



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

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## WEDNESDAY, 21 MAY 2014

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The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

#### Absence of Member

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have received a letter from the member for Mackay, the deputy opposition leader, advising of his absence from the House from 6.30 pm today for the remainder of the sitting week. The member's notification complies with standing order 263A.

### PETITION

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

#### Atherton State High School, Flashing Lights

**Mr Knuth**, from 83 petitioners, requesting the House to prioritise the installation of school flashing lights at Atherton State High School [\[5143\]](#).

Petition received.

### PAPER

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

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

[5144](#) Office of the Public Advocate: Inquiry into the use of electronic monitoring at disability accommodation sites in Queensland—A systemic advocacy report

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Coles Supermarkets



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.01 pm): My government has a strong plan to deliver a brighter future for Queenslanders. Our strong economic plan centres on growing a four-pillar economy that will support Queenslanders' jobs and build a stronger economy. It is a plan that is working. Today, I welcome the announcement by Coles supermarkets that they will have 31 new stores opening around the state of Queensland by 2017. They already have seven new stores finished. Six are currently under construction. Another 13 will be opened over the next two years and yet another five stores will be open at the end of 2017. That is an investment of \$480 million in Queensland over the next four years. That is creating around 8,000 jobs for Queenslanders. That is a massive unequivocal vote of confidence in the state's economy. That is a commitment to the future of the whole state.

Around one-third of the new stores—10 of them, in fact—will be built in regional Queensland. This means new, secure long-term jobs in the regions as well as heaps of work for local construction companies and contractors. Coles has also committed to continuing support for local producers who grow and manufacture the highest quality food in Queensland for Queenslanders. I know that the member for Lockyer particularly knows all about that. Many of his constituents are producers for the majors.

I welcome this investment. I hope that Coles will continue investing in this state for years to come. Their investment shows that Queensland is being recognised—and this was said to us today—as the best place in our nation to invest, to live and to work. Today, the Coles representatives made a particular point of telling me how important the reforms that we are undertaking, especially in

providing planning certainty and certainty around infrastructure charges, have been in securing their own growth plans for moving forward. I did not ask them; they made the unsolicited comment as we went around and looked at the new Coles at Brookside.

We have a great story to tell about our work to encourage new development in Queensland and the Coles story is only part of that story. More and more businesses, both big and small, are now seeing just how serious this government is in getting the state's economy growing. It is important to have a strong government with a strong plan to drive growth that will ultimately deliver more confidence, more investment and jobs for Queenslanders.

### Prime Minister of India

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.04 pm): I want to talk about recent happenings overseas. I am referring to the largest democracy in the world, the nation of India. Over the last few weeks India has conducted the largest elections that occur in the world and the clear winner is Mr Modi, who has been the Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat for some years. He has been a driving force in reforming that Indian state, creating economic growth and opportunity and jobs for his people. The clear message that Indians gave in their recent elections was a message that that is what they wanted for the whole nation. Indians voted overwhelmingly for the election of Mr Modi and his team and he has had an unprecedented result in terms of a majority in their national parliament, which means that he has a very clear mandate to take that country forward.

Why am I talking about this? Mr Modi has a plan for growth, for jobs and for economic opportunity and I say today that Australia, but particularly Queensland, will be the beneficiaries of a strong economic growth plan in India. They now have a strong leader with a strong plan and we have a strong plan for a brighter future here.

There have been many nay-sayers, many people who are sceptical about the Galilee Basin coal projects. I know that this is one issue that is particularly close to the heart of many in this chamber, and the Deputy Premier has a great interest in it. The Galilee Basin coal projects have been subject to questions, but I am very confident now that this election result means that we will see those projects going ahead. On other occasions I have reflected on the approvals that have been given by this government and the federal government and every day these projects are coming closer to reality and we are particularly excited to see the Adani Carmichael project get going late this year, with 2,500 jobs during construction and 3,900 long-term jobs.

I reveal today that I have been very hopeful of Mr Modi's elevation to Prime Minister for some time. Quite a while ago I wrote to him in his capacity as the Chief Minister for Gujarat and invited him to visit Queensland. We certainly hope that he takes the opportunity as the new Prime Minister to visit Queensland associated with the G20 meetings.

### Federal-State Relations

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.07 pm): Before I resume my seat, I could not let this one go past without some comments. I see the headline of today's front page of the *Australian* newspaper, 'PM urged to cut funding drip to states' and that the Treasury chief backs the budget. I have a few reflections to make that are consistent with what I have said in the last few days. This is a grown-up government with a strong plan for the state's future. We have made the strong decisions over the past two years. Frankly, I think that the head of the Treasury—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** And Abbott's following you.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. Mr Abbott is making some strong decisions. He has to, because of the debt and deficit junkies in the Australian Labor Party—those train wreckers of the national economy and the national finances. He has to do something about it and he is.

We may have disagreements about the way forward, but in relation to the Treasury comments I say this: we are prepared to be a strong, grown-up government. But the argument is not about increasing taxes and charges; it is about saying that the states that have these big responsibilities for service delivery, for infrastructure delivery, should be funded directly. I do not know why he has missed the fact that Queenslanders are paying income taxes into the federal Treasury and Queenslanders deserve a fair share of their income taxes coming back to this state to pay for the infrastructure, to pay for the services, that they deserve. That is what this discussion and debate is all about.

I know that Tony Abbott is the man to lead our Federation forward. We need to recast Australia. We need to remake Australia. Kevin Rudd had the opportunity. Julia Gillard had the opportunity. They squibbed. Kevin Rudd was an unapologetic centrist and a control freak who thought that he could do it all in Canberra and he failed. It is time for a new model of Federation to give back authority and financial horsepower to the states so that they can stand independently and proud and deliver what people expect them to deliver.

### Galilee Basin, Rail Corridors

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.09 pm): Our government has a strong plan for a bright future in Queensland's regions based around the resources and agricultural pillars of the economy. The Galilee Basin is an important part of that plan. I endorse the comments that were made by the Premier about the results of the recent election in India and the success of Mr Modi. At the end of last year when I was in India on a trade mission I had an opportunity to meet Mr Modi and talk about the economic development that his government had undertaken in the state of Gujarat. The prospect of those economic development policies being applied to the huge Indian economy certainly presents a lot of opportunities for Queensland.

We are prepared here in Queensland to do the job of a grown-up government; to plan and make decisions for the future rather than Labor's do-nothing approach in the hope that the difficult situation would just go away. Nowhere was that more evident than the spaghetti junction of rail lines that they had set out to allow in the Galilee Basin. When we came to government Labor's ineptitude had led to up to six separate proposals for rail lines to be built from the proposed Galilee Basin mines to the coast. Six separate sets of landholders and communities were faced with the prospect of having rail lines running across their regions. When we came to government that changed. We promised to support growth in both the resources and the agricultural pillars of our economy. We recognised how important it was to properly plan to provide the critical infrastructure needed to unlock the resource-rich Galilee Basin and provide jobs for thousands of Queenslanders for generations to come. Under Labor there was no plan, no certainty for job seekers and certainly no certainty for either landholders or investors.

On 6 June 2012 our government announced that it would support just two rail corridors in the Galilee Basin, one east-west corridor and one north-south corridor. We identified what we called preferred corridors that would provide the rail access needed to allow the development of the region's mining projects but, very importantly, would minimise the uncertainty and the physical impact on landholders, on the environment and on communities. Since that announcement the Coordinator-General has conducted extensive community and stakeholder consultation on the proposed declaration of a Galilee Basin State Development Area within which the government's powers of compulsory land acquisition may be exercised. Overwhelmingly the view of the community is that the area covered by the state development area must be minimised to reduce impact on landholders.

On Monday last, cabinet reaffirmed its June 2012 policy position that only two multi-user corridors are needed to service the needs of the Galilee Basin. Consistent with what we said in 2012, there needs to be one corridor to service the southern end of the basin and one corridor to service the central part of the basin. It has become increasingly clear to me that the corridors best placed to service the region are the rail corridor approved in the Alpha Coal Project joining into the Aurizon network and the rail corridors being developed in the Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project and the North Galilee Basin Rail Project.

My clear view is that these two corridors reflect the projects that are best placed in their approval processes, they have a pit to port capability and they continue to advance in a manner which suggests they are serious about moving forward. We have a strong plan to unlock the economic potential of the Galilee Basin and our plan will provide a bright future for local communities and jobs for Queenslanders in the future.

### Economy

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.12 pm): This can-do government has a positive vision for this state, but the accumulated Labor debt of the last 10 years threatens the future prosperity of our state. Members, in the time since I addressed this House yesterday we have had to pay out a further \$12.6 million in interest payments on Labor's debt. That is

\$12.6 million that cannot be spent on vital infrastructure, on providing jobs and training pathways for young Queenslanders. We on this side of the House see this money, this dead money, and we realise the need to act. We understand that strong choices are needed to reduce debt so that we can continue to invest in the infrastructure this growing state needs.

Our government is already delivering for Queensland. We are providing \$1 billion towards a total \$10 billion improvement of the Bruce Highway, a project creating thousands of jobs throughout the state. We are delivering on the \$1.7 billion Toowoomba second range crossing. Not only is this project expected to create 1,800 jobs through construction but it is projected to boost national productivity by \$3.1 billion. We have outlined our plans to construct the BaT Tunnel—the Bus and Train Tunnel—a project that will revolutionise public transport and create more than 18,000 full-time jobs in Queensland. We are also delivering 10 new schools in key growth areas, a project that will generate 1,700 jobs a year.

The Newman government has big plans for the state of Queensland. We are rolling them out. But to do this it is imperative that we maintain control of Queensland's finances. We must act now to address the state's debt. But reform of our Federation is also a must. The Commonwealth maintains power over the vast majority of revenue-raising taxes, but the states are responsible for delivering services in key growth areas like health and education. This is reflected in the fact that the Commonwealth raises revenue in excess of its spending responsibilities whilst state governments have insufficient revenue from their own sources to finance their spending responsibilities.

Suggestions as published in today's *Australian* that states can fund a revenue shortfall by increasing taxes are ill-informed. More taxes are not needed. The states simply need access to stronger revenue streams that better reflect the level of services they are expected to provide. This is a view that the Premier and others will continue to express to our federal counterparts in Canberra as we go about the process of reforming our Federation. Only the LNP government has a plan for Queensland, a plan to build the four pillars of the economy, to restore the state's finances and to create more jobs and opportunities for all Queenslanders. We are delivering on that plan.

### Disability Services, Wait Lists

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (2.15 pm): Queensland has always been a great place to live and work. But with growth comes new pressures on our living costs, our infrastructure and our essential services. The Newman government understands these challenges and that is why we took a plan to the last election with five core pledges to improve the lives of all Queenslanders. These five pledges represent our strong plan for a brighter future and this government is going to stick to its plan because it is the right one. One of the five pledges, and the one that relates most to my portfolio, is revitalising front-line services. That includes providing better front-line services for Queenslanders with a disability, their families and carers.

In the 12 months to April my department conducted a blitz on the waiting lists for the Community Aids, Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative and the Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme. I am excited to advise the House today that as a result of this blitz more than 4,000 people with a disability have now been provided with access to aids, equipment and assistive technology. This amazing result was made possible because of more efficient assessments, meaning simpler processes for clients, reduced waiting times and a broader choice of aids and equipment. And, of course, the great commitment by our front-line disability services staff. This is what we mean about revitalising front-line services and putting customers first.

We have also dramatically reduced the wait list for disability assessments in Far North Queensland. In March 2013, there were 115 people on the wait list for a disability assessment. These 115 people were waiting an average of five months to have their assessment completed. I am delighted to inform the House that as of last month there is no-one on the wait list in Far North Queensland. Instead of waiting five months for assessment, they are being finalised within four weeks. These improved time frames far exceed the state-wide benchmark of 90 days from contact to completion and are a credit to the dedicated front-line staff helping Queenslanders with a disability. The Newman government has a strong plan to revitalise front-line services and I look forward to updating the House on how we are building a brighter future for Queenslanders with a disability.

## Great Barrier Reef, Environmental Protection

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.18 pm): I would like to update the House on just what the Newman government is doing to protect the environment, in particular the Great Barrier Reef. The Newman government understands the value of a strong plan and we have one. By having a sustainable management plan for the reef we are looking after it for all Queenslanders now and into the future. It is not uncommon to hear those opposite sprout mistruths. If it were not so serious it would be laughable. Yet again last night we heard a prime example from the member for Mackay. Unfortunately that comment was repeated on ABC radio this morning. It was: 'This government has not properly responded to the concerns of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority about how land management agreements will continue to protect land from environmental degradation and prevent run-off to the reef.' That is completely and utterly false. It is alarmist and simply not based on the facts. The facts—all the facts—are available on the government's Reef Facts website. Allow me to remind the House, and particularly those opposite.

The Newman government has a strong plan for the Great Barrier Reef to ensure a brighter future for it, not only for the more than one million people who live alongside it but also for those who visit. Its international tourism status underpins more than 67,000 jobs and delivers around \$6 billion a year to our economy. We all know the greatest threats to the reef are storms and cyclones, the crown-of-thorns starfish and coral bleaching. Whilst we cannot control the weather, we can invest \$35 million a year on reef water quality initiatives.

In addition to supporting water quality targets under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, otherwise known as the reef plan, we continue to fund and support the sugarcane and the grazing industries to lead the development and implementation of best management practice programs. That not only will reduce green tape, because we all know that the best outcomes with farmers do not come from asking them to fill in countless reams of paperwork, but also will strengthen long-term agricultural productivity and profitability. Our \$8.9 million investment in reef water quality science projects directly relevant to farm extension give producers more information and tools to assess their current management against best practice and enable them to develop action plans for improvements on their properties.

Under the Newman government, the reef is in good hands. It is in much better hands than those of members opposite who, while they remain armchair critics, failed to get out of their ministerial seats and do what was needed to be done to protect the reef and ensure the Queensland economy would continue to thrive because of it.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane. What were they going to do at Abbot Point? Thirty-six million cubic tonnes of sediment was to be removed, which is more than four million tonnes per ALP member sitting opposite.

Under the Newman government, the economy will continue to grow as Queensland becomes the destination of choice for the resource and agricultural sectors and the reef becomes a destination of choice for tourists. Under the Newman government, strong appropriate regulation will see high environmental standards not only be achievable but also be met. Under the Newman government, basic state reporting will be open, transparent, on time and accurate, which is something that those opposite could never achieve; hence UNESCO's interest in the reef in the first place. This is the difference: on this side of the House, we have a plan, we take action, we get out of our armchairs and we ensure that Queensland has a strong plan for a brighter future.

## ConstructionQ

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.21 pm): This government has a strong plan to deliver a brighter future for Queenslanders, and the newly announced ConstructionQ will do just that, securing the long-term future of Queensland's building and construction industry. Construction is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. The industry is a significant employer in Queensland, with more than one-quarter of a million people working in construction across the state. The industry also contributes around \$60 billion annually to our economy. ConstructionQ will set the vision and provide a long-term blueprint to advance the building and construction industry in Queensland now and into the future.

Under Labor, the construction industry was choking behind a wall of red tape and regulation that constricted the industry's growth, slowed approvals and escalated costs. In contrast, we have made a point of slashing red tape, reducing the cost of doing business and speeding up approvals, which generates growth and creates jobs for Queenslanders. Our reforms are already bearing fruit, with Queensland showing 24 months of consecutive growth in dwelling approvals. The total number of dwelling approvals is now 64.3 per cent higher than under Labor in January 2012. In addition, total residential building activity is forecast to increase by a healthy five per cent in 2013-14, and a further increase of 18 per cent is predicted in the following year. ConstructionQ is about building on those gains and putting in place a vision that will unleash the industry's full potential and generate a brighter future for decades to come.

Next Wednesday we will host an industry leaders forum where over 70 industry representatives will come together to establish an agenda for the second and larger forum in September, the ConstructionQ forum. That is likely to involve 300 to 400 industry participants and stakeholders from across the state. Our aim is for the building and construction industry, local and state government and other key stakeholders to jointly develop and implement clearly defined actions deriving from the ConstructionQ forum. ConstructionQ will deliver a plan that will create a strong, competitive and diversified construction industry, which will underpin the state's future prosperity by driving growth and creating jobs for Queenslanders.

### ResourcesQ Partnership Agreement

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.24 pm): The Newman government also has a strong plan for the future of the resources sector in Queensland. We plan to grow the resources sector as part of Queensland's four-pillar economy. Earlier this year, I launched the ResourcesQ initiative, which will see the creation of a 30-year vision and action plan for the sector. We have already held a leaders forum and a supply chain forum here in Brisbane, as well as three regional workshops in Cairns, Mount Isa and Gladstone, allowing us to hear from those on the ground, and we are on our way to Roma and Emerald to continue that conversation.

Last week, the Premier joined me at the CSIRO Ecosciences Precinct at Dutton Park to sign a landmark partnership agreement between the Queensland government and our peak resource industry organisations. The Queensland Resources Council, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association have now joined the Newman government to cement our commitment to the resources industry. This agreement will strengthen our ResourcesQ initiative to drive economic growth and to create jobs in Queensland's resources sector. It will deliver a strong plan to ensure that the Queensland's resources industry is supported for decades to come.

This agreement will allow the government and industry to work collaboratively to ensure Queensland remains a world-leading mining jurisdiction. We intend to make Queensland a global hub for skills and innovation in the resources sector by examining ways we can deliver much needed education and training. The next generation of resource workers, researchers and academics will be a source of innovation and it is critical that we provide the best opportunities to develop those skills. We are already looking at the early delivery of resource industry skills through the school curriculum, along with the possibility of a flagship school in Brisbane that builds upon the role of the existing Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy. This school would be a significant step in providing our next generation of resource workers with the skills they need to pursue a career in mining. Additionally, we are examining the options to develop a resource skills centre of excellence that will coordinate, plan, facilitate, promote, lead and deliver resources sector skilling and innovation, in partnership with quality education and training providers.

However, as I have said before in this House, for Queensland to have a mining industry in 20 or 30 years, we need to have exploration today. The ResourcesQ partnership agreement proposes the creation of a one-stop shop to provide resource companies and potential investors with a single government contact point for information. That window into government would provide companies with access to data about Queensland resource diversity and prospectivity, land availability and current tenders, guidance through regulatory requirements and processes, and resource development incentives. We will also develop strategies to build better transparency and community understanding of the resources sector and encourage best practice in community engagement.

Unlike our predecessors, this agreement will not simply be a few discussions that will lead to a paper identifying opportunities without any actions. The Newman government is committed to seeing Queensland become the best place to do business in Australia. We have already made good progress in our streamlining project approvals processes, cutting red tape and making Queensland a better place for industry to do business, but we need to do more to encourage and strengthen the resources sector in this state.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I call the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. Minister, you have one minute.

### Flood Recovery Plan

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.28 pm): The can-do Newman government also has a strong plan for flood recovery. Queensland has had a rough few years on the back of repeated natural disasters that have wreaked havoc on communities the length and breadth of this great state. The constant disruption has affected everything from access to services and people's homes, to simple things like the local supermarket being unable to be resupplied.

Early on, the Newman government identified three areas where Queenslanders were being let down in dealing with natural disasters. Firstly, there was the initial lack of speed and urgency in getting the major repairs up and running. We knew that communities could not recover if people's access to front-line services, commerce, education and family were disrupted by a slow construction period. Secondly, we knew that we were being let down again by a lack of planning. We had a ridiculous situation where expensive and vital infrastructure was being damaged one year, repaired to the same standard and location the next year and then destroyed shortly after, the next time disaster struck. Not only was this bad in a value-for-money context; it was also devastating to communities that would spend years without access to vital infrastructure, due to a lack of planning by previous governments.

Madam Speaker, I seek leave to have the balance of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This is why we spoke to the Federal Government and requested a \$200 million betterment fund to end the madness.

A great example of this madness was the Gayndah water intake. The Gayndah Water Intake facility was washed away in the 2011 floods, rebuilt in exactly the same location then extensively damaged again in 2013, just two weeks after it was recommissioned.

With a bit of planning and common sense the pump was relocated to higher ground with the help of the extra money from the betterment fund. The residents of Gayndah can now have some confidence in their future water supply.

The third issue is mitigation. In many cases, mitigation projects have suffered due to the protests of minority groups who would rather save a plant than a human. In other cases time has diluted the interest of the government and community in mitigation projects.

Our methodical approach to natural disasters has seen us put in place funding for flood programs of around \$50 million to keep on driving flood resilience and ensure that we are following our plan to protect communities now and in the future.

An example of a great mitigation project is the Roma levee. We worked with the local council to build the 5.2km levee. In the future, the levee will offer some peace of mind to the 500 homes and businesses that have been repeatedly smashed by floods. And in the meantime, residents are now able to get insurance when it was not offered before.

All that I have mentioned has not happened by accident. For too long the lack of planning by previous governments has led to longer periods of misery for communities affected by disaster. The stark improvements in performance are a direct result of our methodical approach which is seeing communities back on their feet sooner and protected into the future.

### ABSENCE OF MINISTER

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (2.29 pm): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier will be absent from the House for the remainder of the sitting week due to health matters. Minister Emerson has been appointed as acting minister for this portfolio for the duration of Minister Elmes's absence.

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (2.29 pm): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 42 of the Finance and Administration Committee. This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 4 March 2014 and 1 April 2014 considered by the committee. The subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 5 June 2014. The committee did not identify any issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of this subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 42—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 4 March 2014 and 1 April 2014 [[5145](#)].

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Boot Camps

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (2.30 pm): My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's comments on Cairns radio today when he stressed that the Attorney-General had followed a proper tender process in relation to the North Queensland boot camp, and I ask: will the Premier explain where in the government's *Better purchasing guide: Ethics, probity and accountability in procurement* a minister is allowed to unilaterally overturn a departmental recommendation on tenders and award a contract? I table the procurement documents.

*Tabled paper:* Crime and Misconduct Commission and Queensland Purchasing, Department of Public Works report titled 'Better Purchasing Guide: Ethics, Probity and Accountability in Procurement', dated October 2006 [[5146](#)].

**Mr NEWMAN:** I am delighted to answer the question. I am glad to see that the Labor Party are monitoring what I say up in the north because I am very committed to the regions. Cairns, particularly, is a city that they neglected. It had a youth crime problem. It had quite an issue in the CBD. This government has worked hard to correct that. The boot camp at Lincoln Springs is an important part of dealing with that problem.

If they had listened closely they would have heard me say that the director-general of the department 100 per cent supported the decision that was made by the minister. Ministers are elected to make decisions. The minister has been accountable to this parliament and has been accountable to the people of Queensland, through the work of the media, for the decision. He stands by the decision and the government stands by the decision because the youth boot camp is doing a great job. Crime is down in Cairns. Crime is down in Townsville. This is a government with a strong plan to make this the safest place in Australia to raise a family.

What about those opposite?

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** To take the interjection, I have a nice little document here dated 18 June 2010—an article from the *Brisbane Times* titled 'Top cop steps in to protect Attorney-General'. No, it refers not to this Attorney-General, but the Attorney who has been dug up like in a *Weekend at Bernie's* scene and brought back. They are bringing him back. The then Attorney-General went down to the Greek Club to tell Queenslanders at the Your Right to Feel Safe forum that things were good and things were great—'You've never been so safe', is what he said. I will read from the article, which states—

From that point the forum descended into a one-sided slanging match, as participants jeered and booed at the Attorney-General after he continued to compare issues of crime in Queensland today to those in 18th-century England.

"The reason (crime and punishment) challenges us is that there are no easy straight forward solutions. If that was the case, we would be the same as England was in the 18th century, where so many people would be sent to jail ... that they had to colonise another nation to put prisoners somewhere else," Mr Dick said.

Members of the crowd yelled, "We didn't come here for a history lesson. Get off the stage! Stop patronising us! You're a joke".

They are a joke. They are still a joke. He is coming back. They are putting the gang back together. They have no policies. They have no plans. They have no unity. This is the only team that takes this state forward to a brighter future.

*(Time expired)*

## Boot Camps

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My next question is to the Premier. I refer to an answer given to the 18 July 2013 estimates committee by Director-General John Sosso about the selection process for boot camp operators. It stated—

... I have ensured that the selection committees are independent of government—that is, of executive government in the sense of ministerial intervention—and that there is probity in place.

In light of the Attorney-General's direct intervention within a month of that answer, will the Premier finally establish an independent investigation into this process and into Mr John Sosso misleading the parliament?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Thunder, lightning, scary music and smear and innuendo from an opposition with no position whatsoever, no strong plan to deal with crime, no strong plan to deal with youth issues in our regional cities like Townsville and Cairns. All they can do is come in here like that.

What would happen if they were elected once the old gang is remade and brought back—dug up from the garden bed; the zombies are back? What would they do? They would get rid of the criminal gang laws. They would repeal the reforms to youth justice. They would probably cut the budget to the Queensland Police Service; 800 police would be off the streets. Those opposite would not work hard enough. They would not work hard to protect Queenslanders on crime issues.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Answer the question.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will answer the question with quotes from the DG as tabled yesterday by the Attorney-General. This is a direct quote in relation to this matter—

- (1) I was satisfied that the procurement *process* was appropriate, in that government procurement guidelines were complied with;
- (2) I was not satisfied that the *recommendations* flowing from that process were optimal;
- (3) I was not satisfied that all of the successful parties had either the experience in residential boot camp related services, or even had the capacity to provide such services—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Did he say, 'Table it'? Did I hear that right or did I mishear? Did I miss that?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I will ask members to cease their interjections. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I may have been mistaken, but I thought the member for Mulgrave said to table it. If that was the case, it was tabled yesterday—openness, accountability, willingness to come here and answer the question. The Attorney-General did that yesterday. He made a fulsome statement.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Members, the Premier is answering the question and I am having difficulty hearing the answer with the interjections to my left. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** It continues—

- (4) I was not satisfied that the selection committees had given sufficient weight and concern to the publicly stated position of the Government and the Department, that following the cancellation of the Kuranda boot camp, that the safety of the community was paramount ...

The bottom line is that Boyd Curran is an outstanding individual who has done a wonderful job. But do you know what? I think Boyd Curran stands as a real message on a greater issue. Why would anybody have anything to do with the Australian Labor Party? You have the member for Mulgrave ringing you up and congratulating you. You have former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd wanting you to do work for him. You have former Premier Peter Beattie giving you awards. Then what do you do? You drag the individual's name into the mud. They are dirt diggers, trawlers in the slime. But they have no strong plan for Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

## Business Confidence

**Mrs OSTAPOVITCH:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on how business confidence in Queensland is growing and advise the House of any recent announcements about job creation in my electorate of Stretton?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Clearly she has picked up on a bit of a theme today that the economy of Queensland is going forward because there is a government with a strong plan to actually get the economy going and create those jobs. Right across Queensland right now this state is showing its potential once again. It is shining. This state is shining. People in Queensland know that there is opportunity there, there is potential there, to set up a business, to build a business, and larger companies, as you heard before, Madam Speaker, like Coles are investing in this state.

In terms of the member's own electorate, she knows full well that recently we had the delightful experience of formally opening the new Toll distribution centre or freight facility at Karawatha. This is an \$86 million investment in Queensland—no new jobs at this stage, although there were a lot of construction jobs. But it is a world-class facility that will ensure that Queenslanders are fed and clothed and provided with the necessities of life right across this state. These distribution centres are important facilities that serve all of us. It might be a private sector facility. We know what the ALP would do. That would really be something that would have to be done within government, going on their twisted 19th century view of the world.

**Mr Seeney:** Nationalise everything.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Nationalise everything. But it is now home to 500 workers—

**Mr Pitt:** What's the current employment rate in Queensland?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I have hit a raw nerve for the member for Mulgrave—some economic interjections this afternoon from the economic illiterate from the Far North.

It is fantastic to welcome Toll's investment in this state. I know something: if those opposite were re-elected with the same old gang that smashed and destroyed and broke this state up, that destroyed business confidence, that tied us all up in red tape and bureaucracy, you would not see decisions like this—decisions like the one Coles has made today.

This state is now in very good hands. We are seeing the results of the last two years of reform—fought every step of the way. Those opposite want to bring back the same discredited individuals, like the former Attorney-General who was soft on crime, like Mr Kerry Shine, who believed that there was some equivocation about what rape was or not—what a disgrace that was. We see the inappropriate comments by the member for Bundamba about fly-in fly-out. By the way, the Leader of the Opposition should show some leadership. Precious little has been shown in the last few years. The Leader of the Opposition has been big on saying that someone should resign or that the Premier should do something about a minister. It is time now to show some leadership and actually deal with the member for Bundamba over her inappropriate comments. This is the only strong team in this place with a plan for Queensland's future.

*(Time expired)*

### Boot Camps

**Mr BYRNE:** I refer to revelations today—

**A government member:** Who's it to, Bill?

**Mr BYRNE:** I refer to revelations today—

**Mr Seeney:** Who are you going ask it to?

**Mr BYRNE:** To the Premier.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr BYRNE:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to revelations today that the government is paying two corrections staff to work at the Far North Queensland boot camp, and I ask: will the Premier reveal the full cost of all additional state government support being provided to the camp operator on top of the already \$2.2 million that taxpayers are providing?

**Mr Seeney:** Do you know what a minister is? All these people here.

**Mr NEWMAN:** If the Deputy Premier could calm his enthusiasm—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier.

**Mr Springborg:** He just wants a question.

**Mr NEWMAN:** This is what happens, Madam Speaker, when a Deputy Premier is not given enough questions in the House. So I urge honourable members to ask him a question.

I need to recap how the member for Rockhampton was quite embarrassed over the last few days because we had the revelations of the member for Mulgrave. What an admission in peddling the story to Channel 7! Why didn't they fess up? Why didn't they tell the truth? Why didn't they say how enthusiastic they were about the appointment of Beyond Billabong? Because they support it. Did he say it in caucus or are the relationships at such—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Are the relationships at such a torturous point? We know that the member for South Brisbane is hated by everybody. We know that they are at each other's throats. We know that there are these enmities and jealousies about people like Cameron Dick coming back. This is meaning that the wheels are falling off.

**Mr Springborg:** And Bill's a dark horse.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! Pause the clock. I know there is a fair amount of interjections across the chamber, but the Premier has the call. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Thanks for your protection from the government members, Madam Speaker. We know that the pressures and the tensions are building up as they bring the old gang back together, the discredited ones. So it must be difficult to actually communicate and get across that one side of the House is congratulating Boyd Curran while the other side of the House, Labor, is actually trying to destroy him and denigrate him and drag his name in the mud and spread untruths about him and really malign someone who in the past has been strongly supported by the Australian Labor Party at both state and Commonwealth level.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Answer the question.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I am happy to answer the question, Madam Speaker. I am trying to get there but they keep making all this noise. They do not want to hear the answers—very rude, don't you think? The answer to the question is: there is an estimates process. They could ask the Attorney-General this afternoon. I do not know. Have a go. But I will make this point: it is a correctional facility and we on this side believe that young offenders who have been sentenced to a boot camp should not run away. That is right; it is actually a form of incarceration. They should not run away.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** That's a great idea.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! It is one thing to interject if there is provocation pertaining to yourselves. It is another matter when the question is being answered. I would ask the interjectors on my left to cease interjecting. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Their idea of running a youth detention centre was to have bucking broncos and excursions and play stations and jumping castles and, God knows, air conditioning and ice-cream and I don't know what. We believe that you should be punished, that you should do the time—blah, blah, blah. But they should stop running away. That is why they are there.

*(Time expired)*

### **Galilee Basin, Jobs**

**Mr JOHNSON:** Madam Speaker, I know the Premier is knocked-up this morning from answering questions from the opposition, so I will give him a rest. My question is to the Deputy Premier.

**Government members:** Hooray!

**Mr JOHNSON:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. Can I ask the Deputy Premier to please explain the importance of the Galilee Basin to the creation of jobs in Queensland?

**Mr SEENEY:** I thank the member for Gregory for the question because these are the issues that will be important for generations of Queenslanders to come. The Galilee Basin is incredibly important to the development of the Queensland economy into the future. The jobs figures that are projected for the Galilee Basin are very large indeed—some 28,000 construction and operational jobs in total; 28,000. Alpha, Kevin's Corner and Carmichael coalmines will deliver 15,000 construction jobs and over 13,000 operational jobs. They are big numbers and they represent a big future for generations of Queenslanders—a big future that will be generated by the \$28 billion worth of investment that hopefully has been made more likely by the developments in India, as one of the major customers that we spoke about earlier.

Those people who will work in those mines will come from all over Queensland. They will come from Emerald, which the member for Gregory represents. They will come from Monto and Biggenden and Biloela in my electorate. They will come from the Capricorn Coast. They will come from Mackay and from Cairns. They will all travel in and out of the Galilee Basin. They will drive in and out and they will fly in and out to get the benefit of that long-term employment.

It brings into context the horrendous comments that were made in this place last night by the member for Bundamba—the absolute appalling comments that were made by the member for Bundamba that insult the thousands and thousands of Queenslanders who choose to work in the resources industry and live in other communities. It is an absolute insult—an absolute insult—to the people who suffered in concentration camps. It is an appalling comment that the Leader of the Opposition should do something about.

The campaign against fly-in fly-out that the member for Bundamba seeks to support is simply an industrial campaign. It is about making sure that the union heavies, the union thugs, can extend their intimidation into every part of people's lives, rather than giving people the opportunity to choose where they work, rather than giving people the opportunity to choose which communities they live in. I hope that people who work in the Galilee Basin, some of them at least, will live in Alpha and live in Clermont, but it will be their choice, not at the behest of union heavies who want to influence every part of people's lives as part of their industrial campaign. The comment that the member for Bundamba made was appalling, and it has been condemned by a lot of people across Queensland today. The member for Bundamba should stand up and withdraw it, and the Leader of the Opposition should have the spine to do something about it.

### **Pensioner Concessions**

**Mr PITT:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer. I refer to the removal of \$1.3 billion in funding for rebates for pensioners in Tony Abbott's budget of broken promises, including for travel, electricity, phone and council rates, and I ask: will the Treasurer rule out cuts to the concessions and rebates worth \$2 billion a year provided by the Queensland government that are vital to helping families with cost-of-living pressures?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I thank the member for Mulgrave for his question. In terms of the position of the Queensland government regarding the changes that have been made by the federal government to the national partnership agreement on concessions, I have made the point—I made it on the Tuesday night and I made it on the Wednesday morning following it—that the strong decision the federal government made in relation to concessions will have an impact here in Queensland. There is no doubt about it. The value of those concessions will have an impact here. The Premier has spoken very much about it. I say to the member for Mulgrave that the Premier led other first ministers throughout the nation in raising these issues. He went to Sydney on Sunday to raise these issues and spoke about it on Sunday afternoon at the press conference in relation to the impact that these changes will have.

Madam Speaker, as you know, this government provides \$5-plus billion in concessions to Queenslanders. For the first time ever last year this government, because of its openness and transparency, provided a detailed list of all of those concessions we provide. We increased those concessions last year. With the increase in the electricity prices, we increased the concessions. With the increase in prices, we continued with our community service obligation to ensure those in rural and regional Queensland pay the same price per kilowatt hour for power as those in the south-east corner pay. I want to reassure the people of rural and regional Queensland that that community service obligation will stay in place.

Those opposite were re-elected in 2009 but, because of the spending spree they went on and their inability to manage budgets, they immediately cut the fuel subsidy, making it much more expensive for all Queenslanders to go to work, to visit their friends, to travel and to earn an income. When it comes to cutting subsidies, look no further than in the mirror, I say to the member for Mulgrave, because it was the ALP government—Anna Bligh, Andrew Fraser, the member for Mulgrave as a minister, the Leader of the Opposition as a minister and the member for Mackay as a minister in that government—which cut the fuel subsidy worth more than \$600 million. What else did they do? They then cut the stamp duty concession that allowed people to buy a family home, adding another \$7,000 to the cost of buying a home. What did they then do? They imposed a new tax—a waste tax on the small businesses of Queensland. They did all of that while at the same time spending \$9 billion on a water grid that did not get turned on and that we are still paying interest on. We have made our point clear. When is the shadow Treasurer going to say what he is going to do to make life better for Queenslanders?

### Queensland Economy

**Mr GRIMWADE:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer update the House on any constraints currently threatening the bright future of the Queensland economy and detail some of the strong choices being considered to secure our growth and prosperity?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I thank the member for the question. As I have said on a number of occasions when the member has asked me questions, he takes a vital interest in business, small business and growth in the economy of Queensland. I thank him again for his question today. It is true that Queensland is doing well. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, our economy for the last full year grew at around 3.6 per cent and our state accounts to the end of September show our economy continuing to grow. As we said yesterday in the House, more than half of all the jobs created in Australia in the last 12 months were created here in Queensland. We have had 12 consecutive months of trend employment growth here in Queensland. We have gone from having the worst unemployment rate on mainland Australia and for a number of months the worst unemployment rate in Australia to a situation where half of all the new jobs created in Australia were created here in Queensland for the year ending 30 April 2014.

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** We hear the bleating of those opposite. The member for Mulgrave is never satisfied when we do something to see a Queensland worker in a Queensland job. They do not support Queensland workers in Queensland jobs, nor do they support the actions of this government in doing it.

The latest information I have is from the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Survey of Consumer Sentiment. There is a range of results. The latest index published by Westpac shows seasonally adjusted national CSI fell 6.8 per cent in May 2004. However, changes in sentiment over the month varied widely state by state, with results ranging from a 3.1 per cent rise in Queensland to a 19 per cent fall in New South Wales—a 3.1 per cent rise in Queensland due to a 38.9 per cent rise in Queenslanders' view of economic conditions over the next five years here in Queensland. That is the result of a state that is growing a four-pillar economy that is focusing on our problems.

There are a number of things that hold us back, but the single biggest thing that holds us back is the \$80 billion of debt that costs us \$4 billion a year in interest. We need to make some strong choices to deal with that debt. That debt needs to be paid down if we are to invest in the infrastructure that will provide the jobs and growth that a prosperous and growing Queensland needs. But there are other challenges. There are challenges from people like the member for Bundamba, who claims that people who go to work in those businesses that we are going to grow are going to be living in concentration camp conditions. That is a shameful statement on all of those who work in those work camps who provide the food and who provide the services, and rightfully condemned by the Anti-Defamation Commission, which said that to assert those conditions in Queensland are in any way similar—

*(Time expired)*

### Strong Choices

**Dr DOUGLAS:** My question is to the Treasurer. With reference to an article in the *Courier-Mail* on 10 May this year which quoted the Treasurer saying, 'We will certainly be listening to what people have to say, but we will also have to take into account some of the decisions we have already made', I ask the Treasurer: what other decisions have already been made in advance of the Strong Choices media campaign that the public are unaware of?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** As always, it gives me great pleasure to answer a question from the member for Gaven in relation to economic decisions. I refer to the member for Gaven's startling endorsement of this government's first budget where he absolutely endorsed the need for a strong and disciplined plan to try to reduce the excesses of the previous years of Labor government. His speech is in *Hansard*. He congratulates this side of the House for doing the job that was necessary—a \$7.5 billion fiscal consolidation task so that we could stop the rot of previous years.

The member for Gaven was at that time part of the government that voted for that budget that saw those changes brought in. I would have thought that someone like the member for Gaven, with his encyclopaedic knowledge of all things parliamentary, would have observed that that budget did two things—two decisions that are also included in the Strong Choices website. One of those—and it was a strong decision—was to increase coal royalties. The member for Gaven's memory may not go back two years. It may be clouded in some way. He may have been breathing the air on Mount Coolum in some different way. I am not quite sure what he has been doing. He may have been sniffing nickel fumes up at Yabulu. I am not sure what he has been doing there.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** He may have been doorknocking in the Rolls—

**Mr Newman:** In Logan.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** In Logan, which is yet another unusual way of connecting with the electorate.

