4 March (see p. 335).

#### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (6.03 pm): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Education and Innovation Committee for its reports tabled on 29 April 2014 supporting the passage of the Further Education and Training Bill 2014 and the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014. These two bills are part of this government's agenda to reform the vocational education and training sector, or VET sector, and ensure that Queenslanders have the appropriate skills and access to training. The committee had a relatively short amount of time to examine both bills and I would like to thank the committee for its work. I note that the committee received a detailed briefing from the Department of Education, Training and Employment, considered written submissions from stakeholders and invited selected stakeholders to a hearing before preparing its reports. The committee has recommended that both bills be passed and I thank the committee for its support of the bills and reform of the VET sector in Queensland. I now table the government's response to the committee's reports.

*Tabled paper:* Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 31—TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014, government response [\[5056\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 32—Further Education and Training Bill 2014, government response [\[5057\]](#).

In relation to each bill, the committee made further recommendations and raised some points of clarification. In relation to the Further Education and Training Bill 2014, the committee has made one recommendation for a minor amendment to the bill. Recommendation 2 was that the terms 'calling' and 'restricted calling' be defined in the bill. The dictionary to the bill already defines these terms and uses the same definitions included in the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000. I can assure the committee that these terms are well understood by stakeholders in the industry and the current definitions meet the needs of government and industry. Therefore, the government does not support this recommendation. The committee also raised a number of points for clarification in its report. Responses to these matters are contained in the government's response to the committee's report. After the bill was introduced, a number of technical issues were identified that require amendment, including a typographical error identified by the committee. I propose to move amendments during consideration in detail of the Further Education and Training Bill 2014 to address those technical issues.

The committee made a number of recommendations for amendments to the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014. Recommendation 2 was that the bill or the explanatory notes be amended to clarify that dual sector entities are public providers of vocational education and training, or VET. I appreciate the committee's concerns about the quality of VET in Queensland, the need to ensure access for persons in rural and remote locations and the need to meet the skilling needs of industry and the community. I reassure the committee that this government is committed to ensuring its investment in training is provided by high-quality providers, including TAFE Queensland, dual sector entities and selected other training providers.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment will enter into a funding agreement with the dual sector entity to purchase vocational education and training. The terms of that agreement, as for any agreement with a VET provider, will outline the department's expectations for the delivery of VET. The bill already includes a number of provisions which will give me as the minister oversight of the dual sector entity. For example, the bill provides for me as the minister to approve of the dual sector entity's operational plan, to request information and give directions in the public interest. These measures will ensure that the government's investment in the dual sector entity is protected, that the dual sector entity achieves the government's objectives and that the quality of

the TAFE brand is protected. Stating that the entity is a public provider would not add anything to these obligations and, with respect to the committee, the government does not support this recommendation.

Recommendation 3 was that the dual sector entity at Central Queensland University, or CQ University, be considered a pilot project and that the minister publish a report on the establishment of the entity. The government supports this recommendation and I can advise the committee that I will publish a report on the operation of the dual sector entity after it has been established.

Recommendation 4 was that the bill be amended to require ministerial approval before a dual sector entity undertakes significant action. This recommendation was made on the basis that the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014, the QTAMA Bill, included this type of provision. The government does not support this recommendation. The objectives of dual sector entities are very different to those of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, or QTAMA, which is being established for the primary purpose of managing training assets and obtaining the best possible return on the government's investment in training assets. Therefore, it is appropriate that any proposed sale of training assets by QTAMA be approved by government. By contrast, dual sector entities are established to deliver high-quality VET through merger of a VET provider with a higher education provider. In the case of CQU, the government will transfer assets to the entity. The bill includes safeguards to protect that investment, including a requirement to notify me before taking a significant action such as sale of a transferred asset. As minister I will also have the power to give directions to the entity that are in the public interest. The assets transferred to CQU will be subject to covenants registered on the title, ensuring the assets are used to further the objectives of the transfer. Given these differences between dual sector entities and QTAMA, the government does not consider it necessary to make the amendment recommended.

The committee also raised a number of points for clarification in its report. In point for clarification 1, the committee requested that the Minister for Housing and Public Works clarify whether the QTAMA Bill provides for the transfer of TAFE assets to a future dual sector entity, and how such assets would be managed post transfer. On behalf of the Minister for Housing and Public Works, I will respond to this point for clarification.

The QTAMA Bill allows for the transfer of assets to a future dual sector entity through its transfer regulation-making power in section 50. A transfer regulation may make provision about the transfer of an asset or liability of the relevant entity to another relevant entity. This power could be used to transfer assets to a future dual sector entity. The assets would then be managed by the dual sector entity, not QTAMA.

Point for clarification 2 requested clarification of how a transfer regulation would provide for the separation of dual sector entities back to two independent entities, including how assets would be distributed between the entities. Section 50 of the TAFE Queensland Act 2013 provides that a transfer regulation may make provision for a relevant TAFE entity about the transfer of a business, asset or liability of the relevant TAFE entity to another relevant TAFE entity. This transfer regulation could transfer assets to and from government, if that was considered appropriate.

If the government decided that CQ University should no longer be recognised as a dual sector entity it could repeal the regulation which prescribes CQ University as a dual sector entity. It could also make a transfer regulation under section 50 of the TAFE Queensland Act to provide for the transfer of assets back to the state or another relevant TAFE entity.

Point for clarification 3 sought advice about how the annual returns of dual sector entities will be calculated and whether guidance will be provided and published to assist in the calculation of annual returns. The bill provides for how annual returns will be calculated. Each year the dual sector entity will give an estimate of its surplus from VET operations and a recommendation about the amount of the annual return, if any, to be paid. VET surplus is defined to mean the surplus generated by the entity for the year in the performance of its VET operations after (a) providing for income tax or its equivalent; and (b) excluding any unrealised capital gains from upwards revaluation of non-current assets. The amount of the annual return must not be more than the VET surplus for the year. However, a dual sector entity is not stopped from recommending that no return is payable for a particular year.

Given the definition of VET surplus and the process for payment of returns in the bill, it is not proposed that guidance will be published to assist in the calculation of annual returns. The amount of the annual return will be a matter for me, as the responsible minister, to determine taking into account the dual sector entity's surplus and its recommendation about the annual return that should be paid.

Finally, in point for clarification 4 the committee requested clarification of whether the bill would allow the minister to amend a dual sector entity's operational plan beyond the scope of VET matters. I can confirm that the bill does allow for me, as the responsible minister, to amend a dual sector entity's operational plan beyond the scope of VET matters. As the responsible minister, I have an interest in all operations of the dual sector entity in so far as it impacts on its VET operations. The ability for me to agree to and amend an operational plan beyond its VET operations is appropriate given the significant investment the government will make when transferring assets to CQ University.

The bill does allow for a regulation to be made limiting the minister's powers in relation to the operational plan and other matters to VET operations only. This provision provides flexibility for the government to prescribe that operational plans are no longer required for all the dual sector's operations just the VET operations at a point in time, if this is considered appropriate.

Revitalising the vocational education and training sector is essential if Queensland's economy is to prosper. 'Great skills. Real opportunities.' sets out the government's five-year plan for modernising and improving the way VET is delivered, to better meet the needs of industry and employers as well as meeting individual and community needs. Introduction of the Further Education and Training Bill, which streamlines and modernises the regulation of apprenticeships and traineeships, is a key component of effectively progressing these crucial reforms.

The merger of Central Queensland Institute of TAFE and CQ University will benefit not only the Central Queensland region, but the Queensland economy more broadly. Students will benefit from a broader range of offerings that improve articulation between vocational and higher education courses. Industry and employers will benefit from courses that effectively respond to the particular and changing needs of the region. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (6.14 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate on the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014 and the Further Education and Training Bill 2014. The opposition will not be opposing either of these bills. I will first speak to the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014 and then to the Further Education and Training Bill.

The Queensland opposition will not be opposing the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014, and fully supports the merging of Central Queensland University and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE to form Queensland's first dual sector entity. I wish to take this opportunity to comment on a number of the recommendations of the Education and Innovation Committee and highlight some concerns the opposition maintains with regard to the legislation.

The passing of this legislation will enable the merging of Central Queensland University with the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE to create Queensland's first dual sector entity. The merging of these two institutions has not happened overnight and a dedicated group of individuals have been working hard on this project for a number of years.

I would like to thank the staff of CQU and CQIT for their participation in the merger process. Without the cooperation and dedication of staff, this merger would not have been possible. I would like to make particular mention of Scott Bowman, the Vice Chancellor of CQU, and Garry Kinnon, the Director of CQIT, for their ongoing dedication to this merger and the many, many hours of hard work they have put into this project.

The previous Labor government first lent its support to this project in August 2011. The state Labor government assisted in securing nearly \$74 million worth of funding from the federal Labor government under the Structural Adjustment Fund, ensuring that the merger process was well on its way. This merger will represent over half a billion dollars worth of combined assets, 40,000 students, 2,000 staff and over 20 campuses. Importantly, it has the support of both industry and the local community. This new entity will enhance the future of regional Queensland.

The Education and Innovation Committee made four recommendations in its report on the bill. I would like to speak to some of these recommendations. Recommendation 2 states—

The committee recommends that the Minister for Education, Training and Employment amends the Bill or, as with the TAFE Queensland Bill, the Explanatory Notes to the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014 to clarify that dual sector entities are public providers of VET.

This issue was raised by the Queensland Teachers Union in their initial submission to the committee. It was seeking that the committee recommend that—

... the Bill be amended to restrict the designation of "dual sector entities" to public provider institutions (i.e. those combining TAFE and public university provision).

The opposition supports this recommendation. The bill in its current form does not preclude private VET providers from forming dual sector entities. This opens the door to the possibility that future dual sector entities could be comprised a private VET provider whom, under this legislation, would be entitled to use the protected title of TAFE without necessarily offering the same quality of training or meeting the high expectations of those seeking vocational education and training through a TAFE branded public provider.

The committee's third recommendation states—

... that the Minister for Education, Training and Employment considers the CQUniversity/CQIT merger as a pilot project for dual sector entities in Queensland, conducting an evaluation and publishing a report on the establishment of the dual sector entity once the dual sector entity is well established.

The opposition supports this recommendation as well. As mentioned previously, the merger of CQU and CQIT will create Queensland's very first dual sector entity and, as with many firsts, there are lessons to be learnt from the experience. This makes it essential—and I welcome the comments of the minister—that he support recommendation 3 to designate the CQU and CQIT merger as a pilot project and ensure a thorough evaluation is completed so that future dual sector entities in Queensland can benefit from the lessons learned in this initial merger.

One significant concern the opposition has with this legislation is that it focuses very much on the commercial and financial viability of dual sector entities. The bill states that the minister's reserve powers allow the minister to give direction in the public interest. The bill states—

Before giving direction, the minister must—

- (a) consult with the dual sector entity; and
- (b) ask the entity to advise whether, in its opinion, complying with the direction would not be in its financial interest.

The following section of the bill provides for the dual sector entity to give notice of concern about financial viability because of the minister's direction. There is no opportunity for recourse if the dual sector entity has concerns about the 'academic' viability of the institution in response to the minister's direction.

Universities and vocational education and training providers were not designed solely to make a profit. The opposition acknowledges that an educational institution cannot continue to operate at a financial loss, but some consideration needs to be given to the academic costs associated with certain decisions and the flow-on effects to the community.

Many VET students fall into at least one category of disadvantage, whether that be related to their socioeconomic status, prior education level or a disability. TAFE was designed to be a major social and educational institution, not just a provider of workplace skills and, while the latter is a significant part of TAFE's role, it is not the only part.

Professor Lawrence Angus, the head of the School of Education and Arts at Ballarat University, is the author of a recent article in the *Campus Review*, titled 'Social emphasis missing in TAFE plan'. I table a copy of the article for the benefit of members.

*Tabled paper:* Article from [www.campusreview.com.au](http://www.campusreview.com.au), undated, titled 'Social emphasis missing in TAFE plan' [5058].

The article discusses the public vocational education and training sector in Victoria and the reforms that have occurred there in the past few years. Professor Angus states—

Institutes and colleges were set up to train people and fulfil community services obligations; unfortunately the latter is now disappearing.

