



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

### Thursday, 28 August 2014

Subject	Page
<b>REPORT</b> .....	<b>2847</b>
<b>Office of the Speaker</b> .....	<b>2847</b>
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. ....	2847
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Office of the Speaker Report, July 2013 to June 2014.....	2847
<b>PRIVILEGE</b> .....	<b>2847</b>
<b>Speaker's Ruling, Referral to Ethics Committee</b> .....	<b>2847</b>
<b>SPEAKER'S STATEMENT</b> .....	<b>2847</b>
<b>Dissent from Deputy Speaker's Ruling, Clarification of Effect</b> .....	<b>2847</b>
<b>PETITION</b> .....	<b>2848</b>
<b>TABLED PAPERS</b> .....	<b>2848</b>
<b>REPORT</b> .....	<b>2848</b>
<b>Ministerial Expenses</b> .....	<b>2848</b>
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and Independent Auditor-General's report. ....	2848
<b>MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>2848</b>
<b>State Schools, Maintenance</b> .....	<b>2848</b>
<b>Regional Queensland, Health and Education Services</b> .....	<b>2849</b>
<b>Newman Government, Health and Education Services</b> .....	<b>2849</b>
<b>Fixing Our Schools Fund</b> .....	<b>2850</b>
<b>Health Services</b> .....	<b>2851</b>
<b>Accelerate Program for Deaf Children in Rural Areas</b> .....	<b>2852</b>
<b>MOTION</b> .....	<b>2853</b>
<b>Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date</b> .....	<b>2853</b>

Table of Contents – Thursday, 28 August 2014

<b>ABSENCE OF MINISTERS .....</b>	<b>2853</b>
<b>STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>2853</b>
<b>Reports and Submissions .....</b>	<b>2853</b>
<i>Tabled paper.</i> State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 47— Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014.....	2853
<i>Tabled paper.</i> State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 47— Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry.....	2853
<i>Tabled paper.</i> State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 48— National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014.....	2853
<i>Tabled paper.</i> State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 48— National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry.....	2853
<i>Tabled paper.</i> State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 49— Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014.....	2853
<i>Tabled paper.</i> State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 49— Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry.....	2853
<b>FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.....</b>	<b>2853</b>
<b>Report .....</b>	<b>2853</b>
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 48—Inquiry into Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud risk management.....	2854
<b>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR .....</b>	<b>2854</b>
<b>QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE .....</b>	<b>2854</b>
<b>Unemployment .....</b>	<b>2854</b>
<b>Unemployment .....</b>	<b>2855</b>
<b>Burnett Electorate, State Schools Maintenance.....</b>	<b>2855</b>
<b>Brisbane Office Market, Vacancy .....</b>	<b>2856</b>
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Article, dated 7 August 2014, from the Property Council of Australia website titled 'Brisbane office market must transition'.....	2856
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Media release, dated 6 February 2014, from the Property Council of Australia titled 'Brisbane office vacancy aligns with expectations'.....	2856
<b>Burdekin Electorate, State Schools Maintenance .....</b>	<b>2857</b>
<b>Royalties for the Regions .....</b>	<b>2857</b>
<b>Ferny Grove Electorate, State Schools Maintenance.....</b>	<b>2858</b>
<b>Royalties for the Regions .....</b>	<b>2859</b>
<b>Chatsworth Electorate, State Schools Maintenance.....</b>	<b>2860</b>
<b>Ministerial Expenses.....</b>	<b>2860</b>
<b>Mirani Electorate, State Schools Maintenance.....</b>	<b>2861</b>
<b>Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Procurement.....</b>	<b>2862</b>
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Article from the <i>Gold Coast Bulletin</i> , dated 20 August 2014, titled 'Games of Broken Promises'.....	2862
<b>Thuringowa Electorate, State Schools Maintenance.....</b>	<b>2863</b>
<b>Coolum Men's Shed .....</b>	<b>2863</b>
<b>Moggill Electorate, State Schools Maintenance .....</b>	<b>2864</b>
<b>Queensland Health Awards, Government Advertising .....</b>	<b>2865</b>
<b>Ipswich Electorate, State Schools Maintenance.....</b>	<b>2865</b>
<b>SPEAKER'S STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>2866</b>
<b>School Group Tours.....</b>	<b>2866</b>
<b>EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE.....</b>	<b>2866</b>
<b>Report No. 36, Motion to Take Note .....</b>	<b>2866</b>
<b>EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE.....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<b>Report No. 37, Motion to Take Note .....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<b>FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<b>Report No. 47, Motion to Take Note .....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<b>HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<b>Report No. 53, Motion to Take Note .....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL.....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2867</b>
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014.....	2868
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes.....	2868
<b>First Reading .....</b>	<b>2869</b>
<b>Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.....</b>	<b>2869</b>
<b>Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date .....</b>	<b>2869</b>

Table of Contents – Thursday, 28 August 2014

<b>ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND (PROVIDING FREEHOLD) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL</b> .....	<b>2869</b>
<b>Second Reading</b> .....	<b>2869</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 44— Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, government response.....	2877
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. Andrew Cripps's amendments.....	2877
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 22 August 2014, from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Hon. Andrew Cripps, to Mr Ian Rickuss MP, regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014.....	2885
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document titled 'Tropical Learning Academy' regarding the Barron River electorate.....	2889
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>2890</b>
<b>Tropical North Learning Academy</b> .....	<b>2890</b>
<b>Premier's Open Data Awards</b> .....	<b>2891</b>
<b>Kawana Electorate, Deaths</b> .....	<b>2891</b>
<b>Overdose Deaths</b> .....	<b>2892</b>
<b>Safe Night Out Strategy</b> .....	<b>2892</b>
<b>Gold Coast University Hospital</b> .....	<b>2893</b>
<b>Ipswich Jets</b> .....	<b>2894</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document titled 'Ipswich Jets Football: Jets Rugby League Club'.....	2894
<b>Emergency Services Volunteer Cadet Program</b> .....	<b>2894</b>
<b>Distinguished Visitor; Kurilpa Riverfront Renewal Plan</b> .....	<b>2895</b>
<b>Weipa, Community Forum</b> .....	<b>2895</b>
<b>Broadwater Electorate, Education</b> .....	<b>2896</b>
<b>Small Business Week</b> .....	<b>2896</b>
<b>Bowen Temporary Local Planning Instrument</b> .....	<b>2897</b>
<b>Currumbin Surf-Lifesaving; Currumbin Estuary</b> .....	<b>2898</b>
<b>Member for Brisbane Central; Member for Toowoomba North</b> .....	<b>2898</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document containing comments by Professor Kypri in relation to members' comments made during debate on the safe night out bill 2014.....	2899
<b>Bulimba Electorate, Fundraising</b> .....	<b>2899</b>
<b>Nanango Electorate, Somerset Region</b> .....	<b>2900</b>
<b>Skin Cancer</b> .....	<b>2900</b>
<b>Malanda Local Ambulance Committee</b> .....	<b>2901</b>
<b>Cultural Diversity Week</b> .....	<b>2901</b>
<b>Cairns Electorate, Unsung Heroes</b> .....	<b>2902</b>
<b>Coorparoo Junction</b> .....	<b>2903</b>
<b>Nicklin Electorate, Community Groups</b> .....	<b>2903</b>
<b>Mount Coot-tha Electorate, Events</b> .....	<b>2904</b>
<b>Queensland Country Women's Association</b> .....	<b>2905</b>
<b>Employment</b> .....	<b>2905</b>
<b>Grantham, Floods</b> .....	<b>2906</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Aerial Photograph of Wagner quarry depicting post flood wall demolition.....	2906
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Reconstruction Authority: Town of Grantham, 2011 flood maps.....	2906
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Transcript, dated 12 December 2013, of an interview by Alan Jones of a resident of Grantham about 2011 floods.....	2906
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 4 August 2014, from the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, to Councillor Steve Jones AM regarding 2011 flooding of the Lockyer Creek between Helidon and Grantham.....	2906
<b>Transport Regulations, National Reforms</b> .....	<b>2906</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Transport and Main Roads map: critical areas and roads in Queensland, June 2011.....	2907
<b>Carly Ryan Foundation</b> .....	<b>2907</b>
<b>Moreton Media Group</b> .....	<b>2908</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Constitution of Moreton Media Group Inc., registered on 1 August 2008.....	2908
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland government: Associations Incorporation Form 12-1—annual return of association for Moreton Media Group Inc. for financial year ending 30 June 2011.....	2908
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Photo regarding Moreton Media Group.....	2908
<b>Lytton Electorate, Small Business</b> .....	<b>2908</b>
<b>ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND (PROVIDING FREEHOLD) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL</b> .....	<b>2909</b>
<b>Second Reading</b> .....	<b>2909</b>
<b>Consideration in Detail</b> .....	<b>2929</b>
Clause 1, as read, agreed to.....	2929
Clause 2 postponed.....	2929
Clauses 3 to 65—.....	2929
Clauses 3 to 65, as amended, agreed to.....	2931