**Mr Newman:** The bogans.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Yes, indeed, we know what the member for Gaven thinks of his own electorate. So what is the other choice? We actually increase gaming charges as well. Those two decisions were already decisions that this government had made in the first budget that this government delivered—when you were part of this government, and you soundly endorsed them at the time—and they have increased our ability to meet the demands that were necessary to pay for the services that Queenslanders want at a price that they are prepared to pay. Member for Gaven, those are the two choices that were there.

The question we now face as a state is what we do next to pay down the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt. Do we significantly increase taxes, fees and charges even more? The member for Gaven seems to be advocating that, but I am not sure the federal member whom his party is named after will be supporting an increase in coal royalties. Perhaps we should increase something to do with nickel processing; I am not sure. So we have already done that. Do we reduce services? I know in the fantasy land that is Palmerville you can do all of these things without actually explaining it to anyone. Or do we sell or lease some assets? None of the choices are easy but we will make them.

*(Time expired)*

### Cochlear Implants, Waiting Lists

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the Minister for Health to the can-do government's strong plan for a front-line health service. Are there any updates on the LNP's \$7.8 million investment to reduce the Cochlear implant waiting list for people suffering hearing loss, including children?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I thank the honourable member for Albert for his question. I know that he is very concerned and interested to ensure the government is able to revitalise front-line services in Queensland, as we are seeing is generally the case. One of the very clear obligations which the Premier gave me in my charter letter was to turn around the 'basket case' which was Queensland Health and to make sure that we could liberate waste and inefficiency so that we revitalised front-line services in the state of Queensland. I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that that is something we are doing in so many areas across this state.

Indeed last year, as honourable members will remember, we made a very clear and concise commitment to address the issues of the significant waiting lists for adults, adolescents and children in Queensland awaiting a Cochlear implant. As of 30 June last year, there were 119 adults and adolescents awaiting their Cochlear implants, and some of them had been waiting for more than three or four years. I am very, very pleased to inform the House today that, as of 30 April 2014, only eight patients remained on the waiting list. Of the other 111 patients, 74 had received an implant, 18 were deemed to not be suitable after they had been through the assessment process, 13 chose not to proceed, four were not contactable and two had already had their surgery in other areas. So we have been able to all but eliminate that waiting list, and we are very confident that, given the process we have put in place, by 30 June this year, all of those remaining patients in the adult and adolescent category will have their treatment pathway underway and at a time of their choosing.

If we now look at the issue of the money which was allocated to eliminate the waiting list for the 22 children who were waiting in Queensland, I am very pleased to inform the House that we have actually exceeded that and that as of 30 April this year 36 children had received Cochlear implants. So for children on the waiting list for a Cochlear implant in Queensland, we have not only achieved the 22 but we have actually been able to provide implants to 36 children. That is the practical manifestation of the positive changes which have been brought about by the Newman government as we rebuild front-line health services in the state of Queensland. What we have in effect done is give the gift of hearing to those children and their families, and I know that Queenslanders would be very proud to know that we have been able to achieve that.

### **Boot Camps, Beyond Billabong**

**Mr HOPPER:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Given the Attorney's advice yesterday that the Beyond Billabong tender for \$2.2 million was for a super boot camp and the expressions of interest had been called for individual camps at Townsville and Cairns, were all tenderers informed of the change to the scope of works?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the honourable member for the question. There is no doubt that the honourable member for Condamine is now engaging in the same sort of smear campaign that we see from the Labor Party, but we know there is not much difference between the Labor Party and the member for Condamine, as he is a possible branch member of the Labor Party. The point is that, over the last 48 hours, we have seen an absolute smear campaign on an honourable gentleman who is running a fantastic boot camp. This government is into results. We have seen right around Queensland that crime is on the decrease. The Labor Party seems to want to recycle the old candidates and talk about Kerry Shine running against one of our honourable colleagues here, but what does Kerry Shine think about murderers being held accountable for their crimes? He thinks amendments to the double jeopardy laws are unfair. That is what he said at the time—that the amendments are unfair.

This is about making sure that we revitalise front-line services and we put victims first in the state—and the boot camp operators are doing just that. If we look at what is happening in the Cairns and Townsville areas, we are delivering a super boot camp and we only have to look at the recent results. There have been 300 fewer cars stolen this year compared to this time last year. That does not happen by accident.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Premier and I—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, I will ask you to pause. There are too many interjections across the chamber. I call the Attorney-General.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We are not a tick and flick government. We want to make sure that the right decisions are being made for Queensland. We are not like the Labor Party that just willy-nilly have anyone running anything across the state. We want to make sure the people running the programs and getting the taxpayers' money are delivering what was promised to them at the 2012 election.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Attorney-General, I am sorry to interrupt you but I am actually having difficulty hearing the Attorney-General clearly because of the interjections.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** So, when we look at what we took to the 2012 election, we said we would revitalise front-line services, we would build a stronger economy based on four pillars and we would try to get young kids back on track. We only have to look at a recent article in the *Cairns Post* under the headline 'Camp puts troubled youth back on track'. It stated—

Young offenders are showing signs of turning their backs on a life of crime as their families praise a North Queensland boot camp, two hours west of Ingham.

...

"Most of the boys expressed a desire to enrol in a longer pastoral training course—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thought the member for Condamine would have been interested in this. It is something I thought he would be interested in. I will continue—

"Most of the boys expressed a desire to enrol in a longer pastoral training course to learn machinery—

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

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock.

**Mr PITT:** I have listened very carefully to the Attorney-General's response and I—

**Madam SPEAKER:** What is your point of order?

**Mr PITT:** I ask you to rule on relevance under—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Please take your seat.

**Mr PITT:** He has not answered the question, Madam Speaker.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Please take your seat.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! There have been many interjections which were out of line in respect of the question that was being asked. I would remind members that I have actually asked them to cease their interjections. I want to hear the Attorney-General. He has time on the clock but the interjections are not helping that process. I call the Attorney-General to answer the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you. I go on—

Many parents and caregivers provided positive feedback on changes in their children, he said.

"They have reported the boys are considering their options for skill development and reflecting on their life choices."

We can look at a couple of examples that have been given by Beyond Billabong. The father of participant X stated—

We as a family are so proud of our son. To see him at the graduation and how well he did and, all the other boys also is a great thing ... As his Dad I will support him and I believe he will get this Station job because he now believes in himself and has had the opportunity at the camp to live the outdoors life with the horses and he loved it.

This is about making strong decisions for a better and brighter future for our young Queenslanders.

### Natural Disaster Recovery, Funding

**Mr SORENSEN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. I refer to the ongoing discussions about the federal government's funding for natural disaster recovery which is now the subject of the Productivity Commission inquiry. As the state government's submission is finalised, can the minister please outline Queensland's position on this important issue?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay for what is an excellent question. As a very well respected and long-serving former mayor of his city, he knows full well the importance of a great working relationship between the three levels of government.

The member raises the issue of the Productivity Commission inquiry into disaster recovery. I, for one, welcome it. I think it is a golden opportunity because it will show just how far we have come as a state and as a community in delivering value for money, in delivering better time lines and in actually planning something and delivering it properly. The guidelines for the report highlight a number of things, but there is one particular paragraph that I often want to debunk because it displays our view as a government: the benefit of better planning for all levels. It states—

However, current Commonwealth funding arrangements are heavily weighted towards disaster recovery, which reduces the economic incentive for state, territory and local governments to mitigate disaster risk.

Madam Speaker, I say to you and to members of the House, that that is not true. You have only to look at what Queensland has done and you have only to look at our record to know that is not the case. I start with this year's package. Around \$50 million is available for communities to take advantage of opportunities for flood mitigation. It might be levees, it might be retention basins, it might be backflow devices, but there is money on the table. You have only to look at communities like Roma and St George to know that, where there is a local government with the political ticker, you have a state government not beholden to the crazy minority groups, and we will back them every day of the week.

You also have to look at the Betterment Fund. We are prepared to put in 50 per cent of the state's money despite the contribution of the federal government to know that we can protect assets and not just replace them time and time again. The report talks about the possibility of changing the funding arrangements. Currently, members would know that the state pays 25 per cent and the Commonwealth pays 75 per cent. Any change to that would leave disaster recovery in tatters. Any change to that could not be filled by the Queensland government. We are already batting above our weight. If you look at a share of taxation, 25 per cent of the recovery is more than Queensland's share. I do not take the view that, because 75 per cent is Commonwealth money, somehow this means this is a pot from which we should be trying to deliver things hell west and crooked. We will only deliver value for money, and we have proven that time and time again.

I have been heartened by comments, including those from the parliamentary secretary who says it is not a cost-saving or cost-shifting exercise. That is welcome. I say in closing that clearly this submission is one we welcome. It is a golden opportunity. We will stand up for Queensland. We will highlight the reforms that have been made and we will continue to deliver for flood affected communities.

### Public Housing

**Mr KATTER:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. I met with public housing tenants in my office who have cut back on work hours and, in one case, left a job to continue access to public housing after exploring other avenues—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Mount Isa, I am going to ask you to start again and to speak clearly into the microphone. Thank you.

**Mr KATTER:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. I met with public housing tenants in my office who have cut back on work hours and, in one case, left a job to be able to continue access to housing after exploring other avenues as the gap in Mount Isa between public and private housing is too great. In light of this, is the minister willing to revise the threshold for remote areas with high costs for home ownership and rentals to address this problem?

**Mr MANDER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. We have to remember the challenges that exist with social housing. We have 72,000 houses that we provide for low- and moderate-income earners and we have 20,000 people on the public housing waiting list. Let me remind everybody that there were 30,000 on the public housing waiting list two years ago—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr MANDER:**—more than 30,000. We have made some fantastic inroads there. The challenge constantly is to make sure that we have the right people in public housing. We are trying to change a mentality so that once people get into public housing they do not think they have a house for life if they do not need that help for that period. Of course there is a cohort of people whom we need to support for the rest of their lives—people who are broken for whatever reason. It might be due to mental health issues or physical health problems. Of course, the state has a responsibility to that group of people. However, there is a heck of a lot of other people in social housing who probably could survive in the private rental market, who probably could survive on their own. We are trying to change the mentality and build a level of resilience so that we can move people through. Public housing should be transitional. It should not be something for life. That is even more important when there are 20,000 households on the public housing waiting list.

One of the issues that we have been trying to address has been not just public housing, but affordable housing, and, of course, that is very relevant in our regional areas. I have to say that the recent decision by the federal government to actually not go through with round 5 of the National Rental Affordability Scheme is a blow. That has been a successful program in this state. There has been a lot of bad publicity about it in the southern states because it was abused in some ways, but in this state we have administered it very well. Thirty per cent of the people who went into NRAS

properties were on the public housing waiting list. There was also a great economic stimulus whereby nine per cent of the residences built in the last two years have been through the NRAS scheme. So it is important that we look at another scheme that provides affordable housing. That is particularly relevant for regional people.

At the moment we are doing regional plans right across the state, starting at Logan and then the Gold Coast and then we are going to Gladstone and Central Queensland. Every area in the state will do a regional plan to assess the needs in that area, to assess the capability in that area and to make sure that we have a good, strategic response. I am very aware of some of the pressures in regional areas like Mount Isa. These things will be captured in our regional plans. I am very confident that in the end we will have a plan that will ensure that our most vulnerable people are housed.

### **Agriculture Industry**

**Mr HOBBS:** My question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Can the minister update the House on how the Newman government is working closely with the agricultural sector to meet our ambitious target of doubling farm gate production by 2040?

**Dr McVEIGH:** I thank the member for his question because he knows, as does everyone on this side of the House, that the Newman government has a strong plan for a bright future in Queensland, and that is no more so the case than in our agriculture sector. Our vision is to double agricultural production by 2040. To achieve that we are encouraging all sectors of the industry to work together. To share that vision we will be holding the first Queensland Agriculture Conference on Thursday, 26 June here in Brisbane. With the theme of 'growing opportunities' this one-day event will see all the main players in agriculture across Queensland gathered in one room to discuss the future of agriculture in Queensland. It will be a wonderful opportunity to get all the sectors together, from the farm gate right through the whole supply chain, involved in agricultural discussions at the one time.

As part of our strong plan for agriculture, I launched the Queensland agriculture strategy last year. That strategy provides a framework for government and industry to work together to grow agriculture which, as we know, is one of the four pillars of our economy. A key commitment of the strategy was developing and presenting the first state of Queensland agriculture report. This report will establish the baseline for industry and future reporting on progress, because that is what you do when you are a grown-up government: strong plans providing progress reports to industry—in other words, accountability in government—and maintaining a long-term focus.

I am very proud of the fact that the state of Queensland agriculture report will be fully released at that conference in June. Conference sessions will have a strong focus around our agriculture strategy's four pathways: resources, productivity, markets and production, particularly production costs. It will include discussion on economic issues and agricultural drivers impacting on our markets. It will look at government's efforts across all departments to support the agriculture strategy.

The conference will bring together Queensland's top agricultural minds from right across our great state and promises to be one of the most important events on the agriculture industry calendar this year. It is most important that we recognise that the resources of government across all departments are being drawn upon to support the agriculture strategy. I need to acknowledge and thank so very much my fellow ministers amongst whom I note the Minister for Natural Resources, the Deputy Premier and many others whose resources are supporting the strategy.

*(Time expired)*

### **School Bus, Standing Policy**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** My question without notice is to the minister for education. Minister, under the partnership with the department of transport, the education department has accepted a policy which allows for standing students on buses travelling at highway speeds of 80 or 100 kilometres an hour. Will the minister review this standing policy for buses travelling at highway speeds, given the clear evidence that this is unsafe?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, is this in your portfolio? I call the Minister for Education, Training and Employment if it is in your portfolio.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I am happy to answer it.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The question is whether it is in the minister's portfolio, given that it relates to a transport policy.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** This is a team government, and we work closely with the department of transport on this.

**Madam SPEAKER:** If the minister wants to answer that and if he believes it is within his portfolio, I will call him.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I am serious, Madam Speaker: it is a team effort. I want to thank the member for Gladstone for raising this issue, which is a very serious concern that parents face all the time, and that is their concerns about students on buses. It is very clear from my department that our responsibility in education, training and employment stops at the school gate. But parents who say that their children are going to school on buses that are taken care of by my honourable colleague, the member for Indooroopilly, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, do not really want to hear there is a separation or segregation of responsibilities when it comes to their children's safety. So that is why it is a very important question and why the minister and I were just in fact discussing whether the member for Gladstone would ask that question today, and she has. As I say, I can understand their concerns because it is not just an issue in Gladstone, but it is an issue wherever children get on buses, particularly for prolonged distances.

The policy has not changed recently. The issue is about whether it is over 20 kilometres that students may have to be on buses where we have rules about how many are allowed to stand per bench seat. It is something that we will continue to work on for the safety of students not just in Gladstone, but around the state. That is the commitment that I give to the member for Gladstone. These are things that we want to work on to make sure that we have the safe provision of bus services so that students can get to school safely, obviously, and attend school.

I would like to think that this is an issue just about bus safety and not necessarily an issue for the people who reside in the Calliope region. After advice from my department, the Premier ruled out the possibility of providing a new high school in that area. But given that we have said we cannot put a school on every corner and that at times students are going to have to catch buses, we want to make sure that they can get there safely. As I look around and see regional and rural members from both sides of the House who have these concerns about bus services, that is the commitment I give as the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. We will continue to make sure that our students can get to school safely on roads that have been well constructed and on buses that are sticking to workplace health and safety rules. My department is always looking to review those things whilst maintaining a responsible budget and making sure that whilst safety is paramount, we do not have crazy rules and regulations that mean that we cannot provide those services economically, both for parents and for government, who have inherited a budget situation from those opposite that meant we have had to look at all the services we provide.

That is our commitment. We will continue to do it. We will work together as a team to make sure that the children of Gladstone and children from right around the state get the best education services.

### **Tourism Industry, Jobs**

**Mr MOLHOEK:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Can the minister update the House on how the government's focus on tourism is supporting jobs for Queenslanders?

**Mrs STUCKEY:** It is indeed a pleasure to answer the question from the honourable member for Southport with more good news about our tourism industry here in Queensland. He, like so many members in this House, is a strong advocate in his own region and his own electorate. He understands that our \$23 billion tourism industry is one of the four pillars of our economy, representing some 10 per cent of Queensland jobs. He also understands that following so many years of neglect by Labor, finally we have a government that has a strong plan for a brighter future for our tourism industry here in Queensland.

Over the last two years we have worked closely and collectively with operators across this great state to reinvigorate our industry through what we are calling our Destination Management Approach. So far this year, this government has invested more than \$17 million in domestic tourism marketing activity. From that amazing campaign the Theme Park Capital of the World to promote the Gold Coast, up north to 1 Day in Paradise for Far North Queensland, to Where Great Begins in the

Capricorn region, our campaigns are working on driving visitation from both intrastate and interstate markets. This investment is paying off because our tourism industry is on the rebound. It has its mojo back! Our most recent visitor statistics show that domestic visitor numbers increased 2.4 per cent to 17.6 million visitors, and our international visitors creased seven per cent to 800,000.

It is not surprising that our numbers are going well when you look at the Australian Tourism Exchange, which happened in Cairns last week. Some 2,000 delegates converged on that fair city—the first time a host city could hold the Australian Tourism Exchange in its 35-year history. We had some 1,200 Aussie sellers, 600 buyers from 38 countries around the world and 80 international media all there to do business. I have to say that I am a tiny bit biased on this one: I did go through the pavilions of the other states, but Queensland ‘left ‘em for dead’! It was buzzing in the Queensland pavilion. When you consider that these people had an average of 86 meetings—that makes our community cabinet meetings look quite small—over four days, you can see that a heap of business was being done.

So apart from a \$10 million injection locally into that economy, over the next 12 months they expect to write another \$85 million worth of business for Queensland’s tourism industry and particularly Far North Queensland. I welcome our delegates once again and acknowledge the efforts of the members for Cairns, Barron River and, of course, Cook.

### **Nambour, Men’s Sheds**

**Mr WELLINGTON:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. I am informed that the Deputy Premier’s office has had a request to occupy a vacant shed from the Nambour Men’s Shed support group for some time and I ask: will the minister support this request?

**Mr SEENEY:** I could probably begin by suggesting to the people in Nambour who have an issue that they could get their local member to make a representation on their behalf. That would be a good start, because the member for Nicklin has not spoken to me about this issue. He has had plenty of opportunities to speak to me. I do not have any knowledge about the local issue that he raised, but I would invite the member for Nicklin to come and see me. If he is shy he can send me an email. Despite reports to the contrary, I am not scary. I am quite happy to discuss with the member for Nicklin anything that might provide some benefit to his community.

In relation to the Men’s Sheds movement, it is an issue that I have pursued on behalf of a number of communities in my electorate. The first one we were involved in was with the community of Gin Gin on the Bruce Highway. A group of fellows came to see me at one of the mobile offices that I run there on a regular basis. They came in and they said that they wanted to build a men’s shed. I had never heard of the concept and I was sceptical about it. I said, ‘What’s a women’s shed?’ There is no such thing. When the concept was explained to me, I was happy to support that project. I was in opposition at the time, and we did a lot of work with those men to get some funding through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. It was a resounding success. I was pleased to open that Men’s Shed, and it is still a resounding success. Just the other day we established a similar Men’s Shed in Biloela and they have been established in a number of other communities as well. I urge members in this parliament to support such efforts in their particular communities. This is a great opportunity for men in communities who may have lost touch with contacts or with their peer groups to make new friends, to come together and deal with a lot of issues that men confront as they grow older, and that is coming to all of us—sooner rather than later.

The Men’s Shed movement is a cause worth supporting by every member of this House and I would be very pleased to look for opportunities to provide a Men’s Shed facility in any community across the state, even those that are not very well represented by the member for Nicklin.

### **Newman Government, Queensland Economy**

**Mr BENNETT:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please explain what the government has done to fast-track works and to boost the Queensland economy?

**Madam SPEAKER:** Minister, you have one minute.

**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the member for Burnett for that question. In terms of where we are and in the little time I have available to me, members know that we have a strong plan to make a brighter future. Part of that is ensuring that we have a speedy recovery from the natural disasters that are part of where Queensland is located in the world. It is important that by working with my colleagues,

including the Minister for Community Recovery and Resilience, we have continued to recover from Cyclone Oswald. Some 245 of the 321 projects or three-quarters of those projects as a result of Cyclone Oswald are now completed or in delivery. In terms of all of those projects as a result of Oswald, we expect them to be completed within 12 months. That is a great result after the lessons we learnt in 2011 when things were not done fast and were not done right. We have learnt from those lessons and we are delivering as a government to ensure that those communities recover as quickly as possible.

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

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tours

**Madam SPEAKER:** I want to acknowledge schools visiting today: Aquinas College from the electorate of Southport, Gold Coast Christian College from the electorate of Mudgeeraba and St Oliver Plunkett Catholic Primary School from the electorate of Bulimba.

## BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY PAYMENTS AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.31 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Building and Construction Industry Payments Act 2004 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill 2014 [\[5147\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[5148\]](#).

When this can-do government came to office, business was hogtied in so much red tape and regulations by those opposite that it was sapping the growth of the Queensland economy. Industry had lost confidence and was not investing in the future. Queensland business and the economy needed a strong plan for growth, and this is exactly what they got with the election of this government. We have a strong plan for a brighter future for this state. This plan includes growing a four-pillar economy based on tourism, agriculture, resources and of course construction. As one of the four pillars, the government is committed to building confidence and facilitating growth in the building and construction industry. We are delivering on our plan by cutting red tape and reducing the regulatory requirements on business. Initiatives such as the introduction of notifiable works for plumbers, cutting the mandatory requirement to install rainwater tanks and solar hot water systems make it easier for industry to do business and reduce the costs of doing business. Reforms like the removal of the Queensland Building Services Authority and establishing the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, or the QBCC, are already helping to grow industry confidence.

Through this bill, the Queensland government is taking the next step in its plan to boost confidence in the industry. We are responding to concerns raised by the building and construction industry that while the intent of the original Building and Construction Industry Payments Act 2004, the BCIPA act, was sound and worthwhile there were some unintended consequences that undermined the industry's confidence in the act. The intent is to ensure that a person is entitled to receive and is able to recover progress payments when they undertake construction work under a contract or to supply related goods and services under a construction contract. BCIPA establishes a system of rapid adjudication for the interim resolution of payment disputes involving building and construction work contracts. It is an act where on one contract a person might be the claimant but on another they may become the respondent.

To have a better understanding of this concern and to hear what industry thought the best solutions might be, a discussion paper was released for public consultation. This discussion paper asked 19 questions covering a broad range of items across the act. Mr Andrew Wallace, a barrister with industry experience as an adjudicator, was appointed to assess the submissions received in response to the discussion paper, consult with relevant stakeholders and prepare a report for consideration by the government. As part of this consultation, 128 written submissions were received and 86 one-on-one interviews were conducted to further drill down into the industry's concerns and proposed solutions. These submissions and interviews were received and conducted with a very

broad range of stakeholders including authorised nominating authorities or ANAs, adjudicators, builders, contractors, lawyers, resource industry representatives and relevant government agencies. The consultation process identified three key areas of concern that the industry had about the act. These were the process of appointing adjudicators to a claim, the skills of an adjudicator to hear a particular claim, and the inequity in time frames between those who lodge a claim and those who have a claim lodged on them.

The Wallace report was delivered to me on 24 May 2013 and contained 49 recommendations for consideration. In developing the government's response to the recommendations, my department worked collaboratively with other agencies including the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of Transport and Main Roads, as well as the Australian Institute of Building and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. In response to the Wallace report, the government has agreed to accept the majority of the recommendations which provide a suite of reforms to address issues that had been raised by stakeholders from all sectors within the building and construction industry.

The bill covers three areas of reform designed to address the issues raised by stakeholders. Firstly, the bill addresses the appointment of adjudicators and the adjudication process. The bill establishes a single adjudication registry within the QBCC, which administers the act, to appoint adjudicators based on their skills, knowledge and experience. The QBCC will also monitor the performance of adjudicators. Currently, the QBCC is the adjudication registry for BCIPA. As part of this function, it registers ANAs and suitably qualified adjudicators, nominates training organisations responsible for delivering courses to people seeking to be adjudicators, manages a public register of the registration status of ANAs and adjudicators, and also manages a public register of adjudication decisions. The bill changes the role of ANAs, which will no longer appoint adjudicators. This removes the perception of conflicts of interest in the appointment process raised in response to the discussion paper. ANAs will continue to offer their services as a document service agent. Adjudicators will now be required to determine if they have jurisdiction to make a decision. Claimants will also have the ability to withdraw an adjudication application during the adjudication process if they so choose, which cannot be done under the present legislation.

The second key area of reform is to introduce a fairer system for payment claims between claimants and respondents and to address complex claims. To expedite the resolution of claims, the time to serve a payment claim will be reduced from 12 months to six months after the construction work was last carried out, unless the contract provides for a later time. The time to serve a final payment claim will be six months after the work was last carried out, unless the contract provides for a later time. Where the contract contains a defects liability period, the time for a final payment claim will be 28 days after the end of this period. To ensure a fairer system, the bill makes separate provision for standard payment claims and complex payment claims. A complex claim is where the payment claim is for more than \$750,000 or is for a latent condition or a time related cost.

For complex claims, respondents will be given more time to provide a payment schedule in response to a payment claim. Time frames will be further extended if the payment claim for a progress payment is served more than 90 days after the date in the contract which a claim for progress payment may be made.

The definition of business days will also be amended to exclude the three business days before Christmas through to 10 business days after New Year's Day to reflect industry shutdown. This change will remove the possibility of ambush claims—claims lodged on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve but still had to be progressed within the mandated number of days.

The third main area of reform addresses the concern raised by industry that a payment schedule must be compiled and served within five business days after receiving the payment claim even though payment claims may have been prepared over extended periods of time. This response time will be extended to 10 business days for standard payment claims.

For complex claims, respondents will have longer to respond to the adjudication application and will also now be able to provide additional information to the appointed adjudicator to support their adjudication response.

The reforms outlined in the bill ensure a fairer and more equitable system for appointing adjudicators. The reforms will also provide a better balance between the interests of claimants and respondents and reduce the instance of late claims, which will ensure a fairer system for all parties. To ensure the reforms address the concerns expressed by all stakeholders, a review of the impacts will be undertaken 12 months after implementation of the reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.41 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee

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

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.41 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136, the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee report to the House on the Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill by 18 August 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ELECTRICITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

from 20 March (see p. 833).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.42 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Before the debate on the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 commences, I wish to thank the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee for its consideration of the bill. I also wish to thank those who took the time to be part of the committee's consultation process. The committee handed down its report on 13 May 2014 and I note that it recommended that the bill be passed. I now table the government's response to the report.

*Tabled paper.* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 40—Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, government response [\[5149\]](#).

Apart from recommending that the bill be passed, the committee recommended the inclusion of further definitions to improve the clarity of the Solar Bonus Scheme amendments. The government believes that these terms are clearly defined by the amendment to schedule 5 in the bill and has determined not to accept this recommendation. I will discuss other issues raised by the committee shortly, but first I would like to talk about the key elements of the bill and how it benefits Queensland. The bill delivers on two key government commitments: to put downward pressure on power prices and to remove red tape duplication that applies to the re-use of coal seam gas water—or CSG water.

Labor's Solar Bonus Scheme will go down as one of the most costly interventions in the energy market in this state's history. The subsidisation of solar owners to put electricity back into the grid at a very generous 44c per kilowatt hour out to 2028 will cost Queenslanders \$3.3 billion. In 2015-16, an average household bill will increase by \$276 to pay the solar FIT for 44c recipients. Just to be clear: this is all households across the state, including low-income households. Having made that comment, I want to make it clear that this government's policy is that we will not impose any form of levy or tax on recipients of 44c kilowatt hours, but it is very important to remember that this is a Labor scheme that has added so much to power bills and has caused so much pain and suffering.

In 2012, I shut down the 44c scheme and replaced it with a transitional 8c scheme to finish on 30 June 2014. On 30 October 2012, the legislation to do that passed this House unopposed. The government is now focused on creating the environment for a new solar feed-in tariff system that is both fair to solar customers and cost neutral to all Queenslanders. That is to occur through changes to the Electricity Act 1994 as set out in the bill. The new feed-in tariff arrangements are required because, as I said, the current 8c Solar Bonus Scheme will expire on 30 June 2014.

In South-East Queensland, we have a market of voluntary retailer feed-in tariffs to replace the 8c rate, but this is not the case in our regions owing to limited retail market competition. The bill addresses this gap by mandating that certain prescribed retailers pay a feed-in tariff to their solar customers. The new compulsory feed-in tariff will apply only to specific retailers operating in regional areas by prescribing these retailers in the Electricity Regulation. Ergon Energy's retail business, which provides retail services to the majority of regional Queensland, will be required to pay the feed-in tariff. Origin Energy will also be obligated to pay the feed-in tariff to its south-west Queensland customers on the Essential Energy network.

Consistent with Queensland Competition Authority—or QCA—recommendations, other retailers in regional Queensland will not be obligated to pay. We want to ensure that these new arrangements do not adversely impact on the development of retail competition in our regions. The bill requires the QCA to set the feed-in tariff rate that Ergon Energy and Origin Energy pay in line with the exported energy's market value. A retailer funded feed-in tariff set at market value is much fairer and more efficient than Labor's grossly overrated overpayment scheme, firstly, because there are no additional costs borne by Ergon Energy or Origin Energy; and, secondly, feed-in tariff payments will also not be cross-subsidised by electricity consumers, making the arrangements far more sustainable over the long term.

I wish to comment on the repeal by this bill of those sections of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008—the water supply act—that relate to CSG water. Currently, the water supply act captures and regulates CSG water as recycled water. The act treats CSG water differently from other water sources of a similar quality. The QCA found that, in doing so, these provisions replicate existing protections under the Environmental Protection Act 1994. Removing this duplication is a matter of common sense. I also note that the committee supported the amendments on the basis that public health will continue to be protected and that the removal of red tape will result in savings to industry, government and the community.

Finally, I will address those amendments in the bill that relate to the recovery of Queensland's share of funding from the Australian Energy Market Commission—or AEMC—which is a key governance body for the national energy markets. The AEMC is funded by contributions from all states and territories. It is the rule maker for the national energy market and provides strategic advice to energy ministers on market development issues. The AEMC's work impacts directly on important policy and regulatory settings, including electricity price outcomes. Therefore, it is vital that Queensland continues to support the AEMC's work. The bill makes amendments to allow Queensland to recover from industry its share of the AEMC costs. This will occur through amendments to the Electricity Act 1994 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, providing for an increase in fees levied on electricity and natural gas transmission companies that are subject to the national energy rules.

The cost-recovery model is consistent with best practice, as it is more efficient and fair to fund regulations through collecting moneys from that sector of the community that benefits rather than through general taxation.

Under this model the cost will be borne by those who gain from a well regulated national energy market. There are other examples of this approach. In fact, almost all other states and territories in the national electricity market already recover the cost of national regulation from industry. The AEMC works on both electricity and natural gas issues. In terms of gas related work, the AEMC is responsible for amending the National Gas Rules which primarily cover third-party access to pipeline services. Therefore, the gas portion of the levy is to be recovered only from pipelines subject to those provisions, known as covered pipelines. I see that there were some views put to the committee that this approach is not enough as the AEMC's gas work benefits pipelines other than covered pipelines. However, the new levy is being targeted at the primary beneficiaries. While the AEMC's focus on broader gas market arrangements is increasing, how much of its work relates to this is not readily known and it remains the case that the bulk of the National Gas Rules relate to covered gas pipelines.

As there is insufficient evidence to support a change and the committee did not recommend an amendment, the government does not propose to move one. The government will, however, watch closely how the AEMC's work program unfolds and any further case for expansion of the scope of the levy. The levy is targeted at transmission companies as this provides the clearest point at which to recover funds and almost all gas and electricity passes through transmission facilities. But all levels of the energy industry and ultimately their customers derive benefits from the national energy market. Transmission entities will be allowed to pass the cost of the levy onto their customers. However—and I stress this—the impact is expected to be extremely small. We estimate that the average annual household electricity bill will increase by less than \$1 from 2017, and that is an important point. For gas customers the cost impact is expected to be in the order of .32 cents per gigajoule, or less than 0.1 per cent of the current wholesale gas price. The government remains aware that we need to be getting value for money from the AEMC and that is why the Queensland government, with other jurisdictions on the Council of Australian Governments' energy council, is currently working to get better outcomes from the AEMC's workload.

This bill is a good news story for Queensland. It means regional Queensland consumers will have the chance to receive a fair return for exported solar energy after the current 8c scheme expires. It also adds significantly to this government's red-tape reduction agenda by removing red tape that will result in savings to industry, government and the community. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (3.52 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. From the outset I will be clear that the opposition is not opposing the passage of this bill although I will not miss the opportunity to put on the record some concerns that we have in relation to the broken promises of the Newman government prior to the last election as they relate to electricity.

**Mr McArdle:** Bring it on, baby! Bring it on!

**Mr PITT:** You just wait, Minister. The bill before the House has three objectives. Firstly, it will terminate the 8c per kilowatt hour solar tariff in South-East Queensland and institute what is called a fair and reasonable rate to be set by the QCA for residents in regional Queensland. Secondly, it will repeal the provisions of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 that treat coal seam gas water as recycled water to remove regulatory duplication and encourage the use of CSG water as a resource. Thirdly, it will legislate to recover Queensland's portion of the cost of funding the Australian Energy Market Commission through the imposition of a levy on electricity transmission and gas pipeline licence holders that are regulated under the national energy laws.

Firstly, I want to address the changes to the Solar Bonus Scheme as this is the area with which we have the most concerns. The fact is that the LNP promised before the last election that the Solar Bonus Scheme was safe and that it would be retained and kept at the same rate. When asked specifically before the election whether the Solar Bonus Scheme was safe, the Premier said that it was and that it would be retained at the 44c rate. Similarly, the Treasurer promised that the scheme would remain untouched. We are sensing a bit of a pattern here because we have seen Tony Abbott in recent times say one thing before an election and another thing after. Campbell Newman did say that he was wanting to be copied. Tony Abbott has copied his approach down to the letter. Nobody in the LNP talked about changing the rate to 8c for new applicants and they certainly did not talk about scrapping it entirely in South-East Queensland.

Queenslanders are sick and tired of this government trying to con them. They are sick of the broken promises. They are sick of them blaming the former government for everything. I say again that we are on the eve of the third state budget under the Newman LNP government. When will they act like the grown-up government they keep talking about and take responsibility for their own decisions and their own actions?

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Ruthenberg): Order!

**Mr PITT:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Queenslanders are sick of the weasel words and tricky language the LNP uses to explain away broken promises. They are sick of being told that they did not really understand what the LNP had promised at the last election and that they, the voters, were the ones who were mistaken. This approach was copied recently by Tony Abbott when he all but said voters chose to hear what they wanted to hear before the last federal election. The reality is that the Premier and the LNP were so desperate for power that they were willing to say anything and to promise anything to get into office. The Premier promised that he had all of the answers when it came to electricity prices. He promised that the LNP would lower the price of electricity by \$120 per

household each year. Let me pause on that for a moment—they would lower the price of electricity by \$120 per household each year. It was not, as the minister has just talked about, a promise to put downward pressure on electricity prices; the promise was that the price of electricity would be reduced by \$120. But prices have not dropped by \$120. Prices have gone up when the LNP said they would go down. Average households are paying \$460 more each year for electricity than they were when the Newman government was elected. The minister again talked about this promise of putting downward pressure on electricity prices. There was no admission that the saving of \$120 per year is nowhere to be seen.

The Premier also promised to keep the Solar Bonus Scheme just as it was. That promise was broken in 2012 when the LNP cut the Solar Bonus Scheme to 8c per kilowatt hour for new applicants pending a review in July 2014. The government and this minister have constantly demonised and vilified solar users for doing the right thing and embracing renewable energy. Instead of thanking those people for making a sustainable choice, the Newman government routinely disparages them. It tells them that they are greedy. It shames them and blames them for driving up the cost of electricity. We know that the Liberals do not believe in climate change and they do not want to do anything about it. It sickens me every time I hear that this Newman government is the so-called greenest government we have ever seen in Queensland. What a joke! What we know is that the LNP has said one thing before an election and one thing after. We know that they do not believe in climate change. They do not want to do anything about it. They demonise solar users: of course it is all their fault. It is typical. Every time the minister puts out a press release related to electricity prices in this state he will talk about how much the carbon tax, the Solar Bonus Scheme and green schemes are contributing. He always fails to talk about the fact that if they were the only drivers on the increase in price, it would only go up by three per cent not 22.6 per cent. We know this, but the minister fails to tell the truth on each and every occasion. That is why those opposite are so hostile to solar panels and see people with solar panels as an easy scapegoat for their failure to keep their election promise to lower electricity prices. At every stage they have moved the goalposts on the Solar Bonus Scheme to make it more difficult and confusing for people receiving or attempting to access the rebate. They deride the scheme as a failure and blame it for their failings and broken promises.

The facts are that there is now 1,078 megawatts of generating capacity installed on Queensland rooftops thanks to the Solar Bonus Scheme. All of that generating capacity has zero emissions. According to the Clean Energy Council's 2012 report Queensland is the leader in solar PV across the country. To the end of 2012 Queensland accounted for 31 per cent of the nation's household solar PV generating capacity. This amazing success is directly attributable to the Solar Bonus Scheme. Between 2008 when the scheme started and 2012, the generating capacity in Queensland grew from five megawatts to 718 megawatts. As I mentioned earlier, that capacity has continued to grow since 2012 and is now at approximately 1,078 megawatts. That is good news for Queensland because the solar industry is sustainable and provides jobs for thousands of Queenslanders.

The original solar feed-in tariff of 44c supported 11,000 jobs in the solar industry. It was estimated that in mid-2012, the LNP's first round of changes to the Solar Bonus Scheme would reduce that number to fewer than 6,500. I can only assume that this next round of changes will send a further shockwave through the industry, putting the viability of more companies at risk. Labor's policies in government helped make the solar industry a dynamic, growing and sustainable industry in Queensland that delivered benefits across the wider economy. Labor still believes strongly that solar energy has a significant role to play in our state's future, particularly in light of the ever-improving technologies associated with battery storage. That is something that I am certain the minister and I would agree on. Minister? He was not listening. That is okay, because no doubt someone will pass him a note later on.

The LNP derisively writes off what it calls 'green schemes', which it claims are too expensive. What it does not understand is that any cost of those schemes has to be offset against the saved capital network costs from reduced overall and peak electricity demand and the delay in constructing expensive new generating capacity. Of course, there are the less tangible but nevertheless real environmental benefits, which the LNP will never recognise or seemingly understand. Those environmental benefits are sometimes hard to quantify, but the fact that we are now getting more than 1,078 megawatts of energy 100 per cent emissions free from the sun instead of from burning coal or gas is undeniably a good thing.

Under the changes proposed by this bill, recipients of the 8c per kilowatt hour rebate—almost 49,000 households as at December 2013—will no longer receive a mandated rebate. People living in South-East Queensland—38,376 households in December 2013—will no longer receive any rebate from Energex. Those households will be required to negotiate with their electricity retailer to access a rebate for electricity that they feed back into the grid. Households in regional Queensland—approximately 10,500 households as at December 2013—will continue to receive a rebate from Ergon, but the rate will be set by the QCA after a determination process. The rate determined by the QCA could be less than the currently guaranteed 8c per kilowatt hour. The government's rationale for pursuing this policy is that the scheme is too expensive and is driving up power bills.

After a massive build-up by the minister, the time came for the big announcement. On 7 March, the minister spoke to Steve Austin on 612 ABC. Dutifully, Steve Austin asked—

So what can each household expect to save with this measure?