The opposition fears that Queensland is following Victoria's lead in neglecting the community service obligations of public VET providers. Instead, we should learn from the mistakes of other jurisdictions and improve the opportunities available to all individuals in Queensland seeking to increase their education, training and employability.

The final concern I wish to raise on behalf of the opposition relates to the committee's fourth recommendation, which states—

... that the Minister for Education, Training and Employment amends the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Bill 2014 to require that Ministerial approval be required before a dual sector entity undertakes significant action.

The opposition supports this recommendation but believes it is necessary to seek further changes in relation to 'significant actions' relating to the transfer of state assets. As noted by the committee in their report—

Evidence received by the committee does not provide adequate assurance that dual sector entities can take significant action only with appropriate Ministerial involvement. Without appropriate safeguards, assets could be transferred to an entity (\$116 million in the case of CQUniversity/CQIT) and then sold. Although the committee acknowledges this is not anticipated, given the value of assets being transferred, it believes tighter controls are required.

It must be remembered that this bill is not solely relating to the dual sector entity of CQU and CQIT. It will be the underpinning law for all future dual sector entities. There are two areas of concern with this provision: firstly, that the dual sector entity needs to merely notify the minister of their intention to take significant action, which extends to sell property transferred to the entity, as a relevant TAFE entity. In fact, the bill allows for that notice to be given to the minister after such action is taken where the action is included in the entity's operation plan.

This is considerably different to the QTAMA Bill, which requires the agreement of the minister to take significant action. No explanation was provided to the committee to explain why the two bills have been drafted differently in dealing with TAFE assets. I note that the minister today has given some explanation, but I do not believe that that provides the assurances that the opposition seeks in relation to ensuring that there is some oversight in relation to the disposal of TAFE assets. Secondly, the issue as raised in the QTAMA Bill equally applies to this bill, and that is defining 'significant action'. What is the trigger?

The committee notes the minister's reserve powers under the bill, as referred to by the department. However, this does not provide the assurance that the opposition believes is needed to ensure that there is at least some mechanism for oversight and protection by the minister of assets transferred to dual sector entities. This bill also fails to provide any clarity as to how future assets will be transferred to dual sector entities and managed into the future once the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority is established. This issue was also raised by the committee in their report. I think this is an important point because, once QTAMA is operational come 1 July, all assets will be transferred over. All future dual sector entities will then have to have those assets transferred to them from QTAMA, but there is no reference in this bill in relation to dual sector entities as to how that transfer will occur.

The bill needs to show where dual sector entity assets fall in relation to the QTAMA Act. Do assets provided by the state government to a dual sector entity come under the control of QTAMA, the minister, the department or another entity entirely? The bill needs to clearly identify to whom a dual sector entity must apply before completing any 'significant actions' in relation to the management of government assets and what the approval process must involve. Although the bill states that the minister is to be notified, it ignores that role of QTAMA and the fact that such assets would have initially been transferred from QTAMA in the formation of the dual sector entity. The opposition does not believe that the government has adequately addressed this issue and calls on the government to do so in relation to any underlying regulations or policy in this matter to provide certainty about how those transfers will occur and assets management will occur into the future.

The TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014 enables the formation of dual sector entities for the first time in Queensland. This is an exciting time for post-secondary education in our state, and I look forward to seeing some great outcomes for students, industry and our economy. I support the committee's recommendations, requesting the minister to ensure that dual sector entities are public providers of VET and that the CQU and CQIT merger be viewed as a pilot project—and, again, I welcome the comments of the minister today that that will occur. The opposition does maintain some concerns about the commercial focus of this bill. While it is important for a dual sector entity to be financially viable, it is also important for VET providers to meet their community service obligations, something which is not emphasised at all in this bill.

I now move to consideration of the Further Education and Training Bill 2014. As I advised previously, the opposition will not be opposing this bill but, as noted in my statement of reservation to the committee, we do maintain some concerns regarding some elements of the bill. I will expand upon some of the submissions provided to the committee and raise some of the opposition's concerns with the bill and ask the minister to address those issues in his speech in reply.

Firstly, I would like to refer to the amendments to be moved during consideration in detail that have been circulated by the minister. I note that an exemption has been included in relation to an application to extend a probationary period—that is, for an apprentice or trainee who is under 18 years, the application will not have to include the signed consent of their parent. This is in line with the

exemption provided under clause 30 for an application for suspension of a registered training contract. Because apprentices or trainees under 18 are at some negotiation disadvantage because of their age, I ask the minister whether the department will be providing some support or advice for those who seek it?

There is also an amendment to clause 23 providing capacity for the chief executive to extend the nominal term of a registered training organisation where an application is made after the end of the nominal term if the chief executive believes it is appropriate in the circumstances. I note that, if the chief executive refuses to approve the application, they are required to provide written notice of the decision to the parties and the reasons for the decision. There does not appear to be a mechanism for review of the decision. It is not included in clause 167 or 168, so I ask the minister what recourse someone who is dissatisfied with the decision would have.

I also note the amendment to clause 48, which provides a process whereby one of the parties fails to sign a completion agreement because they have refused or neglected to do so after having been requested to do so. This plugs a loophole that was present in the bill, and I am pleased to see this amendment included.

I now move to the provisions of the bill that were considered by the committee. This bill is the final step in the legislative framework that provides for the replacement of Skills Queensland as the regulatory body for training requirements for apprentices and traineeships. When Skills Queensland was abolished by the Vocational Education Training and Employment Bill 2013, the regulatory functions were transferred to the Director-General of the Department of Education, Training and Employment for a transitional period of 12 months to allow the replacement legislative framework to be implemented. Whilst the opposition recognises the need for continual improvement of the vocational education and training sector in Queensland to ensure training meets the needs of industry in this state, we have some concerns about the extent that this bill will allow for the outsourcing of the delivery of VET in Queensland and undermines the protections provided for trainees and apprentices as compared with the provisions of the previous legislation.

The bill envisages the separation of employment contracts and apprenticeship or training contracts. Employment contracts are regulated under the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act 2009. This bill regulates the apprenticeship and training contracts. There is necessarily a correlation between an employment contract and a training or apprenticeship contract. The bill provides the grounds on which the chief executive may cancel a registered training contract. One of these grounds is that the employment of the apprentice or trainee by the employer has ceased. There are no parameters around the exercise of this power by the chief executive.

The opposition has concerns about what happens to an apprenticeship or training contract when the corresponding employment contract is terminated unfairly. Unfair dismissal processes under the Fair Work Act can take some time to complete, so we have concerns about what happens to the training of that person pending the determination of their employment matters. I note that the committee report includes a point of clarification as to how terminated employment contracts will be monitored to ensure procedural fairness, particularly where the department has not been required to intervene. I note that there is no amendment proposed to deal with this situation.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

**Ms D'ATH:** If this is not to be included in the bill, there should be some policy framework established by the director-general so that everyone is aware of the processes to be adopted in those circumstances and to perhaps allow for a stay of the process until this has been finalised. I ask the minister to please clarify how the director-general will deal with the situation where there is a dispute about the termination of employment. One of the identified gaps in the Fair Work Act is that apprentices employed on a probationary basis have no right of appeal to the Industrial Relations Commission. Therefore, because there is no formal process for challenging the termination in those circumstances, there needs to be some method of considering whether and how the training could continue in those circumstances.

The committee report refers to advice sought by committee members from the department as to the process around the termination of contracts. Mr Martin from the QCU gave evidence about the probationary period. He stated—

First of all, there is a probationary period which is an exclusion from taking any action for unfair dismissal. That probationary period is three months unless otherwise agreed so that could be 12 months quite easily. That would get into an esoteric debate about whether that is reasonable or not, but it is quite perceivable that an apprentice would have a one-year probationary period during which they would have to remedy for unfair dismissal.

Mr Stephens from the department also gave evidence on this point. He stated—

If the probation period is, say, three months, I understand that federally you can extend it for another three months to up to six months. If your organisation has fewer than 15 employees, yes, there is a 12-month probation period as a period. If it has more than 15 employees, I think it is a six-month probation period. Within that, that is the probation period.

The Fair Work Act 2009 specifically provides that, where an employer has fewer than 15 employees, employees will need to have worked for the business for 12 months in order to be eligible to make a claim for unfair dismissal. This is the case whether the probationary period has been extended or not. Unfortunately, the committee has chosen to disregard the evidence provided to the committee and has proceeded on the basis that there are limits to the length of the probationary period under the Commonwealth legislation, so 'the apprentice or trainee in such a situation could in fact apply for a review of employment termination under that Act'. This ignores the evidence from the department and the QTU that it is possible for a probationary period to be extended to six months where the organisation has 15 or more employees, and 12 months where the organisation has fewer than 15 employees. It also ignores the fact that the Fair Work Act has limitations on the ability to make an unfair dismissal application in certain circumstances.

The issue of churn then arises, where unscrupulous employers might employ a first-year apprentice on low wages for an extended 12-month probationary period and then terminate their employment and replace them with another apprentice or trainee on the same terms and continue this practice, thereby having a continuous supply of employees available on low wages. Without recourse to unfair dismissal processes, there is little opportunity for the trainee or apprentice to protect their employment and training rights in those circumstances. Various submitters to the committee have expressed concerns about the lack of appeal mechanisms provided in the bill. As the explanatory notes provide, there are limited administrative review rights to QCAT and QIRC for decisions made by the chief executive.

The bill sets out in clause 167 the circumstances in which an aggrieved person can apply to QCAT for review of a decision. All of the matters set out in that clause relate to training and employment providers. Clause 168 sets out the decisions that are appealable to QIRC. These include decisions made under section 36(c), (e) or (h). However, it does not include a decision under subsection (i), which is the cancellation of a registered training contract because the employment of the apprentice or trainee by the employer has ceased. The explanatory notes are misleading on this aspect because they state at page 5 that 'Administrative rights will be available in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission relating to a decision to cancel a training contract under clause 36'.

However, as I have said, the clause clearly provides that those review rights are only available in respect of decisions made under subsections 36(c), (e) or (h). The committee has relied on the statement in the explanatory notes and has therefore commented—

The explanatory notes ... say that administrative review rights will exist in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission ... regarding some training matters (cancelling a training contract, making a disciplinary order, cancelling a completion certificate, declaring a prohibited employer)

...

The committee is generally satisfied with the rights to review of decisions relating to apprenticeships and traineeships that would be available should the Bill be passed.

The report then goes on to seek clarification from the minister in respect of terminated employment contracts and whether there is a risk for some apprentices or trainees to fall through the cracks. This then leads to the question of what action can be taken by an apprentice or trainee where their apprenticeship or traineeship contract is terminated by the director-general and they believe that termination is unfair or wrongful. There are no other administrative review rights than those specified under the act so these decisions remain unreviewable.

The opposition's concern goes further than those expressed by the committee, and I call on the minister to include subsection 36(i) in the appeal rights under clause 168, to allow a right of appeal to the QIRC. As I have asked before, if the issue of termination of training and apprenticeship contracts because of termination of employment is not to be addressed in the bill, will the minister ensure that there is a policy developed whereby, when the director-general is making a decision to terminate a training contract, they take into account the capacity of the apprentice or trainee to access review processes under the Fair Work Act? There should also be a further policy so that, if there is no unfair dismissal process open to a trainee or apprentice whose employment is terminated, there is some way for the director-general to take into account the merits of the dismissal when exercising a power under 36(i).

The Independent Education Union expressed some concerns about how the bill will impact on school based apprenticeships and traineeships. The current VETE Act contains in the objects the important aim of 'community commitment to supporting young people in the compulsory participation phase'. The bill does not contain a similar clause, and we share the union's concern that this may imply a reduced commitment to fulfil the community commitment to young people and does not adequately acknowledge the role of schools as RTOs for young people in the compulsory phases of participation.

The anecdotal evidence of members that withdrawal of government supported TAFE programs is leading to a reduction of school based VET programs, particularly in rural and regional areas where TAFE facilities have closed, is of real concern to the opposition. It would be disturbing if access to training was so heavily dependent on where you live that regional and rural Queensland missed out on these opportunities. Many of the industries that rely on training provided through apprenticeships and traineeships are located in rural and regional areas, and provision of training opportunities where these industries are located simply is common sense.