Table of Contents – Thursday, 28 August 2014

Clause 2—	2931
Clause 2, as amended, agreed to	2931
Schedule, as read, agreed to	2931
<b>Third Reading</b>	<b>2931</b>
<b>Long Title</b>	<b>2932</b>
<b>SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT</b>	<b>2932</b>
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	<b>2932</b>
<b>Health System</b>	<b>2932</b>
<b>Small Business Week</b>	<b>2932</b>
<b>Bushfire Preparedness</b>	<b>2933</b>
<b>Redcliffe Electorate, Newman Government</b>	<b>2934</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 13 August 2014, from the member for Redcliffe, Mrs Yvette D'Ath MP, to the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jeff Seeney, regarding Draft Moreton Bay Regional Planning Scheme	2934
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Email, dated 13 August 2014, from the Office of the Deputy Premier acknowledging email received	2934
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 20 August 2014, from the member for Redcliffe, Mrs Yvette D'Ath MP, to the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jeff Seeney, regarding Draft Moreton Bay Regional Planning Scheme	2934
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Email, dated 20 August 2014, from the Office of the Deputy Premier acknowledging email received	2934
<b>Pine Rivers, Rugby League</b>	<b>2934</b>
<b>Gaven Electorate, Public Transport; Events</b>	<b>2935</b>
<b>St Mary's College</b>	<b>2936</b>
<b>Algerie Electorate, School Maintenance</b>	<b>2936</b>
<b>Curtis Island, Environmental Offset Agreement</b>	<b>2937</b>
<b>Education; Law and Order</b>	<b>2937</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>2938</b>

## THURSDAY, 28 AUGUST 2014

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

### REPORT

#### Office of the Speaker



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the *Statement for public disclosure: expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly* for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. I also table the *Office of the Speaker report* for members for the same period.

*Tabled paper:* Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 [[5769](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Office of the Speaker Report, July 2013 to June 2014 [[5770](#)].

### PRIVILEGE

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



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 10 June 2014 the member for Southport wrote to me alleging that the Leader of the Opposition deliberately misled the House in statements made during the budget reply speech on 5 June 2014 when she stated—

I rise on behalf of the 20,000 workers who were sacked after being told their jobs were safe.

The member for Southport provided evidence which stated that the number of Public Service employees in the voluntary redundancy process was 9,200.

In accordance with standing order 269(5) I wrote requesting further information from the Leader of the Opposition, which was received on 8 July 2014. In response, the Leader of the Opposition provided evidence to me about workers being told that their jobs were safe by referring to reports of Premier Newman stating before the election that public servants had nothing to fear. The context provided by the Leader of the Opposition then indicated that the figures used were referring to Public Service employees. However, later in the Leader of the Opposition's evidence provided to me it is acknowledged that the figure of 20,000 was arrived at by including the opposition's own estimated changes to the workforce in other sectors outside of the Public Service. Thus, there is prima facie evidence of the statements being deliberately misleading.

The process of asking for a response allows members the opportunity to correct the record if they have been inadvertently misleading, and I note that members on both sides of the House have done so on occasion. There has been no correction, so I find that this requires further consideration by the committee. I will be referring this matter to the Ethics Committee.

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

#### Dissent from Deputy Speaker's Ruling, Clarification of Effect



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, yesterday the House did not agree to a motion of dissent from the Deputy Speaker's ruling. This motion pertained to whether a member's absence from a parliamentary committee may be referenced during debate in the House. I advise the House that I consider the effect of the resolution should be confined to the specific matter which was the subject of the dissent motion, being references to a member's absence from a parliamentary committee. In my view, previous Speakers' rulings that members not make reference to members' absence from the Legislative Assembly chamber remain unaffected by yesterday's resolution.

## PETITION

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

### Mining Industry, Employees

394 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure mining companies provide equal options for all workers, employing a mix of workers from the community, fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive out and to ensure all workers are allowed to live where they choose [5771].

Petition received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Dr McVeigh)

[5772](#) Response from the Minister Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Dr McVeigh) to an ePetition (2237-14) sponsored by Dr Douglas, from 163 petitioners, requesting the House to implement regulations with minimum standards for the slaughter of horses, including a captive bolt and solid kill pen at least 20 metres from other horses

Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience (Mr Crisafulli)—

[5773](#) Response from the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience (Mr Crisafulli) to an ePetition (2246-14) sponsored by Mr Bennett, from 121 petitioners, requesting the House to consider changing Gladstone Regional Council from undivided to divided representation, along the lines of State and Federal governments

## REPORT

### Ministerial Expenses



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.35 am): I lay upon the table of the House the public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

*Tabled paper:* Public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and Independent Auditor-General's report [5774].

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### State Schools, Maintenance



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.35 am): This government remains committed to ensuring that Queenslanders have access to the best school facilities and a safe learning environment. That is why the government moved quickly when we first came to office to address issues like peeling paint, ripped carpet and cracked footpaths. Today, I have the absolute pleasure to announce the third round of funding being made under our \$300 million commitment to revitalise Queensland state schools.

It is truly an historic day for Queensland state schools. This final \$100 million will completely clear the huge maintenance backlog left by the previous Labor government. I am pleased to advise the House that all Queensland state schools will receive a share of the funding. In the first year of the program schools were allocated up to \$160,000 each to fix maintenance issues. The second round saw schools receive extra funds of up to \$70,000 plus 14 per cent of any remaining liability. Such was the extent of the backlog that some schools in the second round qualified to receive in excess of \$500,000. So much for their commitment to public education! The third round ensures every school receives its planned base maintenance funds, additional funding for any outstanding maintenance carried over from 2011-12 and up to \$35,000 for any new maintenance issues. But more importantly, the third and final round ensures that the backlog is gone.