After a little bit of dancing around, the minister said, '...around \$10 a year'. You could almost hear Steve Austin fall off his chair. Steve Austin's response was not surprising. He said: 'Ten bucks...is that all?' It was one of the best bits of radio I have heard in some time. He had built this up to be the biggest saving in the history of Queensland households, but like all of their other cost-of-living promises it was a letdown. It was a letdown because they promised big and delivered small. The minister's big announcement on radio was that this change could save the average household just \$10 a year on their electricity bill. That is less than \$1 a month. When electricity bills have gone up by \$460 since this government has been in office, trumpeting savings of less than \$1 a month shows just how out of touch this government is with ordinary Queenslanders.

The changes the bill makes to the Solar Bonus Scheme represent a broken promise, and that is the heart of our argument. At the next election we will be reminding all in Queensland that the LNP promised big when it came to electricity prices, knowing full well that they were not going to be bringing prices down. To get elected they said that they were going to be saving \$120 per year per household, and again it was a con job on the people of Queensland. Nobody will be left in any doubt that they cannot trust anything the LNP has to say when it comes to electricity. When they open their bills, they will think of the Premier and they will think of the minister. They will think about that each and every time, knowing that they were promised a saving of \$120 per year, yet they have seen nothing but prices going up. When the LNP promises the price of electricity will go down, it goes up. When it promises not to touch the Solar Bonus Scheme, it makes cuts. That is keeping your promises, LNP style. Tony Abbott is just following in the footsteps of the Queensland LNP government and we have all seen how that is working out for him at a federal level.

Moving on to the aspects of the bill that we support, Part 4 of the bill amends the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to remove some aspects of regulatory duplication. The amendments are a result of public reviews on CSG water management policy and also a broader review by the QCA of regulatory frameworks applying to the CSG industry. In its review, the QCA found that CSG water provisions in the water supply act imposed prescriptive requirements that do not apply to other water sources of comparable quality. By regulating CSG water released into the environment, the 2008 water supply act duplicated the objectives of the Environmental Protection Act 1994. In its final report, the QCA recommended that the CSG water provisions of the water supply act be repealed so that the release of CSG water is regulated under the Environmental Protection Act 1994. I believe there are legitimate concerns regarding the environmental impact of the CSG industry and that we must always be careful to provide legitimate assurance that public health and environmental safety will always be protected.

Referring to the explanatory notes, I see that even though CSG water will no longer be regulated as recycled water under the water supply act, the release of CSG water into the environment will continue to be regulated under the Environmental Protection Act and the beneficial use of CSG water will continue to be regulated by the Waste Reduction Act. The Environmental Protection Act requires CSG water to be managed under an environmental authority, which are conditioned to manage the potential impacts of a CSG activity on environmental values. Therefore, it appears that these changes retain the same public health protections. There are no implications for drinking water quality arising from the changes. If CSG water is to be supplied directly for drinking, it will continue to be regulated through the drinking water regulatory framework. The bill also contains transitional provisions that maintain existing CSG recycled water management plans or exclusion decisions until the relevant environmental authority or specific beneficial use approval is amended to ensure that they contain conditions to protect public health.

The bill will also legislate to enable the recovery of Queensland's portion of the cost of funding the Australian Energy Market Commission through a levy on electricity transmission and gas pipeline licence holders that are regulated under the national energy laws. The AEMC is responsible for the making of rule changes under the national electricity law and also for the provision of strategic advice to the ministerial council responsible, on request. The contribution Queensland is required to make to the AEMC will total \$4.36 million in 2014-15. Previously, this contribution was funded through the state budget. This change will bring Queensland into line with other states and territories, such as South Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania and the ACT, which have established industry cost-recovery models. This change appears to be a sensible approach that brings Queensland into line with other jurisdictions and the opposition is supportive of that approach.

As I said from the outset, we will not be opposing this legislation. This government is there; it must own its decisions and it must own its broken promises. We are supportive of the second and third components of the bill. However, the changes to the Solar Bonus Scheme represent yet another in a long line of LNP broken promises when it comes to electricity. At the next election we will be making sure that Queenslanders know that, when it comes to electricity and power prices, they cannot trust the LNP.

 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (4.06 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. No doubt, other government members will talk on the Solar Bonus Scheme and the recovery costs for the Australian Energy Market Commission, but I wish to address the aspect of the bill that relates to the regulation of coal seam gas water. In short, this element of the bill is a good news story for Queensland. It will remove regulatory duplication that is currently imposing unnecessary and significant costs on the CSG industry, a key contributor to the state's economy. It will also remove barriers for the beneficial re-use of CSG water for regional communities often experiencing droughts. Let me elaborate on the background of this part of the bill.

The Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008, the water supply act, currently captures and regulates CSG water as recycled water. These provisions were introduced at a time when the CSG industry was increasing the production of CSG and, therefore, producing more associated water. Since then, a number of reviews have shown that the provisions of the water supply act effectively duplicate the aims of environmental protection legislation and, by doing so, impose substantial cost to the CSG industry and discourage the beneficial use of CSG water. For example, in its submission on the revised CSG water management policy, the GasFields Commission Queensland stated that the stakeholders believe that the water supply act made beneficial use of CSG water more difficult. Stakeholders also questioned the value of applying the water supply act to the CSG water, given that other regulatory protections are in place.

More recently, the Queensland Competition Authority's final report on CSG industry regulation found that the CSG water provisions of the water supply act impose prescriptive requirements that do not apply to other releases of a comparable quality. By regulating CSG water released to the environment, the Queensland Competition Authority found that the water supply act duplicates the objectives of environmental protection legislation. Therefore, the Queensland Competition Authority recommended that the CSG water provisions of the water supply act be repealed so that the release of CSG water is regulated solely under the Environmental Protection Act 1994.

The bill implements this recommendation. By removing this duplication, the bill removes regulatory duplication and allows CSG water to be used beneficially without applying significant additional regulatory costs. This change will have no implications for public health. It will apply under the Environmental Protection Act for releases into the environment or under the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act in the case of beneficial re-use, such as dust suppression. In drought times we often see councils using water for stock used for dust suppression. This will be of great benefit.

The Environmental Protection Act regulates water quality to ensure environmental values are protected, such as the value of receiving waters that are a source of drinking water. An environmental authority for CSG activities imposes conditions to manage any identified risks to the environmental value for a drinking water source and so operates to protect public health.

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Act regulates the beneficial use of CSG water. A beneficial use approval is given recognising that CSG water is a resource with a beneficial use and conditions are imposed on the approval holder to ensure the water is used safely. The bill contains transitional provisions as part of the process of repealing the CSG water provisions of the Water Supply Act.

I applaud the minister for his commitment to reduce unnecessary regulatory duplication and promote the beneficial re-use of this potential alternative water source. The committee travelled to CSG properties and saw the real benefits of this water. I can tell members that the property owners were very happy with it. I thank the committee secretariat staff and the committee for their work on this bill. I support the passage of the bill through the House.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (4.11 pm): This legislation is to terminate those solar feed-in tariff subsidies the state has deemed to be noneconomic. This legislative step differentially treats, somewhat still at this stage, those who joined the scheme pre 10 July 2012 who receive the 44c per kilowatt hour feed-in tariff and those post 10 July 2012 who receive the 8c per kilowatt hour feed-in tariff. Those in the latter group will not continue to receive the 8c feed-in tariff after 30 June 2014.

I recognise what the minister said which was that we should direct Ergon Energy to pass on the savings to consumers. I realise the energy minister has a very sanguine view of those who are sharing the 44c solar feed-in tariff and he has made a variety of statements about the individuals who have those feed-in tariffs. The tariffs have had a knock-on effect on electricity prices in the state.

The minister seems to overlook that the solar feed-in tariff has had two major effects in the state which we would not otherwise have got. We effectively have two new thermal power station equivalents which will generate 400 megawatts of base load power north of Mackay. That cost was largely paid for by the owners of homes throughout the state and not by the state itself and it would appear that it is from their own borrowings and not from external borrowings.

The solar feed-in tariff in part does repay some of those owners. But what it does is reduce the demand on the network. There has certainly been some market overshoot which we need to address. I do not deny that there are some problems. There is probably an overprovision of base load power and a higher than is reasonable fixed price that comes on under the national energy guidelines as a result of that.

The lower feed-in tariff, whilst it is one-sixth of the earlier rebate, has made the placing of some solar panels after that date cost effective under the current legislation. We must not look past that. The cost is offset somewhat for those who are generating their own solar power and are reducing their domestic and commercial power bills. In part, this legislation ensures that at least for the near future we are offering those who missed out, for whatever reason, some ability to share in the savings for power generated from the sun for free.

The greater tragedy is that too many commercial, agricultural and residential owners who are living on marginal incomes are unable to accept these benefits. The massive ratcheting up of power charges, along with water charges, and little real economic growth means that there is a gap in people's incomes. Most people are travelling backwards very quickly as a result. This is all occurring at a time when we cannot seem to decide what direction we must head in regarding energy generation, energy utilisation and energy planning for the future. We have stalled.

It makes sense that in an environment where we are repealing the carbon tax and are refusing to engage in a cap and trade carbon trade system that we act in a manner that appears to look like a RETS—a renewable energy target scheme—without calling it that. I also think that these schemes make sense for they address the energy generation and utilisation key objectives which are part of that triumvirate that we need to pursue. They do so without proposing ridiculous one-off schemes like planting trees. The idea there is to plant lots of trees. There is only a one-year benefit for planting trees. There are all the other ridiculous ones like wind and tide which are noncommercial.

These solar schemes do make strong demands on the network to be able to handle the energy coming back to them from the local domestic and commercial generators. They are decentralised to a large extent. The real hope is that in the longer term things like battery storage and greater network efficiency will further advance these solar schemes. It is no secret that we still hope for a second wave. It was raised quite well by the member for Mulgrave. He actually said that we are looking for some people to have a long-term sustainable industrial future for themselves when it comes to solar. We are referring here to businesses. Remember that there were 11,000 people who worked in the industry originally.

One-third of Queensland's population—that is counting tourists—is in a tropical climate over the course of the year. It is a large number of people. I accept that in terms of the total residential population that the figure is a lot lower. It makes real sense to have a solar strategy.

The second objective of the bill is to determine a new management strategy for the issue of water retrieved as a result of CSG extraction. It is no wonder the legislation contains this. Clearly, ICAC in New South Wales is interested in this too. They were interested as to why the head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet would hang on for so long to his shares in Gasfields Water Management. This company was set up to entirely prosper from exactly where this legislation is essentially intending to go over time. I am completely aware that Mr Jon Grayson, the DG of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, has divested his shares now. I raised the question and then people realised the situation. I asked where the shares had been divested to. I still do not have an answer to that.

Water, as anyone would know, is critical to life. In agriculture it is an absolute necessity. Its cost is ultimately a critical input cost for whatever is produced. It is no secret that in our sugar regions, where we have seen production fall from five million tonnes to four million tonnes over the last three years, that there has been a significant ratcheting up of water and electricity charges—I admit that. There have certainly been some changes in the ownership of milling. For those who do not know, water costs have gone up by 300 per cent, as have electricity costs. We have seen a 20 per cent reduction as a result.

The regulation of CSG water released to the environment under the new changes does not significantly address the concerns that I have raised earlier. I accept the argument that primarily this is about handling that released water. We have issues related to accepted public health measures. These are the standard things that we would expect with any release water. It is going to be used where it is extracted. For those who may be unsure, it is largely west and north of Chinchilla. For those who do not know, they are now extensively drilling areas north of Theodore.

The final part of the bill is the levy being imposed on gas passing through existing pipelines. I accept the minister's argument in part that this is a very small levy. It comes out of the federal pricing authority. The reality is that it is a levy. It is going to be applied to existing pipelines and governments—

**Mr Rickuss:** What should we do about it?

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Levies are taxes, okay? Levies are taxes. Every time we talk about taking all taxes out—levies are taxes. Even if the impact on the situation is currently very low, governments do tend to change their strategies when they see these things being raised. We have consistently and over many years—

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** You have never been involved in it, member for Lockyer, so do not interrupt when you do not know. When we have debated internally over many years the issue of taxes, overwhelmingly we have always sought to offset any of our existing taxes if we are imposing new ones. In other words, we sought to reduce things like stamp duty. There have been ongoing debates about things like land taxes and, of course, that hoary old chestnut that affects a lot of businesses—payroll tax. So every time people think we are introducing a new levy, they all have to ask themselves what compensatory mechanism is being offered to both commerce and residential consumers that rectifies the balance. States cannot continue to impose levies like this and then ramp them up when we have the GST, which we accepted would remove a lot of the need for these sorts of charges.

If people think these sorts of arguments are not worth having, they are the arguments that are being had out there in the public domain. They are looking at every time new charges are introduced, because they know governments are addicted to them. So if people think that these sorts of things will slip through and people will ignore it, even though the impact is relatively low, they will not. And I will ensure that they know about them because these arguments need to be had. We need to see a reduction in these sorts of charges because we do have a growth tax in the GST and we have to implement it. It may have come time to look at the way we manage that, but possibly we need to manage it more efficiently.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (4.21 pm): If it is okay with everybody, I might bring this debate back to a bit of reality and maybe a bit of relevance as well. I rise to speak to the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The member for Keppel is exactly right. He has covered the coal seam gas water aspects of this bill and he is right when he said that one of his other colleagues would cover the Solar Bonus Scheme debate—and that is going to be me, at least at this stage.

We have heard today from the member for Mulgrave, who purports to be the shadow Treasurer of the opposition. The shadow Treasurer, you would think, would know something about numbers and might have some sort of rationale about how to run a balance sheet and how to take care of a state, but he has just proven that he has no idea when it comes to running a state. He has no idea when it comes to the problems that the Labor Party put in place with the solar feed-in tariff.

I think members on this side of the House would agree that solar power is a wonderful thing. It is very green and it is good for the environment. But, when you attach a 44c feed-in tariff to it like the previous Labor government did, that creates an ongoing problem for governments year in, year out of hundreds of millions of dollars. We have heard in the past that this is in fact adding over \$250 a year to everybody's electricity bill in this state. They completely messed up that scheme. They had a light bulb moment: 'Let's go out and do something about solar power.' They went out and they completely messed it up, and they have a history of doing that, do they not? We all remember the pink batts scheme, and we have been reminded in the last few weeks about it, that wonderful pink batts scheme that the federal Labor Party came up with—another possibly good idea that was completely and utterly messed up by incompetent Labor members. What about the carbon tax? We have the carbon tax—another light bulb moment that was messed up by the Labor government. And we have recycled water—there is another great idea. We spent \$9 billion in this state alone and we borrowed all that money.

**Mr Rickuss:** Wyaralong Dam doesn't have any pipes.

**Mr HART:** I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer that Wyaralong Dam does not have any pipes. We have the Traveston Dam failure. We have the Gold Coast desalination plant. It just goes on and on and on. The people of Queensland, and the people of Australia, are well aware of these idiot schemes that these people come up with. To stand here and criticise this government for what it has been doing for the last two years since we have been elected is just ludicrous.

This government has decided to continue mandating a feed-in tariff payment for small customers with solar PVs in regional Queensland because these customers do not have access to voluntary feed-in tariff payments in the retail electricity market. Without regulatory intervention, these regional Queensland customers are likely to receive no payment for their exported electricity once the 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff expires. That disadvantages them over other Queensland small customers with solar PV and other electricity generators.

The government has decided not to mandate new feed-in tariff arrangements for small customers in South-East Queensland—those are the customers connected to the Energex supply network—when the 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff expires. That does not mean that people will not be paid a feed-in tariff. All that means is that we are taking away the mandatory 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff and we are going to go out there to the free market and see what people offer. These electricity retailers have a habit of trying to attract customers. Why would they do that? They want to stay in business. So the best thing that they can possibly do is to offer more money as a feed-in tariff than the 8c per kilowatt that is presently regulated, and we have seen that in the market before. We have people out there offering 10c, 12c or 14c per kilowatt feed-in tariff. So taking away this mandated 8c per kilowatt feed-in tariff will not do what the member for Mulgrave said: it will not stop people receiving a feed-in tariff in South-East Queensland. Once again, the member for Mulgrave, the so-called shadow Treasurer of the opposition, is completely off track. The lights have gone out. There is no-one home. He has not got a clue what he is saying.

In particular, I would also like to discuss amendments in the bill that are aimed at improving the efficiency of funding the state's contribution to national energy market regulation, specifically our contribution to the annual budget of the Australian Energy Market Commission payment. Some members may not be aware of the benefit this state derives from participating in a national energy market. One of the primary benefits of participation in the national market is interconnection of previously separate state electricity systems and markets. This allows for the transfer of electricity between regions and has realised significant benefits for Queensland. These benefits include earnings from exporting electricity and the ability to supplement our requirements at times with lower priced generation from the southern states, which ultimately delivers better electricity price outcomes for Queensland. Of course that is what this government is all about: reducing the cost of living for people in Queensland.

There are also gas market benefits from national market mechanisms that are promoting greater transparency and liquidity in the natural gas market, while cementing the rules around how access to pipeline services is provided. Queensland's and other jurisdictions' participation in the national electricity and gas markets is underpinned by the Australian Energy Market Agreement. Made in 2004, the Australian Energy Market Agreement documents the jurisdictions' shared vision to ensure the continued development of an open and competitive national energy market.

The AEMA also established jurisdictions' commitment to the underpinning arrangements, including a consistent national regulatory framework through the national electricity and gas laws and associated rules, as well as the establishment of a national market governance body. So you can see that this bill provides a lot of opportunities for the people of Queensland. We are moving forward in an effort to reduce the cost of living for people. I think we are on track to do that. With those few words, I congratulate the other members of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee for their hard work on this bill and advise the House that I will be supporting the bill.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.29 pm): I rise to speak to the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I would acknowledge at the outset that there have been some complications or some challenges in relation to the solar scheme, but none of those problems and none of those challenges are the fault, for want of a better word, of those consumers who took up the scheme when it was first introduced under the former government. People in good faith paid the money to have their system installed when there was a 44c feed-in tariff. When that was dropped back to 8c, people still participated in the scheme believing that they were assisting the state. Certainly, that is the way it was marketed initially; that use of the solar tariff would reduce the demand on the state to provide additional generating capacity. On that basis, the people of Queensland responded incredibly well. Now, they have found that they are at risk of being penalised because they have taken up that opportunity—not by the minister, but that is the talk that is around the place. The minister stood in this place and said that this is not intended to penalise them, but since the solar scheme was introduced by the former government there have been consumers who have felt penalised—those who have installed solar panels and those who have not and feel they are badly done by because they have to pay the payments to those who have installed via the feed-in tariff.

It is my understanding that these legislative changes, particularly those for the rest of Queensland outside of the south-east corner, are to mitigate against any disadvantage and to ensure there is a feed-in tariff paid to those consumers with solar panels simply because there is no other competition. It is not a competitive market where I live: it is Ergon or nothing. There is no choice. It is my understanding that this legislation is there to facilitate some payments for those people.

I acknowledge the changes that are contained in this bill. There is a direction that the regulator review the proposals within five years. A review is always a good thing. It gives the government of the day an opportunity to see what has worked, what is the impact and what other remediation may be needed. I think five years certainly gives an opportunity for a pattern to develop, a program of costs and a program of obligations.

I have one question, and I do apologise because the answer could be in the bill and I have not picked it up. In the south-east corner the feed-in tariff is not going to be mandated; it is going to be available on a competitive basis. If I was a mum or dad who had solar panels on my roof, do I have to be involved in that competitive process? Do I have to be there ringing up and finding out what my feed-in tariff is? Will it change in a week or a month? It is fine for somebody who does not have much else on their plate to make those kinds of commitments but, for the mum or dad living in the south-east corner, how will that play out in a competitive market?

In relation to coal seam gas, the amount of water that is taken as the CSG is taken has been a matter of concern for farmers since the beginning of the CSG program. We can talk about the value of CSG to this state. It is established. Certainly in my electorate there have been impacts in relation to LNG, but with CSG and LNG there is talk about the impact on the water tables. This bill talks about encouraging the use of CSG as a water rather than a production by-product, and that is fine, but what protections are in place to ensure that those landowners who rely on water, either for stock and domestic or even for irrigation, will have access to that water that they normally would have had access to because of either licences or bores? How will their right to access water play out in this new regime where the CSG water is seen as a resource as opposed to a by-product? I am interested in how those farmers are going to fare. A farm without water is a dust bowl. It is worth nothing, whether you are running animals or producing agriculture. I am interested in how that plays out for those people.

I understand that the Queensland Competition Authority is to decide the feed-in tariff. I have said in this place before that I have mixed feelings about the QCA. Initially it was established because the ACCC, without the establishment of the QCA, would have been deciding Queensland's competition issues. The QCA was there to protect the consumer. I think over time that mandate has shifted markedly, and there are a lot of times when the consumer can argue that the QCA has not protected them at all. There were certainly instances in my electorate some years ago where that was the case, but I understand that the QCA is seen to be an independent arbiter and it will determine the feed-in tariff. I ask the minister: with the regulator's review within five years of the program, will the regulator also be having a look at how the QCA has determined the level of feed-in tariff to be set? If this bill is, as the minister has said, remedial, then consumers can have some comfort but I look forward to the minister's response.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (4.36 pm): The Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 reaffirms the government's commitment to put downward pressure on electricity prices. By implementing this legislation, \$110 million will be saved on electricity bills over the next six years. The solar feed-in tariff program that was implemented by the former government will add, on average, \$276 to household electricity prices in 2015-16. That is a large impost. Looking back, when people signed up to that scheme in good faith, they considered that it was a good investment and the government is standing by those contracts entered into with the state for those people. But it is a scheme which undoubtedly places a burden on those members of the community who do not have solar panels. By bringing this piece of legislation forward and ending the 8c feed-in tariff in South-East Queensland, we are providing additional relief for electricity consumers in the south-east corner.

When we talk about the impost of electricity prices on consumers, we all know that there is an impost on the whole economy due to electricity prices because electricity is used in every part of the economy, in every household and in every business. In particular, network charges on primary producers impose a great deal of impost on their economy, especially primary producers who are classified as a large user—that is, users who use more than 100 megawatts of power every year. Irrigators who use more than 100 megawatts of power a year have an additional charge other than just the usage charge, the variable charge per kilowatt hour. They get an on-demand network charge added to their electricity bill also.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr KRAUSE:** This is under a national regulatory regime where, if you use more than 100 megawatts of power per year you are deemed to be a large user and have to contribute directly to the network costs. The problem, as I see it, and as a lot of graziers and irrigators see it, with this being applied to irrigators is that the demand for electricity in that business can be very unpredictable. You cannot predict the weather. You do not know when it is going to rain, how much it is going to rain and how much it is not going to rain. It is a perverse outcome that means people can be moved into a higher use category to be classified as a large user simply because they have a particularly dry season like we just experienced in the south-east corner and, in particular, in the Lockyer Valley and the Fassifern Valley where it did not rain for about four months leading into March.

**Mr Rickuss:** So the costs of the structure have really gone up.

**Mr KRAUSE:** The cost of the structure has gone up—I take that interjection and I thank the member for Lockyer. It pushes the cost structure for primary producers through the roof, and they are charged on-demand network charges simply because it does not rain for a few months. There is no certainty for these businesses about the costs they are going to face. They do not know what their power bill will be from quarter to quarter because the high-volume user has to pay those peak demand charges which can actually dwarf the variable usage charges in particular cases. So the reform in this bill of abolishing the mandated 8c feed-in tariff, which is paid by Energex and therefore passed on to all electricity consumers including irrigators, is a welcome measure. It is \$110 million that will not be passed on to electricity consumers, including primary producers and irrigators.

I have heard a lot of stories from irrigators in my electorate who have been shocked by their electricity bills in the past few months. In some cases, my residents have felt physically sick when they have opened their electricity bills and experienced the pain which comes from on-demand network charges being imposed on irrigators. To keep crops going over the summer, they need to irrigate pretty much 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some of the charges arising from that, because of the on-demand network charges which have been imposed, have simply made those crops uneconomical in some cases. The perverse thing about this too is that an irrigator who uses one meter point for all of his irrigation could possibly be pushed into the category of being a high user,

whereas his neighbour who uses exactly the same amount of electricity but from three, four or five different metering points will not be pushed into the high-user category. This is because there is no aggregation across all of those points to push them into the high-user category so they do not get charged peak demand charges.

Irrigators need some certainty. If the money has already been spent to put the crops in the ground and then it does not rain, the irrigators are stuck and they need to make a decision. Do they water the crops and take a risk that they will not cop those peak demand charges and they will still be able to make a profit, or do they let the crops die? Farmers are crying out for some certainty about where their irrigation charges are going to lie.

It is a tragedy that we have so much water in the ground after last year's rain in February but in some cases it is just simply not economical to pump that out to grow crops. This is affecting the agricultural production in this state. We need to give irrigators some certainty. They should not be exposed to the crippling effect of those peak demand charges. The threshold for being put into that category should be lifted or removed entirely for irrigators to support our primary producers. We know that, under the watch of the Labor Party, the gold plating of Energex, Ergon and Powerlink and even schemes like the 44c feed-in tariff and the other tariff that is being removed in this legislation has sent up the cost of electricity to a large degree. Prices would be pushed up even higher if we were not making these reforms today. They are the main reasons for high electricity prices for irrigators, for businesses and for homes as well. The ill-conceived 44c per kilowatt hour feed-in tariff is the best example of a scheme that had great intentions but has had horrific consequences for consumers across-the-board.

We know that the cost of generating electricity is reasonably stable and that it is the network charges that are causing such inconvenience in the economy. In fact, it is causing more than an inconvenience; it is causing terrible outcomes for the economy. What irrigators need is relief from on-demand charges because they are exposed to completely unpredictable fees and costs in their sector and they are faced with completely unpredictable and unknown weather patterns and weather conditions. The impact that that is having on our agricultural output is certainly very drastic. I know that the member for Burnett has been speaking to a number of irrigators in his electorate, and that is why it is fantastic to see this reform coming forward to take \$110 million out of our electricity bills.

We need to continue the work that has been undertaken by the minister in developing the 30-year plan to reduce costs. We need to give some certainty to sectors of the economy that their electricity prices will stabilise and that their bills will not be up and down from one quarter to the next so they can plan what their costs will be in their business and they will be able to go about growing produce or whatever their business is with some certainty about their costs. It is simply unsustainable for there to be such uncertainty when it comes to electricity charges. The effect of that uncertainty is already having an impact. I know that a lot of my residents are turning off their electric irrigators and switching to diesel irrigators because there is more certainty about the cost involved with that.

It is a big investment to make the reforms that need to be made to limit the impact of these network charges. It is a big investment for the state, but it will have a great benefit for the whole of Queensland and the agricultural sector, especially those in my electorate who irrigate their crops all of the time and want to use electricity. They do not want to switch off the network because if they switch off the network it will mean that everyone else will pay more charges and that is not a great outcome. We need to give irrigators certainty and relief when it comes to these network charges. I commend the minister for bringing these reforms into the House to take some costs out of electricity bills.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (4.46 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to participate in the debate on the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Many members have spoken about the various charges and various categories for consumers of electricity—be they primary producers, industrial users or mums and dads in our suburbia throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. One of the categories I want to touch on—and I know that the minister is very much aware of this one—is the category of not-for-profit community organisations and halls that operate throughout our great state.

It was only September last year that the minister travelled to Belli Park, which is in the centre of the hinterland on the Sunshine Coast, and met with executives of the Belli Park community hall association. At that meeting, we raised with the minister the very issues about charges and the cost of electricity, just as other members here have raised during their contributions to this debate. Central to the issue that was raised with the minister was a request that there be a new category for

not-for-profit community organisations. At the moment, there is no real category and we think the government could be more reasonable about the fees and charges that these community organisations pay and could recognise that they are providing great community services. The Belli Hall committee specifically asked me to raise this matter with the minister if an opportunity came up, so I thought this might be the opportune time and it follows on from the contributions that other members have made about the various scales of fees and charges that various electricity consumers have been using.

I note that after the meeting in September last year the Belli Hall secretariat maintained regular ongoing contact with the minister's office. They were continually advised by an Anthony Jones in the minister's office, 'Look, don't worry. There's a committee looking into electricity tariff reform and we will advise you. Just wait, just wait, just wait.' It eventually got to the stage where I understand their inquiries about the outcome of the review of the electricity tariff reforms were not being responded to by the various departmental officers. I would like to use this opportunity to ask the minister some questions about this. Has the minister been able to progress the inquiries and the concerns that were raised by the Belli Park hall community in relation to creating a new category for community not-for-profit organisations that do great community work? If not, is he able to further advise those people who operate the many community halls throughout our great state what their likely electricity charges will be in the future?

Other members have spoken about the impact of the use of water from the artesian basin by the coal seam gas industry. I note the explanatory notes, at page 14 under clause 23, state—

While CSG water will no longer be regulated as recycled water under the Water Supply Act, the release of CSG water into the environment will continue to be regulated under the Environmental Protection Act and the beneficial use of CSG water will continue to be regulated by the Waste Reduction Act.

It goes on—

The Environmental Protection Act requires CSG water to be managed under an environmental authority, which are conditioned to manage the potential impacts of a CSG activity on environmental values. The Waste Reduction Act manages the use of CSG water under general and specific beneficial use approvals, which are conditioned to ensure the water is used safely.

I would like to follow on from the comments that the member for Gladstone made about the concern for the future. There is all this water coming out of the ground, coming out of the artesian basin. The science that I have seen does not show that the artesian basin is being recharged in the quantities that are being taken out of the basin. I have real concerns for the future that our rush to tap the quick dollars from the coal seam gas industry will actually destroy some of the foundation industries that have been part and parcel of the history of Queensland, and that is the grazing and agricultural industries which are now basically being taken over by coal seam gas wells throughout Queensland. I worry that there seems to be an almighty rush simply because there is a resource in Queensland under the ground, 'We have to take it today because there's a market today.' I have not heard anything from our Deputy Premier or the Premier himself saying, 'We have a resource under the ground, but perhaps we can leave it there for another day. There is no urgency that we have to take it today and try to process every application and give them the green light.'

I have some real concerns about the capacity of the various regulatory authorities to actually undertake the policing and the monitoring that the legislation is saying is going to occur. So often we have seen major disasters occur—not just in Queensland, but around the world—where private enterprise takes shortcuts. They take shortcuts because under their system they are able to self-police and self-regulate. My concern is not just about the ability or capacity of some of these private enterprises to actually undertake the proper checks and balances required but, more importantly, about the capacity of some of our state government departments to do the monitoring. We have seen so many competent staff leave the employment of the state government and be taken up by the coal seam gas industry—competent, skilled people who are now on the other side of the ledger simply because someone wants to make a buck out of Queensland. I do not have a problem with that, but I believe we need to make sure at all times that, no matter who is in government, we have fully resourced, competent departmental officers to do the policing work that is required. Too often we see a disaster and the government of the day says, 'We'll have an inquiry.' More money is being spent and so often the outcome of those inquiries shows there were shortcuts taken and there was not the proper resourcing of departmental officers to ensure proper compliance with the requirements.

I simply put those comments on the record. I ask that the minister in his reply respond to the ongoing calls from representatives of the Belli Community Hall about any prospects of a new electricity category that more accurately reflects the great work that community groups do throughout the length and breadth of Queensland to support the government and our community.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.52 pm): I rise to support the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to thank the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, the Hon. Mark McArdle, for bringing this sensible bill before the House. Once again, I am extremely proud to be standing here as a member of this government to support a bill which supports regional Queensland. Our government has a strong plan to put downward pressure on electricity prices and is currently implementing the largest ever reforms to the electricity sector in Queensland.

Today I would like to focus on the continuation of the Solar Bonus Scheme for regional Queenslanders and other eligible customers. In June 2012 our government made the extremely sensible decision, which was the only way forward, to close the 44c Solar Bonus Scheme to new customers. This scheme was contributing so strongly to the rise in electricity prices for every mum, dad, grandma, grandad, shop owner, community hall owner—everyone across Queensland. That and the carbon tax represented complete idiocy and ‘Labornomics’ from those who sit opposite.

Today we are helping to save up to \$110 million on Queenslanders’ power bills by scrapping this unaffordable Solar Bonus Scheme, lowering the cost of living for families. However, when we closed the 44c scheme we asked the QCA to investigate the future of solar feed-in tariffs once the transitional 8c Solar Bonus Scheme came to a close at 30 June this year. On considering their findings in December last year, it was agreed to mandate a retailer-funded feed-in tariff to be determined by the Queensland Competition Authority for small customers in the Ergon Energy network. This was based on the fact that in regional areas, such as my great electorate of Nanango, there is no competition in this retail energy market, that is, outside of that south-east corner. We cannot pick and choose who we can buy our energy from; Ergon is the only supplier available in this rural and regional market. While customers in South-East Queensland can still expect to receive payment for their exported electricity, customers in the region serviced by Ergon simply cannot. So I am very pleased that our government has chosen to acknowledge the lack of competition and will be establishing the requirement for Ergon Energy Retail to provide a solar feed-in tariff to our regional and rural areas for all of those Queenslanders, for those who are already part of the 8c Solar Bonus Scheme and for new solar households. As a regional member based in the beautiful seat of Nanango, I applaud this move. I understand the department advised the committee during the review process that it expects regional customers to receive around 8c per kilowatt hour. Additionally, this bill requires that the feed-in tariff will be paid by Ergon Retail, recognising that Ergon will benefit from the onselling of the exported electricity. This means the feed-in tariff will no longer flow through to all of our electricity bills, thereby saving Queenslanders some \$110 million over the next six years.

I know that this announcement is already welcomed in my home town of Kingaroy. We have had a very high uptake of solar technology in my electorate. As the member for Beaudesert was just saying, we have many farmers and irrigators around my area who do rely on solar. Also, we have several businesses based in Kingaroy that are very pleased with this government decision. That includes Evolution Solar. I would also like to talk about Greg and Kelly Taffe of Go Green Generation, who have worked hard to build up an amazing business in Kingaroy. They have diversified throughout the South Burnett and really are going great guns. They have been very keen to know if a feed-in tariff would remain in the Ergon supply region. For them, this is great news. Greg Taffe came into my electorate office today. I have just got off the phone from my electorate officer Belinda, who said that Greg was very pleased with this news because it secures his business in the South Burnett. He is now able to continue to employ the staff he employs and will be able to work further to expand that amazing business. I would really like to encourage Greg in his business to ensure that he continues growing that business for this great area of Queensland.

There are thousands of regional Queensland families and businesses in the Ergon area who choose to install these solar panels. They will be pleased to know that they have not been forgotten and they have not been denied access to a scheme just because they live in regional Queensland. They will continue to receive a feed-in tariff which will reduce the burden of their electricity bills while at the same time they will know they are part of a more sustainable Solar Bonus Scheme. It is also pleasing to note that the Queensland Farmers Federation has put its support behind this bill. While I know many of our landholders and, in particular, our irrigators are struggling with the issue of high electricity costs, this bill is good news. It will continue to provide some relief while our government progresses with further electricity reforms.

I believe that this bill is an example of our government's strong plan for a brighter future, and I would very much like to congratulate and thank the minister, the Hon. Mark McArdle, for his hard work in this area. The electricity business is one of the most difficult and misunderstood that our state and our government has to grapple with. It is a credit to this minister that he appreciates what the regions are going through and that he is actually standing up and supporting those regions with this bill.

Whilst I appreciate that I have only addressed a third of the bill that the minister has put before the House, it is important for my electorate of Nanango and the businesses that will now be able to continue to grow and employ people in my region, including those irrigators that I touched on. I am very proud to fully support this bill.

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to support the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This bill has three main aims that fit into this government's determination to provide a brighter future for all Queenslanders, including the many in my electorate of Brisbane Central. It will recover Queensland's contribution to the Australian Energy Market Commission from industry rather than it being paid directly by the state government. It will establish the requirement for Ergon Energy retail to provide a feeding tariff to regional and rural Queenslanders who are part of the 8c Solar Bonus Scheme and new solar households, and it will repeal the coal seam gas water provisions of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to remove regulatory duplication and encourage the use of CSG water as a resource rather than a waste.

I support all of these three measures. I think they are sensible measures that will go a long way to ensuring an efficient energy sector. However, the part of the bill that I would like to concentrate on is the Solar Bonus Scheme and the confirmation that the 8c solar feeding tariff will expire on 30 June 2014. This Solar Bonus Scheme, which was introduced by the Labor Party, will go down as one of the worst political interventions into the energy market that we have ever seen in this country. The initial government subsidy of 44c per kilowatt—and now 8c—for excess electricity that is fed back into the grid by solar owners is one of the most inequitable examples of cross-subsidisation that you will ever see.

Because the solar feed-in tariff costs are recovered by the network companies through power bills, this means that Queenslanders who either cannot afford solar PVs, or those who rent and live in apartments or units, pay for those who can afford solar to export power back into the grid. This is of enormous concern to the many constituents of Brisbane Central because, as many of my colleagues would be aware, particularly in the inner city of my electorate there is an enormous amount of high-density apartment buildings and units. These people cannot have solar PV panels for obvious reasons, even if they wanted to. The same applies to the many renters in my electorate, the majority of whom are young people and low-income earners. These people are paying prices through their electricity bills for those who cannot afford to buy solar PV systems to reduce their electricity costs.

Those who signed up for the 44c scheme will continue to receive it until 2028 due to the terms of the contract that they signed. In 2015-16 it will mean that \$276 of the average Queensland power bill will be due to the Solar Bonus Scheme. This bill ensures that in South-East Queensland the government will no longer pay a feed-in tariff because there is sufficient competition now that retailers offer feed-in tariffs to pay for any excess power produced by solar. In regional Queensland, where there is no competition, a feed-in tariff will still be paid by the government and this will be set by the QCA. I congratulate the minister for his fantastic work on this legislation and offer him my strong support for the bill.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.04 pm): I rise to speak to the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It says here—

The Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme (the Scheme) is legislated under sections 44A and 55DB of the *Electricity Act 1994* (the Electricity Act), which provide for eligible participants to be paid a prescribed credit amount (feed-in tariff) for the surplus electricity generated by solar photovoltaic (PV) systems and supplied into the electricity network. The Scheme currently operates with two feed-in tariff amounts: 44 cents per kilowatt hour (c/kWh), which is legislated to end on 1 July 2028; and 8 c/kWh expiring 30 June 2014 for applications lodged from 10 July 2012.

I do believe that this is a good scheme. It was a policy that was put forward by the Labor Party around 2008 when the LNP was in opposition. There is no doubt about it that, as you travel around areas of Brisbane particularly, there are a lot of solar panels on the tops of roofs. I cannot think of anything better than being able to generate your own power whilst at the same time being able to return it to the grid. I believe that the Solar Bonus Scheme was introduced on the basis of a report which suggested that if something was not done, then Queensland would not be able to produce enough energy. This scheme reduced the need for energy generation.

The federal Labor Party government had introduced the Renewable Energy Scheme, and we saw a lot of companies investing in wind farms and other renewable energy projects. I do agree with the minister when he says that we must look at the viability of the Renewable Energy Scheme. We have seen many projects which have been put into place and we have seen many arguments, and I know that Senator Macdonald has been very vocal in his opposition to wind farms.

We are told that North Queenslanders are subsidised and that, with the community service obligation, power is transmitted further from the south to North Queensland. I believe it is around \$600 million to \$700 million a year that energy consumers are paying for that subsidy. Over the years that is why we have been strongly calling for a baseload power station in North Queensland, because it would help resolve that issue of the subsidy.

We have two projects that are being looked at: the Tully-Millstream Hydroelectric Scheme, a \$750 million project that would produce 600 megawatts of clean energy; but right at this present moment we also have the Mount Emerald Wind Farm, a \$550 million project funded through federal government grants. As the energy minister said, these schemes do put up the price of power in the end. We must look at the viability of this \$550 million wind farm, and I know that the minister for infrastructure has called in the development and is seeking submissions in regards to it. However, it will produce 60 megawatts in real terms, whereas the Tully-Millstream—and we have already spent \$70 million on the tunnels—will create 700 jobs but produce 600 megawatts a year. This will resolve the issue of the community service obligation so that energy users from the south will not have to pay extra for their electricity to subsidise the north.