The committee has noted that the first *Annual Skills Priority Report* was published by the Ministerial Industry Commission in March 2013 and that budget allocations for VET will be determined as part of the 2014-15 budget process. The opposition will be keeping an eye on that budgetary process to ensure that there is no reduction of services. Following are the issues that the opposition has identified as concerns with this bill. Vocational education and training provides a significant contribution to the economy of this state. The age and sometimes inexperience of many of the participants in the sector mean that there should be significant protections provided to ensure they are not exploited in any way. Deregulation may mean that some of those protections that have existed may no longer apply. Ensuring the smooth continuation of training to these young people is important in providing the greatest benefit to the economy and community.

As I stated, the opposition will not be opposing the bill, but we do have concerns about how deregulation will affect the sector. We will be keeping an eye on how things pan out with the government's ongoing reforms in this area.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.39 pm): Both the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill and the Further Education and Training Bill were referred to the Education and Innovation Committee on 4 March this year and it was required to report back to the House by 29 April. The committee, supported by the majority, agreed that both bills be passed. The committee received several submissions from stakeholders and also held public hearings for both bills.

The TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill heralds a totally new era for tertiary education in Queensland with wonderful new opportunities becoming available for students. This dual sector entity between Central Queensland University and Central Queensland TAFE will come to fruition after several years of planning, evolving the framework for this legislation. I particularly thank Minister Langbroek for his acknowledgement of both of the committee's reports and his responses to the recommendation and points for clarification outlined in that report.

The merger of CQ TAFE and CQU will result in the first dual sector entity in Queensland. There are six other such dual entities in Australia as well as 84 mixed sector entities. It may be new for Queensland, but it is certainly not nationally. Dual sector entities are relatively rare in Australia, possibly because of the differentiation of government funding between the state government for VET and the federal government for universities. There could be several benefits from this merger including an improved ability for students to access VET and higher education and to meet the changing needs within Queensland regions. It should also improve integration and learning opportunities by optimising the articulation and credit transfers from VET to university courses. Of course, there is the fact that sharing common resources should enable an increased capacity for the entity across many sites.

This legislation provides for the transfer of assets, employees and other matters from TAFE Queensland across to another entity, which is the dual sector entity. The Queensland government is contributing \$116 million in assets and \$40 million in expected revenue per year towards the merger.

The committee particularly acknowledged the importance of the TAFE brand and was concerned, as was another submitter, that the TAFE brand could become diluted or could be taken by a private provider in the event of the introduction of dual sector entities. The department did advise that the operational plan of dual sector entities would recognise their role as public providers of VET,

and that is very important. In its submission, the CQ University encouraged the state government to consider this merger as a pilot project for future dual sector developments in Queensland. This certainly would be a benefit to future dual entities to learn from the CQ University merger.

One of the issues that still arises with other dual sector entities in Australia is the issue of double funding—federal and state—and double reporting, with differing regulations between sectors and even different industrial regimes for staff and different calendars. Dual sector entities could even end up with two different cultures. The Central Queensland University is aware of these issues. They did acknowledge at the hearing that a number of these issues had been taken into account during the development of the potential dual sector entity. There is much more I could say about this bill, but, in the interests of time, I will say that I think this is going to be an excellent opportunity for education in Queensland.

The Further Education and Training Bill is an important piece of legislation. It will provide for a much more streamlined way forward for vocational education that will support economic development and industry in Queensland. The bill repeals the Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2008 to create a new regulatory framework for apprenticeships and traineeships. In 2012 the Queensland government established an independent, industry led Skills and Training Taskforce to review the VET sector in Queensland. Following the recommendations of the task force, the government released its action plan for VET, 'Great skills. Real opportunities.'. This bill is the implementation of those commitments within that action plan with respect to reforms to apprenticeships and training.

This bill provides for more flexible pathways for qualifications. A point of concern that was raised is that perhaps there is no distinction between certificates, traineeships and apprenticeships within the vocational concept, and this was the central focus in this bill. As the department said in its response, the bill provides for both apprenticeships and traineeships to be declared. The department provides a list that identifies whether a calling is an apprenticeship or a traineeship. Certificates of achievement are a new concept included in the bill. They provide for alternative training pathways to be recognised. These alternative pathways will enable a rigorous, work based skill formation experience underpinned by quality training. They will also allow for a more flexible work pattern, which is what industry is calling for.

The focus for the department is to facilitate the provision of vocational education and training that is linked to employment and is responsive to the future workforce development and skills requirements of industry. To ascertain those training skills for industry, the Ministerial Industry Commission will advise the Minister for Education, Training and Employment on skilling and funding priorities. That of course is also underway. The first Annual Skills Priority Report was published by the Ministerial Industry Commission. Budget allocations will be determined as part of that 2014-15 process.

Having taught in the vocational education sector at TAFE previously, I welcome both of these bills. The dual sector is an excellent move and should benefit students in the long term. Over recent years there has been a steady move towards acknowledging and accrediting vocational training towards university level degrees in many disciplines. This move has secured a pathway to tertiary studies for many students who may not have gained a sufficient OP score or may not have even attained a senior certificate. As we know, learning is a lifelong experience. Tertiary education can become open to almost anyone who has the capacity to learn.

On behalf of the committee, I must particularly thank the minister for his acknowledgement and responses to our queries and also the staff members of the department who very, very willingly attended briefings before the committee. The input from the submitters to both bills as well as the witnesses who appeared at the hearings was particularly beneficial for the compilation of the committee's report, and we thank those people for their efforts.

Once again, I extend the committee's appreciation of the guidance and assistance of the research team, which is ably led by Ms Bernice Watson. I also thank the members of the committee. The skilling of our workforce is essential and these pieces of legislation will set the framework for that to occur. I am very happy to add my support to these bills.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.47 pm): I rise tonight to make a small contribution to this cognate debate. Of course, these bills form part of this government's reform agenda to reduce red tape and provide for more efficient and effective vocational education and training in the VET sector. The provisions in the Further Education and Training Bill 2014 will make the apprenticeship and trainee system in Queensland simpler and more flexible and will improve outcomes for a range of stakeholders, from industry and employers to the apprentices and trainees themselves. As a member

of the committee that considered these bills and recommended they be passed, I am confident that the Queensland VET sector stands to become much more effective as a result of the measures proposed in this legislation. As the government has stated on plenty of occasions, having a vocational education and training sector that can respond to the needs of industry is one of the keys to our economic prosperity. I would like to highlight a few aspects of this legislation which mark significant steps forward from the current circumstances.

The bill will reduce the time frame for registration of a training contract to 28 days. Currently, an employer is not required to lodge a training contract until after the completion of a probationary period, potentially leaving this trainee or apprentice in a state of uncertainty for several months. The new time frame for registering a training contract will resolve the employment status of these trainees and apprentices much sooner. Once a training contract is registered, it will be much easier under the new legislation for amendments to be made and for the contract to be suspended or cancelled in the circumstances where this must happen. Suspension and cancellation must now have the consent of both parties. I commend the provision of a seven-day grace period to protect people who may feel that they were coerced or pressured or who wish to withdraw their consent to the suspension or the cancellation of these contracts.

Under circumstances where the parties are unable to reach an agreement, I note that the chief executive will retain the ability to cancel a training contract at their discretion. This also provides for circumstances where an employment contract is terminated but the parties neglect to deal with the training contract.

During the committee's inquiry some concerns were raised, and of course I am very happy that all of these issues have been resolved and we are very happy that employment contracts will be regulated under the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act 2009. Under this legislation an apprentice or employee will be able to permanently transfer their training contract to another employer. This not only gives them some freedom to seek better conditions if necessary, but it also makes it easier to relocate if need be or get training while working on shorter-term projects.

Also, as part of the government's objective to increase options and create flexibility in education and training pathways, this bill provides for the issue of certificates of achievement. Quite often people's circumstances change before they are able to complete a three- or four-year apprenticeship or traineeship. Certificates of achievement will allow people to be recognised for the skills they have attained if they wish to change their career pathways.

The bill will also reduce red tape by removing unnecessary duplication of rights and processes in the current VETE Act and industrial relations legislation. The current legislation allows aggrieved parties to pursue multiple options for compensation in relation to a single event, which is unfair and costly to those who have to address these multiple complaints. This was an issue identified by the Skills and Training Taskforce as a major barrier for industry. There will now be a clear process for the resolution of issues between apprentices and trainees and their employers, making things less complex for all concerned.

In talking to the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Bill 2014 and the agreement for the merger between Central Queensland University and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE reached last year, we here in Queensland and the Wide Bay-Burnett area now have the opportunity to implement a significant step forward in tertiary education. This bill will facilitate the merger of CQU and CQIT into a dual sector entity as well as provide a model for the establishment of similar entities in the future—something I am both excited and optimistic about in the near future.

As the minister pointed out in his introductory speech, this government has always been committed to economic prosperity. Having tertiary education institutions that are able to respond and adapt by providing courses that are always relevant to current workforce needs is a fundamental element of that commitment we have made. The dual sector entity model allows institutions to increase their capacity and flexibility to offer a wider range of courses through the sharing of common resources. We also envisage that by combining the industry engagement capability of VET with the research and academic traditions of universities, it will create a strengthened organisational culture across the two sectors.

Operating under one banner also paves the way for a more effective and efficient credit transfer and articulation processes. Being able to take a variety of education pathways that recognise previous study is vital to ongoing learning, and this model will make it easier for tertiary education institutions to accommodate students' needs in this regard. Quite clearly there are significant benefits

to establishing dual sector entities. By taking this opportunity to put the framework in place now, our education sector will be better positioned to meet the changing needs of Queensland's regions in years to come.

As a member of the Education and Innovation Committee which considered the bill, I also wish to express my support for the committee's recommendation that the minister consider the merger, and I do encourage the dialogue around a pilot project. Once this entity is well established, an evaluation will be vital to improving and refining the process of establishing such entities even further.

Finally, I wish to note that the bill allows for the dual sector entity to be recognised as a quality VET provider by allowing the use of the protected term 'TAFE'. It is important to recognise that many of the teaching staff and resources come from the proven TAFE system and that their integration into another entity in no way diminishes their ability to deliver quality training products and services. Given the fact that CQU serves as a vital training and education facility for many of my constituents, I will follow the establishment and operation of this dual sector entity with great interest.

I reiterate the point that we now have an opportunity to establish a model of tertiary education that is far more flexible and much more capable of quickly and effectively adapting to the ever-changing needs that exist within our industries.

I thank the minister and his staff for their hard work in bringing these bills to the parliament, and I thank my fellow committee members and all those who contributed to the inquiry. This legislation ticks all the boxes of reducing red tape and creating a more robust VET sector that is able to meet the needs of Queensland. I look forward to its implementation.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (7.53 pm): I rise today to speak on the cognate debate on the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill 2014 and the Further Education and Training Bill 2014. Firstly, I would like to start on the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill. This bill certainly bridges the gap between TAFE and university education.

In September 2013, the Newman government executed an agreement with Central Queensland University to establish a dual sector education facility by merging the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE and the Central Queensland University. Previous to this bill there was no provision to allow for the operation of dual sector educational facilities, thus forcing universities and state vocational educational and training providers to operate separately. To negate any confusion, for some time universities have been able to deliver vocational education training courses by establishing registered training organisations and being accredited in the VET courses. Dual sector entities will be different because they will be permitted to use the protected term 'TAFE' in relation to their vocational education and training courses.

However, to achieve this there certainly needs to be a significant transfer of public assets such as land, buildings, student enrolments and staff to the Central Queensland University to establish this dual sector facility. This will be done under a framework of governance, requiring accountability and reporting to ensure that the government's policies are achieved and that the entity remains viable into the future.

The provisions within the bill will provide for: submission of quarterly reports on operations to the minister; powers for the minister to request information and give direction to the dual sector entities; and provisions for operational plans and the capacity for payment of an annual return on the dual sector entity's vocational education and training operations to the state if appropriate.

We live in a world which presents an enormous number of challenges and there is a lot of cutthroat competition. Education is the key to economic prosperity, preparing the next generation for the real world. By having the Central Queensland University and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE coming together you are drawing the talents of both of those sectors into one area, so that is going to be very beneficial.