Since coming to government, the Advancing Our Schools Maintenance program has delivered \$203.5 million to primary schools, \$84.4 million to high schools, \$7.8 million to special schools and schools of distance education and \$6.2 million to outdoor and environmental education centres. Apart from the funding itself, the government has also made changes to streamline maintenance procedures. We have given schools the ability to engage independent tradespeople to deliver planned and routine breakdown maintenance, rather than being shackled to QBuild. As well as giving schools autonomy, this will stimulate local economies and create jobs—real jobs.

When I was elected as the local member for Ashgrove, one of the first schools I visited was Mitchelton State School. What I saw was completely unacceptable: a tired, run-down school with peeling paint, cracked and rusted downpipes, blocked drains and cracked playing surfaces. Since this program began I have seen a complete turnaround in the presentation of the school, and I know that this is happening in electorates right across Queensland.

Now that we are on the cusp of achieving a milestone in its own right—clearing the maintenance backlog of all state schools in Queensland—we will continue to fund our schools to ensure this situation does not repeat itself. Schools will never again be neglected and fall into disrepair, but only under an LNP government with a strong plan for a brighter future.

### **Regional Queensland, Health and Education Services**

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.39 am): Our government has a strong plan to revitalise front-line services and deliver a brighter future for all Queenslanders, and health services for regional Queenslanders are an important part of our plan. The Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning works together with major project proponents doing business in regional Queensland to ensure that they can make a meaningful contribution towards the delivery of those critical front-line services. Queensland's resource sector provides a great deal of investment in positive health and education initiatives in regional communities across regional Queensland. For example, in 2012-13 Queensland resource companies voluntarily contributed more than \$71 million to communities in a wide range of areas. A total of \$5.6 million of that \$71 million was provided specifically for health initiatives and a further \$4 million was provided specifically for education programs.

The gas industry has made a significant contribution to health and education initiatives for communities in the Surat Basin and in Gladstone. Gladstone Hospital has been one of the biggest beneficiaries, with QGC providing \$3.5 million to upgrade the renal dialysis centre and Santos GLNG providing \$1.45 million to assist the hospital's high-dependency unit. Roma Hospital today enjoys a wellness centre with 30 clinicians from a range of medical fields thanks to a \$1 million contribution from Santos GLNG. In times of emergency, the Surat and Bowen Basin communities are better serviced now due to the gas industry proponents funding of two CareFlight rescue helicopters totalling \$35 million. The gas industry also partners with Education Queensland and has provided more than \$300,000 to enhance students' training in science, maths, engineering and technology. All of these initiatives from the large multimillion-dollar investments in aeromedical services and hospitals to the smaller individual grants provided to community groups like junior sport and surf-lifesaving groups are improving the health and wellbeing of regional Queenslanders.

Our government, too, through the flagship Royalties for the Regions program has also improved health outcomes in regional communities. In round 1 we provided \$750,000 to construct a new general practice medical clinic in the town of Dysart to allow local residents to access health services in their local communities. Royalties for the Regions has also provided for the upgrade of a number of airports in regional centres to ensure, amongst other things, that health patients can be evacuated to larger hospitals in a sensible and more reliable way. Aerial evacuation has become more important for country people needing the specialist or emergency health services that can only be provided in our larger hospitals and upgrading these airports is a critical part of delivering those services. Royalties for the Regions itself, of course, was made possible due to the partnership approach to funding infrastructure in regional Queensland. Industry, predominantly from the resources sector, has collectively contributed more than \$61 million to Royalties for the Regions over its first three rounds. While providing the best free healthcare system in the nation is predominantly the responsibility of the government and the responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Health, it is incumbent upon the rest of us, especially due to the debt and deficit we inherited from Labor, to encourage smarter investment in these services. These contributions by the resources sector are great examples of how we can work together to revitalise front-line services in our regional communities and provide a brighter future for regional Queenslanders.

### **Newman Government, Health and Education Services**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): It is indeed incumbent on all of us to make sure that we are delivering better health and education services, and that is what this government is all about. We came to government with a commitment to deliver better front-line services and we are all about delivering those services.

**Mr Newman** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** The taxpayers of Queensland are funding it and they deserve to get the best value for the funding that they provide. We have heard all this week how our focus on revitalising front-line services is delivering for Queenslanders in the areas of health and education. Our school results are improving and our hospitals are functioning better. Less money is being swallowed up by the bureaucracy and more money is being provided to programs that are delivering real results. But this government is not just focused on the here and now. Everything this government does is about ensuring this state's growing population enjoys a brighter and more prosperous future. That is why we are absolutely committed to repairing the state's finances and outlining a plan to pay down Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt. We may not have created the problem, but we know it is imperative that we must act. We know that a do-nothing approach will simply lead to more debt and more deficits in the long term, and that has been demonstrated by Queensland Treasury modelling.

We also know that in the next 20 years we will have an extra 600,000 people over the age of 65 and we will have to educate an extra 400,000 students. This growth is going to place huge demands on both our health and education systems, and the government has to start planning now to ensure that we have the infrastructure in place to deal with this growth. This LNP government has a plan. It is a positive plan that will reduce the state's stock of debt by \$25 billion. It will inject resilience back into our budget in case of a disaster. It is a plan that will reduce our interest payments by \$1.3 billion annually and it is a plan that provides an \$8.6 billion Strong Choices Investment Program divided into a range of funds to build the infrastructure that a growing state like Queensland needs. As part of this program, there is a \$1 billion Future Schools Fund. The Schools Planning Commission has delivered a report to government detailing the need for up to 48 new schools between now and 2021. This fund would enable a program for new schools and a program to deliver new classrooms at existing schools. There is also a \$300 million Community Hospital Fund. This government knows that hospitals across Queensland but particularly in regional Queensland need upgrading and redevelopment to cater for our increasing population and growing demand for health services. This fund puts aside money for the future health and hospital needs of Queensland.

Again, I stress that none of our proposals will be implemented until we have taken our careful and methodical plan to the people of Queensland at the next election. But what is important is that Queenslanders know we have funding certainty. They know how this government is going to fund the schools and hospitals of the future. They know where this money is coming from and that we are not going to have to put further strain on the budget or on taxes to deliver this infrastructure. Contrast that with the lack of a plan, the lack of vision, from those opposite. They have no plan to pay down the debt they accumulated and they have no way to fund the schools and hospitals of the future. Only the LNP has a strong plan for a brighter future for Queenslanders.

### **Fixing Our Schools Fund**

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (9.46 am): Having the job as Minister for Education in Queensland is always inspiring, but today is especially great because I can announce that we will shortly begin rolling out the final maintenance allocations under our Fixing Our Schools Fund to clear the school maintenance backlog left for us by Labor. It has taken nearly \$300 million, but the backlog will be gone and Queensland schools will all be safer places for our children to play and learn. Some schools will receive in excess of \$500,000, and that is in addition to funds we have invested in capital works projects to deliver new facilities and build the schools of the future. Once again, schools will, if they wish, be able to go direct to market to have necessary works completed rather than being told to lodge a maintenance request, join the queue and wait hopefully, as they were under Labor.