This is about investing into an energy scheme with a return. If we look at the \$700 million subsidy, Stanwell participate and work with the federal government. Under the Renewal Energy Scheme we would see investment into that hydroelectric scheme that would produce 600 megawatts a year and solve the energy issues in North Queensland so that we do not have to buy our power from the south, but it is there and available to us in the north.

I am not a conspiracy theorist, but the Treasurer is frothing at the mouth to sell energy assets. One only has to read the speech he gave when we privatised the retail arm of our energy sector. Twelve months ago former Premier Peter Beattie admitted that the biggest mistake he made was the privatisation of the retail arm of our energy sector because he said that he did not think that the energy corporations would be so greedy. That is as a result of a combination of two things, and I agree with the minister—the high cost of our renewable energy scheme that is part of the package of our electricity bills and the greedy corporations. That is why it is a big concern if we ever put our energy assets up for sale, because there is no doubt that it would be about profits and not returns. I am quite sure and confident that LNP members will vote with me to oppose that. I still believe that solar power has been a great initiative. I would love to live out bush and not have to be worried about being connected to the grid and not have to pay this \$60 service fee for someone to come along and write down what energy we have used. I would rather have solar power providing energy.

The minister understands—and I fully support him—that we must look into the renewable energy scheme and the cost factor, but he is not opposing it. I know he is not opposing it, but we have to look at the viability of it. South-East Queensland MPs are always sulking that their constituents are subsidising the north in terms of \$700 million a year. Here is the opportunity to change that. This is good, sensible business—that is, construct the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme. We need to forget about this silly looking wind farm where all of the money is going to go overseas to some Thai based company. We have to forget about that. That is a waste of taxpayers' money. In the end, it is only going to produce 60 megawatts a year for \$550 million. That is stupid! Who would even want to entertain that thought? It is absolutely ridiculous! How on earth would anyone be so stupid to entertain \$550 million worth of dirty great big windmills when the money is going to go overseas paid for by the federal government? I agree with the minister's words with regard to the reliability of the renewable scheme. Solar power is good for this state, but at the same time we cannot continue the argument that we need to subsidise the north when we have a golden opportunity to put money into a scheme that will provide everlasting power for Far North Queensland as long as it is needed. I bring those issues to the attention of the House.

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.13 pm), in reply: I start by thanking all speakers this afternoon who spent their time contributing to the debate on the bill. In particular I thank members of the LNP and also the committee which spent some time looking at this bill and assessing the pros and cons. This is also a prime example of how beneficial a committee can be in that issues can be raised and discussed and a report come back to the House that provides a balanced and good outcome—that is, that the bill be passed.

Turning to the contribution of the member for Mulgrave, I note that his opening comments were along the lines that he will not be opposing the bill, and I thank him for that. He then followed that for about 15 minutes with anything but support for the bill.

**An opposition member:** I am just reminding Queenslanders.

**Mr McARDLE:** We will get there, member; don't you worry about that. We have a long time to go yet. We will talk about the ALP record; don't you worry about that. There was even a suggestion at one stage from the honourable member for Mulgrave that this bill terminated the 8c feed. Clearly, that is wrong. The date of 30 June 2014 was placed into a bill that was passed by this House on 30 October 2012, and the opposition supported it. The member as the shadow spokesperson supported that bill. So it is clear that he is trying to indicate that this bill in fact terminates the 8c feed when he in fact supported the bill in the House in October 2012 that made it quite clear that 30 June 2014 will be the termination date. What the member does not really grapple with in any strong sense or in a sense of reality is that in 2015-16 \$276 is going to be added to the power bills of every Queensland. Whether you live on the cape, or on the Gold Coast, or out west, \$276 will appear on every person's power bill in 2015-16 because of the grand scheme put in place by his comrades around the cabinet table—the Labor way of course: 'Let's burden everybody. Let's not do anything sensible. Let's burden everybody.'

The member is in denial about this. He clearly denies that there is an impost on the most vulnerable and the most desperate people in this state and he is quite happy to burden them ad infinitum for \$276 in 2015-16 and then on and on. I remember saying across the chamber to the member, 'Why don't you amend the bill to bring the 44c back in?' He did not deny that. That might be the first policy we have from the ALP with regard to the energy sector in over two years. The first policy is to impose more costs on consumers. Does that not sound very familiar in terms of the way that the Labor Party acts? It says, 'Let's build the debt up. Let's get the debt up. Let's pass it on to the consumers and they can simply wear it.' It is quite clear the member ignores that low-income earners and renters in many cases are subsidising those who can afford solar PV systems on their roof, but he is quite happy to have that happen. He is quite delighted to have that happen.

Recently Malcolm Roberts on 4BC said that the Solar Bonus Scheme is 'one of the worst forecasts you'll find in recent history'. The chairman of the QCA, making an assessment on the Solar Bonus Scheme, said that it is one of the worst forecasts you will find in recent history. In a report for 2014-15 released in about December last year he made the comment that the Solar Bonus Scheme was the second major cost driver for power increases, constituting 30 per cent of the power increase in tariff 11 to the Solar Bonus Scheme. The member cannot acknowledge that the power network has to cope with peak demand at all times of the day, including peak usage times between 6 am and 8 pm in the evening. Solar does not work at night, member. We still have to build the network up. We are going to build up a revelation of light. The solar powered light bulb went on for those opposite: 'Solar doesn't work at night. We still have to build the network up, but we'll continue to impose the obligation on those who are least able to afford it.' It is \$276 in 2014-15. He is mightily happy to do that. The savings from these changes will save \$110 million out to 2020. But what really worried me about the ALP—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** The eight dams; how much are they costing?

**Mr McARDLE:** We will talk about dams. We will talk about Traveston Dam—the non-existent \$700 million dam! You beauty! Come in, spinner! \$700 million on a dam that does not exist! What a brilliant exercise in stupidity! Economics 101: 'Let's go to a site. This looks okay. How much money do you want? Let's do it.' What a brain snap!

But let us get back to the \$110 million. If the opposition wants to debate the water issue, we will debate Tugun. This bill will save \$110 million out to 2020. What really concerned me is that, when I said to Steve Austin that the saving for people will be \$10 a year, the ALP laughed at that.

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr McARDLE:** The member brought it up in the House and made a joke out of it. At what point does the saving become important? Is it \$15? Is it \$20? Is it \$25? At what point does the ALP say that that amount of money becomes important? At what point in time does it become important so that the member says, 'Enough is enough.'

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr McARDLE:** The member makes a joke out of it. I can tell the member for Mulgrave now that for many people across this state \$10 is a lot of money

**Mr PITT:** I rise to a point of order. I find the minister's comments offensive. I have not made a joke of anything. I ask him to withdraw

**Mr McARDLE:** I withdraw. I think the point is well made. The ALP believes that \$10 is not an important sum of money. So what is an important sum of money? At what point do we get to a figure that the ALP thinks is important? At what point—

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr McARDLE:** The member does not care about the poor in this state. He does not understand what they need. He makes a joke out of people trying to save money. He is a disgrace.

I would like to turn now to the contribution by the member for Gladstone. Can I say that, compared to the contribution of the ALP, it was a breath of fresh air. What an enlightened member she is. The member for Gladstone is a member who has taken this bill quite seriously. She understands the implications of it for her constituency. She did not try to make cheap political points, as the member for Mulgrave did. I can make it quite clear to the member for Gladstone that those who signed up to the 44c FIT will retain that until 2028 as long as they remain eligible to receive it. It was made very clear in October 2012 when the relevant bill came before the House that the 8c FIT would expire on 30 June 2014. I say to the member for Gladstone that her constituents in the Ergon sector will continue to receive a FIT past that date. That is fair. That is reasonable. People have spent money on solar panels. They should get a return on that investment until such time as we can get competition in the Ergon sector working more effectively.

Currently, there are seven retailers in the south-east corner that provide between a 4c and 10c FIT. The bill simply moves the price set by the government, shall we say, to the market and the retailers having a strong say in what the price is going to be. That will mean that people will negotiate with the relevant retailers to obtain the best deal that they possibly can. That could be for one, two, or three years. It depends on the individual terms of the contract and also the desire of the consumer.

The calculation of the FIT by the QCA is the sum of the direct financial costs that are avoided when the regional retailers onsell a unit of exported electricity from its solar PV customers. I indicate to the member for Gladstone my confirmation that the QCA is monitored on an ongoing basis by my department. I am acutely aware that the QCA is there to provide certainty and fairness to consumers. My commitment is to make sure that the QCA does exactly that—not just now but for a long time into the future.

There will be no changes to the protection of groundwater resources for farmers or the process of allocating water as a result of this bill. The bill simply makes it easier for farmers and other users to make use of the water extracted as part of CSG production by ensuring that it is managed as a resource and not a waste.

The member for Nicklin raised the issue of community halls. I recall travelling to the electorate of Nicklin some time ago now and speaking to the member and a number of other individuals who were at the hall that I visited. My department has a tariff reform agenda that is ongoing at the moment. I will ensure that the issues raised by the member are discussed by the group and are taken into account in an overall tariff reform agenda going forward. I hope that that will also cover off the issues raised by the acting Deputy Speaker in regard to irrigators. Certainly, I know that the production of food crops and other items across the state is part of the four pillars of this great state. We need to work with irrigators and we also need to understand the needs of irrigators, but irrigators also need to understand that everybody in this state is suffering from very high power prices.

I am now going to turn my attention to exactly why we have reached the point at which we are looking at very high power prices. I want to start this part of my contribution by talking about the green schemes—by talking about the RET and the Solar Bonus Scheme. I refer to an article that appeared in the *Australian* on 29 April 2014 by Bjørn Lomborg, who is a believer in climate change. He makes it quite clear that he believes that climate change occurs and that he believes that it is man made. In that article in the *Australian* he makes the following point—

The Australian government recently released an issues paper for the review of the renewable energy target. What everyone engaged in this debate should recognise is that policies such as the carbon tax and the RET have contributed to household electricity costs rising 110 per cent in the past five years, hitting the poor the hardest.

He then goes on to say—

According to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 'Climate change harms the poor first and worst.'

At the end of the article he then makes this comment—

Addressing global warming requires long-term innovation that makes green energy affordable. Until then, wasting enormous sums of money at the expense of the world's poor is no solution at all.

This government has made it quite clear that we will support a green scheme, provided it is sustainable, provided it is commercially viable. That is what is required, not pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into subsidies, because the Solar Bonus Scheme at \$276 in 2015-16, the carbon tax at \$171 and the RET at \$80 are all adding to the cost of consumers' power bills in this state. They are being subsidised. Green schemes need to stand on their own two feet. This government will support any enterprise that is viable.

Let us go back to 1998, when then Premier Peter Beattie trotted in here. It was around about that time, or soon thereafter, that Beattie demanded that the power corporations directed 95 per cent of their profits to the government—up from 70 per cent to 80 per cent in the Borbidge era. In fact, in 1999 the predecessor to Energex wrote to the government warning that the demand of 95 per cent of profits in dividends would hamper their ability to deliver power. In 2003, Beattie forced them to deliver dividends at 95 per cent. That meant that the power corporations did not have the money for capital spend or for maintenance. Soon thereafter the whole system started to collapse.

The Labor Party—greedy for money, spent God knows where—ripped money out of Energex, Ergon and Powerlink and what happened? We had blackouts and brownouts leading to the Somerville report. That then produced the N-1 standard of reliability. That is the gold plating. If I recall correctly, in about 2010-11—almost two years before we came to power—the debt of Powerlink, Ergon and Energex was \$11.5 billion and we were paying interest at \$500 million a year. That was courtesy of the Labor Party, which ripped out dividends of the very entities that were there to protect the poles and wires and, by doing so, they risked the whole network collapsing around them. The member for Mulgrave can stand in this House and make accusations one after the other, but he cannot deny the fact that, in 1998, Peter Beattie set this state on a road to ruin in regard to power prices, in regard to blackouts, in regard to brownouts and in regard to gold plating and we are paying the price to this very day.

When we look back at the history we see that, during this period that the whole rot set in, the chief of staff to the minister for energy was Anastacia Palaszczuk, the now Leader of the Opposition. She either had her hand on the tiller or was certainly guiding the ship towards unmitigated disaster. Never once has the Labor Party stood in this House and apologised for the mess, nor has the Leader of the Opposition acknowledged her role in relation to this matter. The *Courier-Mail's* caricature of Powerpoint Pete, and we can recall that very clearly, in my opinion highlights the fact that everybody knew that Powerpoint Pete led this state down the gully of destruction by ripping out the very important dividends that were required to maintain the power network.

I want to talk now about the Solar Bonus Scheme. I want to remind members, as I have made comment in this House before, that I have written to the Labor opposition and asked them to provide to the government access to documents that models how many people would take up the 44c feed-in tariff. On 13 July 2013 I wrote to the member for Mulgrave seeking that. I table another copy of that letter for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 9 July 2013, from Hon. Mark McArdle MP to Mr Curtis Pitt MP, regarding the solar bonus scheme [\[5150\]](#).

I have received nothing. What modelling was done by the Labor Party in government to get to the point where they said it was viable to roll out the 44c FIT? Today in this state there are 279,855 houses with solar panels on their roof getting the 44c FIT. There are 68,760 houses with panels on their roof getting the 8c FIT. In April alone, 2,800 more homes took up solar panels in this state. I want to know what the modelling was that gave the Labor government the imprimatur to roll out a system that is going to cost us \$3.3 billion by 2028. I call upon the member for Mulgrave and the Leader of the Opposition to table in the House, or allow access by the government to, the cabinet documents and all other documents to find out exactly what the modelling was. My suspicion is that it will be scant—one page—not unlike the costings they gave in the 2009 or 2012 election campaign, which was one flimsy A4 bit of paper.

**A government member:** It was on the back of an envelope.

**Mr McARDLE:** It was the back of an envelope? I take that interjection. The back of an envelope, was it? Wonderful. That is about what it amounted to as well.

**Mr PITT:** Mr Deputy Speaker, the minister is trying to verbal me.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Order! Member for Mulgrave, resume your seat.

**Mr PITT:** I find those comments offensive and ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mulgrave, there was no personally offensive comments and you do not have a point of order. Minister?

**Mr McARDLE:** As I said in dealing with the Solar Bonus Scheme, \$3.3 million by 2028 with a 44c FIT. It would appear that the opposition is prepared to put back on the agenda the reinstating of the 44c FIT to add more burden to the cost borne by consumers. What do we think will be the relevant cost before Labor would stop that? Would it be \$1,000 a year? \$1,200 a year? I now want to turn to the carbon tax. I will come back to solar. Then we will talk about water. I want to talk about dams again. Traveston Dam really intrigues me. Let us talk about the carbon tax. The cost of the carbon tax on bills will be \$177. We have asked on many occasions for the Labor opposition to stand up for Queensland. They have a go at Campbell Newman for standing up for Queensland in regard to what happened in the budget. This mob opposite will not even stand on their feet and say to the Labor Party in Canberra, 'cut the carbon tax'. They will not even do that. Campbell Newman has the fortitude as the Premier to stand up for the people of this state. The Labor Party members are simply ETU hacks. The ETU actually run the Labor Party. This mob in here, and the old gang who are coming back, the zombies—the zombies are coming back!—are ETU hacks. Cameron is coming back. The member better watch her position because Cameron is coming back.

When one looks at the carbon tax there is one person in this chamber who actually had the right to cast a vote in a parliament not to impose the carbon tax and that is the member for Redcliffe. What did the member say? She said—

I rise to speak in support of these clean energy bills, and I do so as a proud member of the Gillard Labor government, a government which had the foresight to say, 'Enough is enough,' when it comes to talking about addressing climate change and is willing to stand up and finally take action on this important matter.

She was the one person in the Labor Party who had the opportunity to cast a ballot to say no to the carbon tax and the member did not. She condemned all Australians to the carbon tax and power price rises. She was happy to do that. She is not going to stand up now and retract it. The Labor Party are men of straw when it comes to electricity. They support burdening our customers with incredibly large power bills, the RET, the carbon tax and the Solar Bonus Scheme, which I will come back to in a moment. Those opposite supported Peter Beattie ripping out the dividends back in 1998 virtually collapsing the whole network. I suspect they may support bringing back the 44c FIT. Wouldn't that go down well with people who are unable to meet their expenses? Those opposite are happy to continue with green schemes and subsidising them ad infinitum, again adding more cost to people's power bills. This government has a plan. The best we can get out of the opposition is 'wait for it'.

**Mrs Frecklington:** Have patience.

**Mr McARDLE:** I take the interjection. 'Have patience, a little Bex and a lie down, a little comfy up with a teddy bear in the corner and when the world wakes up we will let you know.' That is what the ALP are about because when it comes to a plan they have nothing but rhetoric, bluff and spin. But we do have Mythbusters, a document that we will trawl through with great delight in the election campaign outlining the true intent of the Labor Party and the true intent of the member for Mulgrave in relation to power sale and also the use of power. I say to all members that this is an important bill and I commend it to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 44, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

**Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.38 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. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.38 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.

## ELECTORAL REFORM AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 21 November 2013 (see p. 4230).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.39 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Before I start the debate on the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013, I take this opportunity to mention the recent inquiry by the Electoral Commission of Queensland, the ECQ, into the conduct of the Redcliffe by-election on 22 February 2014. The government considered it sensible to await the findings of the report before debating the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013. On 24 April 2014, I tabled the final report of the inquiry. The report identifies three issues in relation to the Redcliffe by-election: first, overt intimidating and obstructive behaviour towards the public and election staff; secondly, excessive displays of political statements and the manner in and time at which those statements were erected and displayed; and, thirdly, the conduct and number of scrutineers at the Saturday-night count. The report makes nine recommendations for legislative amendments to better ensure that people do not feel intimidated or harassed when they are entering a polling place. It also identified business improvement opportunities that the ECQ intends to implement, including the introduction of a voluntary code of practice for participants in Queensland elections.

Before making any decisions on the recommendations made in the report, the government is seeking feedback from stakeholders and the Queensland community. For this purpose, I have written to all registered political parties to seek their views and am seeking public comment through the website of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. I encourage people to have a say on this important issue that affects all Queensland voters, as well as to comment on the broader issue, which the government supports in principle, concerning the banning of canvassers on polling day. Comments are sought by 13 June 2014 and the government hopes to consider a second phase of amendments in response to public suggestions arising from the Redcliffe report.

Now I move on to the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013. In doing so, I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its timely consideration of the bill. I thank all the stakeholders that made written submissions as part of the committee's examination of the bill. The purpose of the bill is to ensure the opportunity for full participation in Queensland's electoral process and enhance voter integrity and voting convenience. At this point, I remind honourable members who were not in this chamber in 2011 about what happened when last we had major electoral reforms. I have been referring to the *Hansard* of 2011 and reading the debate on electoral reforms moved by the Hon. Paul Lucas, who was Attorney-General at the time. The electoral bill that he introduced, which reformed and changed the way voting practices and public funding happens in Queensland, was introduced into this House on 7 April 2011. Last night in a particular debate, the member for Redcliffe said that 10 weeks was not enough time to consider particular bills. When the Labor Party moved its substantial reforms to the Electoral Act in 2011, the bill was introduced on 7 April 2011 and four weeks later on 11 May 2011 we came into this place and debated the most substantial reforms to the electoral laws in Queensland's history. Not only did we debate it over a couple of days in that sitting week, but also we debated it the day after the federal budget was handed down and the day before Gordon Nuttall appeared at the bar of parliament. A smokescreen of other issues was used to get the 2011 electoral amendments through.

The member for Redcliffe might like to hear a bit more of the history of that bill. The bill was introduced on 7 April, so it just happened that it missed the introduction of the parliament's new committee system by a few days. The bill was introduced by Paul Lucas on 7 April. For the benefit of honourable members, I add that there was no consultation with the opposition and no consultation with the Queensland community in terms of the additional funding to political parties. I thought it

important to point that out, because last night the member for Redcliffe was talking about a particular bill and said that 10 weeks was not enough time. I thought I should give her a lesson in terms of how the Labor Party used to do this sort of stuff in this place. It introduced a bill on 7 April, a few days before the new committee system was introduced so it did not go off to a committee. It was then debated four weeks later on 11 May, the day after the federal budget and the day before Gordon Nuttall appeared at the bar of parliament. There were smokescreens and distractions, because those 2011 laws were designed to make sure that the Labor Party had its coffers full for the next election, which was to be in less than 12 months time. That is what it was all about and, of course, we opposed it.

Let us compare and contrast that with this strong plan from this strong government for a brighter future for Queenslanders. We issued a green paper on electoral reform, we sought feedback, we advised the community of Queensland as to our answers to the feedback and we then published the report of the government's response to the green paper. That has happened over the past 18 months. We have been fully transparent and upfront with the people of Queensland when we looked at restoring accountability in government and accountability in the electoral processes.

I know that in the next few hours of today and over the course of tomorrow, the opposition Labor Party will forget the events of 2011. Its members will forget the events that led to the debate of the amendment to the Electoral Act. They will forget that the bill did not go to a committee. They will forget all that. They will call me corrupt, they will call the government corrupt and they will call the Premier corrupt. We are expecting to hear all of that over the next few hours, and particularly in the next hour from the opposition leader. However, one thing that cannot be taken away is the history of the Labor Party. In 2011 when the electoral reforms went through, the honourable opposition leader sat in cabinet. In a minute I will come to the figures and statistics that show how that legislation did bolster the Labor Party coffers. It was designed to make sure that they had a war chest to take into the 2012 election campaign and they did that without consultation, while hiding it behind Gordon Nuttall and the federal budget. That is the compare and contrast

This bill is designed to undo those wrongs that the Queensland community did not have a say in. Through this bill, we will remove the caps on donations and expenditure as unnecessarily restricting full participation in the political process in Queensland. We will increase the disclosure threshold to \$12,400 to more closely align with the threshold applying at the Commonwealth level. We will return the basis for electoral public funding to a stated dollar amount per vote. We have proposed to increase the threshold for entitlement to public funding from four per cent to 10 per cent of the primary vote, but following consideration by the committee we will be moving an amendment to take that back down to six per cent. We will be facilitating electronically assisted voting, particularly to ensure access to secret and independent voting for blind and vision impaired voters and voters who require assistance because of disability, motor impairment or insufficient literacy. We will be changing particular requirements in relation to postal voting to make it more convenient and more accessible to voters. In recognition of how-to-vote cards as an important resource to voters, we will provide that how-to-vote cards be made available on the Electoral Commission of Queensland website and grant the ECQ the power to refuse to register a card if it is satisfied that it is likely to mislead or deceive a voter in casting their vote. We will be implementing proof-of-identity requirements to vote in a state election in a non-discriminatory way that reduces the potential for electoral fraud.

Let us again compare and contrast that to 2011, when the bill was rushed through without legitimate consultation and without any consultation with the Queensland community. We have been upfront. We have had green papers issued. We have taken on feedback and we have extended the debate of this bill for weeks and weeks, to ensure that we had all the feedback from the Queensland community. As I said earlier, we will have a phase 2 bill that will deal with the outcomes of the Redcliffe by-election and the issue that we have given in-principle support to, to ensure that people do not feel fearful and intimidated when they go to vote, as they did in the Redcliffe by-election. We are proposing that Queensland look at the issue of banning canvassers on polling day, so that people can be free to vote without any hassle or harassment.

As I indicated in my explanatory speech, our proposed amendments in relation to continuous disclosure foundered on the rocks of constitutional invalidity. Equally, our intention to align the level of disclosure under Queensland law with that of the Commonwealth law is based on an acknowledgement of that same principle. That principle was stated by the High Court in the *Devondale Cream* case of 1968, where the court said—

A State law may 'alter, impair or detract' from a Commonwealth law where there is a 'direct collision' between the two laws—that is, 'where the State law, if allowed to operate, would impose an obligation greater than that for which the federal law has provided'.

Herein lies the inconsistency to which section 109 of the constitution refers. Within these constitutional constraints, this legislation seeks to maximise openness and transparency. It seeks to let the sun shine in on political process, to ensure that Queenslanders will have confidence in that process and its outcomes. As I indicated, I will be moving certain amendments with respect to the disclosure limit where we are increasing it to fall in line and be consistent with the federal disclosure regime. We will be moving an amendment that will change the disclosure threshold to \$12,400, CPI indexed each financial year. That amount was decided for consistency with the disclosure threshold applying at the Commonwealth level. To ensure consistency of the Queensland and Commonwealth disclosure levels over time, amendment Nos 1, 6, 11, 20, 22 and 24 replace references to the \$12,400 CPI indexed amount with references to 'gift threshold amount' and provide that this is a dollar amount under the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, as indexed under that act. Therefore, if the Commonwealth changes the amount, naturally and automatically the Queensland amount will follow.

The issue of expenditure caps has also been addressed by the High Court in *Unions New South Wales and Others v State of New South Wales* in December last year. The court found that the law relating to expenditure caps in that state was invalid because it impermissibly burdens the implied freedom of communication on government and political matters contrary to the Commonwealth Constitution. To go down the road of favouring such caps would place such Queensland laws on expenditure and donation caps in constitutional peril.

At the same time, I note with interest an article by Anthony Gray, professor of constitutional law at the University of Southern Queensland, in the *Courier-Mail* of 19 May, where he stated—  
Australia is and has always been a very robust democracy, and this system has overwhelmingly been free of corruption.

...

For the overwhelming duration of time in which our democracy has operated free of corruption, it has also been free of political donation and expenditure restrictions.

Professor Gray continues—

Even if limits on donations and expenditure might be justified, it has proved to be extremely difficult for legislators to get it right. A large truck could be driven through existing loopholes in Queensland's recently enacted political expenditure laws.

Of course, he was referring to the 2011 Labor Party amendments. Bearing this in mind, I am drawn towards the holier-than-thou attitudes of those opposite.

I have before me an email from one Eoin MacGiollari seeking donations for the ALP in the seat of Sunnybank. His enthusiasm exposes just what Labor is prepared to do in seeking donations. The candidate for the Labor Party for Sunnybank is Peter Russo. He wrote on 19 May—this is very relevant—

Using this link ensures that your donation goes directly to Peter's election campaign. Contributions up to \$1,500 are tax deductible. Contributions over \$1,000 must be declared to the electoral commission but if you donate that much—I promise I'll make that process very easy for you!

What are we to make of this offer? Just what is this enthusiastic fundraiser offering to do? Is he seeking to drive his own truck through Labor's disclosure laws? I table a copy of the email for the benefit of members opposite.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 19 May 2014, from Mr Eoin MacGiollari regarding fundraising for Mr Peter Russo, ALP candidate for Sunnybank [\[5151\]](#).

It should not be forgotten that the 2011 Labor Party amendments accompanied a significant increase in funds flowing to political parties, including just where the Labor priorities lie. It should not be forgotten that under the Labor Party public support for political parties would have risen from \$3.57 million over the 2009-12 election cycle to \$24.3 million over the 2012-15 election cycle. Labor believes that it is entitled to these rivers of gold. They believe private activity should be funded at the public expense.

I recall three years ago highlighting the other shortcomings of Labor's 2011 amendments. I mentioned at the time the preferential treatment provided to trade unions and their officers, the loopholes provided through the definition of electoral expenditure, the sheer complexity of the administrative processes required and the arbitrary nature of the caps imposed in relation to both donations and expenditure. Labor was unable to respond to these criticisms at the time. They have been unable to answer them in the intervening three years. At the same time as getting its hands on the public purse, Labor sought to impose a range of complicated, bureaucratic restrictions on parties and candidates that diverted resources from campaigning to complex record keeping that served little public good.

I now turn to the committee's report. As part of its report the committee made four recommendations in relation to the bill. I now table the government's response to the committee's recommendations.

*Tabled paper:* Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 56—Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013, government response [\[5152\]](#).

The first recommendation made by the committee was that the bill be passed. I thank the committee for its timely consideration of the bill and appreciate the committee's recommendation that the bill be passed. The second recommendation is that the proposed threshold of 10 per cent for entitlement to public funding be reviewed. The committee recommends instead a threshold of six per cent. I have reviewed the level of threshold and agree that the amendment is appropriate to ensure the threshold does not adversely impact on participation by genuine independent members and those minor parties that do have a level of community support. I will be moving an amendment during the consideration in detail stage to change the threshold for entitlement to public funding to six per cent.

The final two recommendations relate to the proof of identity requirement. They recommend that a reasonable range of documents, both photographic and nonphotographic, be included in the electoral regulation. They also recommend that the ECQ provide training to electoral officers in assisting voters with the declaration process.

I acknowledge that there is a concern in the community about the implementation of a proof of identity requirement in order to vote at a polling booth and concerns raised about the ability of particular persons to obtain and present photographic identification. As I have previously stated publicly, the government proposes a wide range of documents will be acceptable as proof of identity. This includes both photographic identification and non-photographic identification. Also as stated previously, a voter who does not provide acceptable proof of their identity will still be allowed to cast a declaration vote. Before the next state election the ECQ will provide the necessary training for electoral officers and will run a public awareness campaign to make the transition as easy as possible for every Queenslander.

I will now briefly address a number of the issues raised by the committee, particularly in relation to the application of fundamental legislative principles. The committee raises the issue of the retrospective commencement of the amendments to part 11 of the Electoral Act 1992 and whether it is necessary as the next state election is yet to be determined and may not be held until 2015. As previously noted, the act currently places requirements on candidates and political parties in relation to political donations and expenditure caps and associated requirements. These requirements commence well in advance of an election. For example, the capped expenditure period for the next election actually started in March this year. For this reason, the government believes it is important to ensure participants in the next state election have clarity and consistency in relation to the rules and requirements that will apply for the next election, including the run-up period to that election.

In relation to the committee's concerns about the removal of the entitlement to advanced payment of election funding, the ECQ has advised that, at the introduction of the bill, no claims for advanced funding had been actually received. The new public funding model proposed by the bill is directly related to the electoral strength rather than how much a candidate or political party spends in an election. As it is not possible or appropriate to predict how people may vote at a future election, it is appropriate to remove the entitlement to advanced payments for public funding. To safeguard public funds, this amendment has effect from the date of the introduction of the bill.

While talking about public funding, I will take the opportunity to address the committee's concerns about the implementation of policy development payments and the dollar per vote amount for registered political parties and their candidates. As I stated in my speech when introducing the bill, policy development payments will be based on a party's relative electoral support. The payments will ensure that parties can continue to engage fully in developing and shaping policy throughout the electoral cycle while continuing to effectively represent the community. Policy development payments are proposed only for registered political parties and are recognition of the costs involved in the important role parties play in setting policy agenda. Independents, who are not members of a political party, do not have these costs.

The bill reforms the expensive public electoral funding model introduced by the former government. Public electoral funding will instead be paid on a dollar per vote basis up to the amount expended. The different amounts for registered political parties and candidates reflect the greater demands placed on parties in performing the important role of informing debate, as I mentioned earlier.

The committee has also raised a concern about the bill making provision for the ECQ to decide to stop a class of electors making an electronically assisted vote. As noted by the committee, the power can only be used if there is an emergent security concern or technical issues with the information technology to be used for that electronically assisted voting. It is important that the ECQ be able to make a decision in a timely way to ensure the integrity and security of voting.

As the Electoral Commissioner has briefly publicly stated, it is the role of the ECQ to ensure that no voters are disenfranchised. If such a decision had to be made, the ECQ would ensure affected electors were informed and that they were able to cast their vote in another way.

I note the committee's support for the reforms in the bill to improve electoral processes in the areas of proof of identity, electronically assisted voting, postal voting and how-to-vote cards. Important objectives of this bill are to improve voter integrity and voter convenience. In relation to how-to-vote cards, I will quickly address the committee's concerns about the timing for resubmitting a revised card. The bill provides for a person to resubmit a card that has previously been rejected as likely to mislead or deceive an elector in casting their vote. The card may be resubmitted until 5 pm on the Wednesday immediately before polling day. In resubmitting a revised card, the person must comply only with the requirement to provide the required number of how-to-vote cards and accompanying statutory declaration, not with the original time frame for lodging the card.

I will be progressing amendments in the bill during consideration in detail to set the time frame to apply for a postal vote, to provide that the gifts and loans disclosure threshold is the dollar amount applied at the Commonwealth level—so when theirs moves ours will move—to clarify that the amendments made by the bill do not apply in relation to the Redcliffe by-election, and to correct a small number of minor errors in the bill.

So if I can finish with where I started, we started this debate essentially back in 2011 when the Labor Party, under the cover of Gordon Nuttall appearing at the bar the day after and the federal budget being handed down the day before, moved sweeping changes to the Electoral Act of Queensland. The taxpayers of Queensland went from providing political parties with funding of \$3.5 million to \$24 million. Although we tried at the time to raise this issue and raise the awareness, because it was such a rushed job by the government at the time, Queenslanders did not have an opportunity to fully appreciate why the former government introduced the laws and what benefit the laws would have to the former government.

We have been upfront with the people of Queensland. We issued some 18 months ago a green paper. We went out for public discussion. We took all views on board—those opposed to the laws and those supporting different types of laws. Then the government considered it and then we responded publicly with our intentions. As I said earlier in the debate, it was our intention to have continuous disclosure of political donations, but we had to rely on advice that we received at the time—and the High Court since has held certain things invalid in the New South Wales legislation in relation to the unions in New South Wales. The government had to rely on the advice from crown law, and that is why we are not proceeding with the continuous disclosure.

The second element I raised earlier in my contribution was with respect to increasing the threshold from \$1,000 to \$12,400. Again, based on advice that we received, as well as the continuous disclosure, we have increased the threshold from \$1,000 to \$12,400 to remain consistent with the federal legislation. Remaining consistent with the federal legislation will not put our legislation at the peril of constitutional invalidity.

As I indicated earlier too, if the federal government wish, we would certainly support the federal government lowering the federal amount. But ultimately after this bill is passed, the amendment that we will move during consideration in detail will ensure that, if the federal government reform their electoral laws in the future and they put the disclosure limit down, ours too will automatically go down. But that will be a matter for the federal government. It will be a matter that is consistent with the state jurisdiction of Queensland. Our laws will be consistent at the ECQ level and at the AEC level.

As I said, this implements important reforms, fixing a lot of the issues that were created in 2011 that the Labor Party unfortunately got away with. When you increase funding from \$3.5 million to \$24 million, the public should know. In this debate the opposition leader, as I indicated earlier, will get up in a minute and she will call the government all sorts of things. We will be accused of being corrupt. We will be accused of this and that. But let history not be forgotten that in 2011 amendments were rushed through this House making sure that the gold linings of the Labor Party were there going into the 2012 election campaign. That is why they did it. As I indicated earlier, they did it a few days before the new committee process was established in this House with bipartisan support. So that bill conveniently did not go to a committee and it was not consulted with the opposition.

Compare and contrast that to a strong plan for a brighter future in Queensland where we have been completely upfront with the government's intentions and our laws, so much so that we issued a green paper. We responded to the green paper. We have now indicated that we intend to have a phase 2 of legislative amendments, and that is responding to the Redcliffe by-election and giving the courtesy to the Electoral Commissioner who conducted that inquiry to sort a lot of those issues out to ensure that does not happen in the 2015 election campaign where people can go and exercise their democratic right but they can do it in a free manner without fear and intimidation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.03 pm): I rise to oppose the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013. This legislation is nothing short of an attack on Queensland's democratic system. This represents the worst of the worst from this arrogant, know-it-all Newman government. This legislation attacks the fundamental democratic rights of everyday Queenslanders, while providing for special concessions to allow the big end of town to gain special influence over the Premier and his cabinet ministers.

This legislation is a blatant attack on transparency and accountability. As the Attorney-General was saying, this is a plan. This is a plan to take Queensland back to a dark past. This is taking us back to a place where Queensland does not want to go but which this government wants us to revisit. This is about attacking accountability and integrity in this state. This is what this legislation is doing. This is about winding back accountability, about winding back integrity. This is taking Queensland backwards, not forwards. In typical manner, the Premier and the Attorney-General are arrogantly ramming through legislation that they did not take to the election, that faces overwhelming objection from the Queensland public and will prove to be a serious risk to open and fair government in this state.

To illustrate the motive and arrogance of this government, it is useful to consider the background to how this legislation has arrived at this current point. The Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013 will make significant changes to the electoral process, from the administration of elections to the financial dealings of political parties and donors. In January 2013, the Attorney-General released a discussion paper on electoral reform, to be managed by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, not through the parliamentary committee system.

It is worth noting that the hundreds of submissions provided to the analysis process overseen by the Attorney-General to this stage that I am aware have not been made public. Instead, the government released the discussion paper only. At the time the departmental discussion paper was announced, the Attorney-General floated a series of red herrings, including suggestions about removing compulsory voting. The opposition suggested at the time that those issues were a distraction from the government's true intentions, which are now evident to see in the contents of this bill.

The department, I understand, outlined that it received around 250 submissions on this issue, and we are still yet to see them. The Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013 is supposedly the government's response to the feedback gained through the discussion paper. The legislation includes many seriously detrimental proposals that were foreshadowed by the opposition at the time. Unfortunately, this legislation is proof that the LNP government is as obvious, extreme and partisan as feared.

This legislation proposes a wide variety of changes, some more offensive than others. The proposed changes contained in the bill include changes to the funding arrangements for parties, both in allocation of funds and thresholds of voting percentage received to gain public funding; changes to donation laws, drastically increasing the level of donations allowed before declaration requirements kick in; and the imposition of voter identification requirements for enrolled Queenslanders trying to exercise their democratic right to vote in elections.

This legislation is a retrograde step that significantly reduces the transparency and accountability of large political donations. This represents a winding back of electoral reform that has been improved and progressed over the last 20 years. The Goss government saw the overhaul of the electoral process in the wake of the Fitzgerald inquiry and the entrenched corruption that pervaded the Queensland political system at that time. Reforms included the overhaul of the weighted vote of the zonal system that drastically skewed true democratic outcomes. The government established the CJC, and later the CMC, and parliamentary oversight through the committee process. Whistleblower protections were introduced and the core principles of an independent Public Service were restored.

At the time of the 20th anniversary of the Fitzgerald inquiry, the Bligh government extended transparency and public accountability. These reforms were welcomed as a positive and important next stage to opening up government and ensuring that the dark days of the past could not be allowed to sneak back in. As the *Courier-Mail* editorial on 5 July 2010 stated—

... irrespective of one's view on Ms Bligh's policies or leadership style, few could seriously challenge her commitment to improving public accountability.

On coming to office in 2007, the new Premier overhauled the Freedom of Information laws and, more recently, banned former government figures from lobbying for two years after separation from public life.

In reference to the capping of political donations at \$1,000, this is what the editorial suggested—

... Ms Bligh is perhaps striking her boldest reform to date—one that, if adopted nationally, will sharply reduce undue political influence in this country.

Let me repeat those last few words: 'will sharply reduce undue political influence in this country'. This is the very point about the Newman government steps to date. Let us look at the reality.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thought the honourable member for Gregory would know better. He lived through those years and he remembers it well. We know deep down that he does not want to go back to those dark days. These are very serious issues. I have quoted extensively what the *Courier-Mail* stated about the cap of \$1,000 to sharply reduce undue political influence. Now this LNP government wants to lift it to \$12,400—from \$1,000 to \$12,400.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Order! Honourable members!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They don't like to hear it, and that is why they are interjecting, because it is the truth and it is a return to the past. The logic is clear and obvious for everyone to see. If, as the *Courier-Mail* pointed out, reducing the cap for the donation threshold will sharply reduce undue political influence in this country, then dramatically increasing the amount that donors can give in secret will sharply increase undue political influence. They are the facts. This legislation to make it easier to make large donations and keep it secret could not have come at a worse time.