Now I will move on to the Further Education and Training Bill 2014. This government gave a firm commitment at the last election to build our four-pillar economy. To do this we need qualified workers who are up to the task. The Further Education and Training Bill 2014 continues the government's focus in reforming the Queensland vocational education and training sector by making apprenticeship and traineeship systems in Queensland more flexible and simpler. This is about working with industry and improving skills for better job outcomes.

The bill repeals the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000 and establishes a new regulatory framework for traineeships and apprenticeships. We need to be in tune with modern working environments to enable flexibility. The old legislation restricted employment to those under

the age of 21. Under the new bill, a young person will have access to many more flexible pathways, which include training pathways, to gain necessary qualifications. Furthermore, the bill reduces time frames for the lodgement of training contracts. This will allow the employment status of trainees and apprentices to be formalised as soon as possible and will bring them in line with other jurisdictions.

To cut red tape and reduce complexity, the suspension and cancellation of training contracts under the old system will be replaced by a much more simple system that emphasises agreements between both parties rather than a decision of the chief executive. The bill also combines the three separate processes for suspending a training contract into an overarching process for suspension which is agreed to by both parties. The government must also continue to provide support for both parties to resolve any potential disputes.

I think the key aspect to this Further Education and Training Bill is the issuing of certificates of achievement. Not all employers can commit to a three- to four-year apprenticeship. These certificates allow training experiences to be documented and recognised in accordance with required learning outcomes.

This creates a new high degree of flexibility that meets today's changing work environments. Furthermore, these certificates will demonstrate the completion of work based training, highlight the skills obtained to increase employment opportunities, and help potential employers access skills that they need for their businesses. I thank my fellow committee members, particularly the committee chair, Rosemary Menkens, for her fantastic effort. I also thank the minister for bringing this legislation forward. It is very much needed and school leavers and people trying to change their career paths will certainly appreciate this great piece of legislation.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (7.59 pm): I rise to speak in particular on the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill, whilst recognising that this is a cognate debate. The prospect of a dual sector in the Gladstone area with Rockhampton CQU has been around now for several years. When it was first mooted I would have to say that, whilst the university through Scott Bowman was very strong on the prospect and on the model, there was a great deal of disquiet in the TAFE sector in my electorate, and no doubt that was duplicated across other sectors. My direct experience was with our TAFE people. TAFE is a wonderful place. Over many years it has provided vocational education and training and skills based training for a lot of people who otherwise may not have had the opportunities that they gained after receiving accreditation. The people who work there are people with an investment in our community and in our people, not only young people but mature age students as well.

It is easy to talk about the better utilisation of TAFE buildings and it is easy to talk about the amount of face-to-face teaching time and all of the issues that have been faced by TAFE, both internally and criticisms externally. The fact is that over decades TAFE has provided a vital service to the people of Queensland and it has been developed and grown through the funds that the people of Queensland have channelled to it through government. As I said, there were those in the TAFE sector who were very uncertain about what was proposed. Sadly, in one conversation that I had with some of the proponents the word 'takeover' was used. It was used unwisely. It was done almost naturally and I certainly challenged the person when they made that comment. They quickly backtracked and said, 'No, it's not a takeover.' But that sentiment was the one that was most feared by the people who worked at TAFE in Gladstone. They did not want to be subsumed by the university. They did not want to disappear off the face of the earth, and I raised concerns in this place several years ago because I am old enough to remember when QUT was a technical college and it morphed into the Queensland University of Technology. We do not hear anything about technical courses next door; it is all about tertiary and university.

The proponents of the dual sector talked about the seamless interaction between TAFE students moving into tertiary studies and tertiary qualifications but also people who are doing a university course being able to go into the TAFE sector and get practical qualifications as well. I think that notion—that aim—is something to aspire to but also something to protect. It is the structure that is contained in this bill and in former bills that have gone through that will protect the essence of TAFE whilst creating that union with the university. Therefore, it is essential that, whilst the TAFE entity merges with the Central Queensland University, the strengths of TAFE are retained and protected, that the entity of TAFE is retained and protected and that as time moves on TAFE is not consumed by the university. It is unlikely that the university will be consumed by the TAFE, but certainly the fear in our TAFE community was that it would be taken over by the university.

The elements in this bill and the accountabilities in this bill are intended to protect, I believe, the TAFE structure whilst creating that dual sector entity but ensuring that the strengths of TAFE are strengthened, that the strengths of the university are strengthened and that any deficiency in either can be addressed so that the end result is an opportunity for both young men and women and older people to be able to go into this educational precinct, albeit a split precinct, and come out at the end with a qualification that is both recognisable and practical.

It also gives the opportunity for an energy training centre to be established. Prior to the last federal election there was funding for an energy training centre on the TAFE campus. This current federal government has scotched that idea, but there has been a very positive proposal for the energy training centre still on that dual sector model but to go into what was the PELM centre at the university. It is a building that already exists. The floor area is exactly the same as was proposed for the energy training centre at the TAFE and it provides the opportunity for training in energy, particularly in LNG, to occur. Any practical training that requires a bigger area than the small training area within the building that provides the training can be done in the big LNG plants.

I believe that that opportunity should not be lost simply because the federal government revisited its budget and decided that the funding that had been promised to the training centre at the TAFE could no longer be accommodated given the constraints that it is facing. This allows for the training centre to be established without the cost of capital construction of the buildings, for the floor space still to be there and for that training to be provided. I have been shown through the PELM centre. As it currently is, it is fairly well gutted in terms of the activities of PELM. Some of the training is currently going on, but it certainly provides an opportunity that I hope is not lost to strengthen yet again this dual sector entity.

As I said, the TAFE people had a great deal of misgivings in relation to this proposed merger. For 12 months or longer they could not get information because the two entities were separate entities and they were not speaking to each other—the uni was not allowed to speak to TAFE and so it went—so there was a great deal of disquiet amongst the staff there which has been alleviated in the last six months or so since formal documents were signed late last year. I again commend the minister for the protections in this bill and the accountabilities that this legislation requires. They will be required to continue on into the future—not just for a transitional period—to ensure that the opportunities through VET training at TAFE continue on not only through the university but also through the TAFE structure as well and that rather than subservience of TAFE to the university the strengths of both can be recognised and capitalised on to the benefit of the community in Gladstone, in Central Queensland and throughout Queensland generally.

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.08 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate on the Further Education and Training Bill and the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill, but my focus will be on the dual sector bill. I want to speak to the event which has prompted the legislation we are debating regarding the merger of the Central Queensland University and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE into Queensland's first dual sector tertiary institution. Both institutions have a long and significant history in the Central Queensland region. The Central Queensland Institute of TAFE has a history that stretches back to 1889, with the initial formation of the subcommittee to create and plan for a technical college in Rockhampton. Within the next decade the first classes were held in buildings in Bolsover Street. Over the next few decades a School of Mines was established and engineering courses were offered. A high school was included in the technical college in 1919.

Mackay's technical college was open in 1912 at a new building on the corner of Wood and Alfred streets. That building still stands today. The technical college opened simultaneously at the same premises with the Mackay State High School, which was one of the first state high schools opened in Queensland in that year. The growth of the technical colleges both in Mackay and Rockhampton followed a similar trajectory. The technical colleges became important parts of their communities beyond teaching the skills needed for the growing communities of Central Queensland. During the 1918 Mackay cyclone and flood, the Mackay Technical College was used as a maternity ward. After both of the world wars, Rockhampton Technical College retrained returned servicemen, helping diggers return to civilian life.

As their high schools were spun off in the 1960s, the technical colleges grew to offer further advanced courses in mining and advanced trades. As technical colleges became TAFE colleges in the mid-1970s, prevocational adult education and hospitality courses were introduced. In 1994, TAFE colleges in Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone and the Central Highlands were merged into a single

Central Queensland Institute of TAFE. At the turn of the century, Central Queensland TAFE gained a reputation for excellence, winning the Large Training Provider of the Year Award at the Queensland Training Awards on multiple occasions.

While the CQ University has a shorter history, the struggle for the establishment of a university in Central Queensland stretches back over half a century. The push for a university in Rockhampton began in the early 1940s. In 1941 the former member for Mackay, William Forgan Smith, introduced section 17 of the National Education Co-ordination and University of Queensland Amendment Act, which provided for the creation of a university college outside of Brisbane. In 1944-45, a series of Rockhampton delegations lobbied the Queensland government for a university college. But after the University of Queensland established a network of provincial study centres in the late 1940s, the issue became dormant.

Rockhampton's university campaign resumed in 1958 when the local branch of the Institute of Engineers started organising an association to agitate for a university in Central Queensland. With the support of local schools and religious leaders, on 3 March 1959 Rockhampton's mayor, the late Alderman Rex Pilbeam, called the first public meeting of the Central Queensland University Development Association—or UDA for short. The UDA presented university proposals to federal and state governments and in 1961 the Queensland government reserved 161 hectares of government land at Parkhurst as a tertiary education site.

In March 1965, the Commonwealth government's Martin report recommended the expansion of tertiary education. The Commonwealth government soon announced the foundation of a new form of tertiary institution at both Rockhampton and Toowoomba. The Rockhampton institute was named the Queensland Institute of Technology, Capricornia and was affiliated with the main Queensland Institute of Technology campus in Brisbane. Although the QITC lacked the autonomy of universities and was controlled by the Queensland education department, Central Queensland finally had its own facility for higher learning.

When QITC opened in February 1967, it did not yet have a campus of its own. Ironically, the initial classes were held on the top floor of the technical college in Bolsover Street. What was to become the CQ University was born in the classrooms of what was to become the CQ Institute of TAFE. This July, if this legislation is passed, these two institutions will be together once again. By 1969, most of the facilities had moved into the new Parkhurst campus.

Amendments to education legislation in 1971 granted autonomy with its own governing council to the newly renamed Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education. The young institute gradually began to spread its wings across Central Queensland. In 1974, comprehensive distance education was introduced. A second campus was opened in Gladstone in 1978. Further campuses were opened in Mackay in 1987, Bundaberg in 1988 and Emerald in 1989.

As part of the federal Labor Dawkins reform to higher education, in 1992 the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education became a fully-fledged university as the University of Central Queensland. Further expansion of the campuses followed, as CQU aggressively injected itself into the global marketplace for higher education. New campuses were established in Sydney in 1994, Melbourne in 1997, Brisbane in 1998 and, in 2001, Noosa and the Gold Coast. CQU embarked on offering its courses even further afield, with joint venture international campuses in Shanghai, Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Shortly after the turn of the 21st century CQU was winning critical acclaim for its innovative higher education offerings as both a regional university and as a provider of higher education to international students. CQU was also recognised by the *Good universities guide* with a five-star rating. In 2008, the university became known by its present name, CQUniversity.

CQUniversity has continued its tradition of pursuing innovation in its courses. Over the past decade or more CQUniversity has developed a constellation of research centres that has spurred excellence in their respective fields, such as the Centre for Rail Engineering, the Process Engineering and Light Metals Centre, the Centre for Environmental Management and the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development. These research centres are important engines for industrial innovation and growth in Central Queensland.

I believe that the creation of the dual sector entity, providing both higher and vocational education by the merger of CQUniversity and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE, is an important step forward for both institutions. It will allow hitherto separate institutions to benefit from each other's areas of expertise, offer new pathways for vocational and higher education and reduce the administrative costs through having both campuses under the one roof.

I know that the communities across Central Queensland support this proposal. I reflect the remarks that the member for Gladstone made. Because of the due diligence that was carried out, it certainly created uncertainty for TAFE employees but, now that the agreement was signed late last year, certainly, both institutions have worked hard so that the merger, when it happens, will be smooth. I think the great thing about having a dual sector is the opportunity that it will provide for lifelong learning. Often people will study for a trade and then go on to undertake tertiary studies.