Labor likes to think that only it can be trusted when it comes to education. It is an article of faith for it—at least, that is what it says! This could not be further from the truth. In community after community it took Queenslanders for granted for 20 years. Nowhere was this more shamefully evident than in the state of Queensland schools. The worst thing is that it was burning through money in almost every other area, because we have the debt to show for it; it just was not leaving any to look after the area it supposedly values the most. In the days and months after I became minister I received calls and emails from colleagues, from parents, from principals. In the years before we became the government, principals in my electorate of Surfers Paradise were wary of complaining in case of retribution. I could not help but notice when I visited schools in my electorate whilst in

opposition for eight years cracked guttering, fencing in disrepair, shabby fittings and peeling paint for which schools would receive amounts of up to \$10,000 a year. Under the LNP government, that is a thing of the past.

I want to reassure those opposite that this LNP government has done what they never did: we fixed Labor's school maintenance mess in every one of their electorates. So let us go through them. The 10 schools in the Leader of the Opposition's electorate of Inala have benefited from more than \$2 million in maintenance funding since we came to government, with half a million dollars of that flowing to them in 2014-15. That was good news for Darra State School. Under Labor, it would have received \$7,480 for 2012-13 maintenance—\$7,500! With today's announcement, it will have received a total of more than \$300,000 to revitalise its school.

The member for Mulgrave might be interested to know that the 19 schools in his electorate have received more than \$3.7 million since 2012, with \$970,000 in 2014-15. What does that mean? Let us look at Hambleton State School, which had a maintenance liability of \$176,330 when we came to government. The planned allocation under Labor was going to be \$21,274 in 2012-13. We gave them \$160,000 in our first year. They will have received a total of nearly \$260,000 by the end of 2014-15.

The member for Redcliffe likes to place a lot of blame on the policies of this government. The policies of this government have resulted in an investment of more than \$3 million in clearing the mess that Labor left in Redcliffe. For Scarborough State School, there is \$252,360—the kind of investment that really makes a difference. The member for South Brisbane, who I see leering at me from over the chamber, has not yet written to me to say thank you—and I think I will be waiting for a long time—for the \$2.34 million that this government has invested in the eight schools in her electorate or, for that matter, the many millions of dollars we spent future proofing Brisbane State High School—

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! The member for South Brisbane will cease her interjections.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** There is more than \$410,000 for Narbethong State Special School, \$284,000 for West End Special School and \$259,842 for Dutton Park State School.

The member for Stafford—welcome—can breathe a little easier because, unlike us on this side of the House when we were elected, he has an electorate in which the Labor backlog has been cleared. Thanks to the \$828,484—

**Dr Lynham** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Stafford will cease his interjections.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** For Stafford's four schools, this LNP government has delivered \$828,484. The 16 schools in the electorate of the member for Rockhampton have received \$4.437 million for school maintenance, including the more than \$1 million that they will receive in 2014-15. The member for Mackay can tell principals that they have received a combined total of \$3.54 million in 12 schools. They will certainly have their final maintenance allocations of \$823,000. In Bundamba, the member may be interested to know that 13 schools shared in \$3.21 million to fix up Labor's mess, including \$662,000 in 2014-15. Finally, in Woodridge we have delivered a massive \$374 million to the 12 schools in the member's community.

When I say that the future of Queensland's schools is too important to risk on the chaos, waste and mismanagement of Labor, I need only point to the state of disrepair that they left Queensland's schools to prove my point. Queenslanders can have every confidence in the LNP and its plans for the future. They only have to look at what we have done in our state schools.

## Health Services

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.52 am): Since 2012, under this government's strong plan for a brighter future in our state health system, local hospital and health boards play a pivotal role. When the former Labor government lost control of Queensland Health, tens of thousands of people were waiting, some up to 10 years, to have their teeth fixed. Today, there are no long waits for dental treatment. Under Labor, only 86 per cent of patients in need of urgent surgery received it on time. Now, we see 97 per cent of patients in that category receiving surgery on time.

In Labor's hospital emergency departments, just 63 per cent of patients were seen and treated in less than four hours. Now, we treat 76 per cent. Labor's list of more than 6,000 patients waiting too long for surgery has been cut to 1,068 and the main remaining impediment to further reductions is the absolute necessity to cater for high-risk factors prior to surgery.

All of that is not possible without the culture of leadership and dedication to patients that hospital and health boards help to provide and inspire. The boards and their clinical teams achieve remarkable outcomes for patients while balancing their budgets year on year. Our goal is to build Australia's best free public hospitals system and nothing less will do.

This year, we have a record state Health budget of \$13.622 billion—\$2 billion more than when Labor was in office. Today, I will also be writing to every hospital and health board chairman outlining their charter from me and my expectations about the priorities that they must deliver as they grow and as the quality of our health care improves. Some of the key matters that I will be expecting from them are as follows. With regard to clinical engagement, as decision making is devolved, boards must build upon their clinician engagement strategies. Better collaboration between senior management will also be expected. The Clinical Senate, clinical network, local clinicians and staff will also be better engaged to shape our health system to deliver best patient outcomes.

Regarding elective surgery, momentum in reducing the number of long-wait elective surgery cases must be accelerated. By 1 January 2015, hospital boards must ensure that no Queenslanders, once ready for surgery, will wait longer than is clinically recommended. Regarding emergency departments, in every case local performance against the national access target must continue to improve.

With financial accountability, boards are expected to deliver patient focused, sustainable, quality, value-for-money health care. Community engagement is essential and boards must always seek and respect the views of the patients and communities they serve and form strong partnerships in health service delivery. Proactive patient community and media engagement, including social media, will reinforce local accountability and improve the effectiveness of local health strategies.

Regarding outpatient and dental care, as boards commit through their service agreements to greatly reduce numbers of long-wait outpatients, the government will coordinate specific related activity, for example, targeting support for ophthalmology waiting list reduction. The historic reduction of dental long waits to zero will remain locked in place.

I congratulate our hospital and health boards, doctors, nurses, allied health and support staff on their achievements. Under our strong plan for Queensland Health, Queenslanders look forward to continued significant improvement in public health care across the state.

### **Accelerate Program for Deaf Children in Rural Areas**



**Hon. IB WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (9.56 am): Kids in the bush deserve the chance to overcome hearing loss just as much as those living in the city and a new research fellowship supported by the Queensland government is committing money and expertise to help them. The government has provided \$8.75 million to Queensland science and innovation through the Accelerate program, including \$3 million for new and midcareer fellowships. Through these fellowships, we are delivering better access to health services and better education results for Queenslanders and a program that helps children living in remote areas of our vast state is an important part of that push.

Dr Gabriella Constantinescu from Hear and Say has received an Accelerate Fellowship of \$180,000 over three years to help regional children who are hard of hearing. As members know, Hear and Say is a not-for-profit organisation that helps children with hearing loss. Wally Lewis is associated with Hear and Say, as is Dr Dimity Dornan AM, who is its executive director and founder. Dr Constantinescu is leading a world-first project to deliver specialised early intervention training to remote children with hearing loss via telemedicine. Children in remote areas cannot access face-to-face programs. This Hear and Say program is a telemedicine program to help kids in regional areas with hearing loss. It will compare the results of the telemedicine program with the face-to-face program to validate its usefulness. It is hoped that this program will lead to a broader uptake of telemedicine to assist the children who need it the most. In the one-hour sessions, parents teach their children specific skills under the guidance of their therapist. Speech and language assessments are completed twice a year and a report is provided to the parent following each assessment.