**A government member:** For you.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They laugh and they heckle, but we have seen from the Sydney hearings of ICAC that even in a modern democracy when donations are kept secret, funnelled through other entities or used by unscrupulous people to gain access to political influence, public policy and proper governance can be put at risk. This is the real threat to democratic integrity in Queensland, not the imagined electoral fraud that this Attorney-General is trying to hoodwink us with.

The revelations down south hit a little close to the bone with some in the government, didn't they? The Premier was all too proud to show what a buddy he was of Mr Nick Di Girolamo, or however you pronounce his name. The Premier knew how to pronounce his name very well, skiting about it in the House. We all know from the ICAC hearings—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not want to hear about corruption in New South Wales. They do not want to know the facts. I will put the facts on the table, because they are relevant. They are changing the donation laws when we have just had ICAC hearings in New South Wales. Let me go back to Mr Nick Di Girolamo.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Attorney-General and member for South Brisbane! The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let us talk about Mr Di Girolamo. As reported by the *Courier-Mail* on 7 April this year, Mr Nicolaou emailed Mr Di Girolamo in 2007 stating—

The Lord Mayor of Brisbane is happy to see you. The person whom I am liaising with on your behalf would like you to donate the \$5k as soon as possible.

That amount was subsequently paid to Mr Newman's fundraising entity Forward Brisbane Leadership. Again I quote from the *Courier-Mail* report on 6 April—

'There was a price on meeting Campbell Newman,' he put to Mr Nicolaou.

'Yes, if you look at it that way, Mr Nicolaou replied.

He would meet Mr Di Girolamo if Di Girolamo paid \$5,000, correct?' Mr Watson asked.

'Correct,' the witness said.

So we have sworn testimony from those ICAC hearings that a system was allegedly in place for large donations to be solicited as the price for meeting with the then Lord Mayor. Those opposite can carry on, but these are very serious issues. The issue about the alleged \$5,000 would not be declared under the LNP's changes to the electoral laws that we are seeing put to the people tonight at just after six o'clock. The LNP is significantly increasing the threshold for when donations need to be declared—that is, this legislation will allow significantly higher donations to be made without any declaration at all. Setting the mark at \$12,400 means that a company or individual could donate \$12,399 and not have to declare it at all. It will be a secret donation. This measure will open up the political process to potential corruption and undue influence.

Currently, declarations need to be made on a six-monthly basis. The government is claiming that by making that a monthly process it is being more transparent, but in reality under the LNP model it does not matter if declarations are made every month or every six months. The threshold is set so high that the vast majority of donations will never, ever be disclosed. For example, for the six-month period covering the second half of 2012 about 95 per cent of donations would not have been captured under the LNP proposal and would not have been declared at all. Let me put that in context: 95 per cent. Of the donations to the LNP, 337 out of 352 donations were under \$12,400. That means only 15, not 352, donations would be declared. This clearly demonstrates that the new threshold will hide the vast majority of donations. In addition, these figures do not include those who currently do not donate but would if they knew donation will remain secret. Here we have a real question regarding the LNP's changes and intentions. I think a lot of Queenslanders will be rightly asking: why would a company or individual only donate if it is to be kept secret?

We have seen evidence on Channel 7 news this week that the Attorney-General himself was put under questioning for curious interactions between the granting of tenders for boot camps, personal meetings between the Attorney-General and his LNP colleagues, political donations from a tender company and the awarding of a tender to a company that was double the price of the recommended group. The timing of this legislation tonight shows just how arrogant and out of touch this government is. Let me put it in context: we were told that six days after the tender was awarded Beyond Billabong granted—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, would you resume your seat? What is your point of order?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, the matters that the opposition leader is raising were raised in question time this morning and are of no relevance to the bill currently before the House.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, they are. They are donations.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** A tender process is no relation to the bill before the House, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, I would ask that you remain relevant to the long title of the bill.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me be very relevant. This legislation is about changing donations and the LNP got a donation of \$5½ thousand from a company after it was awarded a tender. That is right on topic. That is right on message. That goes to the heart of this matter. That goes to the integrity of this Attorney-General. I do not know why he is still sitting in this House when he is the first law officer, and he cannot explain to the House how he went outside the tender process. That is a disgrace.

**Mr Bleijie:** You never asked me. You never asked me a question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You could not even answer that question in the House today. You could not even stand on your feet and answer that question.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me now put it in context. The donation cap is going to go from \$1,000 to \$12,500. Members, would that \$5,500 from Beyond Billabong to the LNP be declared under these new laws? No, it would not. Absolutely not.

**Mr Holswich:** But it was, wasn't it.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** But it is not going to be in the future. Under the Labor laws, it was declared; under the LNP laws, it will be secret, secret, secret. Let us look at Barry O'Farrell's \$3,000 bottle of Grange down in New South Wales. Would it be declared under Labor laws? Yes. Would it be declared under LNP laws? No. You could have four bottles of Grange and it would not be declared under the LNP laws. They will be swimming in the grapes; they will be swimming in the Grange. It is absolutely disgusting.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And the member for Gregory can refer to me by my correct title.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Attorney-General will be bathing in the Grange; he will be swimming in the Grange. The truth hurts, and this Attorney-General cannot explain the tender process.

**Mr Bleijie:** Refer it to the authorities. You refer it to the authorities.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You cannot explain it to your colleagues; you cannot explain it to your cabinet colleagues. You are a sitting duck. Never before have I heard of the first law officer of this state going outside the procurement process in the awarding of a tender.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition, I remind you to please direct all of your comments through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the member for Gregory can refer to me by my correct title, thank you.

**Mr Bleijie:** That's a reflection on the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, it is a reflection on the member for Gregory.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition—

**Mr Johnson:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Just a moment, member for Gregory. Leader of the Opposition, I am quite capable of determining when members need to be chastised for incorrect behaviour, and thank you for your suggestion. Member for Gregory, did you have a point of order?

**Mr Johnson:** I do apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker, to the honourable Leader of the Opposition for calling her by her first name, and I will never do it again.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Gregory. Can you take your seat, please.

**Mr Johnson:** Do you want me to sit down now, Mr Deputy Speaker?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, please, member for Gregory. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much. Queenslanders should be concerned after what we have seen emerge this week about what is going to happen in the future. I am very concerned about future donations that could be made to the LNP that will not be on the public record. There will be no transparency; there will be no accountability. It is a backward step of integrity. We have seen it. There is nothing clearer than what we have actually witnessed here this week—with the granting of a tender and then six days later a subsequent donation of \$5,500. In New South Wales, we saw that the nondeclaration of a \$3,000 bottle of Grange brought down the New South Wales Premier, yet the awarding of a \$2 million contract with a subsequent payment to the LNP of \$5,500 has left this Attorney-General standing in this state. This does not appear right and this matter should be investigated. I do not know why the Premier of this state has not taken action. These are serious issues and they should have at least been thoroughly independently investigated or else they should have been referred to the CMC for investigation.

**Mr BERRY:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I come back to the donations.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Ipswich, do you have a point of order?

**Mr BERRY:** I heard the Leader of the Opposition through the television, and I have certainly heard her now, and I am yet to understand—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Do you have a point of order, member for Ipswich?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BERRY:** I am sorry—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Ipswich, do you have a point of order?

**Mr BERRY:** I do, and there is no relevance at all with what she is talking about in relation to the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill, and if she wishes to continue with it, let her state what the—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Ipswich. Could you resume your seat, please. Leader of the Opposition, I have been listening to what you have been saying and I ask that you please remain relevant to the long title of the bill as it relates to donations.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sure. I will go back to donations. A donation was made from Beyond Billabong to the LNP for \$5,500. Under the new laws, this would be secret. As I said in relation to what has been happening in ICAC, Premier Barry O'Farrell lost his job for not declaring a \$3,000 bottle of Grange, but they can now donate four bottles of Grange and no-one would be any the wiser. This is about hiding political donations. This is about secrecy. This is about cover-up.

**Mr BERRY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, the CMC bill has already been—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Ipswich, do you have a point of order?

**Mr BERRY:** It is still irrelevant. She must explain. It is irrelevant.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Take your seat please, member for Ipswich. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to please remain relevant to the bill.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you. Let me go on about donations. As I have said very clearly, 95 per cent of the LNP's present donations will become secret in the eyes of the public, so I want to know how this is going to enhance transparency in this state. How is this going to enhance accountability in this state, when we will not know who is giving money and who is being awarded the contracts?

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, will you resume your seat.

**Mr BERRY:** Repetition. This is probably the fourth to sixth time this one point has been mentioned.

**Mrs Miller** interjected.

**Mr BERRY:** Repetition is not part of the debate in this House, as far as I am aware. Under Labor it may have been but not under this government.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Ipswich, can you resume your seat please. Leader of the Opposition, the member for Ipswich has made a point of order concerning your repetition and I ask that you adhere to the standing orders. We have heard a number of points a number of times and I ask for you to carry on with your address.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The heart of this legislation is about donations. It is about lifting the donations that currently stand at \$1,000, and they are going to make it now \$12,400. Donations will be made—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It would be lovely to be able to finish a point but I keep getting so rudely interrupted by those opposite.

**Mrs Miller:** Because they don't want to hear the truth, Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I now move on to removing—

**Mr Berry:** Oh! Move on! Well done!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Ipswich!

**Mr Berry:** Sorry, I just couldn't contain myself.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is all right. He will be moving on after the next election, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The legislation also removes the \$50,000 caps on spending for each electorate. This is a clear indication that the LNP is intent on trying to buy victories. This move creates legitimate public anxiety that elections are there to be bought. Combined with the changes to donation requirements, the government's changes will mean that the LNP can encourage their business mates to donate thousands of dollars, keep those donations secret and then spend as much as they can to try to buy victories in the electoral contests right across the state.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I want to be able to hear the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They have only got a few more minutes until the dinner break. The legal affairs committee was presented with overwhelming evidence from experts in electoral funding and electoral law reform. In typical fashion, it appears that the Premier and the Attorney-General are determined to ignore evidence and refuse to acknowledge the experts with whom the Premier promised they would consult. So I would like to place some of their evidence on the record to remind the LNP that they are thumbing their collective nose at the experts in this field. Graeme Orr, professor of law at the University of Queensland, put it very clearly. He said—

Removing donation and expenditure limits is retrograde. It is a backward step for the key goals of political integrity and equality. The common law democracies we benchmark with have such limits: the UK and New Zealand limit campaign expenditure; Canada limits both expenditure and donations. Even the US limits donations to parties and candidates. Queensland in 2011, along with NSW and the ACT, pioneered such limits in Australia.

Professor Orr then went on to explain the very real dangers in removing caps to donations. He said—

Unlimited donations risk political integrity. They allow wealth to buy an unequal share of political influence and voice.

Debate, on motion of Ms Palaszczuk, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

## SUSTAINABLE PLANNING AMENDMENT REGULATION

### Disallowance of Statutory Instrument



**Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.30 pm): I move—

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

This disallowance motion is another indication of the Deputy Premier doing the unpleasant work of this government. Is he doing the work of the bungling Attorney-General? Let's be clear: this regulation provides a process to set up boot camps in residential areas and is another broken promise. It is a broken promise from the LNP brand, whose word can no longer be trusted at any level of government. Broken promises are entrenched in the LNP's DNA, as has been recently demonstrated by Tony Abbott. I have long been critical of the LNP's ability to implement policies and programs.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! Order, members! There is too much interjecting. The member for Rockhampton has the call.

**Mr BYRNE:** I have reflected on the fact that some ministers in this LNP government have no practical experience in ever having done anything other than playing politics. The perfect example is the frequent patch-up jobs we are seeing to fix the emerging problems with the LNP's boot camp program. What is happening is that we are retrofitting square pegs into round holes. This amendment to the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009 effectively creates a scheme or a process through regulation that requires government approval to put boot camps in residential areas. A very simple question is: why? Why would we be doing this through regulation? The regulation does not allow a property to be self-assessable under sections of the Sustainable Planning Act if the boot camp is a single-storey building that is located at least three metres from a boundary or a multistorey building which is located at least 10 metres from the boundary. Is the government seriously proposing that a

super boot camp filled with kids sentenced by a court for serious crimes to mandatory boot camp orders will soon be operating near family homes with young children in Queensland? If the answer is no—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Rockhampton has not taken interjections.

**Mr BYRNE:**—why are we creating this mechanism? What is this mechanism about? I know exactly what it is. The Attorney-General has previously said he would not allow these camps to be set up near residential homes following the disastrous experiment he inflicted on the residents of Kuranda.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BYRNE:** He said he would not do it after that. I need not remind the community of the failure that led to innocent neighbours being threatened with weapons. However, the revelations this week should remind the Premier that the community is aware of the serious failings of this Attorney-General on boot camps and many other areas of his portfolio.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! There is too much interjection.

**Mr BYRNE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, it would not be normal if there were no robust debate. Tell them to bring it on. That the Deputy Premier has tabled this regulation is surprising to say the least. The cabinet room must be in a bit of chaos. What is going on? Has the Deputy Premier decided that having boot camps in residential areas is a good option? Has he overruled the Attorney-General, who has promised that having boot camps in residential areas will never happen in Queensland? I wonder what kind of fight the Attorney-General put up because, despite the bantam rooster performances we see in this House, he knows that his goose is cooked and his position is untenable. This amendment might just be a bizarre ploy by the Deputy Premier to give the public one last reason to call for the Attorney-General's sacking and allow the Premier to claim that he has listened to the public by booting the Attorney-General to the backbench, or it could of course just be a complete mistake—another mistake.

On 21 May 2013 in relation to the Kuranda debacle, the Attorney-General claimed that the new boot camp will be away from urban and populated areas—'Community safety is the top priority.' On 6 June 2013 on the ABC it was reported that Mr Bleijie had guaranteed that new boot camps would not be run in residential areas. Most importantly, the Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, John Sosso, chimed in at estimates in July last year. He said—

... we determined that there would be no more boot camps located in residential areas or near residential areas.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr BYRNE:** That is what he said. He went on to say—

It is very important in the future that the boot camps be provided in a safe environment for the juveniles concerned but, more importantly, in a safe environment for the community, because if there is not safety for the community then there is no support for the boot camp and the whole process is a nullity. So from this point onwards, the boot camps will be located in areas where they are not near urban—

areas. Upon further questioning by the Leader of the Opposition about the possibility of a boot camp being located in a sold-off school in Townsville, Mr Sosso said—

The decision on the location of boot camps is a combination of two things. One is whether it meets the requirements of the tender—

a moot point—

and the other is the appropriateness having regard to a range of factors. One is the safety for the juveniles—workplace health and safety and so on and so forth. Fundamentally, as I said before, if the issue is whether a school facility in an urban area will be used as a boot camp then the answer is absolutely no.

The opposition leader replied at the time—

This school site is located adjacent to a commercial precinct. Will you rule out that existing school site being utilised as a boot camp? There is a lot of concern in the Townsville region.

Mr Sosso said—

The decision is for the minister, not for me. If there is a school site located in an urban area, whether it is near a commercial premises or not, it will not be the subject of a boot camp because it would not meet the terms of the tender.

As it turns out from the recent revelations, no-one seems to meet the terms of the tenders for boot camps. The government's intentions regarding boot camps in residential areas have also been subject to backbench comment. On 28 April 2013 the *Courier-Mail* reported—

State MP Michael Trout, the local LNP member for Barron River, which covers Kuranda, said most voters believed they were voting for a "remote" boot camp model with military-style discipline.

He is absolutely right. I can tell the House that that is what everyone thought they were voting for because that is what the LNP intended at the time of their election campaigning. It was not until everyone who knows anything about this pointed out how ineffective these sorts of methods are in helping wayward children—military style boot camps—that the LNP changed its tune and adopted what was essentially the Labor Party's early intervention model, and that is exactly what we are seeing rolled out in the majority of camps today.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! There is too much interjection.

**Mr BYRNE:** This is demonstrated by the Attorney-General's own media release on 19 September 2012. He responded to the Australian Institute of Criminology warning him that his boot camps would not work. An extract from that media release states—

Mr Bleijie said the boot camps were a key component of the Newman Government's proactive approach to help young offenders rehabilitate.

It comes as Dr Troy Allard, one of the authors of an Australian Institute of Criminology ... report into youth justice, questioned the effectiveness of military-style boot camps.

"We have made it very clear from the out-set ours will not be military-style boot camps ...

The member for Barron River says 'remote military style'—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Excuse me, member for Rockhampton. Members at the back, can you either keep your conversation down or take your discussion outside, thank you. The member for Rockhampton has the call.

**Mr BYRNE:** The member for Barron River says they were intended to be remote military style camps—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Excuse me, member for Rockhampton. Member for Capalaba and member for Condamine, you were the two I was talking about and the second I finished you kept going. I will start warning you.

**Mr BYRNE:** The member for Barron River says that they are 'remote military style'; the Attorney-General says that they are an 'early intervention', and now we are debating potentially moving super boot camps back into residential neighbourhoods. It is clear that the LNP cannot be trusted to let the public know what they intend to do. Just look at how the tenderers were treated during the recent tender processes; look at how Tony Abbott treats voters. We know that it is in their DNA and that they cannot be trusted. Now we have a Deputy Premier trying to slide through the ability to put boot camps in residential areas by amending this regulation.

I have highlighted the weak and dodgy record keeping of this government when making key decisions in awarding boot camp contracts. I highlighted that changes were made in the boot camp scope of works that appear to have been made during the tender process without informing all of the other tenderers. Is this whole process of doing it through regulation necessary because the justice department cannot tender properly and the regulation has to be put in place so as to give some form of fail-safe in the process of awarding boot camp tenders? Logically, one would think if there were location parameters, it would be within the scope of works for such tenders and not running around in regulation.

I have asked the Attorney-General to explain the discrepancies in his official diary and the one that he published in relation to the attendance of the member for Barron River at boot camp meetings. Now the LNP is hiding information from Queenslanders as to what residential areas will now have super boot camps or their ilk operating in them. Where are the reasons for these decisions? They

appear to have all been made based on verbal briefings on the back of an envelope or hidden emails. That was never acceptable governance and never will be, and it is not in line with well-established public policies and guidelines on good public sector governance and accountability.

Yesterday I asked a number of questions that have still not received satisfactory answers, despite the Attorney-General's statement to the House. So I will ask some of them again. On 5 June the Attorney-General—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! What is your point of order, Attorney-General?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Relevance, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is a disallowance motion for a particular element under the Sustainable Planning Act. For 10 minutes the member has not been talking about the Sustainable Planning Act or a disallowance motion.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am listening carefully to the member's speech, and I do remind the member to remain relevant. The member has the call.

**Mr BYRNE:** Those questions that I asked are all about boot camps and their capacity to appropriately establish and manage these boot camps. Those questions are on the record and still have not been answered. This disallowance motion is about a regulation to allow boot camps in residential areas; that is what it enables. It should be in the conditions and terms of the written tender documentation and in the statement of works. But what we have seen here is a government that does not know, and a department that is incapable, of running an appropriate tender process. I think the questions I have asked in the House earlier in the week are entirely relevant, and it is about time the Attorney-General got up and answered those questions rather than mumbling about disallowance motions.

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

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

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member for Rockhampton has not asked me a question this week about boot camps. How can I answer a question he has never asked me?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order; it is a point of view.

**Mr BYRNE:** He knows exactly what I mean.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Rockhampton and Attorney-General! It was a point of view, not a point of order. The member for Rockhampton has the call.

**Mr BYRNE:** I call on every backbencher who is blindly following this LNP leadership over the cliff to vote with us on this issue. They know that this regulation is a complete and utter nonsense. I particularly call on the members of the LNP who have had meetings with the Attorney-General about boot camps. Perhaps someone could speak to whether these electorates will have some form of boot camps or super boot camps operating in residential areas.

On 10 July the member for Morayfield had a meeting with the Attorney-General about having a boot camp trial in Caboolture. On which residential street in Caboolture does the member for Morayfield propose to operate a boot camp? The member for Cleveland might also like to advise the residents of Cleveland which residential streets he has proposed for his boot camp after his meeting with the Attorney-General on 10 September last year. If the LNP is thinking about putting boot camps in residential areas—as has been promised by the Attorney-General—then members should vote against this regulation. It is quite a simple choice. If the LNP is not paving the way to have boot camps in residential areas, do not proceed with the amendments. It is quite simple.

The LNP bang on in this House about reducing red tape. This regulation will create more unnecessary red tape. It is completely unnecessary; it is not needed; and if there is no intention to do anything with boot camps in residential areas, it should be thrown out. The Labor opposition will be voting against this unnecessary red tape that allows the prospect of these LNP boot camps, filled with kids on mandatory sentences from the courts, to be set up in family-friendly neighbourhoods. Why is that? It is because they cannot properly run a tender process. They cannot define a tender; they cannot evaluate it; and they cannot deliver an outcome without compromising longstanding tender processes. The LNP members in the back bench who have any appreciation of this should support the opposition.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (7.45 pm): I rise to speak against this disallowance motion. At every turn the ALP stands in the way of our great state developing and achieving its full potential. At every opportunity they stand in the way of progress. Their self-centred and arrogant mentality was crippling our great state when Labor was in government. Now that they are in opposition, their petty adherence to baseless rhetoric is nothing but a vain attempt to promote the union agenda. They had 20 years to do the right thing and they failed.

It took our LNP government only months to introduce a viable and sustainable approach to address the grave concerns facing youth offenders. For 20 years the ALP had the opportunity to make a difference, yet they failed. Now that they find themselves in opposition they are full of opinions and comments, yet once more they have failed to provide the House and the people of Queensland with a viable option.

A good opposition contributes constructively to debates to provide alternatives. All this opposition provides is the same wailing rhetoric that echoes of yesterday's losers. It is no secret that the ALP is soft on crime and they lack the stomach to make hard choices to protect our community. Both in thought and deed the ALP has done little, if anything, to protect Queenslanders. Their willingness to vote against legislation which strengthens communities, protects police, imposes tougher sentences on violent offenders and cracks down on antisocial behaviour, is on the record. Queenslanders, take note: if you want to ensure that your communities remain a safe place in which to live, work and raise a family, it will not happen under an ALP government.

There are eight members of the Labor Party in this parliament, and they have four different factions with 12 different opinions. Their sour grapes are filled with rhetoric, name-calling, spin and scaremongering tactics, but they have no plans, no policies and no record to stand on, and they have nothing that will move the state in a positive direction. They did little, if anything, during the 20 years they were in government to protect communities, and as long as they keep playing coy for their union masters, Labor will do nothing in the future.

A correctional sentence should serve as a punishment, a deterrent, and provide an opportunity for the offender to rehabilitate and become a functional member of society. Early intervention programs such as our boot camp initiatives are instrumental in achieving those outcomes. This initiative is part of this government's strong plan for viable youth justice boot camp facilities across this state aimed at reducing the pool of young people at risk of entering the youth justice system and giving those already entrenched in the system an opportunity to have a bright future. Institutionalisation at a young age does little, if anything, to rehabilitate young offenders. Constructive and proactive environments that support and mentor our youth are a practical approach.

It is clear that this government has chosen the best service provider for the job, and despite appalling attempts by the ALP to detract from its proven record, our boot camp operators have continued to achieve results that benefit not just the broader community, but offenders as well. I have every confidence that the sentenced youth boot camp run by Beyond Billabong, along with early intervention camps at Hervey Bay, Rockhampton and the Gold Coast, will continue to give young Queenslanders the opportunity to have a bright future—one which could never have been achieved under a Labor government.

There have, in fact, been 20 young people who have attended Lincoln Springs and nearly 100 people have attended our four boot camps, which are all achieving positive results. This disallowance motion by the ALP is part of a deliberate and disgraceful smear campaign to undermine a boot camp which is achieving real results for young people and creating a safer community while facilitating the reduction of youth crime. It seems that the priorities of the opposition are centred on cheap political gain and not working towards a stronger future for all Queenslanders. It is our duty as members of parliament to support and provide direction for our community.

**Ms TRAD:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): What is your point of order?

**Ms TRAD:** My point of order is that the member is not addressing the disallowance motion at all.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! I want to hear the point of order.

**Ms TRAD:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So your point of order relates to relevance?

**Ms TRAD:** My point of order goes to relevance to the disallowance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Okay; I have got it. I say to the member for Logan that it took a little while to get on to the disallowance motion. I am listening carefully. You have been speaking to the disallowance motion on and off, but I am listening. I would remind you to stay on the disallowance motion. Thank you.

**Mr PUCCI:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I shall. Youth intervention programs are essential for our ability to grow as a community. Residents in Logan are proud and passionate people who understand the need for development and opportunity. Our initiatives deliver what this state needs to charge ahead. While the ALP continues to play games with the lives of Queenslanders to appease its union bosses, it is our obligation to oppose such motions that neglect the needs of our community. I strongly oppose the disallowance motion moved by the opposition and support the Attorney-General.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (7.50 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the disallowance motion moved by the member for Rockhampton. At the outset I say that I will be opposing the motion and supporting the Attorney-General. Over the course of this parliament we have seen just how much Labor has flip-flopped when it comes to issues like this—the fact that Labor flip-flopped when it comes to protecting our community, the fact that Labor has no plan for our future and the fact that Labor has no plan for Queensland. It should be absolutely ashamed. I am incredibly proud to be part of this government—a government that is delivering real solutions for the people of Queensland and a government that has a strong plan for the people of Queensland, and that includes the boot camps that have been mentioned by the member for Rockhampton, and the boot camps are delivering. They are delivering for the young people in Queensland who need that little bit of extra support. Just west of the Gold Coast there is an early intervention boot camp, and it is doing fantastic things. I remember visiting that particular boot camp last year with the members for Burleigh, Albert and Coomera. We had the opportunity to see firsthand exactly what these boot camps are delivering for the people of Queensland. When we think about it, it is actually an investment in the future because we are making sure that we can change people's lives so that they are able to be productive, contributing members of the community.

The people of Queensland want their government to be tough on crime, and this government is delivering. They want a strong plan for the future, and this government is delivering. The member for Rockhampton accused members of the LNP backbench of blindly following the Attorney-General. What I would say is that I think maybe Beaker should be going to Specsavers so then he can see exactly what Queenslanders want. I will not be supporting the disallowance motion.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (7.52 pm): I rise to speak against this disallowance motion. One of the things I am most proud of with this LNP government is the drive toward achieving outcomes and measuring our success by the outcomes which have been achieved rather than the processes followed. In the lead-up to the election we had a policy of making our community safer, with a particular focus on youth crime. As a government—and I thank the relevant ministers—we have been dealing with the youth crime issue in two ways: with legislation to ensure stronger sentencing and with boot camps to help turn around the lives of young people, to turn them away from a life of crime and towards a life of positive contribution to the community. The setting up of boot camps has been approached in two ways: camps which are designed to take youth who are the subject of a custodial sentence from the courts and, in the case of the Hard Yakka boot camp in my electorate of Maryborough, an early intervention boot camp which takes troubled young people on a referral basis. Bob Davis of Hard Yakka and his family had for many years been working to provide at-risk youth with an opportunity to turn their lives around, and I acknowledge my colleague the member for Hervey Bay for his work with Bob and the team in the years before I became involved in politics. Bob and his team have had a demonstrated success rate in the provision of these services over many years. I personally have put my arms around distressed mothers who desperately wanted their sons to have access to this program, but sadly at that time under Labor there was no government support. While Bob and his team did everything they could to keep the costs down, some young people missed out on the opportunity because of the lack of money.

I am sure I also speak for the member for Hervey Bay when I say that we were both very pleased when Bob Davis and his team were nominated to provide the boot camp service for the state government in the Fraser Coast-Sunshine Coast area. Our pleasure was on two bases: the first being that Bob and his team on their own initiative had, for many years, been providing successful programs and so were very well experienced and therefore highly likely to succeed; the second point was that we knew that more young people were going to be able to access this service. I have not been able to check with Bob, but I sincerely hope that the children of those two distressed mums have had the

opportunity to now access the program. Since the implementation of this program I have spoken with departmental staff who were stunned by the turnaround in the behaviour of the first cohort of youth in the first funded program. These staff were involved in the monitoring of the program and so had seen the change in the young people from when they first arrived to when they graduated. I also saw a couple of those students some time later graduating from the Glendyne college. The pride and respect shown by one of those young men in his march to and salute to the principal to receive his award and the smile on the face of the principal was just something to see. As noted, this program is noncompulsory. Students can leave, although they are strongly encouraged to stay. I believe at least one mark of success is the fact that all of the young men graduated from that program. None dropped out, and this is a great credit to Bob and his team.

Parents of former graduates of Bob Davis's Hard Yakka program prior to the awarding of the government contract gave very high praise to the program, which had life-changing results both for them and for their children. I know that Bob and his team continue to follow up with graduates and their parents and we all get a thrill when we hear of the positive outcomes achieved. I go back to my original point: the real measure of the success of a program is not the processes that have been followed but the outcomes achieved. As a government we set out to help turn around the lives of some of our young people who were on the road to a life of crime and jail. We have succeeded through people like Bob Davis and his team in achieving that goal in the programs to date, and I have every reason to believe that there will be future successes where, in years to come, these young people will look back and say, 'My life turned around because of those people.' While I have spoken only of the boot camp in my electorate, I believe that the other boot camps are achieving similar successes and I commend the continuation of those programs. The measure of the success of this LNP government policy is the outcomes achieved. They are there for all to see and I will therefore be voting against this disallowance motion.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (7.57 pm): I support the disallowance motion. It is a motion to disallow—

**Mr Davies** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Actually, you should listen to the argument before you start—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! Member for Gaven, you will speak through the chair, thank you.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your advice. This motion seeks the disallowance of a regulation that comes from the amended Sustainable Planning Act 2009. I want to explain to the member for Ferny Grove why these things—

**Mr Shuttleworth** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Through the chair, he could listen to why this has come about. I have nearly 20 years of experience in managing prisoners in custodial care in the former corrective services system, QCORR, and what came out of it. I, along with my wife, family and friends spent years raising money and supporting the Youth Enterprise Trust—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! There are too many interjections.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

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

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Dr DOUGLAS:** That is what you should aim to be—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:**—and you are not!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting. The member for Gaven has the call.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** We raised money for the Youth Enterprise Trust run by Lloyd Hancock and the Hancock family, who have been very generous in this area for many years—enormously generous to young people who are in trouble.

They ran a boot camp of sorts, which took a number of people into care—these were people who were going to enter the custodial services—and it was relatively successful. It was not greatly successful, but those were small numbers of people. Unfortunately, the money eventually ran out and the Hancock family, as things happen, could not afford to keep it going.

I have heard all of these interjections tonight from probably well-intentioned people, but they are largely ill-informed, including the Attorney-General, who has absolutely no understanding of what boot camps should do and can do. Most of the hubris and nonsense seems to mainly defend the indefensible, that is, the decision to award a lucrative contract to a provider of this type of approach who had obviously submitted—

**Mr KRAUSE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can I ask what the relevance is, please?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! Thank you, member. I am listening to the speech and the member does need to be relevant to the motion.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. There is plenty of evidence to demonstrate that we have some boot camps that are successful. They have a limited application. But there has been a massive expansion of the services. Primarily, for boot camps to be successful it must involve an experience that is away from the—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. The disallowance motion is about a piece of land where a boot camp resides, not about the program or the type of program. I ask that the member be ruled out of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member is speaking to boot camps in general terms and I have allowed some latitude for all speakers so far in the debate, including the Attorney-General, on boot camps broadly, in terms of the Attorney-General's interjections and inputs to date. So I am still going to allow a little bit of latitude, but the member for Gaven needs to stay relevant to the motion.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** The boot camp must have a leadership program. There must be an attempt to pursue a self-sufficient group experience. It should involve a relatively limited number of people. It must be a totally different approach and it must be principles and values based learning. By default, that implies that the program does not involve a prison, or prison farms, and it must not be a program based at a local sportsground or even a place such as the Tallebudgera camp. It cannot be something that is like a rural experience that is fun to be at.

In the past the YMCA and Outward Bound have offered such programs. As I say, there was the Youth Enterprise Trust run by the Hancocks. Many members of parliament have never understood, participated or seen those programs. They are just seeing what they believe is the right experience now.

I do not mind saying that I supported Project Booyah. But it was a tendered program. It was run by the PCYC out at Nerang, which the Leader of the House knows all about. It was run by Sergeant Scott Muldoon and it was very successful.

**A government member** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** But it was a rural based program. It is nothing like what the LNP is progressing. In fact, this disallowance motion is entirely appropriate, because they are saying—

**Mr Cox** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** You need to listen to this.

**Mr Cox** interjected.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Just stop talking and listen. The member for Thuringowa—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Gaven, if you could just take your seat for a moment. Member for Gaven, I have already asked you to speak through the chair and I ask you again to speak through the chair. Members around him who are interjecting need to be aware of the standing orders and I will start warning people. Attorney-General, you have a point of order?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I refer to the Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, which we are debating in this disallowance motion. The regulation amended—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** And your point of order is about?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The point of order is relevance. The regulation amends the Sustainable Planning Regulation. It does not mention the type of program or what happens in the program. The honourable member is expanding way beyond, firstly, his capacities but, secondly, what the motion is all about.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is about land. Here it is here.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for South Brisbane, you will stay out of it. Members, we are not broadly debating boot camps per se. I have allowed some latitude. There is a very specific boot camp within the Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation and the disallowance motion. So I ask the member to stay relevant to the specifics of the motion.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, clearly, I am taking your advice. There is no place for such a program in an urban environment. There is no evidence to support this short-cut approach. The expansion of a boot camp program alone is very difficult to accept until real evidence of a cost-effective approach and the alteration of offender behaviour comes out.

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You have just given the member a warning and he is going on about behavioural matters and how effective they are. That is not the point of this disallowance motion. The member has had more than enough chances. He should be sat down.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Gaven, you need to stay specifically relevant to the motion entirely from this point.

**Dr DOUGLAS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you. After many years of involvement in managing young people and having them in custodial care in a prison farm environment, as I say, to move them into an urban environment or anything like an urban environment, which is the whole point of this disallowance motion here tonight, to undertake a boot camp program is to make it fail. It is to set it up to fail. It will not work in that environment. There are many people who have all sorts of well-intentioned motives, but it will not be a program that works. It must be in a rural environment, well away from everything else. That is the intention of this disallowance motion. I think it is reasonable and I have clearly explained why.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.06 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Do you have a point of order or something, Attorney-General? There is a speaking list that I am working through.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I called. I am on the list. I called.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Attorney-General, take your seat. Member for Gladstone, take your seat. Attorney-General, the intent of the disallowance motion is to allow a free and open debate. There are a number of speakers still on the list, both from the opposition and the crossbenches. I am just seeking advice—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I jumped.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am seeking advice. If the House would just allow a moment.

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand that there is a list in the House, but it is recognised under standing orders that, when a member stands and calls and is acknowledged by the chair, then he is the next one to speak to the matter. The very fact that you acknowledge that—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, I understand that and that is accurate, Leader of the House. Is there anything further?

**Mr STEVENS:** I have not finished my point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The very fact that you recognised that the Attorney-General had the call in that you said, 'Do you wish to raise a point of order?' and you recognised him on his feet, under the standing orders I firmly believe—and I will take advice from the Clerk shortly—that the Attorney-General has the call.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Leader of the House.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am going to allow a point of order from the Leader of Opposition Business and a point of order from the member for Gladstone and then I will make a ruling.

**Mr PITT:** Just looking through the sessional orders, my understanding is that the person who can close this debate down is the minister in reply. If I am mistaken I apologise, but I have an understanding that this is the Deputy Premier's regulation not the Attorney-General's, so in that case the Sustainable Planning Act is not under the Attorney-General; it is under the Deputy Premier.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Gladstone, what is your point of order?

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** My point of order is this: you had just been adjudicating over a number of points of order. I would have jumped earlier, but I assumed that when the Attorney-General jumped he was taking another point of order and not attempting to close the debate. Had I realised that that was the intent of the Attorney-General I certainly would have jumped and called quicker, but I did assume that when he jumped and called he was going to take yet another point of order as others had done.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Gladstone. The House will wait a moment. Members, while I believe that the debate should have been allowed to go somewhat longer, the Attorney-General has jumped and taken the call. My intent was to give him the call in terms of a point of order. However, he does have the call. I call the Attorney-General.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Before I get to the substance of the debate, can I just say that this House runs on a list. I have a list. The member for Gaven was not on the list. He jumped. I did not see anyone else jump and I jumped because I have the list.

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have ruled under the standing orders and that is the way it has gone tonight. What is your point of order, member for Gaven?

**Dr DOUGLAS:** I discussed the list and we were added to the list. The printed list was amended, as you know.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Gaven, I have already ruled on this, whether people think that that is fair or not, according to the standing orders. The Attorney-General jumped. He called first. I have given him the call and so the Attorney-General has the call.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is not my disallowance motion; this is the member for Rockhampton's disallowance motion. I make it abundantly clear that we will be opposing the member for Rockhampton's disallowance motion of this regulation tonight because the member for Rockhampton has not got the facts right. He has misrepresented the whole debate here tonight. The point is that there is one boot camp centre at Lincoln Springs west of Ingham established under the program. Exempt development is the default category of development under the Sustainable Planning Act. Nominating a particular type of development as exempt development simply means it cannot be declared to be a development of a particular type and is therefore exempt from development assessment under the local planning instruments. The development may nevertheless still be required to attain relevant state approvals.

In effect, the exemption supports the efficient and timely development of a boot camp development centre. This appropriately reduces the red tape around the development of a boot camp centre, with development which meets the practical criteria in the Sustainable Planning Regulation as amended able to proceed without having to seek local government development approval. Parliament may be interested to note that there are some other types of development which schedule 4 of the Sustainable Planning Regulation establishes as not able to be declared other than exempt development, including community infrastructure projects such as educational facilities, community and cultural facilities and trade training centres. As with other exempt developments, development of a boot camp centre will not be able to be prohibited or delayed by being required to comply with unduly onerous permit and planning requirements.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the honourable member for South Brisbane. When a school is built in South Brisbane it does not require council approval. When a correctional centre is built it does not require council approval. When community facilities are built they do not necessarily involve council approval. The member for South Brisbane should update herself on the sustainable planning legislation. As I said, as with other exempt developments, development of a boot camp centre will not be able to be prohibited or delayed by being required to comply with unduly onerous permit and planning requirements. However, I would emphasise for parliament that establishing that a boot camp centre development is exempt development does not mean it can proceed somehow outside of the regulatory system. Rather, like all exempt developments, boot camp centre developments will still be required to comply with all applicable state and Commonwealth development and environmental proposals.

The Lincoln Springs boot camp centre is a unique facility unlike any other public infrastructure in Queensland. It is more than just a school or correctional infrastructure; it is a purpose-built centre established to trial a positive intensive program for helping young offenders choose a different path in life. Such a unique development throws up particular issues which require a specialised response. For this reason, in addition to requiring that any development at this centre comply with the relevant state and Commonwealth development and environmental approvals, the amendments to this Sustainable Planning Regulation by the amendment regulation set out a number of specific prescriptive criteria with which this development must comply if it is to enjoy the exemption. These criteria include: sufficient written notice is given to the local government for the area in which the development is to take place; buildings are located at specified distances from neighbouring properties and roadways; any lighting which is installed complies with applicable industry standards; and any changes to vehicular access to the premises are limited to those necessary for the centre's operation. This strikes an appropriate balance. It ensures that development for a boot camp centre must comply with an appropriately prescriptive set of planning requirements tailored to have regard to a boot camp's unique situation but avoids stifling this development through the imposition of excessive unnecessary red tape. Further, the amendments to the Sustainable Planning Regulation will not affect any requirements for development of a boot camp to obtain relevant state and Commonwealth development approvals. The member for Rockhampton says that this is a residential facility. If I can point out to the member for Rockhampton that this is Lincoln Springs here. It is about an eight-hour round trip from Townsville. This is no residential facility.