The success of the new dual sector institution will occur because the vocational education faculty will continue along with the different schools within the university. I think that, if there was a merger of the vocational education faculty with the different schools within the university, that will weaken the VET sector over time. I do not believe that that is what the members of this chamber want to occur. We want to see both institutions bringing their strengths together so that, as a new institution, it can grow and service not only the people of Central Queensland and the economy of Central Queensland but also produce graduates who will work in Australia and in the many corners of the world. The shadow education spokesman has outlined Labor's concerns in relation to these two bills—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (8.20 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill and the Further Education and Training Bill. I want to acknowledge the Department of Education, Training and Employment, the Queensland Teachers Union, Central Queensland University, and in particular Mr Nic Babovic and Ms Jenny Moore, for their contribution to the committee process. While the bill primarily facilitates a merger between Central Queensland University and Central Queensland Institute of TAFE to create the dual sector entity, it meets the government's commitment to provide better front-line services and to allow for a more economic and efficient use of existing infrastructure.

This is an exciting prospect and I would like to think that it may be considered a pilot for potential dual sector entity arrangements into the future. While the TAFE brand is a known and trusted provider of quality training, the opportunity to merge with a provider of higher education outcomes allows a convenient opportunity for the community to have access to a greater range of services. I acknowledge that there was some consternation around the ability to maintain the quality expectations of the TAFE brand, but note that the bill maintains sufficient protections around the brand and that indeed it is my belief that TAFE has and will continue to provide quality training of the highest standard.

I should also provide some comment as to concerns raised around the ongoing provision of training that meets the community's socioeconomic need as well as industry or employment driven outcomes. Essentially it is a question of the ability of the dual sector entity to maintain the role of TAFE as a public provider and to meet its community service obligations. I note the department's and the minister's advice that these concerns should be addressed through the legislative requirement for the annual provision of an operational plan with quarterly reporting to the minister.

The Queensland Teachers Union expressed its belief that the role of the public provider, specifically those community service obligations, is to address the issue of access, providing services in a range of often rural and remote locations; provide courses across a range of vocational and general knowledge skill areas; and to set a quality benchmark for VET delivery. I certainly do not disagree with the assertions of the QTU in this regard. However, I would have to express that I would consider each of these objectives, or the provision thereof, is in the best interests of the dual sector entity to maintain. It is my belief that the provision of a broader range of courses, specifically those that result in a greater variation of qualifications and a greater utilisation of facilities, provides greater access and opportunity. Maintaining a quality of service that meets or exceeds the existing high standards of TAFE simply makes good business sense for any provider—more so if an element of contestability applies.

As I mentioned at the outset, I think this presents a wonderful and exciting opportunity for Central Queensland, and I will be watching this model in the hope that other parts of our great state may identify similar opportunities for consideration into the future. I thank the minister for responding to the committee's inquiry concerning transfers of assets for any potential future dual sector entities where those assets will fall within the jurisdiction of QTAMA.

I will also speak to the Further Education and Training Bill. This bill will enable the government to achieve its commitment to meet recommendations in the *Great Skills. Real Opportunities—Queensland government reform action plan for further education and training*. I note the minister's response to the committee recommendation that the terms 'calling' and 'restricted calling' be defined in the bill and I thank him for his clarification in that matter.

This is a bill that provides greater flexibility and greater opportunities for career pathways and will ultimately afford greater community resilience. As the member for Albert mentioned, the bill greatly reduces the time frame for the lodgement of contracts and affords protections around dispute matters. The bill meets our red-tape reduction targets and, for all of those reasons, I support the bill this evening.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (8.23 pm): I rise tonight with great enthusiasm to voice my support for the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill and the Further Education and Training Bill.

**Mr Bleijie:** You look as enthusiastic as I do.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** Thank you, Attorney-General. These two bills pave the way for the consecration of an historic marriage between Central Queensland University and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE, something that has been eagerly awaited by many communities throughout Central Queensland. It is a marriage that was mooted some time ago—well before the election of the Newman government. I am personally very pleased that once again we have listened carefully to all the key stakeholders, listened to industry, listened to local people, and brought this much awaited merger to fruition, thereby delivering a dual sector university for our region.

It is a first for Queensland, offering programs and courses ranging from pre-apprenticeship through to doctorate level. CQU has certainly come a long way since I finished high school in Mackay, when many locals would pack their bags for the nearest university some 340 kilometres down the road in Rockhampton which was then home to the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, nowadays known to many of us simply as CQU. I might add that CQU even has a study hub now in the northern part of my electorate, working in partnership with another TAFE—that is, the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE. I was delighted to attend the official opening of that study hub at its Cannonvale campus last year—a step in the right direction for many of my constituents in the Whitsundays, especially those younger constituents.

**Mr Symes:** A great opportunity.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** It is a great opportunity, thank you, member for Lytton. At CQU's Mackay campus we certainly have something we can be truly proud of, something not lost on myself last Friday when I joined the local MP, the member for Mirani, and our hardworking Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the latter of whom officially opened our new trades training centre at Ooralea which will be a tremendous asset for the Mackay-Whitsunday region, our local industry and, of course, our fledgling dual sector university.

The dual sector model certainly has many fans: people like Narelle Pearce, the former managing director of MAIN, Mackay Area Industry Network, who told the *Daily Mercury* on 11 September 2012—

Having Queensland's dual sector university in the heart of the state's largest resources sector will have an incredible impact on the skills shortfalls that has stopped this region from reaching its full potential.

For too long we have seen students travel outside of Mackay to study and not return home. Allowing them to transition their studies locally means they will be more likely to stay and work here.

I might add it was terrific seeing representatives from MAIN and industry in general in attendance at the official opening of the skills training centre and I acknowledge those key people involved, people like Gary Kinnon, who was acknowledged earlier this evening, from CQ Institute of TAFE, which happens to be celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. I also acknowledge CQU Chancellor Rennie Fritschy for the leadership he has displayed in this whole process, likewise CQU Vice Chancellor Professor Scott Bowman and the head of the Mackay campus Professor Pierre Viljoen, and all those industry people, the likes of Allan Rummig and co, who played their part in this great outcome for the Mackay-Whitsunday region.

As the minister said on 11 September 2013—

The merger provides the Central Queensland community with certainty that they will have a higher education provider delivering both TAFE and university programs to meet the changing skills needs of their region.

I think that says it all. In summary, I commend the minister for his work in the portfolio and I thank him for delivering this terrific outcome for the people of Central Queensland but, in particular, the region that I hold dear to my heart, the Mackay-Whitsunday region. I support the bills.

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (8.26 pm), in reply: I thank all members who have contributed to the debate in relation to these two bills. In particular I thank the members of the Education and Innovation Committee, especially the chair, the honourable member for Burdekin, for their considered report and support for the bill. I thank the member for Redcliffe, the shadow minister, for the support of the opposition for the merger of CQU and CQIT to form the first dual sector institution.

These two bills are another step forward in our relentless effort to improve vocational and technical education in this state leading to better outcomes for students. The focus in my portfolio is from crayon-to-career, whether it is early childhood or schooling or this very important part of the portfolio, training, which I acknowledge can be very confusing for people who are not part of the sector, possibly because of the acronyms that are part of it and the registered training organisation part which is separate to, or another segment of, TAFE as part of vocational education and training. We have registered training organisations and the public provider TAFE and they all form vocational education and training. The other part is universities and on to employment. We know that the best road to social and economic wellbeing is employment. The Newman government is unashamedly committed to training people for real jobs.

I will speak first about the dual sector segment of the cognate debate. The member for Redcliffe pointed out that it has resulted thanks to the tireless efforts of staff from both facilities. The member for Redcliffe mentioned Vice Chancellor Scott Bowman and Gary Kinnon who heads up the regional area for TAFE. I saw both of those gentlemen last week with their respective senior executives at the opening of the Mackay Ooralea campus—a \$37 million facility. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was here earlier in the debate and he referred to that. It was good to see the wonderful new facilities, along with the seven TAFE campuses in regional Queensland, that will be part of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE-CQU merger. They are great facilities that students will want to study in. In my contribution to the QTAMA Bill debated earlier today I made the point that modern young students in the 21st century want to study using up-to-date infrastructure and technology with teachers and trainers who are committed and not using donated, out-of-date equipment that does not reflect the modern world. TAFE is big business in Central Queensland.

We are confident that the technical skills of the institutes of technology or the TAFEs will supplement CQU and the theoretical skills of universities will supplement each other, which will lead to better outcomes for the students of Central Queensland. This government has travelled via the regional cabinets. This evening we have heard from the honourable member for Gladstone and we have received representations from her part of Central Queensland about their determination and their wish to see this particular merger succeed. Early in our term, the honourable member for Whitsunday hosted a community cabinet in his electorate. People from the Mackay City Council attended that forum, as well as senior executives from the regional development authorities. We have been to Rockhampton, Gladstone, Mackay, Emerald, Biloela and a number of other places. Wherever we have been, people have said that this is something that should happen. However, we wanted to ensure that it was done responsibly.

The honourable member for Redcliffe mentioned the \$74 million commitment from the Australian government. I point out that that was concluded under this government in May 2013. The Newman government delivered that agreement. Importantly, given that the state government was going to be contributing \$116 million in facilities and some \$40 million of training revenue for up to at least the first 18 months, it was not something that we were just going to jump into without making sure that we had appropriate checks and balances in place so that the merger could have every chance of success. Even allowing for the undoubted enthusiasm of the local community, we had to make sure that we had all of the checks and balances in place.

In this case, each year the minister will receive a plan from the CQU and then quarterly updates to ensure that there are protections for the infrastructure, as well as for the jobs of people who are apprehensive about what a prospective change could mean. To that end, last year the assistant minister, the member for Mount Coot-tha, and I toured the region to reassure many of the TAFE employees in Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone, and via a phone hook-up with the other regional TAFEs, that they were not going to be subsumed by CQU but were going to be part of a genuine merger. That is what we are delivering today.

Given the former Labor federal government's reckless expenditure and lack of sufficient and appropriate checks and balances, whether that was about building school halls or putting pink bats into roofs, we have to ensure all of the appropriate checks and balances are in place, while taking into account things such as the Auditor-General's reports into universities, which I receive every year. There is no doubt that over the past couple of years CQU has faced a significant challenge as, for a very long time, it was very heavily dependent on international students. As the global financial crisis started to bite, its bottom line was significantly impacted, which was something else the Auditor-General pointed out. I acknowledge that this year the university has made significant changes to its financial and administrative arrangements. Vice Chancellor Scott Bowman has made sure that they have the appropriate arrangements in place to secure their end of the bargain.

As I said, the Queensland government's initial investment is \$116 million of infrastructure plus, of course, training revenue for the first 18 months. The shadow minister expressed some concerns about community service obligations. We want to ensure that, under its new commercial entity, TAFE is entering a contestable market and there are always going to be foundation skills provided in some form with subsidies for those. A couple of months ago I was in Maryborough, where a \$3 million program, which has been ongoing for some time, provides foundation skills for people who need literacy and numeracy support. Community learning grants and the certificate 3 guarantees add up to about \$89 million.

CQU has committed to maintaining current service provision to remote and regional communities across the region. The vice-chancellor came to a meeting at Emerald to reassure people at the local TAFE. We know that they are committed to making sure that the infrastructure is updated, just as we said to TAFEs across the rest of the state that are not part of the dual sector. That is how TAFE has raised its utilisation rate to 65 per cent. In 2012 when we came into government, there was a 40 per cent utilisation rate and now there is a 65 per cent utilisation rate across the state. They are more productive, they are more efficient and they are training more students than they have in the past. There are 180,000 students doing TAFE qualifications, which is more than at all the Queensland universities combined. We want TAFE to be strong. It is big business. In Central Queensland it will continue to deliver many of the things that it has delivered in the past 130 years. We want to ensure that we have specified training funding to guarantee the provision of those services to disadvantaged students. It is why we allocated specified training funding.

I refer the shadow minister to the government response to allay her concerns about the protected term 'TAFE'. It is already possible for a university to deliver VET by establishing a registered training organisation and becoming accredited to deliver VET courses. To distinguish dual sector entities from providers that offer both higher education and VET, dual sector entities will be permitted to use the protected term 'TAFE' in relation to their VET courses. Also built into the bill, as I have mentioned, is ministerial oversight which allows the minister to monitor the activities of the new entity and to intervene if required through the approval of the operational plan and quarterly reports.