This government will not forget the children and the families living in rural and remote Queensland. Dr Constantinescu's fellowship will make a real difference to children. This research is part of our strong plan in health and education and that strength exists not to throw our weight around but to deliver a brighter future for all us. Kids in the bush deserve to hear just as well as every other child in Queensland. We may not be able to cure deafness, but we are doing what we can for all Queensland children, no matter where they live.

## MOTION

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.59 am): I move—

That the report date for the Finance and Administration Committee's inquiry into the Queensland Plan Bill 2014 referred by the House on 26 August 2014 be extended to 10 October 2014.

Motion agreed to.

## ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.59 am): I wish to advise the House that the Attorney-General will be absent from question time from 10.30 am today as he is attending the funeral of Mr Cedric Hampson, Officer of the Order of Australia and Queen's Counsel.

I further advise that Minister Emerson will be absent from the House today as he is attending a transport and infrastructure ministerial meeting in Canberra.

## STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

### Reports and Submissions

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (10.00 am): I lay upon the table of the House the following reports of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: report No. 47, *Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014* and submissions received, Nos 1 to 18; report No. 48, *National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014* and submissions received, Nos 1 to 18; and report No. 49, *Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014* and the submissions received. I commend the reports to the House.

*Tabled paper:* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 47—Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[5775\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 47—Electricity Competition and Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry [\[5776\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 48—National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014 [\[5777\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 48—National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry [\[5778\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 49—Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014 [\[5779\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 49—Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry [\[5780\]](#).

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (10.00 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 48 of the Finance and Administration Committee titled *Inquiry into Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud risk management*. The report presents a summary of the committee's inquiries into four Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud risk management. The committee found during the course of the inquiries that issues raised in the reports were interrelated and therefore agreed to present the findings of all four audit reports at once encompassing all the issues examined.

The committee has made 13 recommendations aimed at assisting departments in combating fraud activity. On behalf of the committee I wish to thank the Auditor-General and his staff and the departmental officers for meeting with the committee and for their cooperation in providing information to the committee on a timely basis. Finally, I would like to thank the members of the committee and the committee secretariat for their hard work and support. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 48—Inquiry into Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud risk management [5781].

## DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**Madam SPEAKER:** Before commencing question time, I wish to acknowledge the visit today of Sir Alan Haselhurst, chairman of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's executive committee and member of the UK parliament. Sir Alan will be attending various functions at the parliament today and we are delighted to welcome him to the Queensland parliament. Question time will finish at 11.01 am.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Unemployment

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.01 am): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise what the youth unemployment rate was when he was elected in March 2012, what the youth unemployment rate is now and what the government is doing to address this crisis?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The issue of unemployment in this state is one that this government takes extremely seriously. Since the day that we were elected we have worked relentlessly towards our target of a four per cent unemployment rate in this state. We will continue to work, we will continue to strive every single day, to create jobs for Queenslanders. That involves a whole range of initiatives, but particularly it centres around our four-pillar economic approach which is to build up tourism, agriculture, construction and resources. We have a plan now for each of those sectors. I note, for example, that DestinationQ will be held at Noosa in only a few days time. Minister Stuckey, myself and other ministers will be attending. I particularly make the point that tourism is an industry sector that is important for young people because many young people work in hospitality—in restaurants, coffee shops and at tourism resorts. By getting tourism going, as we have as a government, we give young people opportunities to enter the workforce.

Overall, the government strategy is to make this the best place in Australia to do business. We have been doing that for the past two years and four months. Unfortunately, those opposite do not have business backgrounds and those who were in the parliament previously did not understand the folly of many of the things that they inflicted on businesses—things like a waste tax, things like sustainability declarations when selling residential properties and things like huge amounts of paperwork for property agents, motor dealers and auctioneers. They were people who supported a carbon tax and continue to support a carbon tax. They somehow pretend that a carbon tax does not impose extra costs on businesses and people's cost of living. They did not understand that the more onerous legal obligations you put on directors the more you drive out the appetite for risk and entrepreneurship. All those things affected business. They were tied to the unions. We know they are even more tied to the unions today after last weekend. They are showing no signs out in the community of actually having any real economic policies. I say this: we are committed, totally and unequivocally, to making this the best place in Australia to do business.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. The question was clearly about what the youth unemployment rate was when the Premier came to power and what it is now. It is a simple question.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Please take your seat. That is not a point of order. I warn the Leader of the Opposition. That is not a point of order under our standing orders. The Premier is answering the question. There were many parts to it. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I want to talk about what we are doing to deal with the problem to actually create jobs—and that is what we are doing. When we were elected it was 11.9 per cent. It is now 12.9 per cent.

## Unemployment

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My question is to the Premier. With Queensland's unemployment rate in July reaching a disturbing 11-year high, how many jobs will now be needed to meet the LNP's four per cent unemployment pledge?

**Mr NEWMAN:** It seems like we are having a day today of 'see if we can ask the Premier a question about numbers' or something. Isn't that fascinating? I will talk about some numbers as well. The Leader of the Opposition released her diaries—finally—for the months of April, May and June. I am working relentlessly to create jobs for Queenslanders. Every member of my cabinet is working hard to create jobs for Queenslanders. Every member of this political team is working hard to promote business, promote the state and create investment in Queensland. What is the Leader of the Opposition doing? In April the Leader of the Opposition had six external meetings.

**Mr Seeney:** In a month!

**Mr NEWMAN:** In a month. In May the Leader of the Opposition had two external meetings. Those external meetings in May were with Mr John Battams, the president of the Queensland Council of Unions, to discuss issues relating to upcoming Labour Day events—not to create jobs, not to get a compact with the unions to actually take this state forward. What was her second meeting? I am looking for it. That's right, it was with the mayor and the deputy mayor of the Gladstone Regional Council to discuss local issues including the possible sale of the port. The port is not being sold. We are proposing a lease of the port.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I warn members on my left. There are too many interjections which are coming across as just a wall of sound. I ask you to cease your interjections. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thought I perhaps should give her a go and have a look at the next month, which was June. In June the hardworking—no, sorry, not very hardworking—Leader of the Opposition had three external meetings. We now have in aggregate in three months a total of 11 external meetings in a 90-day period. What a breathtaking level of activity for a Leader of the Opposition. Let us look at the three external meetings. The first one I have noticed that might have something to do with jobs was with Daniel Gschwind, the CEO of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council. There was a meeting with Councillor Jenny Hill, the mayor of Townsville, and there was a meeting with the Governor of Queensland. So as far as can I make out, one industry related, job-creating meeting in three months. In contrast, I can tell members that this government is working relentlessly on creating jobs. The statistics speak for themselves. This state, with only a fifth of the nation's population, is creating every month more than half the nation's jobs and that is a proud track record.