**Mr JUDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The use of props in the House is inappropriate.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, but the minister is using it as an explanatory tool.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I require my explanatory material back, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I have allowed some latitude, Attorney-General. I ask you to make your point.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was merely explaining. The reason I raise this for honourable members is to show the complete incompetence of the member for Rockhampton.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I think we have made the point.

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Attorney-General, please take your seat. There is a point of order from the Leader of Opposition Business.

**Mr PITT:** Obviously the prop has been put down, but the Attorney-General has been carrying on all night, lecturing us about standing orders. He knows better. It is typical of the Attorney-General, who is trying—

**Mr Stevens:** What is your point of order?

**Mr PITT:** I will speak to the Deputy Speaker, thank you, Leader of the House. I will not speak through you.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of Opposition Business, the Attorney-General has used the diagram to explain a particular point. He has been given some latitude to explain something and now that is finished.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I understand. I was missing something: it was a crayon. I should have had a crayon to draw it on so that the member for Rockhampton could fully appreciate and understand. The member for Rockhampton thought he would be smart by coming in here and moving this disallowance motion to stop a boot camp being established in a residential community. This is about establishing a boot camp that is located an eight-hour round trip from

Townsville. It is anything but residential. In fact, it is actually in the Valley of Lagoons. This is anything but residential. It is in the Valley of Lagoons. If you escape from this boot camp, you are at the nearest neighbours in 2½ hours. It is no residential community.

**A government member:** By foot.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection: that is by foot. I do not know what world or reality or 'misreality' the member for Rockhampton lives in, but where I come from in Kawana we would not classify a cattle station as a residential community.

**Mr Cripps:** The Labor Party put half of it in the national park and it is full of pigs.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. My point is this: the change to the sustainability act regulation—

**Ms Trad:** Sustainable planning.

**Mr BLEIJIE:**—the Sustainable Planning Regulation actually means that the boot camp operators are out in the middle of nowhere and do not have to apply if they want to develop—

**A government member:** It is somewhere.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is somewhere, but it is in such a place that they do not require council approvals if they want to build something. It does anything but what the member for Rockhampton said about regulation and red tape. It reduces the red tape.

**A government member:** It is good country.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection: it is great country and that is why we chose it. The member for Rockhampton is completely muddled as to why he is moving this disallowance motion because he thinks that Lincoln Springs is in a residential community. I am happy to offer the member for Rockhampton a pair of good sneakers so that he can track out to the boot camp. If only the transport minister were in here he could give him a go card to go out there. I am not sure if you can put enough credit on a go card to go out there. It is a shambles.

**Mr Newman:** It is outside the TransLink area.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the Premier: it is definitely outside the TransLink area.

**Mr Newman:** How far outside the TransLink area?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is an eight-and-a-half-hour round trip from Townsville outside the TransLink area. This is just a stunt from the member for Rockhampton, who flips and flops on these issues.

**A government member:** They all do it.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** They all flip and flop. He goes to an election saying that they are going to introduce boot camps and he changes his mind when elected into the opposition. This is nothing but a stunt and he is nothing but a show pony. That is why this disallowance motion should be shown the sort of contempt it deserves. It should be thrown out of the House and not supported.

**Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (8.23 pm):** I seek leave to speak on this motion.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted .

**AYES, 12:**

**ALP, 6—**Byrne, D'Ath, Miller, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad.

**KAP, 2—**Hopper, Knuth.

**PUP, 2—**Douglas, Judge.

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

**NOES, 61:**

**LNP, 61—**Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dowling, Emerson, Flegg, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seene, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Young.

Resolved in the negative.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (8.31 pm): I seek leave to speak to the disallowance motion.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): The question of leave has already been put and we are now putting the question on the motion.

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

**AYES, 12:**

**ALP, 6**—Byrne, D'Ath, Miller, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad.

**KAP, 2**—Hopper, Knuth.

**PUP, 2**—Douglas, Judge.

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

**NOES, 62:**

**LNP, 62**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dowling, Emerson, Flegg, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Young.

Resolved in the negative.

## IDENTIFICATION LAWS AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 8 August 2013 (see p. 2532).

### Second Reading



**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (8.39 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I commence my contribution with the Premier's contribution to the bill. I note in the committee's report on page 1 it states—

The Premier advised the Committee the Government would not be providing a submission on the Bill.

I compared that comment to the comments that the Premier made in his very first speech to parliament. Guess what he said? He told all Queenslanders that his government would 'respect our system of government'. Can I say quite clearly that that is not happening. The Premier's and government's contribution to this bill clearly shows that that is not happening.

The system of government in Queensland is very simple. If someone wants to propose a change to a law in Queensland then that proposed change is introduced into the parliament. It then gets referred to a parliamentary committee under section 93(1) of the Parliament of Queensland Act and in due course that portfolio committee has the responsibility of reporting back to parliament on the committee's consideration of the bill.

What we are quite clearly seeing here is that, because the bill was introduced by a non-government member, the Premier chose that his government would not make a submission. Not only that; we did not even get a submission from the Police Service—

**Mr Knuth:** Unbelievable.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** It is not really unbelievable with what—

**Mr Knuth:** Shocking.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Shocking. Thank you, member for Dalrymple. Not only did the committee not get a formal submission from the government but it did not get a formal submission from the Police Service either. All the committee had to rely on was some reported media comments that the Police Commissioner made. Guess what? This is not the first time we have had this sort of response from this government. It is not the first time.

**Mr Judge:** They're dictators.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** That is right, member for Yeerongpilly—and, hopefully, future member for Kawana. They are dictators. That is exactly it. It shows the arrogant style of this government. They say that they are going to honour the committee system and have a fulsome investigation of matters referred and discussed in parliament, but the Premier will not even participate. The committee then goes out and gets various submissions.

Basically the proposal contained in this bill was about adopting the boy scouts motto of prevention is better than cure. If you have a model or a law that has been adopted somewhere else in Australia that is sensible and reasonable, in my view that is a good precedent to adopt in Queensland because it is about preventing something untoward happening. That is the difference between the Attorney-General, the Premier and me. I am trying to prevent problems getting out of hand by adopting laws that are already adopted in other states—and this law was adopted in New South Wales and this law was modelled on the New South Wales law. But, by way of comparison, when something goes wrong the government do not want to know about it until it blows up. The bikie fiasco on the Gold Coast blew up in their face. There was none of this action about prevention is better than cure. They wait until things go wrong and then they run around like chooks with their head cut off. That is a very clear distinction between this government and my proposal. My proposal is about trying to prevent something going wrong.

Clearly if people take the time to consider the bill and look at the contributions that have been made by other members of the community and leaders of the Muslim community, they will see that this has nothing to do with wearing a burqa. This has nothing to do with Islam. I note that in my dissenting report I quoted the former president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, who, in 2013, gave his support for the bill, stating that the wearing of the burqa had nothing to do with Islam. I also noted that the Office of the Information Commissioner found that the proposed bill minimised the practical aspects of the removal of a face covering and in doing so incorporates respect for the privacy of the person concerned.

Other states have this legislation—New South Wales and Western Australia, and there is even a similar set of laws in the Australian Capital Territory. But when we see that the Premier will not even allow his government to make a contribution and we see the Police Service leadership team muzzled in that all the committee could rely on was a reported media comment—the Police Commissioner's leadership team were not game to make a submission; that just shows how intimidated they are by this government—I do not know whether that is the best model for government in Queensland. I do not know whether that is the best model at all.

I am not going to take up any more of members' time other than to say that this was a sensible and reasonable adoption of a law that is now law in New South Wales and now law in Western Australia and there are similar laws in the ACT. It is disappointing that the government did not even want to participate in making a submission. I suppose it goes to the heart of how effective our committee system is. Often we hear about committee reports, but if you really drill down into some of those committee reports the committee report recommendations are, by and large, from the government members because, after all, the government controls the numbers on the committees.

**Mr Judge:** Under the rule of the Premier.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Under the rule of the Premier; that is right. Sometimes I have to wonder whether some of the committee members are taking their instructions, their riding orders, from maybe the Premier's office or maybe the Attorney-General's office. I do not know. I do not have any phone-tapping or other devices to do any of that monitoring. So who would know what actually happens behind closed doors. That is surmising. I look forward to listening to other contributions of members in relation to this very important bill.

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—PUP) (8.46 pm): I rise to support the private member's bill of the member for Nicklin. I do note that the proposed laws have been modelled on New South Wales. There are similar laws in Western Australia and the ACT. I have a great deal of confidence in the member for Nicklin and his ability to write private members' bills, so much so that I probably have more faith in his bills than the government's bills, to be quite frank and honest about it.

We live in Australia. We live under the rule of law where all people are treated equally. Sometimes in the course of applying the law you are required to obtain identifying particulars to physically confirm the identity of people. This proposed law achieves that. It is very important. If we think about what is coming up in Queensland in the next six months, we have the G20. We have the G20 coming to our state, coming to this city, and the identification of people in major events like the

G20 will be crucial. We have just heard the Attorney-General say he will not be supporting these laws. What he is going to do is potentially expose the community, the major event and the participants in that major event to a greater risk.

The Information Commissioner found that the proposed bill minimises practical aspects of the removal of a face covering and in doing so incorporates respect—I will say that again: incorporates respect—for the privacy of persons concerned. That is critical. The member for Nicklin also indicated that the former president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils had no problem with the provisions of the bill. I do not know who else you need to get information from as to whether this bill offends people. Clearly the member has taken a great deal of care to ensure that his proposed laws are not offensive, and I commend him for that. The government should do the same. We have seen the bikie laws. They have offended everyone. They jammed them in here at three o'clock in the afternoon and pumped them out at six o'clock, and they have offended a whole range of people. That is not how you create law. The member for Nicklin has demonstrated a more competent approach without any support from a department. He has more competence than the entire cabinet team over there—unbelievable.

**Mr Kempton:** You're working yourself up, mate.

**Mr JUDGE:** Thanks for that. In terms of respecting diversity in our community, in the street I live in there is an Islamic neighbour on one side of me. He is a wonderful man. He has great children. He is a really good bloke. On the other side of me there is a Croatian family and they are equally as good. We need to respect people from all walks of life. Across the road we have some English people. There are no problems with them either. These proposed laws are not offensive to anyone.

In policing on a daily basis the identification of people in our community is incredibly important. If you want to play that down, you should go out in the real world and consider the sorts of situations where people's identification becomes critical in everyday life. It should not be dismissed. We have a changing community. We accept that. Tolerance is important and respect is important, and these laws achieve those two things. For that reason, I think these laws are good laws. The dissenting report contains information that validates that statement.

The member for Nicklin raised a point that the government does not provide a response to private members' bills anymore and it does not seem to allow departments to provide responses. We have to ask ourselves why that is occurring. The member for Nicklin pointed out the system that we are operating under. We do not have an upper house. We rely on the committee system, and the government is circumventing the committee process. We have to ask the question whether Queensland needs an upper house again. Arguably, you could have 60 members in here and 29 members in an upper house. You could defeat the silly approach the Newman government is taking. In any event, I commend the member for Nicklin on this bill. I think he has done an excellent job. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (8.51 pm): In listening to this debate tonight, I would like to commend the member for Nicklin for having the nerve to bring this into the chamber for debate. This is really what Queenslanders want. This bill is not about religion. We heard the Attorney-General screech out in his tiny little voice to the member for Nicklin that he was racist and that this was a racist bill. This has nothing to do with racism. If you read the legislation, this is about having faces covered up. May I say that there are a lot of faces covered up in this place.

This bill is about security in Queensland. That is exactly what this bill is about. When your face is covered up and you have a big overhanging coat or dress on, you do not know whether you are male or female. All you can see are the eyes of someone, and that is a very dangerous situation that the people of Queensland may be facing. If someone here were to start a religion and to be part of that religion you had to wear a balaclava, under the present laws what we are saying is that I could wear a balaclava into a service station or into Coles or down the main street and what would happen? That is exactly the scenario we are facing here.

I commend the member for Nicklin. This is about security. Those members laughing should hang their heads in shame because they are faceless people. They will vote with the LNP against the will of the people of Queensland—against exactly what the people of Queensland want. I heard the member for Nicklin describe what the Premier said in the report. Why do we have committees? We just need to chuck committees out. We have heard the member for Callide proudly say how good the

committees were and how he helped set them up for the people of Queensland so the parliamentary system could run so well. We have heard the Leader of the House say the same thing. It is disgusting to see what is happening in the chamber. The LNP should hang their heads in shame. I commend the bill to the House. I support it totally.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (8.53 pm): I support the Identification Laws Amendment Bill 2013 that has been championed by the member for Nicklin. I support all the comments in the previous speech. The intention of this legislation is to enable persons of responsibility, such as lawyers, justices of the peace, commissioners for declarations, to lawfully require that such a person remove face coverings so that the person's face can be seen in order to identify that person.

This legislation addresses the issue that occurred in New South Wales when a burqa-wearing woman—her name was Carnita Matthews—had a charge of making a false statement dismissed because there was no evidence to prove that it had been her behind the burqa. In other words, they failed in their case purely because there was no capacity to identify her. Clearly, there are few other recognised or identifying attributes that come close to that of someone's face. This approach in legislation makes sense. The member for Nicklin should be applauded for drafting this legislation and submitting it to the committee.

Equally, what has just been said about the committee is entirely right. It is disappointing that the committee rejected it, but what is worse is that such a serious offence could have been potentially avoided and the LNP government did not urgently seek to copy the legislation and develop a mirror image of the legislation, which happens routinely. Over years and years in opposition we put many bills to the Labor Party which it copied many times over, and we did not mind because it achieved the same objective. That is what should have happened this time, but this time Premier Newman in his first speech stated that he wished to 'protect the system of government'. When he was given a clear opportunity to do something simple, he refused even to participate, gave no submissions to the bill, despite having a massive bureaucracy to assist him in any role, and the committee behaved in a manner that responded to the same kind of ignorant behaviour exhibited by the Premier.

This is in spite of similar legislation that has been in effect in New South Wales from November 2011 and the ACT from April 2012, and for the reasons submitted. There is no debate that this is a racist bill, and there is no argument from the leader of the Islamic council, as has been quoted by the member for Nicklin, who stated that there is no objection at all. He further stated that the wearing of a burqa has nothing to do with Islam. I acknowledge some of the comments made by a variety of speakers who made submissions, but they merely appeared to ignore the simplicity of the bill and carried on about everything else that was not in the bill.

In my electorate this week a man wearing a helmet was shot dead by a security guard. Routinely all motorcyclists wearing helmets or balaclavas are asked not to enter anything from service stations to shops and are routinely arrested if they will not remove them. This is a serious matter. Members should see it in the same terms. This legislation is essentially the same approach in a very specific situation of requiring identification. Identification is an important step to authenticate a person at that time and retrospectively. How do members expect people like the police and others to do their job if they cannot do this? Merely asking someone to remove their burqa to ensure identification is sensible, reasonable and fair. The bill warrants all peoples' support. It is a common-sense bill. The public are watching when you reject these types of legislation.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (8.57 pm): I rise to speak to the Identification Laws Amendment Bill 2013. I read with interest the committee's report and the differing points of view that are represented in that report. I note that the committee has not supported the passing of this bill. One of the comments in this document talks about a submission from the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights. It has said that the ALHR considered that the New South Wales law and the introduction of the bill in Queensland could be considered knee-jerk reactions to a single incident. The incident is the one the member for Gaven referred to where a case was dismissed in New South Wales because it boiled down to a legal argument that the person who had been accused could not firmly be identified as the person who was purported to have committed the crime.

I believe that in this place—indeed, in many parliaments—there is legislation passed that is clearly a knee-jerk reaction. This is not one of them. One of the things that you have to say about private members' bills in this place is that they are not knee-jerk reactions; they take that long to get through. There is plenty of time to consider both sides of the debate. There is plenty of time to

consider what your own community thinks about it. I know that not often but regularly—and there is a difference—there are concerns raised in my community in relation to identity and in relation to other religious accoutrements.

I wrote to the Minister for Police. A concern was raised with me about a group of people who wear a dagger in the back of their shirt as part of their religious dress. At the supermarket in my electorate, at least one person expressed a concern to me—and I am not going to provide names because they spoke to me privately—that they felt very vulnerable that this was occurring. A whole group of people of the same faith walked in—all men, all with daggers—and they felt incredibly vulnerable. When I wrote to the minister, he said, ‘That’s part of their religious dress.’ I would say that if a group of other Aussies did it that would not be so easily forgiven.

This bill provides that the circumstance in which a woman wearing a face covering is required to remove that face covering is quite specific. It is not arbitrary. It is not intended to be offensive. It is not intended to make that woman—and it has to be a woman who wears this apparel—feel embarrassed. Indeed I believe that, if the legislation went through, steps would be put in place to ensure that the identification was done sensitively—much like you get the pat down at the airport when something metal goes off and they say, ‘Can we use the wand on you in public or do you want to go into a private room?’ I am sure that could be built into the process.

The OIC were consulted in relation to the committee’s report. Their submission stated—

OIC notes that respect for the privacy of the individual concerned has been built into the process insofar that:

- There are limits on the circumstances under which a person can be asked to remove a ‘face covering’
- There are limits on who can request the removal of a ‘face covering’
- There are limited circumstances under which a person can legitimately refuse to comply with a request for removal of a ‘face covering’
- If the person so requests, the removal of the face covering must occur in a way that provides the person with reasonable privacy

OIC acknowledges that the last provision—affording reasonable privacy to the person—goes beyond strict compliance with the privacy principles governing disclosure.

The second issue that goes to influencing the way I am going to vote is this, and it is very close to my heart. I am not a JP and I am not a commissioner for declarations, but I have two wonderful women in my office who are and I can tell the House that it is concerning to see the high level of work that comes through my office for commissioners for declarations and JPs. The Queensland Justices Association submitted the following to the committee—

As you are aware, Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations are required to satisfy themselves as to the identity of a person when witnessing their signature. They are required to further identify that the person also has the relevant interest in property for land title documents and determine a person’s capacity for Powers of Attorney.

In principle, we support that a person must remove face coverings for the purpose of identification. If the face covering is there for religious or cultural reasons, we support the provision of a Justice of the Peace or Commissioner for Declarations who is able to see the person without the face covering.

For example, in a public signing facility, a female JP or C.Dec should have access to a discreet location where they can take a female client with the face covering to see their face matches their photo ID, and then return to the public facility to sign the document. If none are available at that time, then an appointment should be made with a suitable JP or C.Dec.

This bit is important—

We do not support JPs and C.Decs being forced to sign documents where they cannot feel satisfied as to the identity of the person, or their relevant interest in property or if there is doubt that a person has capacity or they are being unduly influenced by others.

We are aware that NSW Statutory Declarations provide options where a JP can declare they have NOT seen the person’s face.

Finally, in determining what I would do in relation to this legislation, I read the member for Nicklin’s dissenting report. He stated—

It is noted that the office of the Information Commissioner found that the proposed Bill minimizes the practical aspects of the removal of a face covering and doing so, incorporates respect for the privacy of the person concerned.

I note that Former President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Haset Sali, in 2013, gave his support for the Bill, stating that wearing of the burqa had nothing to with Islam.

In early in 2011, I am advised the then Grand Mufti of Australia Sh. Fehmi Naji El Imam, when speaking on this matter issued a Fatwa ... extolling Australia’s multi-ethnic multi-religious society and our respect for religious freedom. The Fatwa continued to say: “In a situation where there is no officer of the same gender to perform a security and identification check, then the Shariah allows a Muslim woman to remove her Face veil as needed in order to have her identity verified.

This legislation is not intended to cause religious discomfort. It is not intended to cause any offence. It is intended to allow the people who live in Queensland to know that the rules apply equally across-the-board: that where we are required to show our identity, where we are required to go into a bank or any other facility where there is cause for concern—and the Islamic leaders have agreed with this—then it is acceptable to make a reasonable request that a woman unveil her face, albeit for a very short time and in a sensitive manner. I support the bill.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.06 pm): This government believes in a multicultural Queensland. This government respects the rights of its citizens and individuals to practise the religion that they so choose. We believe in a free and democratic society. This government has a strong plan for a bright future for Queensland—something which Peter Wellington does not—and we are opposing his bill.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.07 pm): I want to say that I commend the member for Nicklin. This is not just about courage; this is all about representation of the electorate and what the people are saying and thinking. When I get around, these are the things that people are saying to me. What the member for Nicklin—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! What is the point of order?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am interested in your ruling as to whether the member is appropriately attired.

**Mr KNUTH:** I have a coat on, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Dalrymple now has a tie and now has the call.

**Mr KNUTH:** The question is whether a letter has been put to me and whether the changes that Beattie put in place have been changed again, because I have not been told. If that is the case, then I accept that.

I fully commend what the member for Nicklin has put together. If it were the Attorney-General who put this forward, everyone over there would be saying, 'Yes, this is a great thing. This is the best thing that has ever happened and finally someone's got the balls to take a stand and do something.'

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! Member for Dalrymple—

**Mr KNUTH:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:**—your language was unparliamentary. Sorry, did you withdraw already, member? I did not quite hear.

**Mr KNUTH:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Dalrymple has the call.

**Mr KNUTH:** As I was saying, this is what the people are telling me. This is about security. Things have changed a lot since September 11. We do not try to change laws to suit people in other countries. Here in Queensland this is about security. This is about protection. This is about ensuring that when someone goes into a bank their face is not covered. I do not think that is too much to ask for.

It is a good thing when Queenslanders come to parliament to make representations on behalf of their constituency. It is very sad that some backbenchers were given the opportunity to make decisions for their own electorate. When they do step up, what happens? They are sacked, moved to the backbench, asked to leave or are disendorsed. That is not what the parliament is about. The parliament is about bringing the views of a member's electorate in the state of Queensland to the parliament. I have seen a hell of a lot of people come and go from this chamber—and I have only been here for a short time.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dalrymple, I remind you what the bill is about and I ask you to return to the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** In speaking to the bill, with regard to security, I believe this is a very good move. I know that two years down the track the minister will be introducing this bill himself. He will do that because people will ask him, 'Why don't you do something?' Then he will put his hand on his heart and say, 'Yes, the time has come and it is about time we increase security in the national interest.'

How many times have we seen this happen? It was done with regard to the child protection bill. I put it up and, likewise, so did the member for Yeerongpilly. What does the minister do? He puts one up as well.

**Dr Douglas:** He copied it. He copied it.

**Mr KNUTH:** He copied it. It was exactly the same. Yet he condemned it from the beginning. In two years time everyone over there—Vaughan will still be here; Mr Rickuss may not be.

**Mr HART:** I rise to a point of order. The member clearly does not know what this bill is about. He has not mentioned it in the three minutes that he has been speaking.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dalrymple, I have mentioned relevance and I again ask you to come back to the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** This is about security and this is about what the people of Queensland want. The people here do not have the security. As I said, Vaughan will be still here and the minister will still be here. There will not be many left after that. If you do—

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. You have just finished warning the member about staying relevant to the bill in terms of silly repetition that the member is going on with. Please either keep the member to the bill or sit him down.

**Mr KNUTH:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker. The provisions of the bill state—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dalrymple, I do ask you—and for the last time—to return to the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** The committee's report on the bill states—

The provisions in the Bill are based on similar laws which are currently in force in both New South Wales (from November 2011) and the Australian Capital Territory ...

My goodness, this is unbelievable; it has already been introduced! It was introduced because they saw the reasons behind it. They saw that there was a need for increased security, and that is what is behind this. The report goes on—

The NSW Act applies generally to police officers providing them with the power to require removal of face coverings for identification purposes, while the ACT legislation is limited to the exercise of functions under the ACT's road transport laws and related drug and alcohol testing laws.

The Committee notes the *Criminal Investigation*—

This is what it is all about, because we just cannot have people walking around our streets—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much interjecting.

**Mr KNUTH:**—with their face covered up. We cannot have people walking into banks with their face covered up. We cannot have people walking into places where security is a concern with their face covered up. So what is wrong with saying, 'We don't want bombs going off. We don't want terrorism. We don't want these things. We don't want to see these things'? The Western Australian act—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dalrymple, would you please hold for a moment? There is a point of order.

**Mr STEVENS:** The member is talking about 'bombs going off' and other highly inflammatory remarks. The member is just making a mockery of this parliament. Please ask him to either talk to the bill or sit down.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dalrymple, I have warned you. I do think you came back to the bill. You are beginning to wander again. It is the final time. You need to stay on the bill.

**Mr KNUTH:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker. It goes on—

The WA Act similarly applies to police officers only—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr KNUTH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I do have the right to speak but I also have the right to speak without being interjected upon. I have the right to defend myself as well.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members will cease interjecting.

**Mr KNUTH:** The report goes on—

The WA Act similarly applies to police officers only, empowering them to require a person to remove headwear for identification purposes.

While there are no similar laws in place in other jurisdictions within Australia, a recent publication by the NSW Ombudsman helpfully summarises comparable laws in other states (than NSW) and sets out the actions taken in other jurisdictions which have not resulted in legislative change.

That report referred to a review undertaken in Victoria which concluded the existing powers of police in that state were 'sufficient to allow police to request a person to remove headwear for identification purposes' and that 'if a person refuses to reveal their face, the police can currently arrest the person until they prove their identity'.

I commend this bill to the House. I know that in two years time, when many members opposite will no longer be here, this bill will come back to the House because people will express these concerns. This is very sensible legislation. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (9.17 pm), in reply: I thank all speakers for their contribution on this very important bill. The member for Yeerongpilly summed it up very articulately in his opening words when he said, 'This bill is about respecting everyone whereby everyone is equal before the law.' He noted that the bill is designed to enable people in a position of responsibility to lawfully require that a person removes any face covering so that the person's face can be seen in order to identify that person.

While the bill amends five separate pieces of legislation, it will apply in three main situations. The member for Yeerongpilly, a former police officer, identified them as follows: when a police officer uses their powers to demand to see photo identification or require a person's name or address; secondly, when a person makes a declaration or swears or affirms an affidavit before a qualified witness; and, thirdly, when a person enters a secure building such as a court complex, a corrective services facility or a youth detention facility. He articulately identified that this is about the fact that everyone is equal before the law and respect for the law—respecting officers holding positions of influence regarding the security of our buildings.

The member for Condamine also said very clearly that the bill is not about religion. It is not about religion; it is about doing the right thing, about making sure there is security in Queensland. He pointed out that we identify a person by looking at their face. If a person's face is covered because they have on a motorbike helmet, a Darth Vader helmet, a balaclava or some other covering of their face and a police officer, a security guard or someone at a court complex or a corrective facility needs to identify them, they should be able to lawfully identify them. He spoke about making sure there is security in Queensland and that people in positions of influence are able to identify someone's face.

The member for Gaven certainly identified that the bill is modelled on the New South Wales bill, and he gave the very clear example where a person was acquitted before the courts simply because the police could not prove that that was the person who was involved in the original offence. They could not prove the identity of the person. The member for Gaven clearly articulated that the law is already operational in New South Wales, it is a good law, and there is no reason why it cannot be similarly operational here in Queensland.

**An honourable member:** What about the member for Dalrymple?

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I am getting to him. The member for Gaven also identified that this is not a racist bill, and he identified the example of someone going into Coles or IGA with a motorbike helmet on or going into a bank. He said that this is a simple law that is not difficult and will not have a big cost impact on our police or other correctional facilities. It was very a sensible and, as he said, common-sense response.

In her submission the member for Gladstone said that sometimes we have knee-jerk reactions, but she certainly identified how difficult it is as members of the non-government side to be able to introduce bills. They just sit on the *Notice Paper*. There are so many opportunities for people to make submissions and have input, but what happens? The Premier made a decision that the government would not even have an input or contribute. This bill was introduced long ago—

**Mr Judge** interjected.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** That's right! Thank you, member for Yeerongpilly, you are spot on. The member for Gladstone noted the comments from the Office of the Information Commissioner where he identified it as a 'reasonable and sensible proposal'. This is the Office of the Information Commissioner saying it is a reasonable proposal. But guess what? Members of the government do not want to know about it.

The member for Gladstone also identified that the bill was proposed to have a significant impact on many of our JPs. Our JPs and commissioners for declarations throughout Queensland do a wonderful job. They save this government millions of dollars because of the volunteer work that they do. It was Volunteer Week last week, and I had a volunteer awards celebration in Nicklin at the local CWA hall where we recognised 75 members of our community for the volunteer work that they have been performing. The member for Gladstone identified how this bill would impact and improve the laws assisting our JPs and commissioners for declarations and also quoted the submission that the Queensland Justices Association made. The member for Gladstone also clearly identified that the legislation is not intended to cause any offence to anyone. She came right back to the first comments that were made by the member for Yeerongpilly: it is about saying that everyone is equal before the law in Queensland.

**Dr Douglas:** Respectful!

**Mr WELLINGTON:** It is about being respectful; thank you, member for Gaven. It is about everyone being respectful of the law. That is exactly what the former president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils said back in 2013 when he gave his support to the bill, stating that the wearing of the burqa had nothing to do with Islam. This is about saying that we are a multicultural state and a multicultural country, so let's respect everyone. But we all have to be equal before the law!

The member for Gladstone also said that it was reasonable to request people to identify their face. She gave the example of going through airport security. I have only been through that a couple of times in my life. I think the member for Gladstone does it every time she comes down to parliament, so she knows all about the wand and the security. People do not bat an eyelid, and that is exactly the right sort of comparison. It is about a normal system that is reasonable and is already operating without all the drama and all the problems just over the border in New South Wales.

What a contribution the Attorney-General made! I am stunned at his contribution. After the contributions he has made earlier this morning, yesterday and everything else—

**An honourable member:** Don't forget Shane!

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I am getting to Shane; he is one of the stars! As for the Attorney-General, I just hope Queenslanders have a chance to see the Attorney-General in relation to what happens when a non-government member introduces a bill that is reasonable and sensible. What we are seeing is an Attorney-General who does not want to give anyone any recognition whatsoever. I suppose in due course we will have the debate over the double jeopardy bill and we will see where that goes.

I thank the member for Dalrymple for identifying and repeating what the bill is about, which is making sure that we are all secure in our respective communities. I think he also said, 'Oh, yes, the member for Nicklin from his electorate.' But I say members of the crossbench, be they the Katter party, the Palmer United Party, the Liz Cunningham party, the Peter Wellington party, Independents—we are able to go anywhere in Queensland and take submissions from anyone. That is one of the strengths of the crossbenchers.

As the member for Gladstone identified, it takes time as an Independent or member of the crossbench to introduce a bill, and I know the member for Yeerongpilly has a few on the *Notice Paper* and I know he is working on another one for tomorrow, but 'mum's the word'. I suppose that is one of the strengths of being a non-government member and a member of the crossbench, a minor party: we are able to bring matters before parliament so that issues that the government does not want to know about are actually discussed. As the member for Dalrymple and the member for Yeerongpilly

said, we do not mind if the government copies our bills, because at least the laws are going to be changed. I see the member for Yeerongpilly is smiling. He knows what has happened with one of his bills—

**Mr Judge:** Three of them!

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Are there three of them? Wait and see what happens tomorrow. I know the Attorney-General has the double jeopardy bill on. He has followed the great precedent of the bill that I introduced back in 2007. So again they are prepared to follow the lead from the crossbenchers! I know that members are enjoying this contribution. I am looking forward to proceeding to the next stage, where we are able to have a vote and we can have a division.

**Mr Knuth:** We need a party meeting and say, 'We've got to do something'—

**Mr WELLINGTON:** We don't need party room meetings! Can I just say to the members of the crossbench that I sincerely appreciate your willingness to stand up and speak for something that was a good proposal.

We did not even hear from the Premier; he is sitting down there chewing his gum like a cow. We heard the criticism of the member for Dalrymple. If Queenslanders could see the way that the Premier is sitting there chewing gum in parliament, they would have to wonder about the appropriateness of that.

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Premier, what is your point of order?

**Mr NEWMAN:** There is no cause for these sorts of offensive comments. They are offensive and I ask they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Nicklin, the Premier found your comments offensive and asks that they be withdrawn.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I unequivocally withdraw whatever the Premier takes offence to.

Thank you, members of the crossbench, for your contribution. I look forward to proceeding with the vote, and we will be calling for a division.

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

**AYES, 6:**

**KAP, 2**—Hopper, Knuth.

**PUP, 2**—Douglas, Judge.

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

**NOES, 69:**

**LNP, 67**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Young.

**ALP, 2**—Byrne, Miller.

Resolved in the negative.

## ELECTORAL REFORM AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1713, on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bill be now read a second time.



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 pm), continuing: Before we adjourned for the dinner break I was in the middle of quoting Professor Orr about the dangers of removing caps to donations, so I will start from where I left off. He said—

Unlimited donations risk political integrity. They allow wealth to buy an unequal share of political influence and voice. Democracy and the universal franchise are meant to make all citizens equal in political worth. Unlimited donations skew money to the governing party of the day (or, occasionally, to an opposition on the brink of power), because private donations follow power.

What has been telling throughout the committee process on this legislation is the absolute hypocrisy from the LNP when it comes to free speech and the fundamental rights in modern democracy. In previous debates we have seen—and I suspect we will see it again in this debate—that many LNP members love to rail on and on about freedom and protecting universal rights in a democracy, but when you break it down it becomes very clear that the LNP's love of freedom is restricted to very specific circumstances.

The LNP believes that the ability for an individual or a private organisation to donate very large sums of money to a political party is an important element of free speech—that is, the LNP believes that enabling large secret donations is a legitimate and important part of the democratic right to free speech—yet at the same time it is imposing requirements on voter ID that could be described politely as excessive red tape and more accurately as a malicious tool to directly prevent people from exercising their fundamental right to vote. The LNP will happily carry on about liberty yet sit quiet or actually backup moves to directly attack the right of the individual Queenslanders to exercise their fundamental right to vote. Of course when it comes to free speech and contributing to public discussion on important matters of public interest, the LNP is not so strident in its passionate defence of the right to free speech if the organisation represents the collective interests of workers.

As pointed out by the Queensland Council of Unions in Mr Martin's evidence to the committee hearing, this legislation making it easier for private companies or individuals to donate more than \$12,400 in secret is completely at odds with the LNP's attack last year on the ability of unions to participate in public debate. Mr Martin said plainly—

... I would have to suggest that the two policy propositions are completely inconsistent. That would indicate to me that one or both of them are designed for political partisan purposes.

Not even limited to political donations, this government attacked the very right of industrial organisations to use that organisation's own money collected through voluntary membership and administered by democratically elected officials in the pursuit of representing the collective interests of hardworking Queenslanders. This legislation represents the absolute hypocrisy of those opposite when it comes to transparency, free speech and democratic rights.

**Mr Newman** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am quite sure the Premier can put his name on the speaking list if he wishes to participate and I look forward to listening to his contribution in this evening's debate. I now turn to a very important issue contained in this bill, and that is about the voter ID requirements.

**Mr Bleijie:** You haven't mentioned the \$24 billion you gave yourself.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take objection to that. You are deliberately misleading the House.

**Mr Bleijie:** You passed the legislation!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You are deliberately misleading the House.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Leader of the Opposition, I would ask that you direct your comments through the chair, please.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and perhaps the Attorney-General could do the same. I am very concerned about the restrictions that this government now wants to put in place for people to go and exercise their fundamental right to vote in Queensland elections. I think it is completely missing the boat, because a large number of people living in their electorates pop into a polling booth on the way home from driving the kids from a sporting event or taking their children to ballet or—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The other issue is that I know a lot of pensioners in my electorate—and it would be the same in other electorates—freely wander up to vote. They do not carry with them their wallets.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Coomera.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I believe that this legislation is curtailing their fundamental right to vote.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, it is. It absolutely is. Madam Deputy Speaker, there is plenty of opportunity for people to put their concerns and participate in this debate.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Leader of the Opposition, you have taken interjections.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not taking their interjections, with all due respect. I am not taking their interjections.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Leader of the Opposition, you have taken interjections.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: I have not taken interjections.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I think it is only fair that you allow some interjections. You cannot choose to take some and not others.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: Sure, and it is okay to have 20 people interjecting on me.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Leader of the Opposition, as I have just said, you have chosen to take interjections. It then opens the floor for interjections to come across the chamber. You have the right to continue to make your contribution. If I feel that it is getting too loud, I will step in.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: Right. Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. These proposed photo ID requirements are a barrier to people exercising their fundamental right to vote. The government is making these changes under the guise of protecting against electoral fraud, but there is absolutely no evidence that I can see of electoral fraud in the current system. The Attorney-General's own discussion paper states—

There is no specific evidence of electoral fraud.

The intention is to target voters who are marginalised and vulnerable. Historically, it has been the Australian Labor Party which has proudly stood up for the vulnerable in our community and those vulnerable Queenslanders now being punished for daring to associate with Labor and voting for a candidate who cares about fairness and social justice. These Queenslanders are being cunningly targeted by the Premier and the Attorney-General for the very practical and real reason that they traditionally have been aligned with the Labor Party and its decent social justice policies. Those most affected include Indigenous people, recent migrants, people with English as a second language, the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, young people and the elderly. People within these groups in our community are less likely to have formal ID and are less likely to handle paperwork well, which is why this government is seeking to skew the democratic electoral system.

It is telling that not a single organisation or individual who appeared at the committee's public hearings supported the imposition of voter ID requirements. Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Mr Kevin Cocks AM, made a very powerful and insightful submission in testimony to the committee. He made it clear that there were serious concerns about the voter ID requirements being considered. He submitted the following to the committee—

In relation to the provision of the bill requiring an elector to provide an issuing officer with proof of the elector's identity in order to cast a vote, the ADCQ has concern. Firstly, very little evidence has been put forward by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General or the Electoral Commission of the lack of integrity of the existing voting system to justify the introduction of this new provision.

He went on to state—

Secondly, though the documents that are proposed to be listed in the regulation to establish a person's identity are broad, some members of the disadvantaged groups I mentioned earlier will have difficulty in providing these identification documents on election day. A much higher percentage of Indigenous people than other voters do not have driver's licences. People from some of these disadvantaged groups experience a higher degree of homelessness than the general population and may not have a fixed address at which they receive correspondence and also may have difficulty in maintaining identity documents. For a range of reasons they will not have the necessary documentation to prove their identity at the time they present to vote. These provisions have the potential to make it more difficult for people from these groups to exercise or prevent them from exercising their fundamental human right to participate in the political process.

Thirdly, there is also a potential for voter confusion. If Queensland takes this option up there is no need federally for ID. There could be more inconvenience and delay at the voting booths. Any slight benefit in the new requirements in improving voting integrity we believe is outweighed by the potential for voting disfranchisement, extra administrative costs and inconvenience with regard to the new system. For these reasons we suggest the committee recommend the proof of identity requirement be removed from the bill.

When asked to confirm the position of the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, Mr Cocks made it clear that it was not a matter of fiddling with the edges of these changes but rather that the imposition of voter ID requirements should be removed completely.

The member for Nicklin asked—

Commissioner, on the issue of proof of identity, your submission that clause 9 be removed from the bill in its entirety is a powerful statement. So you are adamant that that is your position. The reason I raise it now is so that it is made crystal clear to the government and the Attorney-General that that is your position? It is not an if, but or maybe; it is a pretty definite position. Is that right?

Mr Cocks said—

That is right, yes.

Unfortunately, it is obvious that the very powerful evidence of the commissioner is being ignored by the LNP members of the committee and it is being ignored by the Attorney-General and the Premier.

The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties outlined in its submission how this legislation had the balance very, very wrong and stated the following—

Voting rights involve two competing interests. On the one hand is the fundamental right to vote which in our submission the State is required not only to protect but to facilitate. The other and competing interest is that the government must play an active role in the regulation and management of elections to ensure that they are fair and honest. As a consequence election laws will invariably impose some burden upon individual voters.

In accordance with its framework for analysis the first question that the QCCL asks of any law which seeks to place a burden on a recognised civil liberty or right is whether it is necessary.