With regard to the member's concern about recommendation 4, I repeat: the objectives of dual sector entities are very different to those of the QTAMA, which is being established for the primary purpose of managing training assets and obtaining the best possible return on the government's investment. I refer the member to the government response for a full explanation of our intentions in this regard. In terms of other aspects about the dual sector entity that I noted, I have mentioned the provision of operational plans and the submission of quarterly reports. The member for Redcliffe was concerned about prospective other dual sector entities. I can advise the member that in Queensland we have nine universities and there are no expressed intentions for any other dual sector entities. The concerns she raised about what might happen should there be others are ones that we would address at that time.

I turn to the Further Education and Training Bill. The member raised concerns about protections for trainees under 18 years of age. Although the bill does not provide for employment related matters, the department will continue to assist employers and apprentices and trainees to resolve issues. In addition, when an apprentice or trainee and an employer sign a training contract, they are given a briefing on key aspects of the apprenticeship and traineeship system by the representative from the Australian Apprenticeships Centres. That is a federally funded program. Just a couple of weeks ago at a pre-COAG Skills Council meeting I met with Minister Ian Macfarlane. The training ministers expressed to him our concern about the extensive duplication that we saw under the former Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments.

I told Minister Macfarlane that we are not necessarily asking the Australian government to give the Australian Apprenticeships Centres to the states to administer; we are just asking that we do not have two systems of administration, because that is very frustrating for apprentices and their employers. The whole purpose of this bill is to get rid of the layers of red tape—for example, with the transfer of an apprenticeship or traineeship if, because of a change in the employer's situation, they cannot keep that apprentice or trainee. We want to ensure that we do not have a wholesale reduction in apprenticeships or people ceasing apprenticeships. We will continue to work with the federal government and the Australian Apprenticeships Centres to try to get rid of the extra administration that leads to a lot of duplication.

The briefing from the Australian Apprenticeships Centre includes advice about the wide range of matters that can arise during a training contract, including employment related matters and the rights of an apprentice or trainee to seek remedies under relevant industrial relations legislation. The strategies outlined will enable the department to gather information in relation to the revised practices for cancellation of training contracts to allow for the ongoing improvement in advice to stakeholders regarding the protections available for the termination of employment under the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act 2009. The bill improves the cancellation process for training contracts by providing a simpler model for cancellation of a training contract which in the majority of cases occurs with the parties reaching consent.

The amendments in the bill, as far as possible, align the workplace relations treatment of apprentices and trainees with that of other employees in the workplace. This is achieved by allowing apprentices and trainees to rely on industrial relations legislation to enforce their rights as an employee.

The bill makes consequential amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 for Queensland system employees to provide them with access to employment rights. Similar rights in the VETE Act have been removed because apprentices and trainees will now receive protection under the Industrial Relations Act 1999 or under the Fair Work Act 2009. Most employees, including apprentices, are protected by the national employment standards in addition to award or workplace agreements. Apprentices are entitled to the same notice of termination and unfair dismissal protections as the other employees in the workplace.

As I have mentioned throughout the debate, in working through the issues affecting vocational education and training, first of all with our TAFEs but also across the whole sector, what we have done since we have been in government is say, 'How are we going to maximise the outcomes?' I said this today in my contribution to the debate on the QTAMA Bill. If we have limited training dollars we have to look at how we are currently providing training. We have to look at where we are providing it to make sure we are not spending a great proportion of money on administration as opposed to training people to get real jobs in the modern economy.

This bill, as part of the cognate debate, is a very important plank in terms of red-tape reduction and ensuring we have simpler arrangements for apprenticeships and traineeships. I have mentioned removing unnecessary duplication, enabling transfers, replacing a current complex system for suspension and cancellation of training contracts, introducing important flexibility into the system by lowering the restricted calling age from 21 to 18 years and ending the state regulation of vocational placements because there is now a national regulator.

They are the sorts of things we are trying to do as we aim to get more people into the system. As the Premier often says, if we are all about supercharging the economy, the best way we can do it in my portfolio is to get people into the workforce who may not have had the opportunity to be in it before. That may be due to disability, indigeneity, socioeconomic status, living in remote locations or having English as a second language. TAFE and training is a very important part of this.

There is also great proof statistically that people who go to a dual sector—and this has happened in Victoria; there is a great proportion of people who may be the first in the family to study at an institution like TAFE or a dual sector institution—after receiving their first qualification then have the confidence to go on to do a subsequent course, potentially at university. I would like to see the education continuum a more horizontal one. If we are talking about the continuum starting at advanced diplomas and certificates and going all the way through to bachelor degrees, masters and PhDs, we know that lots of people will potentially want to upskill or reskill. That is why the government has also implemented Supporting Women Scholarships. These scholarships support women going

into traditionally male dominated professions. They are the sorts of things that will increase productivity as will getting people into the workforce who have not had the opportunity to do so before.

It is very clear that we do have a plan. We hear those opposite complain about what they say we are trying to do. I can give the absolute commitment of the government and every local member here that we are committed to a strong TAFE sector. That is big business.

When it comes to VET in schools—and I know the shadow minister asked some questions about VET in schools and some changes in programs there—TAFE is well placed to be the first on the ground because it has the reputation and it has the brand. It has the ability to take advantage of the new contestable funding models. Looking at the TAFE product there will be increased utilisation of that sector. We want more students studying because that will give them more qualifications that will enable them to get better jobs.

That is the purpose of today's bills. They are part of a considered plan. It has taken some time to bring the dual sector together to make sure we have adequate protections for employees who are partnering with a university. We have more school based apprenticeships and traineeships—school based VET—than any other state in the country. We also need to make sure that that is not seen as a second-best option. We do not want to see teachers guiding students to do vocational education and training at schools simply because they are not seen as being necessarily as academic as other students. These qualifications and skills that students get at school may help them go on to TAFE or other vocational education and training or university. They may decide to pursue those honourable trades which provide a very important support system in our Queensland economy.

The last thing we need is to have a system that is too top heavy, as has happened in many European countries. They have then had to import people who have the talent and ability to do those sorts of jobs that locals did not want to do. We have that tendency here in Queensland and have seen that over some time. We need to make sure that young Queenslanders know that there are opportunities to do VET in school. We have to make sure that industry has a line of sight to the limited training dollars.

Taxpayers may not always be able to subsidise all of the courses that people have done in the past simply because we want to make sure that the jobs that the ministerial industry commission—chaired by the assistant minister, the member for Mount Coot-tha, and which gets advice from economists and people with workforce planning experience—identify as being in need of training dollars are getting them. It may mean that if a person wants to do physical fitness training or photography and they already have a qualification then the subsidy is not going to be what it was before.

In the world of voodoo economics that those on the other side operate under, they would say that people should be able to train in whatever they like. They did that in Victoria under a former Labor government. It brought in a scheme of open-ended training. People could get a subsidy for whatever course they wanted to do and basically it drove TAFE into the ground. They have now had to have a \$300 million rescue package.

We have done it in a much more considered way. We have increased utilisation in our TAFEs and we have more productivity, but more work needs to be done. We are absolutely committed to having a strong training system as well as a strong education system overall.

Tonight's bills are another step on the path towards the Newman government's commitment to improving our path from crayon-to-career. I commend the bills to the House.

Question put—That the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Question put—That the Further Education and Training Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)****TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill**

Clauses 1 to 11, as read, agreed to.

**Further Education and Training Bill**

Clauses 1 to 223—

**Mr LANGBROEK** (8.50 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 12 (Application to extend probationary period)**

Page 19, line 6—

*omit, insert—*

Section 15 states who are the parties to the contract.

**2 Clause 12 (Application to extend probationary period)**

Page 19, after line 15—

*insert—*

(5) If the apprentice or trainee is under 18 years, the application must include the signed consent of a parent of the apprentice or trainee.

(6) However, subsection (5) does not apply if it would be inappropriate in all the circumstances for a parent to give signed consent.

*Example—*

It may be inappropriate for a parent to give signed consent if the apprentice or trainee is living independently of his or her parents.

**3 Clause 20 (Amending registered training contract)**

Page 26, line 7, 'by signed notice, require'—

*omit, insert—*

by written notice, request

**4 Clause 20 (Amending registered training contract)**

Page 26, line 26, 'the parties'—

*omit, insert—*

each party

**5 Clause 23 (Extension of nominal term of registered training contract)**

Page 28, lines 19 to 31 and page 29, lines 1 to 5—

*omit, insert—*

**23 Application for extension of nominal term of registered training contract**

(1) This section applies if the nominal term of a registered training contract is to end before the apprentice or trainee who is a party to the contract completes the apprenticeship or traineeship.

(2) The parties and the supervising registered training organisation for the apprentice or trainee may apply to the chief executive to extend the nominal term.

(3) The application must be in the approved form and state—

- (a) that each applicant agrees to an extension of the registered training contract; and
- (b) the reasons for the requested extension.

(4) On receiving the application, the chief executive may approve or refuse to approve the application.

(5) Despite subsection (4), the chief executive may approve an application made after the end of the nominal term only if the chief executive is satisfied it is appropriate to do so in all the circumstances.

- (6) If the chief executive approves the application, the chief executive must give notice to the parties and the supervising registered training organisation that the nominal term has been extended.
- (7) If the chief executive refuses to approve the application, the chief executive must give the parties and the supervising registered training organisation written notice of the decision, including the reasons for the decision.
- (8) If the nominal term of a training contract is extended, the contract is taken to be similarly extended.
- (9) If the chief executive approves an application after the end of the nominal term, the training contract and training plan are taken to have continued in force until the approval.

**6 Clause 41 (Definition for div 7)**

Page 41, lines 13 and 14—

*omit, insert—*

- (ii) when requested by any of the following persons, produce the record for the person's inspection—
  - (A) another party to the contract;
  - (B) the chief executive;
  - (C) the supervising registered training organisation for the apprentice or trainee under the registered training contract; or

**7 Clause 48 (Notification of failure to sign completion agreement)**

Page 45, lines 12 to 14—

*omit, insert—*

- (b) the employer or apprentice or trainee—
  - (i) has refused or neglected to sign a completion agreement after being requested to do so; or
  - (ii) has not signed a completion agreement because they can not be contacted.

**8 Clause 49 (Chief executive must give notice to the parties to the training contract)**

Page 45, line 23, 'training contract'—

*omit, insert—***registered training contract****9 Clause 49 (Chief executive must give notice to the parties to the training contract)**

Page 46, line 1, '14 days'—

*omit, insert—*

21 days

**10 Clause 50 (Decision by chief executive about issue of completion certificate if all parties do not agree)**

Page 46, line 10, '14 days'—

*omit, insert—*

21 days

**11 Clause 54 (Apprenticeship or traineeship ends when nominal term ends)**

Page 48, line 25, 'assessment and training'—

*omit, insert—*

training and assessment required

**12 Clause 54 (Apprenticeship or traineeship ends when nominal term ends)**

Page 48, after line 28—

*insert—**Note—*

Section 23 provides for an application to extend the nominal term of a registered training contract.

**13 Clause 62 (Revocation of declaration as prohibited employer)**

Page 54, lines 12 and 13, 'an information notice for the decision'—

*omit, insert—*

written notice of the decision, including the reasons for the decision

**14 Clause 70 (Replacing supervising registered training organisation)**

Page 57, lines 9 to 13—

*omit, insert—*

- (2) If the supervising registered training organisation is to be replaced, the employer must—
- (a) give the organisation a signed notice stating the day, no sooner than 14 days after the day the notice is given, when the replacement becomes effective; and
  - (b) at least 14 days before the replacement becomes effective, give the chief executive a signed notice stating the name of the new supervising registered training organisation for the apprentice or trainee.

Maximum penalty—40 penalty units.

**15 Clause 82 (Supervising registered training organisation may make minor change to training plan)**

Page 61, line 12, 'received'—

*omit, insert—*

receive

**16 Clause 98 (Decision about cancellation after show cause notice)**

Page 69, line 9, 'the certificate'—

*omit, insert—*

the organisation's certificate

**17 Clause 132 (Additional procedure if electronic application)**

Page 88, line 5, 'under 131'—

*omit, insert—*

under section 131

**18 Clause 176 (Proof of signatures unnecessary)**

Page 112, line 18, 'inspector;'—

*omit, insert—*

inspector.