## Burnett Electorate, State Schools Maintenance

**Mr BENNETT:** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House what this government is doing to fix the damaged floors and ceilings and remove the peeling paint in the schools in my electorate of Burnett so that schools can once again be places of pride for students to learn, teachers to teach and communities to gather?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett, is a strong local member and he knows firsthand what this government is doing for schools by clearing the maintenance backlog that was left by the Australian Labor Party and by getting rid of red tape to allow schools to go direct to market. I am pleased to announce that under this LNP government the 2014-15 Advancing Our Schools Maintenance program will provide an additional \$1.319 million to the 26 schools in the member's electorate, bringing total funding to \$4.502 million. I acknowledge that for 23 years the local member worked all over Queensland for the Department of Public Works and can speak from personal experience, as he has with me, about the frustrations of working under the previous regime, which was focused only on protecting the minister, Rob Swarten. One of the reasons the local member decided to run for office was on the back of years of underfunding and nonsense that was the Queensland Labor government.

The key maintenance work that is being undertaken and delivered as a result of the additional funding in the electorate of Burnett includes: at Kalkie State School, after years of the school flooding, the installation of surface water rectification works; at Bargara State School, the external repainting of three large teaching blocks that had peeling paint; at Woongarra State School, the external repainting of two large teaching blocks that had peeling paint; at Rosedale State School, the external repainting

of two large teaching blocks that had peeling paint. There is a theme here. They put solar panels on the roofs, but they would not make an effort to make the place look like somewhere you wanted to go and learn or where you wanted to take your kids or where you wanted to work as a teacher. At Agnes Water State School there is a new ceiling to the covered games area, where for years the insulation sheeting was rotted and falling down; at Childers State School, the replacement of torn and damaged vinyl floor coverings and the replacement of a rusted roof. Clearly this is an exceptional result.

As I said in a ministerial statement on Tuesday, just the other day I was in the honourable member's electorate and he was telling me that the local principal of the Bundaberg East State School, the highly respected Doug Ambrose, told him-

Schools have never been better resourced in all my years of teaching.

And Doug has been teaching for 40 years. The Great Results Guarantee means that the Burnett electorate and its kids have received \$1.381 million. So far we have not seen an independent public school, but I know that the honourable member is keen to work with school communities to deliver that sort of autonomy and flexibility through this very important program. It is a great result in Burnett and a great result across Queensland.

### **Brisbane Office Market, Vacancy**

**Mr PITT:** I table the report from the Property Council detailing that Brisbane's office market has risen from the highest vacancy rate on record of 14.2 per cent to an even higher rate of 14.7 per cent. Will the Premier explain why his government sold seven CBD office buildings for \$237 million below book value in this market and why he is sinking taxpayers' money into a new office for himself, when there is so much office space available?

*Tabled paper:* Article, dated 7 August 2014, from the Property Council of Australia website titled 'Brisbane office market must transition' [\[5782\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 6 February 2014, from the Property Council of Australia titled 'Brisbane office vacancy aligns with expectations' [\[5783\]](#).

**Mr NEWMAN:** I think we have been asked this question before. If we are talking about the Property Council and its reports, I would note some glowing reports from the Property Council, not just recently but consistently over the past 18 months. One of the most interesting things from another industry body was the recent crane index, which is up 33 per cent. People are back on construction sites.

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr NEWMAN:** People are back at work on construction sites across South-East Queensland and we hope that that resurgence in construction spreads to other important regional cities as well. We will work extremely hard to make sure that that happens. That is what we are about.

In relation to No. 1 William Street, there is a big banner on the fence. Surely the honourable member is not so vision impaired that he cannot see that it says very clearly that there are—how many jobs?

**Mr Seeney:** A thousand jobs.

**Mr NEWMAN:** There are 1,000 jobs being created. Hardworking men and women, of whom many are CFMEU members, have a job today because their industry super fund, Cbus, is investing into the building that we will lease.

**Mr Pitt:** Why don't you address the vacancy rates? That was the question.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, member! I warn the Leader of Opposition Business. Your injections are not being taken.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I am delighted to come into this place and answer questions until the cows come home, but common courtesy would suggest that one would listen to the answer. The reactions that we see in this place time and time again from those opposite really show what they are about. We are about a strong and positive plan that is getting this state going. I am afraid that those opposite do not have a plan. They do not like one another. Every day we see them fighting each other. Can members imagine how those honourable members opposite who yesterday asked those silly questions about Crown Developments felt? One would think that they would have gone away last

night and crawled into their little hidey-holes and died of shame. One would think that today they would come in here and correct the record. One would think that they would have that integrity, but they do not have the ability to do that and they do not have a plan.

I reiterate: the construction sector has roared into life. There are more cranes on the skyline, there are huge increases in development applications in South-East Queensland and, indeed, in some other regional cities and people are back on the tools. People are back on the job in the construction industry, which is exactly what we promised. Today I say that there is a whole lot more coming for Queensland.

### **Burdekin Electorate, State Schools Maintenance**

**Mrs MENKENS:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister please inform the House of how the LNP government is working to clear the maintenance backlog left to us by Labor and is revitalising the magnificent schools in my electorate of Burdekin?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I thank the honourable member for the question. As I recall, she entered this parliament with me, having replaced a Labor member who was a one-termer and, obviously, under his tenure the same maintenance backlog was left in the schools of Burdekin. Since being the minister, it has been a great pleasure, as we have done with all the members opposite, to ensure that that maintenance backlog is being cleared. The member's passion for education is evident. She is a former teacher, including a TAFE teacher. I know that Rosemary Menkens is a passionate advocate for the electorate of Burdekin where we have held a community cabinet and where we have had numerous visits over the years.

In terms of specific maintenance, we have allocated \$4,521,855 to 27 schools in the electorate of Burdekin. Ayr State High School, where I took the new director-general only last year, has Indigenous engagement programs and has received \$143,000. Recently, we held a principal's roundtable at Ayr State School, where \$410,328 has been spent. Principal Bryan Dudley told the honourable member and me that at his school all the maintenance and painting is up to date for the first time. For the first time in his tenure, maintenance and painting is up to date. For the first time, the school is completely repaired, painted and maintained, so that it is once again the community hub that it deserves to be. He is over the moon about that. Let us look at some of the smaller schools. At Giru State School, where I had the pleasure of attending another function with the honourable member some time ago, \$137,647 has been received. At Home Hill State School, \$60,000 has been spent on maintenance, including painting the back and front verandas of the prep unit, upgrading fencing along the school boundaries, repairing roof downpipes and works on a sandpit.

However, this is not just about maintenance. We have already mentioned that that was the situation we inherited when we came into government and we have said that we have to fix these problems. We have also said that we have to have annual budget allocations for things such as the early years of education, where we have focused on the Great Results Guarantee. We have provided more support for prep teacher aides in acknowledgment of the importance of the early years. Preppies at five Burdekin schools will benefit from an additional 104.6 prep teacher aide hours each week in 2015. Under the Great Results Guarantee funding, \$1,632,724 will go straight to schools to make sure that they can help younger students start their educational journey on the right foot. Of course, it is the government's aim to get all our students in prep to year 2 to the national minimum standard when they sit for the NAPLAN test in year 3. It is obvious that that is how the Newman government is delivering on our brighter future, especially in electorates such as Burdekin.