The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties went on to state in its submission—

Not one jot of evidence is produced to show that this is a serious problem in Queensland. The government's own discussion paper notes that, 'There is no specific evidence of electoral fraud in this area.'

This submission makes the important point that, in a free and fair democratic system, the state has an important role to play in regulating elections and ensuring that democratic principles are upheld and maintained. But that responsibility should not be used as a distraction for disenfranchising voters, which amounts to taking away people's fundamental democratic right to vote under the guise of protecting democracy.

The Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service also made some very clear submissions in relation to how this legislation will affect members of their community. The member for Mulgrave and the shadow Treasurer will go into a bit more detail in relation to those specific matters.

In its submission the Human Rights Law Centre stated the following—

A human rights approach requires that any limitation on the right to vote must be necessary and proportionate. We believe that the voter ID requirement is not a necessary or proportionate limitation for the following reasons:

- There is no evidence of significant voter fraud in Queensland.
- There is a risk that voter ID laws will disproportionately and negatively impact already marginalised and disadvantaged groups in society.
- The voter ID requirements will impose a further barrier to participation in elections at a time when that participation is declining.

For these reasons, the HRLC opposes the introduction of voter ID requirements on the basis that they are an unnecessary infringement on the right to vote. There is simply no need for voter ID requirements to be introduced in Queensland and too great a risk that they will unnecessarily stop people who are eligible to vote from casting their ballot.

Even organisations that support particular elements of the bill, such as the genuine and impressive testimony provided by Vision Australia, advocating on behalf of Queensland's vision impaired community, also associated themselves with the many other organisations that expressed concern about the impositions of voter ID requirements and, in particular, the impact on vulnerable Queenslanders.

There is simply no community support for this LNP attack on the electoral system in Queensland. Here we have clear evidence from respected professionals who devote their working lives to standing up for vulnerable Queenslanders providing evidence that on a daily basis they see the impact that imposing something like voter ID requirements will have on vulnerable communities. But the government turns its back on them. The LNP pretend not to hear or simply gloss over the evidence as if they know better than the professionals who work daily in this field. The truth is, of course, that the LNP pretend not to hear because they know what the truth is. They know full well that vulnerable people will be disproportionately affected by this legislation. The fact is, of course, that it is not an accidental side effect of this legislation; it is the very purpose of this legislation. The Premier, Attorney-General, those LNP members on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee who went along with it and all the LNP members about to vote for these changes should be ashamed.

The LNP do not have to believe us, they can simply listen to the Antidiscrimination Commissioner, the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, the independent legal services and countless other Queenslanders who submitted their very real concerns that this legislation will

disenfranchise vulnerable voters. There is no excuse for LNP members. This offensive legislation is on their shoulders. The blatant political motivation behind the LNP imposing these voter ID requirements is revealed by the huge elephant in the room. While the LNP government tries to impose these regressive changes under the guise of fighting electoral fraud, they simply have nothing to offer when faced with the clear evidence that there is no coordinated, organised or widespread electoral fraud in Queensland. As I outlined earlier, even the Attorney-General's own discussion paper had to admit there is no specific evidence of electoral fraud. At the public hearing the independent Acting Commissioner of the Electoral Commission of Queensland stated that after the 2012 state election, with millions of people voting, there was only one referral for prosecution of electoral fraud. That is one single solitary referral. At the public hearing ECQ Acting Commissioner Mr van der Merwe confirmed his testimony to estimates last year by saying—

I am on record as stating at the estimates that at the last state election I referred one person to the Queensland Police Service for multivoting. It is very much a policy issue in terms of why you want to bring it in et cetera.

The Acting Commissioner confirmed that there is not an actual problem with electoral reform, rather the changes are about, I suggest, the imposition of the LNP government's own ideological pursuits or, as the independent Acting Commissioner diplomatically put it, it is very much a policy issue as to why you would bring it in. When pressed on the issue of whether electoral fraud existed or how widespread it might be, the Acting Commissioner said—

Like I said, I referred one for the last state election.

This blunt advice confirms that there is no problem with the current system where Queensland enjoys free and fair elections administered in good faith and with independence through the ECQ. It confirms that these changes represent nothing but an attack by the Premier, the Attorney-General and the whole LNP on the democratic rights of decent, hardworking Queensland voters. I challenge those opposite. It has been confirmed that there is no real existing problem with electoral fraud so I say to the members opposite if experts in the field and the legal community, distinguished representatives of the antidiscrimination community and the independent ECQ cannot find any evidence of fraud, then the burden lies with the Premier and this Attorney-General to show us the evidence. I challenge the Premier and the Attorney-General to come into this place with all the responsibilities that speaking in parliament brings with it and present evidence that electoral fraud exists in any way that would threaten our current system. I look forward to them doing so. I also challenge the Attorney-General. I specifically ask him to respond in his reply to this point. I know the Attorney has many ministerial staff and departmental officers listening to this parliamentary debate to make sure they take down any questions or issues that need to be answered for his response. I therefore ask the Attorney-General to provide what evidence he has of any electoral fraud in Queensland that justifies this legislation. If the Attorney-General fails to provide such evidence it will be further confirmation of what we already know, what the opposition knows, what experts in the law and human rights arena know, what Queenslanders know and what the people who work in the Attorney-General's department who have to try to provide actual facts in their briefings already know: that this legislation is not about combatting fraud, it is not about confronting a real problem in our democratic system, instead it is simply an ideological attack on vulnerable people taken straight out of the conservative playbook of the southern United States. We will wait and see if the Attorney-General has the decency to admit it or will he continue to make inaccurate claims that there is widespread fraud threatening the very foundations of our electoral system.

The legislation also poses significant challenges for the proper running of polling booths. The government is claiming that the ID requirements will not affect the administration of voting and claims the cost of implementing the other reforms introduced by the bill will be met from within existing budget allocations. That is clearly illogical if you have even a basic understanding of how polling booths work on the day. It will obviously take more time for ECQ officials to process people at the booth when they need to check people's ID. The government defends its policy saying that if people cannot produce their ID on the day they can vote by declaration vote and if they provide ID within several days their votes will be counted. That is more difficult and burdensome for those voters and will mean people are less likely to actually have their vote counted. In addition, the time it takes to complete the paperwork for a declaration vote is far greater than a normal vote yet there is no provision of extra resources or personnel to support this change. The Newman government is risking polling booths becoming a farce.

As indicated in the submission from the Queensland Law Society, the Attorney-General put out a media release accompanying the electoral regulation in relation to what types of identification documents could be provided to show that the person is who they say they are when voting in a specific election. They included a current driver's licence, a current Australian passport, a voter identification letter issued by the ECQ, a recent account or notice issued by a public utility or an identification card issued by the Commonwealth or state, et cetera, such as a Seniors Health Card or a Medicare card. I know that these regulations will be brought in as part of this bill later on, but in relation to a recent account or notice issued by a public utility, might I urge Queenslanders that if this comes into place they should in fact take along their electricity bill when they go to vote. Why do I say they should take along their electricity bill? Because they can blame this LNP government for the massive increase. This LNP government promised to lower their cost of living and they have seen their electricity bill rise through the roof. I say to Queenslanders, 'Take in your electricity bill so that you can be reminded of what the LNP has done to you'. That is my message to Queenslanders. Take in that electricity bill. Let it be a reminder that electricity has gone up 20 per cent under this government. Let it be a reminder of a broken promise. This government was going to lower the cost of living.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Leader of the Opposition, I fail to see how electricity pricing is relevant to the Electoral Reform Bill.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: It is very clear. It is in the Queensland Law Society submission quoting from the explanatory notes. It is very clear. The amount of times this Attorney-General has gone off topic is absolutely ridiculous.

**Mr Bleijie**: That is not your call, it is the Deputy Speaker's call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: We have to sit here and listen to your rubbish.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Leader of the Opposition, I would ask you to direct your comments through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: It is very clear. It is in the Queensland Law Society's submission in relation to voter ID. Voter ID is the core of this bill. How the voter is going to present that ID is the core of the bill. One of the suggestions is an electricity bill. That is what it says about voter ID.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Leader of the Opposition, I was not making reference to using correspondence as identification, it was the further commentary with regard to cost-of-living pressures. I would ask you to return to the bill.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: As I was very clearly saying, that is one piece of voter ID that it is suggested can be brought along to a polling booth and I think it is a great suggestion so that people can be reminded of the broken promises of this LNP government. I move on.

**Mr Bleijie**: Move on to the end.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: I will come to you in a minute.

**Mr Bleijie**: End the pain. End your misery. Where's your backup?

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: The Premier could end your pain after your—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Leader of the Opposition, this is the third time that I have asked you to direct your comments through the chair, not across the chamber.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am taking the interjections as you said previously I am allowed to do—

**Mr Bleijie**: Through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK**:—through the chair, from the Attorney-General. I will go on. As it stands, the legislation seeks to increase the threshold to 10 per cent of formal votes in an electorate to qualify for public funding. The amendment introduced this afternoon puts that figure at six per cent. That is an increase from four per cent as it currently operates. While I welcome the amendment accepting the recommendation of the committee, it does not change the underlying attack that that section aims to make. This change should also be seen in the proper context: the committee refused to make any substantial recommendations about the core elements that most witnesses and submissions dealt with. The changes from the Attorney-General are just a tokenistic effort so that they can crow that they like to listen and consult, when in fact they have stuck by the core elements of this bill that received the greatest criticism.

As pointed out in Professor Orr's submissions to the committee, the government seems eager to try to justify changes with analogies to interstate or national figures when it comes to massively increasing the threshold for donation disclosure, yet without explanation or justification it seeks to change the threshold for public funding in contravention of well-established national conventions. Professor Orr stated—

The Explanatory Memorandum at various points (especially in reducing donation disclosure) makes a virtue out of harmonising Queensland with national law. Why not harmonise our public funding regime with the national system?

There are a number of administrative elements of the bill dealing with how public funding is allocated that the opposition does not oppose. Efforts to make it easier for people with vision difficulties also appear to be well intentioned and the opposition will look forward to working on the implementation of those proposals. Unfortunately, the overwhelming thrust of this legislation is an attack on the very core of Queensland's democratic electoral system and simply cannot be supported. The legislation provides for the trial of electronic voting to enable people with visual impairment to be able to vote independently. As I said, the opposition supports this particular move and it is a real shame that the government mixed up what could have been a bipartisan meaningful change with such partisan repressive measures. It is quite disrespectful to the genuine work of the vision impaired community and their advocates that what should have been welcome initiatives are tarnished by being included in a retrograde antidemocratic piece of legislation. Despite the value of these particular proposals, the vast majority of other elements of this bill are so abhorrent that the legislation as a whole must be opposed.

On issues brought forward from the ECQ report, we reserve our right to analyse the government's response and ongoing work in this area. The Attorney-General mentioned that a second phase of amendments will come in as a response to the investigation that was carried out following the Redcliffe by-election. We will look at those recommendations in close detail at that time.

In summary, this bill represents another broken promise from the Premier. He claimed he would listen to Queenslanders and consult more, yet here we are and the Premier is refusing to even acknowledge that the imposition of voter ID requirements for people to exercise their fundamental democratic right is not supported by anyone. I conclude with a quote on the issue of the fundamental right of Queenslanders to vote. It states—

An unfettered right to vote is a hallmark of all liberal democracies. There is no greater symbol of our freedoms than citizens being able to cast a vote free from coercion or intimidation. There is no greater threat to our democracy and its institutions than the threat imposed by those who seek to limit the right of citizens to cast a free vote.

That is not a quote from a civil libertarian; that is a quote from March 4 this year by the Attorney-General himself. He said that in a ministerial statement just a few months ago. My question to the Attorney-General is this: if, in fact, there is a no greater threat to our democracy and its institutions than the threat imposed by those who seek to limit the right of citizens to cast a free vote, why is this government doing exactly that? Why is it limiting the rights of citizens to cast a free vote by imposing unfair and un-needed hurdles to Queenslanders exercising their fundamental right to vote? Are the Attorney-General and this government so arrogant that they will try to justify this blatant hypocrisy? Is the Premier genuine about listening to Queenslanders or is he all about political spin?

The Labor opposition strongly opposes this extreme and damaging legislation and I urge the LNP backbenchers to actually think about what they are doing in supporting it. Once again, they will find themselves on the wrong side of history.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (10.04 pm): It is certainly a pleasure for me to rise and join with my colleagues in passing this bill through the House. I will refer to some of the opposition leader's comments because I found some of them, and one in particular, offensive. I dare say the member for Rockhampton may well have found it offensive also, because the Leader of the Opposition said that those on the committee should be ashamed. I think that we, in fact, did a fair job in considering the 180-odd submissions and holding a public hearing with all involved. For the opposition leader to have a dig at her own party member and the Independent member for Nicklin is in itself shameful.

**An opposition member:** You can spin this one however you like.

**Mr BERRY:** That is the only way one can interpret it; I take the interjection. If it is not that way, is she simply referring to the LNP members? If that is the presumption then she must know what happened in the committee room, but I am sure that is not the case. When she criticised the committee, she criticised her own member and the member for Nicklin, as well as the LNP members.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Is this in the bill?

**Mr BERRY:** That is what she did.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Is this in the bill?

**Mr BERRY:** I know it is very easy now to backtrack and use weasley words to weave one's way out of it, but effectively that is what she said.

**Mr Byrne** interjected.

**Mr BERRY:** The member for Rockhampton can retract it if he wishes. He can tell us how the committee system works without telling what decision has been made. In fact, the members of the committee—and I think I speak for at least the majority of them—find it very offensive that, in fact, we are being criticised for discussing issues relevant to the bill. For the past 30 minutes I have listened to a speech on everything but the bill.

This bill ticks a number of boxes. I cannot go past what Premier Bligh attempted to do. When confronting a change in the polls and confronting opposition status, she brought in legislation. I think it was the Keneally legislation. It did her a world of good. She said, 'Yes, let's change the rules, because we have industrial organisations supporting us. They're unregistered, but they have members'. Of course, what the opposition leader is saying is, 'They have all voted for their union representatives and they trust their union representatives to spend their money wisely'. They would not have any idea how their money was used! The reality is that the Bligh government committed a huge fraud on the people of Queensland, but the people of Queensland realised it because this mob was turfed out on their proverbial ear. Now they are reduced to one car and a trailer.

**Mrs Miller:** And so will you.

**Mr BERRY:** The trailer has just spoken!

**Mrs Miller** interjected.

**Mr BERRY:** Heavens above! I hear the voice from Bundamba. Is the member for Bundamba the person who looks after her electorate? I cannot look after it any more. Heavens above! Why doesn't she attend her own functions?

This bill is, in fact, one of the best pieces of legislation that I have seen in terms of electoral law. In fact, all of the authorities the opposition leader referred to, including the Bar Association and Professor Orr, agree with us in relation to the six per cent. The Attorney has taken on board what the committee has said. They recommended six per cent. They did not like 10 per cent, but said that six per cent is okay, that is, two per cent above four per cent.

I cannot see the logic, the reasoning and the thinking behind the opposition leader's conclusions. She laid down several challenges, each of which can be easily taken up. Let us go through them. The first is identification of the voter. Here we have a party arguing against one person having one vote. That is effectively what they are arguing against—one person having one vote. They are arguing that we cannot have that. We know what goes on in the Labor Party. They all vote two or three times. I am sorry that we do not abide by those sorts of principles. We much prefer one person having one vote.

**Mr Dillaway:** What happens in caucus—12 votes and there's only eight of you? How does that work?

**Mr BERRY:** I do not want to go there. I only have 20 minutes, member for Bulimba. I return to the issue of the identification of voters, which I think the opposition leader summed up pretty well. People have the right to make a postal vote. But if people want to pass through the lines of the ETU then they can do that. They are quite entitled to do that. People do not have to have identification because they can do a declaration vote. Heavens above, it is interesting that this was overlooked. The argument about evidence comes out here.

I think that the opposition leader has not really understood the legislation. Thinking of the past really is not the only way to look at this bill because there is a resounding call in the electorates of Queensland for internet voting. We are not yet there. In the future there might be an app of some sort which people use to vote. The i-vote system has been introduced federally for the visually impaired. At some point in time it will be introduced, maybe in my lifetime, who knows. The one fundamental premise upon which any system of electronic voting must be based is that one person gets one vote.

How do we start that process? We bring in identification laws and look forward. That is the difficulty for the Labor Party. They are always looking back. It is unfortunate that they did not look forward a little because they might have realised the fiscal position they left Queensland in. It is an absolute and thorough embarrassment that they could only look back and not forward.

There are many interesting things in this bill which I wish to highlight for my electorate. One relates to a candidate paying a deposit. There was a measured response to this by the committee. The threshold was raised to 10 per cent and if they do not get 10 per cent of the vote then they lose their \$250. That was not mentioned. If one looks at it in context one finds that it is a reasonable position.

As I remember the public hearing, I asked a few union members, 'You do not like the threshold of 10 per cent so you tell us what percentage you want?'

**Mrs Miller:** Why would they tell a tory anything, you never listen?

**Mr BERRY:** That is the response—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Members!

**Mr BERRY:** That is the response that I actually got from the witness—'No, we are not committing to anything at all. We could say the wrong figure. You could actually agree with us.' I said, 'I understand that.' That shows good commitment on behalf of the union movement. They do not even know what they want. They do not like it, but do not know what they want. Heavens above, I found it interesting that we should receive the light—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Coomera!

**Mr BERRY:** In fact what pleases me so much is the way the committee system works. The evidence is here. As a committee we suggested six per cent. We actually arrived at six per cent after robust debate and discussion.

**Mr Watts:** Listening to the witnesses.

**Mr BERRY:** I congratulate the member for Toowoomba North. He certainly participated in this robust discussion outside the hearing. In the hearing it was discussed. As to how it was discussed is privileged information. The end result is that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, to his credit, has taken on board our recommendation of six per cent. It is a fair assessment taking into account the minor parties as well as the other political parties and individuals. There are independent members out there who get more than six per cent of the vote. The evidence is there.

One only has to look at the electoral roll for the 89 seats in Queensland to work out how many people would qualify. It really does not significantly alter the political landscape. But, then again, that requires research. If those opposite want to yell out and go by what their speech writer says then maybe they do not know what the other electorates will do based on the threshold of six per cent.

It needs to be restated—I am reluctant to do so because I do not want to be accused of repetition; this has been well and truly stated—that Professor Orr, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Law Society and Dr Paul Williams all said that 10 per cent was too high. They looked for an adjustment and that adjustment was made, and appropriately so.

Public funding by government is still part of the landscape. However, it always has to be tempered. We have been left with a sizeable debt and a sizeable deficit. Queenslanders want some of their needs catered for. We would like a hospital system that can pay for itself. We would like an education system, TAFE sector and all those sorts of things. That is with a very dire fiscal position. Public funding has been retained.

Let us talk about donations. Part of the reason I am here, I think, is the actions of former Premier Bligh, which I would call a gerrymander. She knew she was in trouble so why not make it \$1,000 for political donations. She knew that political candidates relying on business would be struggling to make \$1,000. But that is not the case with the unions. If one has the support of a union, unregistered of course, of 20,000, 15,000 or 1,500 members at \$999 each, heavens above, one does not need to do too much work to get elected. One is doing swimmingly well.

As a result, the electorate wholly rejected that approach. In fact, it is looking for something that is fairer to both sides. I hear the rhetoric about what the Labor Party stands for in terms of small business, but they do not do it. They are more interested in making sure that their union mates are

well and truly supported. That is what the previous bill did. That is what this bill actually rights. It empowers small business to be involved in the political process. It is not a bad way to proceed because, quite frankly, they need to be involved. They have been well and truly skinned over the last six years.

We could take, for instance, the ETU. Colleagues, I have an investment in the ETU; I have a sign up there. I have asked them to take the cross off my face because my electorate cannot quite understand who is up there. I try to tell them that that is politically funded. That is what the opposition says—

**Mrs Frecklington:** You are doing a great job in your electorate.

**Mr BERRY:** They have political leaders who have been democratically elected and they decide where the money goes. It could be spent on an industrial campaign or a political campaign. But then again we do have political laws in this state now. It must be money from down south. It is one of those little loopholes that they found to be quite useful.

After all, what Queenslanders want today is flexibility in voting—the flexibility to be able to manage their kids on a Saturday morning without having to drop everything and go and vote. They can now pre-poll and postal vote and that is one of the best moves, I believe, in this bill, because what it does do is it abides by the changing community lifestyles. It allows people to get out and do their civic duty. We still have a lot of people not voting, and hopefully this will draw them back into the fold and make sure that they operate and exercise their democratic right.

Again, getting back to what the bill is about, it is about one vote for one person, and to me that underpins the democratic process. To suggest anything else, for even there to be an inference that that is not occurring, is a blight on any democracy. We must treat that as a basic fundamental. After all, I heard the hyperbole many, many years ago when the Labor Party was accusing other parties about gerrymanders and so forth. The hypocritical position of the ALP astounds me almost every day I am in this place.

I would just like to mention briefly Liz who was a witness, a visually impaired person. Again, I come back to the fact that the committee system, the public hearing system, works. We read the submission but she said—and this is important—‘I would like a change.’ So she telephoned in. But do you know what she did not like? She did not like talking to a person. She did not like a person recording her vote. She did not like one of her parents going with her to vote. She wanted to be independent. She would have much preferred for there to have been an electronic response so that in fact nobody knows how she voted. That is independence. I do not think it will be that long before we reach that standard for her because I think we must try, and that is certainly fortified by the one vote, one person. Hopefully, Liz, that will happen in the not too distant future when we start to perfect an electronic system that will accommodate your needs and desires—and, I think, a democratic right.

I cannot resist holding up these submissions on this bill. Three-quarters of them are four lines. You are not going to believe this—all of them are to do with identification. It does not really say much about it other than we have an American there who tells us about the southern states. I think I have heard that some time before today! Certainly there is a resonance about the submissions that they have come effectively from the one place. It is disappointing because in a way it is rather—I will not say an abuse of the process but it just leads to being a little farcical because it was not even disguised. The GetUp! foundation—the ‘get up and go’ or whatever they call themselves—suggest that they are in fact apolitical. Heavens above, I have been to their website. They certainly say they are apolitical often enough that one only has a huge suspicion that in fact they are funded by a political party. I am not going to tell you which political party—you will probably guess.

This bill really ticks all the boxes because in fact what it does do is it brings democracy back to this state, where previously we had a bill which became an act, I think my friend the member for Bulimba said, in four weeks; I cannot remember. I know that in fact it was just so quick and so directed at manipulating an electorate. It was just so pleasing to know that the electorate woke up to the nonsense that was going on in at least the six years before the election. It was so pleasing to know that you cannot hoodwink the electorate. They know effectively what this bill is about and they endorse it because it allows them to vote in accordance with a lifestyle that is now prevalent in our society. It allows them to know fundamentally that one person gets one vote. How other would anybody be thinking? To actually stand here and espouse a doctrine or a principle or a theory about having identification as something which ought not be in the bill is absolute stupidity—one value, one vote. I certainly join with my colleagues in supporting this bill passing through the House.



**Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (10.24 pm): What exhilarating stuff that was.

**Mr Berry:** Thank you, Bill.

**Mr BYRNE:** Just fabulous, mate. You only get 20 minutes in here but I get hours of it in the committee, but let's just move on. I rise to make my contribution to the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013. Firstly, I would like to thank the committee staff, led by Mr Brooke Hastie. Their efforts are untiring and widely respected by all committee members.

It would be no surprise to fair-minded and decent Queenslanders that the Labor opposition strenuously opposes the core of this legislation. I pointed out briefly in my dissenting report a couple of lightning rod issues in this bill. It is absolutely clear that the new identification requirements will certainly disadvantage and disenfranchise some on the very lowest rung of our society. This is just another way for a government that represents the big end of town, the wealthy, to further disenfranchise minimum wage earners and those even less fortunate in our society. In many respects this measure is a proxy effect for the abolition of compulsory voting. That is right; the effect targets effectively a similar demographic and specifically so on behalf of all the Tories in this parliament and their born-to-rule attitude, because that is what this is all about.

Let's just briefly retrace the government's journey to this point. In early 2013 the Attorney-General released his discussion paper. At about the same time he started this nonsense spin about removing compulsory voting—just so much typical hot air from the Attorney-General, a political shiny bauble from an Attorney-General who, to coin one of my predecessor's phrases, is about as popular as an echidna in a balloon factory. Supposedly there were about 250 submissions to this paper. How would Queenslanders know what was proposed or who of the 250 was influential in these proposals because none of the submissions have ever been made public?

We eventually progressed to this bill being introduced into the House and had subsequent committee hearings. Again, there was convincing and considered evidence put to the committee that in essence said that this bill was regressive. Those committee members who will speak later on will tend to forget that, but that is what the evidence basically said.

The subsequent LNP involvement of the ECQ in the aftermath of the Redcliffe by-election has been bizarre and an irrelevance to the effect of this bill presently—completely and utterly a sideshow put up by the government to distract the result from the Redcliffe by-election and the actions of others during that election campaign. Of course we cannot forget this past weekend when we saw the Attorney-General talking in the media about more consultation on this bill. That is what he was saying last weekend—incredible really. I think every thinking person in Queensland knows what that whole stunt last weekend was all about.

On the issue of voter identification, some might say or even attempt to say that there is some overt fraudulent enterprise occurring here. There may be some suggestion of evil doings by political operatives at some level on a covert and decisive scale inside the electoral process. Otherwise, what is the rationale? What is the aspect of this bill that is supported by that? I even bet that some of the ignorant government backbenchers will try to establish the prospect of that point in this debate. Of course it is a complete synthetic nonsense. There is absolutely no evidence, no material and no reasoned justification for this measure within the bill.

I found the submission of the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland to be subtle and clear. They submitted precise observations when they said—

Very little evidence has been put forward by the Attorney-General, his Department or the Electoral Commission of the lack of integrity of the existing voting system to justify the introduction of this new provision.

In the absence of evidence that there is a regular and routine fraud occurring that compromises the integrity of an election result, it is important to consider whether the requirement for a voter to prove their identity at the time they vote may have the effect of disenfranchising voters who come from disadvantaged groups.

That is very clear, very precise.

That is the way the Anti-Discrimination Commission says in a nice way that this bill will disenfranchise and disadvantage exactly the people the government intends it to. The Bar Association raised similar concerns. The association has a real concern that in practice the proposed changes may impact disproportionately on the poor and oppressed in our society, especially upon some Indigenous members of our community. Such an outcome is unacceptable. Moreover, there does not appear to be a compelling case for making the changes in this respect.

The Queensland Law Society reflected on this issue only in its society. It said that there may be a number of individuals who do not have an ability to obtain proof of identity documents. This has led to many of these individuals facing direct discrimination and exclusion from services and opportunities through no fault of their own. This—that is, the bill—can only further compound the disadvantage that they encounter. We do not consider that it is an appropriate assumption to make that all Queenslanders have access to such relevant documents. We further submit that it is inappropriate to set this requirement as a threshold test for exercising lawful activities such as voting.

I just wish that someone over there had bothered to read the submissions. The Law Society goes on to mention the discussion paper on electoral reform released by the department. It quotes a section of the report which states that Queensland would be the only jurisdiction in Australia to require proof of identity on polling day—the only jurisdiction in Australia. There is no justification anywhere in the country. Apparently in LNP Queensland we have to have voter ID. Further, the very report that has been put out by the Attorney-General reinforces the fact that there is no specific evidence of fraud in the electoral system and that proof of identity requirements could be considered a disproportionate response to the risk.

I have to say that this bill is a disproportionate response to virtually no risk. So much for the LNP's red-tape reduction. This is just another spit-up to advantage tory politics in this state. Let us be frank: this is simply a measure intended to give advantage to tory politics. It is a disgraceful enterprise that undermines our egalitarian society from a political party that maintained its stranglehold in this state for generations due to the electoral corruption of the National Party's gerrymander. That is your gene pool out there—the good old National Party gerrymander. It is unbelievable that we have an LNP member in this House talking about one vote, one value. That is right: the LNP has a rich history of stacking the deck in its favour. Now that it is in power with an unprecedented majority it is prepared once again to reveal these throwback tendencies.

Let me talk about the changes to declarations on donation caps. Here we have a political party that has institutionalised pay-per-view arrangements for its fundraising. The LNP has turned our democracy into a political peepshow. With the passage of this element of the legislation, all we are adding is the dark of night, the white shoes and the trench coats to that image, and it is a disturbing image indeed but one that seems to be strangely appropriate.

Many of the submissions to the committee reflect on this issue. Professor Graham Orr in his submission to the committee made the point clearly and succinctly when he said—

Removing donation and expenditure limits is retrograde. It is a backward step for the key goals of political integrity and equality. The common law democracies we benchmark with have such limits ...

He goes on to state—

Queensland in 2011, along with NSW and the ACT, pioneered such limits in Australia.

...

(a) *Politics is not a free market in consumer goods.* It is a public good. Unlimited donations risk political integrity. They allow wealth to buy an unequal share of political influence and voice. Democracy and the universal franchise are meant to make all citizens equal in political worth. Unlimited donations skew money to the governing party of the day ... because private donations follow power.

That is a fact anywhere in the Western world and everybody knows it, including the government. Of course he is right. These fundamental truths are at the very heart of this legislation and point to the very reason this bill is before the House this evening. It is about this government amassing the maximum political advantage now and into the foreseeable future. There is nothing more to it than that. It would be remiss of me not to reflect on the ongoing revelations in the New South Wales ICAC—all of the dirty tory linen hung out for all to see. How many slush funds deliberately intended to subvert legislation does the conservative side of politics have?

**Mr CRIPPS:** I rise to a point of order. As much as the member for Rockhampton's dissertation in relation to the proceedings of ICAC in New South Wales is fascinating, I do not understand how it is relevant to the provisions of the bill before the House, and I ask you to rule on relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member to stay relevant to the bill.

**Mr BYRNE:** I am staying relevant to the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member to stay relevant to the bill.

**Mr BYRNE:** I am staying relevant to the bill. These are reasonable questions which Queenslanders are now asking. I am certainly no shrinking violet, and anything approaching that is a misrepresentation. However, I have never aspired to the notion of whatever it takes you are only guilty if you get caught. At some point those within political parties who represent baseline values, encourage professional ethics and integrity, and dare I say prudence in decision making, must prevail. While I revel in the present discomfort of New South Wales Tories, I am not so naive—

**Mr CRIPPS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask you once again to rule on relevance. How are the proceedings of ICAC in New South Wales relevant to the bill before the House?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Rockhampton, I give you guidance to either explain the relevance or to move on and talk about the bill.

**Mr BYRNE:** I will explain the relevance. Mr Deputy Speaker, the entire issue around donations is at the core of this bill, and any and all excesses associated with political parties and donations should be a matter able to be discussed as an ancillary to this bill.

**Mr CRIPPS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Surely the member for Rockhampton owes it to this House to remain relevant to the bill before the House, which deals with electoral law in the state of Queensland.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Rockhampton, I will remind you for the last time to stay relevant to the bill. If you stray from that, you need to explain why it is relevant to the bill or I will sit you down.

**A government member:** He did not write it; he does not know.

**Mr BYRNE:** I do know. If we cannot talk about donations or irregularities, then we may as well not have much of a contribution here. I will make this point. I have sat here and listened to the member for Ipswich rabbit on about one vote, one value and there was no intervention at any point about his contribution.

This legislation—the piece that deals with donations—is a substantial step backwards. I would encourage LNP backbenchers, if they have a spine—and that is not likely—to reflect on this: I do not expect anyone to cross the floor or stand up or have the courage to raise their concerns publicly, but in the quiet of the night they all need to appreciate the now inevitable trajectory of politics in this state. It is in the full knowledge of our history, particularly LNP history, when these sorts of measures are allowed to be passed without so much as a blink of an eye. Perhaps less than five per cent of the present party donations will need to be declared in this bill. So the days of \$10,000 in a brown paper bag will be back in a big way and nobody will be any the wiser because of this bill passing the House.

Let me go to the recent revelations aired on television about the boot camps. There is a \$5,500 donation in that equation and that sort of donation will be entirely invisible when this bill passes the House, and that is the whole point. That is what the government is seeking to do—to allow that sort of stuff to go on permanently and invisibly, away from the rest of us in Queensland, and that is not appropriate. It is not appropriate by any stretch of the imagination. If the Attorney-General is still the Attorney-General in Queensland by the time the House rises tomorrow night then let us once and for all stop pretending that this government has any principles whatsoever. What we have is a government that oversees completely corrupted merit based selection processes—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please pause the clock. What is your point of order, Minister?

**Mr CRIPPS:** The member for Rockhampton has made an allegation that in some way the government is corrupt. He is obliged to present that information to the parliament directly if he believes he has a genuine allegation of corruption or he should present it to the appropriate authorities directly, and he has not done so. He is simply participating in the politics of smear.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Member for Rockhampton, you have the call.

**Mr BYRNE:** If members want an example, I can mention the Terry Hill affair in terms of the integrity of recruitment processes that go on under the watch of this government. The government completely rejects the recommendations of independent, properly constituted selection panels and tender boards without the slightest concern and in the absence of any valid documented statement of reasons of decision makers. Ministers seem to think they can do as they please. Government is not a private business, and the executive power is dispensed in an entirely different manner in the public sector. Not too many across the chamber seem to appreciate that, and ministers seem to struggle

with that idea. We have a government that has appointed hacks and mates to boards and senior public service positions without even the pretence of using merit based selection to appoint the best people for those positions. It is, in effect, made men for the LNP where absolute loyalty is the only consideration when advancing people and giving rewards.

Through these ongoing failures and so forth, the remnants of the Queensland government's reputation are being incinerated. Every single government tender, every single government action, is now going to be compromised with this invisible donations regime. The government is now in the realm of being exposed to serious commercial claims, and rightly so. Why is this happening? It is because the government has become nothing more than a sophisticated, self-interested, deformed cargo cult. The Premier has got a lot of explaining to do, and his reputation depends on the actions he takes now and immediately thereafter. This bill is just another insult presented by a government filled with hubris, intent on stacking the deck and trampling the basic tenets of our democracy. Queenslanders will not tolerate it, and I will be strongly opposing the core of this bill.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (10.44 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill. I congratulate the Attorney-General on the introduction of this bill as a significant measure towards increasing accountability and transparency in Queensland's electoral system. I acknowledge the work of my colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on the reporting of this bill and thank those who were part of the process through submissions and of course attending the public briefings and hearing.

The bill amends the Electoral Act 1992, introducing changes broadly categorised into those relating to voting processes and procedures and those relating to electoral funding and funding disclosure. As the Attorney-General drew attention to in his explanatory speech, the former Labor government shamefully rushed through amendments to the Electoral Act in 2011 to avoid committee scrutiny. In a move severely lacking in transparency and accountability, public funding of expenditure of political campaigns went from \$3½ million in 2009 to a staggering \$34½ million in 2012 following these changes at the expense of the Queensland taxpayer.

That is in stark contrast to this approach, where the Newman government has engaged Queenslanders in the conversation about Queensland's electoral system through the electoral reform discussion paper. This discussion paper was released on 3 January 2013 and received over 250 submissions in response from Queenslanders right across the state. This consultation with the community has been used to help shape the electoral reforms we are discussing here today. The community feedback revealed strong support for maintaining compulsory voting and the current optional preferential voting system and, as such, the bill contains no changes to either of those provisions.

The Newman government wants to ensure that Queensland has the best electoral system in Australia. We want to ensure it is a system that guarantees the opportunity for full participation in the democratic process and that enhances voter integrity and voting convenience. This bill delivers on those objectives. Firstly, with regard to voting processes and procedures, the bill introduces a new requirement for proof of identity to vote in a state election. This requirement is non-discriminatory, and I am satisfied that the new requirement will not impose any hindrance on anyone who is eligible to vote.

The acceptable ID documentation is very broad and all-encompassing. The range of documents will include: identification such as the voter information letter issued by the ECQ to eligible voters for that election, a document that evidences their electoral enrolment, a current driver's licence, an Australian passport, a recent account or notice issued by a public utility, or any identification issued by the Commonwealth or a state as evidence of the person's entitlement to a financial benefit. This range is designed to include all eligible voters in the voting process. It is intended to accommodate all eligible voters regardless of their circumstance. In the unlikely event that an eligible voter is unable to provide any of these documents on election day, they will still have the opportunity to cast their vote through a declaration vote. This ensures that every eligible voter will have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote on election day. We know that this is a fundamental principle of this bill—to maximise voter participation and leave no voter disenfranchised.

I wish to refer to the public briefing by the department, and I would like to read a couple of quotes to clarify what the department said. We have heard from those opposite as they continue to mislead Queenslanders about voter identification. They have said that if you do not turn up with your piece of ID then, guess what, you cannot vote and that this will disenfranchise so many people. That is just not correct. I asked the department official to clarify whether a person who did not bring their ID

to the polling booth on the day still had an opportunity to vote. The department official said, 'That is correct. They can cast a declaration vote—make a declaration vote.' I wanted to get a bit more clarification about that so I asked what impact they thought that would have on polling booths on election day, because those opposite were making us think there would be lines all the way down the street, around the corner and past the bread shop.

Again, the department officials said they had been working with the Electoral Commission of Queensland in relation to these provisions, they are well aware of them and they do not consider that they are going to have a significant impact. That is taken directly from the public briefing that we undertook back in December 2013.

Previously, we heard the member for Rockhampton going on about how no other Australian jurisdiction actually has voter ID. I thought it was interesting that he touched on only a little bit of the briefing that we received from the department. I thought I would explore that a little bit more with them. I asked the department if they had looked at any other jurisdiction's electoral systems that are similar to Australia's to determine if they had voter ID requirements. The department official came back and said yes, they had. I asked them to provide the committee with some examples. The department came back and said that some states in the United States have voter ID requirements as well as Canada and various European countries; they all have voter ID requirements. They went on and said that, through their research, they had identified that those requirements have not caused any issues. That is right: they have not caused any issues and voters are quite used to them. And guess what? They do not cause disenfranchisement.

We have heard from the opposition about how this is all going to turn pear shaped on election day; we are going to have streams of people down the street who forgot to bring their ID and will not be able to cast a vote. Then there are those people who will choose not to turn up and vote on the day because they do not have a piece of identification, which could be photographic or a number of other means, as we suggested earlier. Whilst engaging voters in the voting process, this new requirement will strongly reduce the potential for electoral fraud.

I lost count of the number of young people voting for the first time in the last state election who expressed their ultimate surprise that they were not required to prove their identity at the polling booth. One of them actually turned to me and asked, 'What is stopping me from voting twice?' I thought that was very interesting. They went on and said, 'We could go in there and pretend we were somebody else.' I said, 'It is only your conscience at the moment that, to be honest, is protecting you.' Of course, that conscience only affects the people who want to do the right thing. Again, we have heard from those opposite about there being no proof of potential voter fraud. I would like to draw the House's attention to a Senate inquiry, which was reported by the ABC and a number of other media outlets. When the Australian Electoral Commission fronted a Senate estimates hearing, they were asked questions about multiple voting during the federal election that was held in September. The Australian Electoral Commission investigated almost 19,000 instances of multiple voting across Australia.

**Mr Krause:** How many?

**Mr DILLAWAY:** There were 19,000 instances. Of those, 2,000 Australians actually came back and admitted that they voted more than once in the previous year's federal election. But it gets even more interesting. There were actually 92 people who were identified as having voted three times. There were 22 people who were identified as voting four times and there was one person who, in fact, voted as many as 15 times in the one election. We have heard, of course, from those opposite that there is no proof that voter fraud exists. However, I think that clearly indicates that across Australia, across the jurisdictions, if we honestly think that none of those 19,000 multiple voting occurrences took place here in Queensland then, sadly, we have our head stuck in the sand.