**19 Clause 191 (Protection of confidentiality)**

Page 120, line 15, 'disclosure—'—

*omit, insert—*

disclosure, communication, making of a record, or use, of the information—

I table the explanatory notes.

*Tabled paper:* Further Education and Training Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. John-Paul Langbroek's amendments [\[5059\]](#).

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 223, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule 1—

**Mr LANGBROEK (8.51 pm):** I move the following amendments—**20 Schedule 1 (Minor and consequential amendments)**

Page 134, line 3, 'section 201'—

*omit, insert—*

section 223

**21 Schedule 1 (Minor and consequential amendments)**

Page 150, after line 6—

*insert—***13A Section 278(1)(e)—***omit.***13B Section 278(12), definitions *employee* and *employer*—***omit.***22 Schedule 1 (Minor and consequential amendments)**

Page 150, after line 10—

*insert—***14A Section 366(6), definition *employer*—***omit.*

**14B Section 366(6), definition *industrial instrument employee*—***omit, insert—****industrial instrument employee*** means a person who—

- (a) is or has been employed by an employer; and
- (b) works or has worked under an industrial instrument or permit.

**23 Schedule 1 (Minor and consequential amendments)**

Page 150, after line 22—

*insert—***16A Section 399(1)(d)—***omit.***16B Section 399(7)—***omit.***16C Section 400(1)(e) and (f)—***omit, insert—*

- (e) costs in proceedings relating to unpaid amounts mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (d).

**16D Section 400(6), definition *employer*—***omit, insert—****employer*** includes an apparent employer to whom an order made under section 400F applies.**16E Section 666(8)—***omit, insert—*

- (8) In this section—

***wages*** includes remuneration payable to an apprentice or trainee under section 391(2).

Amendments agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule 2—

**Mr LANGBROEK** (8.51 pm): I move the following amendments—**24 Schedule 2 (Dictionary)**

Page 163, lines 18 to 21—

*omit, insert—*

- (c) that the person to whom the notice is given may—
  - (i) for a decision mentioned in section 167—apply to QCAT for a review of the decision within 20 business days after the person receives the notice; or

**25 Schedule 2 (Dictionary)**

Page 166, line 9, 'executive'—

*omit, insert—*

chief executive

**26 Schedule 2 (Dictionary)**

Page 167, lines 1 to 3—

*omit.*

Amendments agreed to.

Schedule 2, as amended, agreed to.

**Third Reading (Cognate Debate)****Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (8.52 pm): I move—

That the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (8.52 pm): I move—

That the Further Education and Training Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Question put—That the Further Education and Training Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title (Cognate Debate)

**Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (8.53 pm): I move—

That the long title of the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the TAFE Queensland (Dual Sector Entities) Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (8.53 pm): I move—

That the long title of the Further Education and Training Bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Further Education and Training Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (8.54 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 20 May 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (8.54 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Redcliffe Pink Snapdragons Breast Cancer Dragon Boat Club

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (8.54 pm): I rise tonight to speak about one of the wonderful community groups in the electorate of Redcliffe, and that is the Redcliffe Pink Snapdragons Breast Cancer Dragon Boat Club. It is a club that is a support minded group that offers paddling opportunities to all breast cancer survivors and supporters.

The 'bosom buddies', both male and female, are their friends and supporters and help them in every way possible. They celebrate life together—paddling, eating and laughing a lot. They do not require any particular level of fitness or paddling experience to be involved in the club. They enjoy exercise in the fresh air, fun and camaraderie. Their aims are to promote breast cancer awareness and education; to demonstrate people can still lead a full and active life despite breast cancer; to show breast cancer does not discriminate on the basis of age or race; to be inclusive of all breast cancer survivors who wish to participate; to give a 'face' to and personalise the statistic; and to always encourage the search for a cure.

I just want to briefly mention the team's founder, Jayne Coe, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in September 2004, and during chemotherapy treatment her mother gave her a magazine article about Dragons Abreast Australia. Jayne loved the idea and, after the second chemotherapy session, she joined the Redcliffe Dragon Boat Racing Club and began paddling with them, as their first breast cancer survivor member. In May 2005, it was decided it was time to create a breast cancer

survivor team as part of the club. Jayne chose the name 'Pink Snapdragons' for something pretty and feminine for herself and for future members to really feel like women. Pink snapdragon flowers, which are featured on their club banner, are also strong and long lasting.

It was wonderful to join them last week to help draw their raffle for their fundraising to go to the International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission Dragon Boat Festival in October, and it is being held in Sarasota in Florida in the United States. They are hoping to send a team of 22, plus supporters, to the regatta. Their raffle prize was actually a P&O cruise around the Whitsundays. I want to acknowledge Helloworld who helped provide that prize by giving the cruise at cost. I want to acknowledge the support of local businesses but acknowledge these wonderful ladies and their supporters who do so much to support women who have gone through breast cancer and who are still going through breast cancer. I congratulate them on the great work they do in our community.

### **Glass House Electorate, Events**

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (8.57 pm): It is wonderful to entertain the House this evening with a couple of wonderful stories from the electorate of Glass House. It was great to welcome Minister Tim Mander to the electorate of Glass House, and specifically to the town of Maleny, on 16 April. Minister Mander came into the electorate specifically to meet with a number of residents at retirement villages and manufactured home parks in Maleny. Our first stop was Maleny Grove, one of the Live Life Villages.

I have to thank from the outset the wonderful Mrs Elsie Elias and Mr Paul Fisscher. Mrs Elias is a formidable force. I do not know that the owners of Maleny Grove knew what they were getting into when Mrs Elias moved in. She has been in an accountancy firm all her life and knew the books extremely well and is doing the same in her capacity on the committee of the residents at Maleny Grove. It was great for us to be able to talk to the residents there about their concerns around management of retirement villages not only in Maleny but elsewhere.

We then moved on to Sunstone Gardens, a manufactured home park just across the way that is also in Maleny. Our thanks go to Mr Ken Guy for organising that and welcoming Minister Mander. There was a much larger group of people there to again talk about the challenges of residents living in manufactured home parks. It is a very complex issue, and I commend Minister Mander on the fact that we also met with the owners and operators of both Maleny Grove and Sunstone Gardens and we were able to have a very frank discussion with them. All of the feedback we received will feed into the reviews of the respective acts. Once again, I thank Minister Mander for making himself available and spending his time in the electorate.

On 24 April we had a couple of Anzac Day services in a few schools in the electorate. It was great to get to Palmwoods State School and it is always a pleasure to catch up with Principal Peter Wilson. I think Deputy Principal Allan Petts had a lot to do with the organisation of this service. The school leaders did a fantastic job of leading the ceremony. I have to particularly acknowledge the Anzac Day competition prize winners for each grade, starting with young Lacey in prep, Oakland in grade 1, Evangeline in grade 2, Marissa in grade 3, Leilu in grade 4, Bailey in grade 5, Sierra in grade 6 and Kaia in grade 7. The essays written by Sierra and Kaia were read out to the audience at the ceremony and, for kids so young, they certainly captured the true spirit of Anzac and it was great to reflect on what they had written.

I also had an opportunity to get down to Mount Mee State School for their Anzac Day service. Trevor Buchanan, the principal, does an awesome job. The really ironic thing about Mount Mee State School is that they have the Anzac Day service and then they clear the decks and get ready for the cross country. They kicked off the cross country with the kids who were born in, of all years, 2009. I was feeling old, but it was great to spend the morning down there at Mount Mee State School. Congratulations to the teachers, to Trevor Buchanan, to parents and particularly to the students.

### **Cost of Living**

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.00 pm): Nothing cripples my valued Hervey Bay constituents' cost-of-living challenges more than government red tape, and this state laboured and struggled under a giant trawler net of red tape for far too long. I am proud to be part of a government with excellent management experience and skills that has made the slashing of red and green tape a major focus.

Our cost-of-living scorecard is, frankly, fabulous. For instance, we have provided \$620 million in 2013-14 to the community service obligation payments. This now ensures that all Queenslanders pay the same price for their electricity regardless of where they live. We have cut \$120 from the domestic electricity tariff per average household. We have doubled the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme—the first significant increase in more than a decade. We have spent more than \$214 million in public transport concessions to lower the cost of travelling for regional Queenslanders. Renewing your driver's licence at the Transport and Main Roads centre is quicker and easier, according to the latest Queensland government quarterly update results. We have achieved this by cutting unnecessary red tape, increasing training for staff and introducing new technology to speed up the time it takes to get served.

For families, we have provided Get Started vouchers of \$150 to help pay for sport club membership fees. Eligible pensioners have been given subsidies to lighten the impact of their council rates. Homeowners now do not pay stamp duty on homes valued at up to \$500,000, and we have provided a \$15,000 grant for first home owners to purchase a new property. Businesses are prospering with our removal of the \$35 a tonne waste levy and an increase in the payroll tax exemption threshold to \$1.1 million. Eligible concession card holders now can access electricity rebates of \$282 a year. This government does not rest on its laurels. It is a working government that works hard and compassionately for all Queenslanders. We will continue to reduce the cost of living for residents in Hervey Bay and in all of Queensland.

### Sullivan, Mr S

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (9.03 pm): During members' statements earlier today, the member for Greenslopes got to his feet and made a contribution on the life of Scott Sullivan. I join with the member for Greenslopes in acknowledging the significant contribution that Scott Sullivan made to MND sufferers in Queensland. I think his story and his achievements bridge the political divide in this House.

As was detailed, Scott was diagnosed in October 2010 with motor neurone disease. It is a disease that claims its victims within three to five years, and there is no cause for this disease and there is no cure. Six months after Scott was diagnosed, he established the MND and Me Foundation and launched it at Suncorp Stadium with over 600 people in attendance. Three years later, through Scott's dedication and hard work, MND and Me has raised more than \$2 million through annual events such as the gala dinner, which I have attended on a number of occasions and as recently as March this year, and the Muscle Up for MND event, which occurred earlier this year. I understand the member for Greenslopes attended that event, as did my husband, and he certainly came back very worse for wear on that day.

The MND and Me Foundation has teamed up with the Brain Institute to provide much needed funding for research into this disease. They have purchased and almost renovated a building at Coorparoo which will provide respite and support for sufferers and their families. When I attended the building and Scott took me on a personal tour, I could not help but feel the pride he had in having actually purchased the building and then receiving the much needed funds to renovate it to make it fit for MND and Me sufferers. He was very proud of this particular achievement.

In his illness, Scott gave so much and in his death he gave even more, having donated his organs to make sure that at least four people can have a decent life. On Tuesday, with the member for Greenslopes, I was privileged to attend Scott Sullivan's funeral. There were over a thousand people there and it was certainly an honourable and beautiful farewell for a courageous and reluctant leader. My deepest condolences go to his wife, Sarah, his children, Abbey and Charlie, his parents and his siblings. On the day of his death, my old running coach—and he may be my running coach again one day—Pat Carroll, the Commonwealth Games medallist, said—

When I spoke at the Gabba post Muscle Up I publicly stated that Scott was one of the greatest people I had ever met. He had made my top 5. We can all only dream to be half the quality of person Scott was.

Rest in peace, Scott Sullivan. Thank you for your contribution to Queensland.

### Nature Play Queensland; Parliamentary Bee and Honey Display

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (9.06 pm): It was great to hear Minister Dickson talk this morning about Nature Play Queensland that he and Bob Irwin helped launch recently. Nature Play is all about getting kids outside and exploring the park, the beach and the bush. With what I have been doing with my schools over the last couple of years, they can certainly slide right into such a great

initiative. In just these last few months, I have delivered over 900 balls of various descriptions to my schools so that teachers can reward students for things like working hard, trying their best, behaving, attending and being kind and thoughtful to others. There are giant tennis balls, handballs and 300 State of Origin footies—I even threw in a few blue balls—and the students are going all out to be rewarded with some of these great rewards.

I, too, agree with Minister Dickson that we need to get the kids out in the open air, the sunshine and the parks and having fun playing outdoors—and not indoors getting sore thumbs on their iPads or Xboxes. This is why my rewards are active lifestyle based. As the Raising Children Network said, being active is a vital part of children's development. It helps create strong bones and muscles and a healthy heart, lungs and arteries, and it improves coordination, balance, posture and flexibility. So I look forward to continuing to spread the get moving and healthy message with these balls—and there are more to come—so that my 15 schools become the most active and healthiest schools in the state.