### **Royalties for the Regions**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. I refer to the minister's answer yesterday regarding Royalties for the Regions and seek clarification. Will the Brisbane City Council and other councils in the Greater Brisbane area be eligible to apply for and receive funding from Royalties for the Regions, now rebadged as RegionsQ?

**Mr SEENEY:** I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. I welcome the opportunity to again talk about Royalties for the Regions. The direct answer to her question, which I have given a number of times since this little conspiracy was hatched by somebody, is that no, of course not. It is called Royalties for the Regions. It is for regional councils. Regional councils will be able to apply. What we did was extend the program from the small pilot group of councils that were eligible to now all regional councils in Queensland. It is called Royalties for the Regions for a reason.

Can I tell members that there is a line-up of regional councils that are understanding the value of the funding that we are providing for regional Queensland. As I said yesterday, when we came to government we had a commitment to regional Queensland, we had a commitment to returning some of the funding to regional Queensland that had been denied to regional Queensland over so many years. Unfortunately, we inherited a terrible financial situation—\$85 billion worth of debt. What were the prophetic words, Treasurer, that were in the briefing note from Treasury that the economic situation of Queensland is unsustainable and fiscal repair is the urgent priority of government.

That was what we were confronted with. But we maintained our determination to put Royalties for the Regions in place from day one, even knowing that the amount of capital that we were able to direct to the Royalties for the Regions would be severely limited. We were determined to ensure that Royalties for the Regions was there to provide that conduit for funding to regional Queensland.

Over the first four years of our budgeting process we have allocated \$495 million to the programs. I still do not know why I could not get \$500 million. There has been \$495 million allocated to Royalties for the Regions. A whole range of regional communities have benefited from those funds in the 2½ years since then.

We have funded a whole range of community infrastructure—water and sewerage upgrades in communities that were suffering growth pressure; the Dysart medical centre that I mentioned this morning in my ministerial statement; child-care centres in the electorate of the member for Gregory; roadworks, bridge works and those types of things that have been badly needed in all sorts of electorates. In the electorate of the member for Condamine where the growth pressure has been great—places like Dalby, Toowoomba and Roma—we have funded community infrastructure. We will continue to work with councils and local members in this House.

I repeat the commitment that I have given a couple of times to the member for Mount Isa. If any local regional member wants assistance in accessing Royalties for the Regions funding for developing projects that can be funded through Royalties for the Regions, then I and my department stand ready to help them. We are there for regional Queensland. I am here for regional Queensland. Royalties for the Regions will deliver for regional Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

### **Ferny Grove Electorate, State Schools Maintenance**

**Mr SHUTTLEWORTH:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House what this government is doing to fix leaky roofs and broken windows and doors so that schools are once again a place of pride for students to learn, teachers to teach and communities to gather in my electorate of Ferny Grove?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The MP for Ferny Grove, Dale Shuttleworth, is a strong local member and he knows firsthand what happens. I will tell a story if I have time about what this government is delivering for schools by clearing the maintenance backlog left by the former Labor government as well as getting rid of red tape by allowing schools to go directly to market with local contractors.

I am pleased to announce that the 2014-15 Advancing Our Schools Maintenance program, under this LNP government's strong plan, will see an additional \$1.257 million going to the eight schools in the Ferny Grove electorate. That brings total funding to \$2.962 million. The member knows what a difference this will make. In fact, Dale Shuttleworth does tuckshop duty at a school in his electorate every sitting week. This week it is Samford State School, I am advised. Through this type of work and his grassroots participation he sees what our students, volunteers and staff have had to put up with in the past.

Key maintenance work undertaken and delivered as a result of the additional funding in the electorate of Ferny Grove includes: major drainage works on the oval at Ferny Hills State School—it used to be weeks, honourable members, before the oval could be used after heavy rain, but not anymore; and leaky roofs were fixed at the Ferny Hills State School. There were leaky roofs and these people opposite used to put solar panels on roofs rather than fix leaky roofs. Other maintenance work includes: broken windows and doors were fixed at the Ferny Hills State School—they used to be locked and not used at all; and the usual fences, gutters, carpets and stair replacements right across the schools in the Ferny Grove electorate. The principal of Ferny Grove State School, Brett Shackleton, remarked, 'The direct to market stuff we have been involved in is just fantastic.'

On that point, the member has told me a very relevant story. I will try to get this right. In 2010 he was approached by a local parent who runs a cafe to install a power point in the canteen of a school to run a coffee machine to be used for fundraisers for the school music program. He was a licensed and insured electrical contractor. He was happy to complete the work for free. However, half way through testing the completed work, a school official hurried towards him shouting to stop what he was doing. Bemused, he asked what the problem was, only to be told he was not allowed to do the work as he was not from QBuild. Even after he informed this lady that he was licensed, insured, qualified, used an active safety system, was a parent at the school and a local businessmen who employed local people, took work experience kids from that school and was performing the work for free, she still ushered him off the premises more annoyed than grateful.

Hasn't a lot changed in the last two years and five months? Under our government today, this has all changed. I quote from that very parent, 'I commend the current government for allowing and encouraging local businesses to perform work for local state schools more cheaply and effectively than QBuild.'

*(Time expired)*

### **Royalties for the Regions**

**Mr MULHERIN:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, I refer to recent changes to the Royalties for the Regions program and I ask: why does local government have to line up behind government agencies to compete for funding?

**Mr NEWMAN:** It is extraordinary to get a question from the member for Mackay—someone who comes from a regional—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock! Members on both sides of the House, the Premier has only just got to his feet. For goodness sake, stop your interjections and give the Premier an opportunity to answer the question. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** What an extraordinary question from the member for Mackay who sat on this side of the chamber, comes from regional Queensland and has never done anything other than toe the party line and basically be a sell-out for the regions. I recall when we announced we were holding the first forum for the Queensland Plan in Mackay and the honourable member was quoted in the local paper as saying that he did not think it was a good idea—he did not want it. That is a matter of fact. That is right.

Far from being a fearless advocate for the region, he has always been a sell-out for his community. He never fought for his community. He never got a Royalties for the Regions program, and we have such a program. Local governments across the state can apply for that program and that has not changed one iota. Right across Queensland there are local governments that are already benefiting—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock! The interjections will cease. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Right across this state local governments are applying for Royalties for the Regions funds that this government has implemented. Each year as we improve the fiscal situation of this state more funds are going into the pool, more funds are being made available for local projects across regional Queensland.

That is the story. That is what is going on. The mayors, the councils and the communities know this and they love it. They know that only this strong LNP government which has sorted out the finances and has got the economy going is the only one with a plan to deliver programs and expand programs like Royalties for the Regions. So that is the answer. That is what we are doing. We can fund these things. We can explain to Queenslanders how they will be funded in an ongoing, sustainable way. Alas, those opposite can only do it by increasing taxes and charges, because as I revealed yesterday they are now ruled by the unions and the union position is that taxes and charges must go up, and they do what they are told because that is what the unions tell them to do.