I do note, however, that during the public hearing with the acting commissioner of the Electoral Commission of Queensland, it was revealed that they currently investigate potential voter fraud only where there is a minimum of three crosses next to one name, which could very well indicate why we have not seen particular instances of examination of voter fraud here in Queensland or those multiple voting instances. I certainly believe that, as the state representative who won a seat with a margin of just 75 votes, I can strongly attest to the value of every single ballot paper. Every vote counted in the state election of 2012. I believe that having the proof of identity requirement, which this bill introduces, appropriately strikes the balance between enhancing voter integrity, protecting against voter fraud and maximising voter participation and opportunity.

I would like to move on to talk about some of the other things that the bill introduces. One of those is the how-to-vote cards which will be published on the ECQ website in the lead-up to an election. This move will address misleading how-to-vote cards and provide important information for voters. During the state election a lot of people came up to me who were concerned about misleading how-to-vote cards—and we saw that in Redcliffe as well. Postal voters will also have access to how-to-vote guidance and this will allow for greater scrutiny of cards before polling day. Of course, we are all familiar with the 30-second walk from the gates of a polling booth during which we are drowned in various papers. Having this information readily available will increase transparency in elections and, of course, voter confidence. Furthermore, removing the eligibility criteria for postal votes will streamline postal voting requirements and make them equal with those of prepoll, removing unnecessary regulation. The bill also facilitates online applications and brings forward the deadline for those applications. It also simplifies the process and supports the government's objective, ultimately, to enable maximum voter participation. Voting will be far more accessible and far more convenient.

I would also like to discuss the removal of donation expenditure caps that will return Queensland to a position similar to the one that existed prior to the rushed 2011 amendments undertaken by those opposite. The act as it was before these amendments functioned effectively and relied on the transparency and accountability afforded through appropriate financial disclosure obligations. Participation in the political process will no longer be subject to unnecessary restriction. Building on this, the bill achieves the appropriate balance between encouraging participation in the democratic process through financial support to political parties and candidates and the public interest and knowing the source of donations, particularly larger ones. The increase in the donation disclosure threshold to \$12,400 is made in recognition that the current threshold is too low, providing no benefit to the community through disclosure of donations as low as \$1,000. Instead, it simply increases the amount of administrative burden for no worthwhile gain.

The proposed amendment will also align Queensland more closely with the Commonwealth requirements. Again, we heard from those opposite about the issues surrounding the \$12,400, and they referenced a number of those submissions. I question whether those submitters, in fact, had actually received crown law advice that informed our government that the former government's rushed through amendments with their smokescreens of reforms of 2011 have actually rendered Queensland's donation laws potentially invalid because they are inconsistent with the Commonwealth legislation. I think it is important for the House to recognise that we are bringing this form of disclosure into line with the Commonwealth legislation.

It is also important to note that attempts to restrict the amount of political donations can potentially lead to the development of more sophisticated concealment techniques. The existing model of public funding based on the extent of expenditure by a political candidate is flawed. It increases the possibility that ill-directed or poorly conceived use of public funds by candidates or political parties who lack support from the community will need to be partially reimbursed. It is concerning that, due to its nature of operation, the greater the expenditure of a political candidate or party, the greater the reimbursement. In recognition of this weakness, the bill moves to restore funding based on received votes, with the amount of funding that a party or candidate is entitled to receive to be directly related to their electoral strength. This change was supported in the Queensland Electoral Review outcomes as part of the extensive consultation process undertaken by the Newman government.

Now, I would like to move on and talk about the threshold for entitlement to public funding which, of course, the bill originally proposed to go from four per cent to 10 per cent of the primary vote. However, I thank the Attorney-General for taking our committee's recommendation on board, and we will now see the increase for the threshold for public funding rise to only six per cent after he moves an amendment during consideration in detail. Our committee felt that this was a fairer value to ensure significant publicly supported minor parties continue their access to public funding.

It proposes the return to a dollar-per-vote public funding model where political parties and candidates are directly reimbursed for each formal first preference vote received for actual eligible expenditure. The proposed amount is set at \$2.90 per vote for registered political parties and \$1.45 per vote for candidates indexed against CPI each financial year. As a result, candidates and parties will be required to make more responsible spending decisions based on an assessment of their prospects of success. This will save Queensland taxpayers from being hit with a bill of over \$24 million each election, and I remind the House that this bill was a result of significant community

consultation and implements many of the results of the Queensland Electoral Reform discussion paper. It enhances voter integrity and public confidence in elections, whilst stimulating and maximising voter participation.

The amendments will guarantee improvements to the electoral system in Queensland, ensuring transparency and accountability, while significantly reducing costs to the pockets of the community. I congratulate the Attorney-General once again for leading the charge in making our electoral system the best in Australia. I support the bill to the House.

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (11.01 pm): I rise to strongly oppose the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013. This bill, as we all know, has been delayed and delayed and delayed by the articulated clerk Attorney-General, and today we finally have the chance to shine the light, to probe, and to debate the Attorney-General's bill, which can only be described as a fundamental and unequivocal attack on Queensland's open and accountable democracy. The bill before the House today portrays—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** I rise to a point of order.

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

**Ms TRAD:** The member is actually not taking interjections and I can barely hear her. I am sitting next to her—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Thank you, member for South Brisbane. I will make the rulings on the order in the House. Member for Bundamba, you have the call.

**Mrs MILLER:** The bill before the House today portrays, in stark colours for all to see, the true nature of those in the LNP. It shows that those opposite do not care about the democratic system as we know it. They want to take a meataxe and they want to slash the bits of the current electoral system—the rules and laws—that they do not like and that in some way may disadvantage their political objects. The bill crafted by the LNP before us today is the modern day equivalent of the gerrymander. They are attempting to establish a political advantage for themselves by changing the goalposts to ultimately disadvantage the most marginalised members of our communities. It just goes to show how out of touch and arrogant those opposite have become in such a short time since taking office. This gerrymander type bill proposes to amend the voting laws—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Order, Attorney-General!

**Mrs MILLER:** This gerrymander type bill proposes to amend laws to require—

**Honourable member** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Could you stop the clock, please. Could the interjection across the chamber please move outside. Member for Bundamba, you have the call.

**Mrs MILLER:** Thank you very much. This gerrymander type bill proposes to amend the voting laws to require voters to bring identification when they come to the ballot box. Of course, this is all being done under the guise of protecting against electoral fraud. But where is the evidence of electoral fraud? I believe that there is none and that this, in fact, is a con job on the people of Queensland. In fact, the only reason that those opposite want to require voters to produce identification is to target traditional Labor Party voters like Bazza and Dogga at the Royal Mail Hotel at Goodna. They can have a drink on election day without ID but they cannot vote without ID, and that is a joke. They can place a bet at the TAB without ID, but they cannot vote without ID.

This proposal will act as a barrier for those already marginalised members of our community to voting. This will affect our Indigenous Queenslanders, people who have settled in Queensland, our homeless—who very rarely have identification—our elderly people and our young people, who seem to be bearing the brunt of attacks from all levels of tory governments recently. Under the Tories, all people under 30 are apparently considered youths—something that people under 30 I think find hard to deal with. There is a significant risk that a large section of our community will be excluded from exercising their democratic right just because they do not have a form of identification.

Since coming to power in 2012, this government has continually attacked people in our community. From ripping funding out of the community sector to putting fear into public housing tenants, now they are concluding their first—and what will hopefully be their only—term in power by attacking a wide spectrum of the community by depriving them of their democratic right to vote. I say to the people of Queensland even because of this that they should only give this Newman government one term.

Let me turn to the amendments in this bill which will significantly increase the threshold for when political declarations need to occur. The existing laws require that donations over \$1,000 be declared on a six-monthly basis. The new law will only require that donations over \$12,400 be declared on a monthly basis. This will mean that individuals and indeed businesses and the big end of town will be able to donate to a political party an amount of up to \$12,399 in secret. This will mean that the big end of town can top up the coffers of the LNP and those opposite in complete secrecy. No-one will ever know. I have no doubt in my mind that this is institutionalising corruption in this state. Yes, there are many people who are saying, 'The boys are back in town with their brown paper bags.'

We have already seen damning evidence in recent times where a boot camp operator was given a government tender at double the cost of all other tenders against departmental advice after personal intervention from the Attorney-General and only moments later made a \$5,500 donation to the LNP, although I must note that the Attorney-General did come into this House recently and table a document which purported to be an email from their hand-picked—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Watts): Member for Bundamba, please hold. Stop the clock please. Attorney-General, I would ask you to take down the banners that reference the comments from the *Courier-Mail* that were said yesterday, and if you could remove the other one as well. Thank you. The member for Bundamba has the call.

**Mrs MILLER**: Thank you. I note that the Attorney-General came into this House and tabled a document which purported to be an email from the hand-picked LNP sympathiser Director-General John Sosso to David Fraser, the Attorney-General's chief of staff, basically saying that it was okay for the Attorney-General to ignore the tender selection panel's decision and make his own decision which resulted in an LNP supporter receiving the tender against the recommendation of the department. Time will tell if that email advice stacks up. What is it? Is it 'bootgate' that it has been nicknamed? It shows how easy it can be for a government to be influenced by businesses—the old 'I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch my back'. Is it tenders for sale by donation to the LNP?

Those opposite talk about our fantastic Labor candidates who are coming for all of their seats, and the oncers in the parliament better be saving their pennies because they will all be gone soon. But they never seem to talk about the corruption of the Joh Bjelke-Petersen government and yet the 'K mart' Attorney-General has resurrected Joh Bjelke-Petersen from the grave, and he is also channelling him when it comes to dodgy electoral reform changes. These changes smell dodgy. There is a stench about them, and the people of Queensland have smelt this corruption all over the state. One only has to look at ICAC, which has claimed the scalps of many Tories, including a Liberal Premier, to know that donations and dodgy deals and conservative politicians go hand in hand. We all know that members of the Liberal Party love their red wine and the proposed laws that are contained in this bill we are debating today will more than allow a bottle of wine to be used to influence the government without any of us knowing. What really concerns me is that, as the member for Rockhampton recently stated in this House, if it looks like corruption, if it smells like corruption and it tastes like corruption, it is not peanut butter, and that is because it is corruption. It is about brown paper bags. It is about giving donations to the LNP and trying to get tenders in return, and it is working.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (11.12 pm): Tonight I rise to speak to the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill. Before I do, Mr Deputy Speaker Watts, thank you for asking the Attorney-General to remove those distracting front-page articles for tomorrow for the six million reasons the member for Bundamba should be saying sorry. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This evening I have sat here and listened to members of the opposition quite intently about why they are asking us to consider crossing the floor on this bill. Indeed, members of the opposition have raised some very interesting arguments in this space—not least of which is the fact that they point to the fairness of the Electoral Reform and Accountability Amendment Act 2011. I do not mind telling my colleagues that in fact I might even consider agreeing with them if what they were asserting was fair and indeed equitable. But we know that in fact that is not the case, because whilst I might ordinarily consider that caps on donations and

caps on electorate spending are not necessarily a bad thing, again, that argument is absolutely rubbish and thrown out with the bathwater when we consider that no such restriction occurred for union spending.

The explanatory notes relating to amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 in the Electoral Reform and Accountability Amendment Act 2011 made substantial changes to the rules governing political donations, the public funding of elections and electoral expenditure. The government was concerned that these changes by the former Labor government were implemented with too little consideration and consultation. That is only half right as I see it. It was right in that I dare say there was very little consultation. However, I contend that there was a great deal of consideration in that amendment because, unlike what the government is doing now—and we heard before from the Attorney-General and other speakers such as Mr Dillaway—this was a bill that was rushed through the House. Not only was it rushed through the House; it was brought in at the eleventh hour before the committee process was introduced so you did not get the consultation and you did not get the stakeholder engagement that this current process has been given.

On 3 January 2013 the Queensland government released the electoral reform discussion paper announcing its intention to review Queensland's electoral system, and this is in stark contrast to how the previous government behaved in this space. There are some wonderful things about this reform amendment bill—indeed, things such as facilitating electronically assisted voting, particularly to ensure access to secret and independent voting for blind and vision impaired voters and voters who require assistance because of a disability, motor impairment or insufficient literacy. It does not sound to me at all like the government is trying to stop people from voting. In fact, it sounds like we are trying to help people express their democratic right.

There is another issue that I want to address, and that is the particular regard to some of the anxiety that has been raised around the proof of identity requirement. In fact, this is an issue that has been raised with me as a local member in my electorate office—not by the broader public of course; it was an issue that was raised with me by the federal candidate for Forde—that is, the federal candidate for Forde prior to being dumped by Mr Beattie! I can accept that there is some anxiety and that there is some concern from people about having to undergo the inconvenience of proving their identity. I put to members that, in order to be able to drive, we require a driver's licence. In order to be able to drink at an establishment, we may be required to show proof of identity. In order to open a bank account or to administer our finances, we are required to be able to identify ourselves. Given that the opposition has had a great deal of discussion around the poor and disadvantaged in this space, even to collect social welfare, should you be dependent on that, you are required to be able to prove your identity.

Tonight I have heard a lot about our right to a democracy. Indeed, there is and we should always have a right to vote. Democracy is an incredibly important thing. In fact, if you do not believe this is the case, come on down to Waterford and Logan and talk to some of the residents there—some of the refugees who know what it is like to live in a country where you do not have that right or that freedom, who know what it is like to be persecuted for expressing one's views, political or otherwise. While we accept that democracy is a right, it also comes with responsibility. I have absolutely no problem—no problem at all—with expressing that one has the responsibility to be able to prove that they are who they say they are so that they may exercise their right to vote on something as important as an election.

I contend that, in fact, there is nothing more important than an election in the democratic system in which we live. All party politics aside, I would have to say that I am distressed that the argument in this House tonight has been full of smear and innuendo around supposed corruption. As it was pointed out earlier by the member for Hinchinbrook, if that is the case, if there is some evidence of such things occurring, they should be put in the appropriate manner for appropriate investigation. But that is not what we are hearing here this evening. We are hearing the usual fearmongering, the scare campaigns and all the usual rubbish that we are coming to expect more and more and more in this House. I put it to the opposition members that I would be prepared to consider their argument if it were a reasonable and relevant argument—if there was something to support their assertions other than utter hypocrisy.

I also commend the committee. We know that the committee process works when a committee can consider in detail a bill that has been put to the House and can make recommendations for change and have those recommendations accepted and agreed to by the Attorney-General. I would have to say that I am very pleased that the recommendation with regard to returning the basis of electoral public funding to a stated dollar amount per vote and increasing the threshold for entitlement

to public funding to six per cent as opposed to the initial 10 per cent that was proposed is a clear demonstration of a process that certainly by far exceeds the process adopted by the previous government in terms of the previous amendment. On that basis, I would like to support the bill.

**Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (11.20 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Attorney-General's Electoral Reform Amendment Bill. This bill will assist in the democratic process by providing a more current, fair and transparent system for elections. Over the past few years, after scenes at numerous elections, there has been a growing discontent within the electorate about how elections are organised and run in conjunction with political parties. This reform bill is intended to enhance voter integrity and voting confidence in how elections are organised and held in this great state.

This bill will help to align Queensland's disclosure threshold with that of the Commonwealth. This amendment bill raises the disclosure threshold to \$12,400. That increase helps by providing potential donors with more clarity. As we live in a global economy, we know that there are businesses and associations that have interests in Queensland, interstate or even overseas—for example, shipping terminals. The raising of the threshold aligns Queensland with other jurisdictions. It also helps mum-and-dad investors who support a particular political party and/or candidate to give a donation to that person's campaign without discrimination or persecution.

The public funding of elections has always been a widely debated issue in terms of who should or should not receive funding from election results based on the dollar per vote system. I congratulate the Attorney-General on changing the entitlement threshold for public funding for a particular candidate from four per cent to six per cent of the primary vote. This change is needed and should be supported for two reasons: it will reduce the cost burden on taxpayers of funding elections and give public funding only to the candidate who can show a significant amount of local support in his or her electorate via the primary vote count. That stops someone who receives, say, fewer than 1,000 votes or less than four per cent of the primary vote receiving exactly the same dollar amount per vote as someone who receives 50 per cent of the vote or even higher. This amendment bill is cost effective and will create a fairer system in terms of public funding for candidates at the next state election and beyond.

The last point that I would like to make about the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill is that the Attorney-General and the Newman government provided widespread consultation to hear the views of residents on how to strengthen the democratic process. This was in contrast to the Labor Party which, in its last term of parliament, rushed through amendments before the 2012 election.

A recommendation that the committee and the Attorney-General, through the consultation, considered was the implementation of proof of identity to vote in state elections in a non-discriminatory way. If you listen to talkback radio after an election, you hear people who ring in talk about how they lined up at a polling booth for an hour or so only to get to the registration table to be told, 'Sorry, sir' or 'Sorry madam, you have already voted.' I remember after the 2009 state election listening to 4BC's drive show when a bloke, who I believe was from Far North Queensland, rang into the station to talk about voting. At that time there were some issues that arose during the election in relation to the electorate of Chatsworth. There were double votes and even people who were, unfortunately, deceased were counted as voting. This gentleman who rang 4BC said that he was in the line waiting to vote, 10 to 15 people deep, when he heard his name given to the ECQ representative. Proof of identity will really strengthen the democratic process. It will also make the process of elections fairer and more transparent as well as provide a balanced election result.

Under this bill, people who do not have photo identification such as a driver's licence or a copy of a utility bill can still be given the right to vote by making a statutory declaration, which is similar to what occurs when a person votes outside of their electorate. For instance, if a person works, say, in the electorate of the good member for Mansfield but that person lives in the Lytton electorate, that person can still go down to, say, Wishart State School and vote for their local state member of parliament at Lytton.

**Mr Walker:** Who would you suggest they vote for in Lytton?

**Mr SYMES:** The hardworking local member down there. Another way in which the Newman government is helping Queenslanders with a disability be able to have their say and feel more included in the public debate is through a trial of online voting. This is another way of empowering people with a disability to have their say. They are the most marginalised people in our communities. This trial of online voting empowers them to have their say in elections as to who they want to represent their views in this great House. So I commend the Attorney-General for that initiative.

Under this trial online voting proposal, people can vote from their own home. That creates less stress. I know that when I have been a polling booth captain in previous elections I have seen people assist people with a disability with the voting process by taking the ballots to them while they sit in a car. It could be demeaning to those people who live with a disability to have to be stigmatised in that way. So I commend the Attorney-General for helping those marginalised people in the community through that online voting trial. I support the Attorney-General's reform around the electoral process, which will help to build a more accountable and transparent framework for conducting elections in the future. I support the bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Symes, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (11.29 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Clontarf Beach State High School, Regional Health Summit

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (11.29 pm): I rise to speak about an event that was held recently at one of my high schools, Clontarf Beach State High School. This was a fantastic event. It was a regional health summit put together with Partnership Brokers. The Australian Catholic University, Clontarf Beach State High School—which was the host—Embrace Life, Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, Redcliffe Hospital, Queensland University of Technology and the University of the Sunshine Coast were involved in this fantastic event. It is held to induct young people into health sector opportunities through innovative community education. It is about getting the kids interested and aware of what occupations are available in the health sector, not just through sitting and listening to speeches, but actually through interactive workshops.

This year was the second year that Clontarf Beach State High School has hosted the summit. There were some 600 students from about 10 schools in the North Coast region who came to participate in the day. Through the workshops they got to participate in things such as chiropractic, optometry, clinical psychology, dental, dental assistant and technology, nursing, occupational therapy, podiatry and medical laboratory science. They could check out all of these different occupations that they may want to pursue later in life.

I would like to read some words from Jess Lloyd, the guidance officer from the school, who said—

The second year of the Clontarf Beach State High School Regional Health Summit once again provided students with a platform to experience health career education in a real world context. The hands-on workshops and exhibitor combination gave students the opportunity to have real conversations with health professionals at a crucial time in a student's career voyage. Clontarf Beach State High School linked with Sustainable Partnerships Australia to offer the Regional Health Summit to 10 schools in the north coast region and approximately 600 students from years 10-12 enjoyed the experience.

This is a fantastic initiative and I congratulate Sustainable Partnerships Australia for this fantastic event. It is disappointing that in the federal budget last week the Abbott government cut the funding for this partnership brokerage. They have cut the Partnership Brokers, the Youth Connections and the National Career Advice programs which by the end of the year would have helped 100,000 young Australians. All of these programs will cease in December this year. These were great programs doing wonderful things. I hope that, despite this funding disappearing, the schools will be able to keep this collaboration going with local health sectors to keep this summit going. It is unfortunate there will not be new ones happening.

### Lockyer Electorate, Initiatives

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (11.32 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution about some local issues in the Lockyer electorate. I table some documentation in relation to levees.

*Tabled paper.* Article from the *Gatton, Lockyer & Brisbane Valley Star*, dated 7 May 2014, titled 'As if farming wasn't already hard enough' [\[5153\]](#).

*Tabled paper.* Article from the *Gatton, Lockyer & Brisbane Valley Star*, dated 21 May 2014, titled 'Minister attacks Lockyer Valley council levee campaign' [\[5154\]](#).

I congratulate the minister for bringing in the levee legislation, which I think is very appropriate. It is needed right across Queensland. It was a recommendation of the flood commission of inquiry that management of levees be put in place. Levees have been managed through negotiation with

councils and the state government. It is important that these levees are managed at a local level. Unfortunately, there has been some scaremongering in my local area. Full-page advertisements have been taken out in the local paper that have not been accredited to anyone. They have not even been taken out as advertisements, which is pretty poor form I must admit. These sorts of things do happen. I am an experienced politician and I am sure I can manage those sorts of issues.

I congratulate the South East Queensland Correctional Facility. I am sure that most members have seen the art that is in the foyer of the Annexe. I was not here when art was being sold quite a few years ago and could be purchased by members of the public. There were complaints made by the victims of crime about artists profiting while they are in jail. Some of the art from the South East Queensland Correctional Facility has been donated to the Arthur Beetson Foundation to support different groups. We have to look at how this art can benefit community groups. A very small percentage could go back to the artist so that they can buy the appropriate art materials they need while they are in jail. Johnathan Thurston was very impressed with his portrait. I have a picture with Johnathan that the member for Waterford took for me and I thank him very much. It is not about the prisoners making money; it is about how we manage to improve their skills and integrate them back into society. Part of that might be by having some of their paintings donated. One of the prisoners has painted a portrait of Victoria Cross recipient Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith. He is going to donate that to the local RSL in Gatton. It is a great painting.

### **Broadwater Electorate, Achievements**

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (11.35 pm): I rise to update the House about some of the significant achievements that we have seen in the Broadwater electorate over the past two years. As I am sure members are well aware, this government has a very strong plan for Queensland's future. We have delivered in areas of front-line services over the past two years. This evening I would like to particularly highlight the successes that we have seen when it comes to revitalising front-line services for families. All members of the government would be aware that the issues that matter to Queenslanders—health, the economy, education—are significantly better under this government than they were under the previous government. We have certainly seen the fruits of our labour borne in the Broadwater electorate.

In addition to the significant investment that we have seen in the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, nearly \$2 million has been invested in my electorate alone to support healthy and active lifestyles through supporting local community sporting clubs. I think that this is absolutely fantastic. I am sure that every member of this House would be aware that one of the things that we need to do is encourage people to lead a very healthy and active lifestyle. If we can support grassroots community clubs and encourage young children to get involved in sport through Get in the Game and support local clubs with infrastructure then I think that that is an absolutely fantastic thing.

I think it is also important to highlight that we have seen more than \$2 million invested in local schools and education department facilities. Education is indeed an investment in the future of our city, our state and our nation. I commend the minister for the record investment that we have seen in schools and in particular the investment that we have seen in local schools to support the maintenance backlog and making sure that we can actually deliver a quality education for the next generation of leaders.

I think what is really telling is the investment that we have seen in social and housing services for this community. I am very grateful that both the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the Minister for Housing and Public Works are in the chamber because we have seen more than \$17 million invested in social and housing services in my community. I am incredibly proud to have been able to deliver these investments for my local community. I am very proud that we have delivered these front-line services and I am proud to be part of a team that has a strong plan not only for Queensland but also for the individual communities right across this great state. This is a great state with great opportunities and with a strong plan for the future it can only get better. I look forward to being part of a team that delivers real solutions for this great state.

### **Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service; Convention Centre**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.38 pm): The member for Cairns has jumped on the bandwagon to demonstrate his mock outrage at Tony Abbott's \$50 billion cuts to health funding across the nation. When the Premier decided to rip \$3 billion out of the Queensland Health system, what did we hear from the member for Cairns? Nothing! When \$20 million was ripped away from the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service this financial year, what did we hear from the member for

Cairns? Nothing! When more than 230 staff were axed in the health district because of the Newman government's reckless program of cutting and slashing, what did we hear from the member for Cairns? Nothing! The member for Cairns even tried to claim that last year's budget saw a real health funding increase of 3.5 per cent in Far North Queensland, when in reality it was less than the rate of inflation and population growth at 4.5 per cent. And what has the member for Cairns said against the planned sale of strategic health land at Edmonton under this Newman LNP government? Nothing!

The Treasurer has now admitted in relation to the so-called funding cuts under the former federal Labor government that it was just a 'parameter adjustment'—not a cut, but a 'parameter adjustment'. Those are the same so-called cuts the member for Cairns used as a smokescreen for Newman government cuts, about which the health minister issued 15 misleading media statements. And how many media statements has the health minister issued in relation to the \$50 billion being ripped away from health funding under the Abbott government? None, zilch, zero, nada!

The dishonesty and hypocrisy of the member for Cairns and this Newman LNP government is laid bare for all to see. Now they are all feigning outrage at Tony Abbott, looking for another excuse for their failure to stand up for health services. The Newman government inherited the lowest elective surgery times in the nation from the previous Labor government. Those opposite have been out there crowing and taking credit for the former federal Labor government's \$3.4 billion National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospitals. This funding agreement delivered infrastructure that significantly improved emergency department response times across our state.

The previous Labor government delivered crucial projects such as the \$454 million redevelopment of the Cairns base hospital, which added new intensive care capacity in 2012 to improve emergency department response times. The member for Cairns will try to take credit for these Labor achievements, while simultaneously blaming Labor for the method by which those upgrades were funded. Federal Labor supported the previous Queensland Labor government's hospital building program, which was the biggest hospital building program in the nation.

Now, Tony Abbott has cut those health funding agreements and it has the Premier worried, because it will ruin the only good news story he has had to tell about continued improvements in waiting lists for dentistry and surgery, all on the back of Labor initiatives. The Premier is now seeing what the rest of the country has known for some time. Without Labor's initiatives, he will not be able to maintain this record and he will not be able to blame anyone but himself.

I put on the record how disappointed I am to hear that, after the Australian Tourism Exchange in Cairns, people have been concerned about a lack of convention centre capacity. We know absolutely that if the \$150 million Cairns entertainment precinct had gone ahead and not been stopped by people like the current member for Cairns and others, we would have the capacity we needed and would not have ended up in that position. Shame on them for cutting a project we needed at a time we needed it most!

### Chappy Week



**Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (11.41 pm): During the Battle of the Bulge, having received a letter from the German commander requesting him to surrender prior to the final victory of the Germans in that battle, General George Patton sent a single word back to the German commander. That reply was, 'Nuts.' To those forces rallying to get chappies out of our schools I say, 'Nuts!'

This week is Chappy Week. I want to honour the chappies working in the schools in my electorate: at Dakabin State School and Kallangur State School, Joshua Laack; at Jinibara State School, Rebecca Andrew; at Kurwongbah State School, Glenn Weatherford and Jason Sharrock; at Narangba State School, Alana Bell; at Petrie State School, Beverley Brown; at Pine Rivers Special School, Tania Pattermore; at Undurba State School, Samantha Porter; at Living Faith Lutheran Primary School, Amanda Pashen; at Our Lady of the Way, Helen Ryan; at Dakabin State High School, Charlie O'Bree; at Mount Maria College Petrie, Janelle Doohan; at Northpine Christian College, Neil Redman, Simon Hutton and Philippa Matheson; and at Murrumba State Secondary College, Tony Latter.

Obviously, the people who want to get rid of chappies do not have kids in school. It is that simple. Chappies provide an immense amount of support to staff and to children. I can tell the House of some of the experiences of the chappies in the schools in and around my electorate. One of the big things that chappies do is provide support to kids. That can be emotional support, spiritual support or practical support. I can give an example of practical support. At the start of the year, one little boy

turned up to school without shoes, wearing ratty old pants and with no lunch. When we finally got to the bottom of the story, we found out that he lives in a house that is completely dysfunctional and his mother is a drug addict. Chappy went to work and rallied the school, and now that kid is in a much better position. A chappy supported a family during the death of one of their children. Another chappy supports not only a child and his family as they go through the devastating effects of realising he has a terminal illness but also the school. As we come to the end of this week, I simply want to say: I honour chappies, who do a heck of a job in our community.

### Lytton Electorate, Road Safety

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (11.44 pm): Fatality Free Friday will be officially held on 30 May 2014 around Queensland and nationally. However, Lytton's day of action will be this Friday, 23 May 2014. The great team at the Caltex Lytton refinery will be organising community pledge events throughout the electorate, starting at 5 am at the Caltex refinery staff car park. We then head to Wynnum Plaza for the community pledge event. I look forward to joining staff early in the morning to open Fatality Free Friday in Lytton. Congratulations to Caltex and, specifically, to Toni Dugdale for her organisation of such a worthy event, which will bring awareness of road safety and safe driving behaviours. This year it is a timely reminder to constituents, as only a few weeks ago we heard of a tragic truck accident that caused two fatalities. My condolences go to those families that lost loved ones in that accident on the Port of Brisbane Motorway.

Since being elected, the community and I have been successful in rolling out school flashing zone lights at Sandy Camp Road, Manly Road, Ernest Street, Wondall Road and Bay Terrace. The feedback from parents and educators has been very positive on those projects, which help to make the roads much safer in the area. We have worked with the Brisbane City Council to deliver school crossings at Boxgrove and Stradbroke avenues, with crossing supervisors funded by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. In consultation with both the Manly State School P&C and the Wondall Heights P&C, as well as the Brisbane City Council, we are currently looking at solutions to the traffic issues around both schools, which is causing frustration and potential safety issues, especially on Ernest Street and Wondall Road.

I thank P&C members, concerned residents, departmental staff and principals for working with me over the past two years to help in getting the message out to the wider community around road safety. In 2013, infrastructure opened at the Port of Brisbane Motorway that has meant a reduction of heavy vehicles driving in and around the Wynnum-Manly community. Once again, I look forward to joining workers at the Caltex refinery to promote Fatality Free Friday and road safety in general in our great local area. It is a timely reminder to avoid distractions such as phones, to pull over if tired and to be alert to changes in road conditions, as well as other motorists.

### Nurses Commemorative Service

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (11.47 pm): I take this opportunity to speak of a commemorative service for nurses who have died in the service of others, held at St James Anglican Cathedral Townsville earlier this month. The principal guest was Her Excellency, Ms Penelope Wensley AM, the Governor of Queensland. It was a simple yet moving ceremony of Passing the Lamp and laying upon the altar a scroll containing the 108 names of nurses who have given their life in nursing others.

Mr Simon Mitchell RN gave a poignant and heartfelt commemorative eulogy. With his permission, I will now read a few excerpts. However, for nurses everywhere, I table them in their entirety.

*Tabled paper:* Untitled document regarding commemorative service for nurses who died in the service of others held in Townsville on 4 May 2014 [\[5155\]](#).

In so many ways nursing is silent work. Nurses are rarely silent but their work is. It is work we cannot always talk about because its practice holds close in caring hands the secret intimacies of others ...

Dark hours beckon, solitary and forlorn, too close to despair. Nurses illuminate that space, they share it and in their work, hope restored through caring hands lifts loneliness. Nurses carry the lamp because necessity and need span the dark hours ...

The profession of nursing is art and science. Its compassion forged in craft and skill. And in humour, that most complex and human of emotions and with it senses of irony, tolerance and flexibility. Nurses are hopeful, they can look at a capricious world and make hope give it meaning. They see suffering and hardship but believe there must be something else. They care and that's enough because in the end it is all.

Simon continues on a reflection of some recent photos of RAAF nurses caring for the wounded in Afghanistan. He reflects—

They were en route from Germany to Australia nursing several injured soldiers who clearly had serious wounds. Wounds of the body and wounds of the mind ...

You could see indistinguishable parts of the soldiers but not their faces. It is night time somewhere 11km above the Earth. I've never been in a C17 but the scene I saw in the photos is not unfamiliar to me. An ICU, there is order and arrangement around the configuration packed with biomedical equipment, ventilators, infusion pumps, dispensary et al. It would be all cold and clinical except for the suffused lights illuminating like a lamp the interior ...

The nurses are attending them; you can see they are attentive but tired ... The photos are silent but powerful.

In a couple a hand holds that of a soldier's. A pulse may be being taken, validating what a monitor relays but also the touch is feeling for tenor, the character of the pulse a clinical sign but it is also a kind and warm touch, no glove is worn. In another a gloveless hand touches a face we cannot quite see, maybe sensing skin for clammy coolness, a sign of hypovolaemic shock. But there again is the human touch and I know looking at the nurse's eyes that he or she will let that hand linger if that wounded soldier responds to its meaning and that lying there confronted by his injuries he sees beyond this time that there can be something else.

Lest we forget.

### **Gaven Electorate, Bus Services; Nerang Community Respite Centre**

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—PUP) (11.50 pm): The residents of Nerang had strong hopes they would get better bus services when light rail commenced on the Gold Coast in mid-2014. But, once again, this LNP government has failed the constituents of Gaven. My residents were hopeful that weekend and evening services would be reinstated to Clearwater Estate and Dugandan Street, but the latest timetable changes show no change to the 746 service from Yarrimbah Drive to Nerang station and a minor timetable change to the 749 service from Dugandan Street to Nerang station.

My constituents from this area had a deputation at the recent Gold Coast community cabinet, but it appears they wasted their time. There was one glimmer of light and that was the increased frequency of the 740 service from Surfers Paradise to Nerang, via Ashmore, from 7 am to 7 pm. I welcome that. The other major change is the 745 service from Nerang which will now connect with the light rail at Broadbeach, rather than going to Surfers Paradise.

I ask why the Gold Coast City Council, in conjunction with the Department of Transport and Main Roads, is offering free bus travel for seniors in a trial until the end of August when the government cannot afford to provide adequate bus services in Nerang and surrounds. This is costing the state government more than \$80,000 a month—money that could be spent on providing services for my residents. It does not make sense and defies logical, economic reasoning when residents in my area have been totally cut off from weekend services. Is the free service at the expense of residents living in Nerang who have no service? I question where the priorities of this LNP government are.

A letter in the *Gold Coast Sun* from an elderly hinterland resident states that he feels as if he is in a Third World country—a prisoner in his own home. These are not my words; this is how residents feel about the lack of bus services, which severely disadvantages them. The newspaper headline says it all, and it is what I have been saying for months, 'Bring back buses for stranded elderly.'

In our busy world, where fewer people know their neighbours, particularly as a lot of people build online communities, their connection with the people around them is lessening. As part of National Neighbour Day, I ran the Gaven Best Neighbour Award, which was jointly won by Margaret See of Gaven and Anne Akins of Nerang. The joint winner Anne Akins has been organising a street Christmas party in her street for many years. Mrs See has been very busy mowing lawns, baking cakes, minding dogs and repairing curtains—all in the name of being a good neighbour.

I would like to highlight the work of Nerang Community Respite Care, which recently won the Leading Age Services Australia Excellence in Care Organisation Award for Queensland. The judges stated that they were impressed with not just the amazing support at the grassroots level that the association gave to clients but also by the testimonials from those whose lives were enhanced by the personalised and caring support and services they and their families and carers received.

Congratulations to Nerang Community Respite Care General Manager, Jo Todoruk, and her outstanding team who provide care throughout the Gold Coast for people who are old and frail, people with a disability and their carers. By supporting them to live independently in their homes, the organisation makes a difference every day to people's lives.

### Port Douglas, Community Forum

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (11.53 pm): I rise in the House tonight on the occasion of my 21st speech. On 15 May I invited the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, Jann Stuckey, to be the guest speaker at a community forum to be held in Port Douglas. The minister gave a very clear perspective of our government's achievements in the areas of tourism and small business in the context of the Douglas region. I thank the minister for her considerable efforts on my behalf.

Even though the ATE was being held in Cairns that week and it was Carnivale time in Port Douglas, the forum attracted almost 100 participants. Mayor Julia Leu shared her vision for the future of the newly formed Douglas Shire Council. Sam Cullen, the organiser of a major marathon event later this year, explained how his group will raise awareness of the importance of the Great Barrier Reef.

**Mr Rickuss:** Are you going to run, David?

**Mr KEMPTON:** Yes, I am down for 10 kilometres. Gary Hunt, a long-term campaigner for Port Douglas, provided the forum with a very detailed account of the history and the future direction of the waterfront development. Leigh Ratcliffe, the CEO of the R&R Group, shared his inspiration for the future development of the Sheraton Mirage Resort, which is now over 30 years old.

I opened the workshop phase of the forum by outlining the constraints faced by regional communities and the positive steps we as a government are taking to address them—constraints such as an ageing population and the debt legacy left by Labor. The forum was broken into about a dozen groups and asked to write on butcher's paper their five most important actions for the next decade. This was a very rich and rewarding process as people swapped ideas. The outcomes were pinned on the wall and each group given a few minutes to convince the forum to vote for their ideas as priorities were determined. There were several lively and passionate presentations and the voting began.

The outcomes not only highlighted the wishes of the community, but pinpointed the years of neglect by Labor in the delivery of infrastructure and services to the Douglas region. Aged care services, the waterfront development and infrastructure and community facilities ranked among the highest actions attracting the greatest proportion of the votes.

The report, which is currently being prepared, will provide a blueprint for all levels of government when delivering infrastructure and services to the Douglas shire. I was very pleased to experience the enthusiasm and community spirit of this new shire. This is yet another example of how the Newman government is a people's government. Not only do we give regional Queenslanders an opportunity to be heard, but we listen and we act.

### National Parks

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (11.56 pm): I rise in the House this evening to inform the House of yet another example of why our government will become known as the most practical and green government in Queensland's history. It was a commitment of our government, which was clearly stated prior to the election, that we would be actively addressing red and green tape that had enveloped our national parks and reserves. They had become infested with weed and pestilence. Groups such as Scout groups, school excursions or families wanting to experience the great outdoors and the many unique experiences that our parks, flora and fauna provide, found it had become too hard to visit and enjoy.

The Newman-led government, through programs such as Everyone's Environment grants and legislative changes, has ensured that there is an increased level of enthusiastic participation within our park environments. Unfortunately, not all activities are undertaken legally. I attended a meeting of the Bunya Residents Association on 26 March. A resident raised concerns with me about the illegal access of motor vehicles within the Samford Conservation Park at Mailman's Track. This situation is reported to occur quite regularly. Tensions between drivers and locals have escalated at times.

Clearly, this cannot continue to occur unabated. With the risk of harm to legitimate users of the park, to local flora and fauna such as the spotted gum—a native to this area—and environmental impacts, decisive action was required. Enter the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, Minister Dickson. The minister and I met with local residents on 29 April. We were both surprised by the damage that was clearly evident at numerous areas along a section of the road,

where vehicles had cut down trees and created alternate routes to access the park area as the access tracks had had new barrier fences installed. The visit was reported in the local *Quest* newspaper. I table a copy of the article.

*Tabled paper:* Media article, dated 8 May 2014, titled 'Cameras to catch hooners' [\[5156\]](#).

There was an undertaking at this meeting that the department would install covert cameras in an attempt to apprehend the persons who were going to such effort to undertake illegal motor vehicle activities within the conservation area. I am pleased to report that five cameras are now in place and the fine work of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff, located at Samford, will ensure that when or if the perpetrators venture this way again they will almost certainly be caught. So our parks are open for activities and enjoyment by all, but the activities must be legal and if not this very environmentally conscious, green government will take decisive action to address the issue.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.59 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, 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, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Young