It was with keen interest that I went down to level 3 during the week to check out the bee and honey display, and hopefully fellow MPs did the same. It was even more refreshing to see certain posters there which were a great reminder of, and contained new information on, the amazing benefits of this natural product. Did you know that honey kills our deadliest enemies? Honey has powerful germ-killing properties, honey kills golden staph, honey kills flesh-eating bacteria, honey kills microbes that cause serious life-threatening infections in wounds and burns, and honey kills fungi that cause tinea—and the list goes on and on and on.

The poster that I stumbled upon lists the uses of honey. Obviously there is eating and cooking but there is also medicine. It states—

The amazing healing properties of honey are continually being discovered through science.

Honey has been used extensively for wound healing since early civilisations.

I like this next bit—

Scientists are now rediscovering—

So it is okay to rediscover things in science. That is how it works. It goes on—

Scientists are now rediscovering the amazing healing properties of honey with a few particular honeys now approved and used for topical use by medical practitioners and in hospitals.

Isn't nature amazing considering what she has provided us? Sometimes we forget and need to be reminded. There is nothing wrong with forgetting and not knowing unless we do nothing.

### **Raffin, Ms G; Anzac Day; Tamborine-Oxenford Road; Coomera Hope Island Cricket Club**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (9.09 pm): The day 25 April is a day in which all Australians take great pride, a day when we remember all those who served our nation, who have suffered and who continue to suffer due to war. From the Boer War to Afghanistan, we as a nation will never forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The younger generation has taken up the chalice of remembrance, which is clearly demonstrated in our schools. As a parliamentary representative, I am very proud to see the passion of the next generation in remembering all those who have served and sacrificed for our nation. I was genuinely honoured to participate in many ceremonies of reflection. I wish to thank those students at Windaroo Valley State High School for their outstanding ceremony and also the students of Coomera Springs State School. Coomera Springs State School is especially blessed, simply because of their very special music teacher, who is also a major in the Army Reserve. Gabrielle Raffin brings military precision to every school event with which she is involved. The principal of Coomera Springs State School, Martine Gill, would certainly endorse my comments saying, 'She is a key member of the school's community.' I would also like to mention the wonderful services on Anzac Day that the Beenleigh RSL and the Coomera Rotary Club held. I also mention the RSL President, David Draper, and his team for putting together their fantastic services and also President Des Lacy from the Coomera Valley Rotary Club.

On a different topic, I would like to inform the House of some Safer Roads Sooner funding which will correct a very dangerous section of the Tamborine-Oxenford Road nears Hayes Road. There is a 600-metre length of road that needs upgrading. This upgrade will include improvements to the horizontal geometry in combination with improved superelevations and transitions to reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes. That is something for which I have been fighting for a long time and it is great to see that coming to fruition.

I would also like to congratulate the Coomera Hope Island Cricket Club on their outstanding victory for their under 12s and under 15s winning their premiership. Recently, we were successful in obtaining a gambling grant of \$28,500 for them so that they could build a nice covered area. It is fantastic that on the day they were able to use their new covered area to celebrate their premiership win. It is a great club. I say to Matt, the president of that cricket club, that he has a great team and a great base on which to build the next generation of cricket stars. I say: good on you, Matt.

### Calliope, School Bus Service

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (9.12 pm): A number of parents have contacted me in the last couple of weeks with renewed concerns about the number of students standing on buses between Calliope and Gladstone. There are no school buses on the school run between Calliope and Gladstone permanently that have seatbelts and kids are being made to stand for the entire distance from Gladstone to Calliope, which is approximately 25 kilometres.

I have less concern about students that are made to stand in a 60-kilometre zone. This is not; it is a 100-kilometre zone and a lot of heavy traffic as well as domestic vehicles travel along that road. It is of great concern to me that these buses do not have straps. Commuter buses in Brisbane have straps that hang down for people to hold onto—if the students are tall enough to do that, but there are no straps, anyway. There are also no safety rails, handles or seatbelts, although some buses have a little handle at the end of each of the bench seats.

Whilst I understand that the department of education has a policy that allows three primary school students to a bench seat and only two high schoolers—and, again, I acknowledge that standing students may be appropriate in the urban areas where 60 kilometres is the maximum speed. However, that is not appropriate on school buses travelling on the highway doing highway speeds and with highway traffic. Parents have also witnessed some young children sitting in the stairwell of the doorway purely due to a lack of seating.

Over the last six months the Calliope school has had a lot of new enrolments; they are up to 545 students and the school is running at capacity. Of those, 60 per cent are in prep to grade 3, with the highest percentage of students in prep and grade 1. So the problem of overcrowding buses is something that is going to get worse as the student population in Calliope continues to grow, and indeed it will grow. With the year 7 cohort moving to high school and there being no high school at Calliope, all of those students have to travel to Gladstone State High School, which is the closest state high school. Some students go to Chanel. There is a small cohort that is carted across to Tannum by their parents. I believe that there is growing justification for a funded bus to go across to Tannum to help alleviate the high schools in Gladstone.

Ultimately, every single person in this chamber would consider the safety of children as a basic tenet. I believe, as I said, that standing on a bus in 60-kilometre zones is a different issue to standing in highway conditions. I call on the minister to review that policy. Whilst there will be cost implications, the safety implications are of far greater importance.

### Fletcher, Mr and Mrs K

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (9.15 pm): I rise to share a good news story regarding a family in the Springwood electorate. Their names are Keith and Kay Fletcher and they have a disabled son Chris. Two years ago Kay first informed me of her son Chris when he was 39 years of age. Keith and Kay are in their 70s and for 16 years they had been trying to find supported accommodation for him without success. Can honourable members imagine working on such a task as that for 16 years without success? Time does not permit me to give the details of Chris's infirmities, but every single door, even including the fridge door, in their home had to be kept closed with a lock and key.

I recently bumped into Keith and Kay at the Springwood Tri-Service's Anzac Day service. I must say that I was very impressed to see the number of war medals on Keith's suit coat. Here was a fine couple who had served their country with great distinction. In addition to that, for more than 40 years, they had been caring for their disabled son.

It was after being elected that I first set about helping Kay and Keith. At first, I discovered that there was a list of 10,000 people waiting for much needed support and also that there were others more in need than was Chris. I was unable to let this matter rest and I continued to search for the help that this poor family needed. Honourable members can imagine the joy experienced by Kay, Keith

and their son Chris when suitable accommodation was found for Chris by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. That joy is captured in the words that Kay penned to me when she said of the effort that I had put in for them—

Within four weeks we had been offered a place in a house for Chris. He subsequently moved in and to date, he has been there for almost seven months.

Kay goes on to talk about how all the members of their family are so happy and passes on her appreciation for the support they have received. I also voice how grateful I am that the department of communities is providing accommodation for Chris.

### Member for Yeerongpilly, Traffic Incident

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—PUP) (9.18 pm): This morning I began to give an explanation regarding the Premier mocking my unfortunate traffic incident on the way home from parliament back on 30 November 2012. It was a disgraceful thing to do. The QPS attended that incident. They conducted a very full and very frank investigation. They were given a full explanation. If the Premier is alleging that the QPS did not do their job properly—and I am sure there would have been an internal investigation done in relation to it—I would have been prosecuted for an offence. There was no offence. I submitted to a breath test and the matter was finalised. Yet the Premier continues to raise the issue. It is a grubby tactic, but we are used to that from the Premier. We are used to it from the Premier. There is nothing funny about traffic accidents on our roads and he wants to make a mockery of it. People get injured on our roads daily.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** I rise to a point of order.

**Madam SPEAKER:** What is your point of order?

**Dr DOUGLAS:** We are getting interjections here from the Attorney-General and he is not in his seat.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I would ask that members only interject from their seats. I will ask members to also keep the noise down. I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

**Mr JUDGE:** If the police minister thinks the investigation was not conducted properly, he should order an internal investigation in relation to the matter. As far as I am aware, that has been done. In any event, the matter has been finalised.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr JUDGE:** I hear plenty! In any event, the Newman government is struggling. The Attorney-General today introduced more proposed legislation which again copies proposed legislation that I have introduced into the House. You really struggle to come up with your own ideas. I will have some more private members bills—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. I am Acting Leader of the House, and I can sit in any chair—

**Madam SPEAKER:** No, Mr Attorney-General, in that case I would ask you to please come down and take a seat in the front.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take offence and ask him to withdraw.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I warn the Attorney-General under standing order 253A and remind you that you should take the appropriate seat. I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

**Mr JUDGE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. He can scamper down there. Quickly! Go and do it, scamper down there and—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Yeerongpilly, I will now warn you. You will address your comments through the chair.

**Mr JUDGE:** Sorry, Madam Speaker, but he can go and scamper down there if he wants to. The Newman government stood up and said that they are opposing the debt levy that Tony Abbott is proposing to introduce, but let's remind all Queenslanders that they introduced a fire levy—a tax on Queenslanders. The Newman government have insulted doctors and lawyers. Today we saw the Deputy Premier stand up in this House, and he does not have the fortitude to go outside and make the claims he made against the federal member for Fairfax; he used parliamentary privilege. What a weak man! He could not even go outside and do it properly. What a disgraceful government! What a pathetic government! Queenslanders cannot wait to get rid of you!

**Mr Choat:** Maggot!

**Mr JUDGE:** I rise to a point of order. I take offence to the comment from the member for Ipswich West. He just referred to me as a 'maggot', and that is hurtful to me.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Ipswich West, did you make that comment?

**Mr CHOAT:** I did, Madam Speaker.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I will ask that you please withdraw it, as it is unparliamentary.

**Mr CHOAT:** I withdraw.

### **PCYC, Time4Kids**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (9.21 pm): I am not here to play possum tonight; I am here to talk about something quite serious. I recently had a run-in with a police sergeant in Toowoomba, Cam Crisp, who had cause to lock me up for a period of time. Sergeant Cam Crisp runs our PCYC, and I was locked up for the Time4Kids event that was held in Toowoomba.

The PCYC is a great establishment in Toowoomba and they provide a lot of opportunities. I was fortunate enough to be locked up with WIN TV's Caitlin Holding. The main purpose of the event was to try and raise money and awareness of the PCYC's activities in my community. The PCYC has been in operation since 1948 and operates basically from the Cape to the Gold Coast and out west as well.

In Toowoomba they have a lot of different events. I have a few friends who go down there and teach parkour and different sorts of gymnastic events. I went along to their awards ceremony last year, where we saw children as young as three learning to box and as young as four doing karate and other activities. As everybody would know, the PCYC is a not-for-profit organisation. It provides affordable and positive sporting, recreation, social and cultural programs in a safe and accessible environment. I would encourage everybody to get down to their PCYC and have a look at the different activities that they operate.

My local PCYC had a target of raising \$7,500 through this event, and this year Cam Crisp, the coordinator of the PCYC there, had cause to lock up a fair few real estate agents and a couple of other local politicians as well. Thanks very much to other inmates Katie Knight, Dan Dwan, Tye Thies, Mike Stewart, Mayor Paul Antonio and Councillor John Gouldson, all of whom gave up some of their time and were 'locked up' to encourage people to donate money.

I would like to thank the businesses and some of the individuals who sponsored me so that I could get out. The money will go to a great cause, and I know that the PCYC in my area is operating several before- and after-school events at different schools, particularly the Harlaxton school, where good numbers turn up. It allows parents to get off to work and provides the kids with a really good opportunity to interact and to learn some new activities, including various sporting activities.

In summary, I would just tell everybody to get down and visit your PCYC. Next year when Time4Kids comes around, get out and get locked up to raise a few dollars for them.

Interruption.

### **SPEAKER'S STATEMENT**

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on reviewing *Hansard* from this morning's question time I believe I made an incorrect ruling in respect of the Leader of the Opposition when I ruled her out of order.

I apologise to the Leader of the Opposition for this. My intention is to try and keep a straight ledger and that, when we do make mistakes, we admit it. I thank members for their grace in understanding that.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Resumed.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.25 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, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young