### Chatsworth Electorate, State Schools Maintenance

**Mr MINNIKIN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister please inform the House about how the LNP government has restored the schools in the electorate of Chatsworth so students, teachers and communities are invigorated to go there again?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I would really like to thank the honourable member for the question. Steve Minnikin is a passionate advocate for the schools in his electorate. He is a genius at coming into the place and asking questions that are relevant to his electorate, and no more so than in the case of maintenance in his schools where we have spent \$2,083,089 fixing the maintenance black hole in Chatsworth's seven schools. One of them I have a strong affinity with: Mayfield State School, the amenities block. When my parents first brought me back from New Guinea in 1974, my father was a teacher-librarian at Mayfield State School. Steve Minnikin, the member for Chatsworth, first came across this when he was a candidate. It is quite a remarkable story. Leaking water was destroying the playground equipment. Labor did not fix the problem; they just replaced the playground equipment. It was a prime example of Labor waste and mismanagement. We have spent \$300,373 replacing the amenities block. At Camp Hill State Infants and Primary School we have spent \$347,916. At Whites Hill—

**Mr Walker** interjected.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I take that interjection from the honourable Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts about his old school. Whites Hill State College received \$467,687. Belmont State School is an IPS, an independent public school. I had breakfast with the 26 independent public school principals so they could tell me what practically it meant to them. To the principal at Belmont State School where the honourable member and I attended an assembly, it has meant not only \$384,222 in maintenance funding but also the involvement of the whole school community via their council. Council members are members of the community and are passionate about their school, as parents are around the state. For that principal it has meant a reinvigoration of the final years of his teaching career in the sense of the enthusiasm and innovation he wanted to bring to his own school which under the former government through a command and control mentality he was never allowed to do from Mary Street. They can now introduce programs at Belmont where they have a passionate community.

Tingalpa State School received \$90,439; Carina State School, \$321,607; and Gumdale State School, \$171,245. Steve Minnikin, the member for Chatsworth, has been to see me about the Gumdale State School, where a master plan is being finalised to enable suitable expansion of this school because it is located in a major growth corridor. Importantly, we let the principals and communities decide the school's priorities. As the Premier just mentioned, allowing schools to go out to market has meant that we have had up to a 20 per cent increase in the things they can get done around their school and they have saved an average of 20 per cent by choosing local contractors or by joining forces with adjoining electorates to cluster their maintenance spend. I congratulate the member for what he has achieved there.

*(Time expired)*

### Ministerial Expenses

**Ms TRAD:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. I refer to the Premier's charter letter to the Deputy Premier which identifies the first-term task of 'identifying wasteful expenditure that can be redirected to front-line services'. I note that according to ministerial expenses tabled today the Deputy Premier has spent more than \$200,000 in charter flights to and from his electorate in the past 12 months, and I ask—

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I am going to ask the member to start again because you are not to interject when there is a question being asked. I ask the member to start again.

**Ms TRAD:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. I refer to the Premier's charter letter to the Deputy Premier which identifies the first-term task as 'identifying wasteful expenditure that can be redirected to front-line services'. I note that according to ministerial expenses tabled today the Deputy Premier has spent more than \$200,000 in charter flights to and from his electorate in the past

12 months, and I ask: will the Deputy Premier confirm that the total amount spent on his personal charter flights in the past 2½ years amounts to \$472,688, almost half a million dollars, which could have been redirected to front-line employment services?

**Mr SEENEY:** It is traditional to thank the honourable member for the question but I think I will pass on that today. I have been in this place a long time, and I have seen a lot of new members come in here and try to make political mileage out of other members' expenses and I have never seen it succeed yet. So I would say to the member for South Brisbane that you have been given a job that the Leader of the Opposition has done for the last two years. Let me repeat the answer that I have given every time this has been asked. I represent regional Queensland. I proudly represent regional Queensland. Regional Queensland is a big place.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. I warn members on my left to cease their interjections.

**Mr SEENEY:** Regional Queensland is a lot further from parliament than South Brisbane. It is a little bit further away and it involves a fair bit of travelling. When I was appointed to this job as Deputy Premier, the independent officers gave a budget for that travel that involved flying in a small charter plane once a week. That budget has remained 41 per cent underspent for this current financial year—41 per cent underspent. I fly in a small charter plane once a week. Actually I am flying tonight and the weather is not too good, my wife says, because she worries about this a lot more than I do. Last time the Leader of the Opposition asked me this question I invited her to come with me. She has not yet. So I extend to the member for South Brisbane the invitation today. When parliament rises tonight, toddle out to Archerfield Airport. There will be a little brown Cessna aeroplane and there is a seat on it for you.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr SEENEY:** I do not know what time it will be, but I know it will be dark, I know the weather will be rough and I know it will not be a real pleasant flight. Then you might understand what is involved in travelling backwards and forwards to regional Queensland. What I want to do is thank some of the people who make it possible for me to do this job. I want to thank Cameron and Paul, my pilots, who fly when even they know they shouldn't—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. I will warn members under the standing orders if they do not cease their interjections. They are neither witty nor contributing to the debate. There is a wall of sound coming from my left. I call the Deputy Premier.

**Mr SEENEY:** I want to thank Cameron and Paul, who are my pilots who fly me when they know sometimes they shouldn't because they know how important it is for me to do this job. I want to thank Neville Morris, who lives in Monto who gets out of bed and chases the kangaroos off the strip for us to land every night. He runs up and down the strip to make sure we can land safely. They are the people whom I represent. They are the people in regional Queensland who deserve to be represented in this parliament. They are the people who understand how important it is for regional Queensland to be represented here. I look forward to seeing the member for South Brisbane at Archerfield Airport tonight when the parliament rises.

### **Mirani Electorate, State Schools Maintenance**

**Mr MALONE:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House what his government is doing to fix the rusty downpipes, ripped carpet and peeling paint so that schools once again can take pride of place in my electorate?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The MP for Mirani, Ted Malone, is a strong local member. He is a regional local member. He knows that regional members have to cover vast distances to represent their constituents. It is a big electorate just like the electorate of Callide. He knows what this government is doing to fix the maintenance backlog left by Labor.

I am pleased to announce to the chamber today and to let the honourable member know that, under the latest round of the Advancing our Schools Maintenance program that is being announced today, the 41 schools in the Mirani electorate will receive an additional \$1.704 million. That means the total funding in the program is now \$6.274 million. The Mirani electorate state schools were deprived of the most basic of maintenance under Labor, such as repainting, recarpeting and the repair of

footpaths. Again, I stop—you would think they would ask a question about education or a question about how much money one of the schools in one of their electorates will get today. You would think that—but, no, they do not have a plan, they are not a strong team, they are certainly not united and the union leadership calls the shots.

The second round of funding has gone a very long way to clear the maintenance backlog in the Mirani state schools. We believe this third round will see the backlog eliminated. Key maintenance work has been undertaken, and I will just touch on some now. For example, work has been completed at Middlemount state school, where the school undertook painting projects inside and out. Throughout the school, the buildings were previously all different colours and now it no longer looks like a patchwork quilt—although some people seem to like that in a school system. The school also undertook a lot of small maintenance jobs, fixing gutters, leaks and other water related problems. The honourable member has told me how great the school is looking. It is clean and well maintained, with a sensational look and presentation for the kids, teachers and parents. The member also told me that allowing schools to use local tradespeople has been a win-win for the local community. Schools have been able to complete five jobs for the price of four, and local tradespeople have been getting extra work.

Under Labor, the Mirani electorate state schools were in a state of disrepair and decay. Under this strong government, the Mirani schools have control over how they spend their maintenance dollars, and once again they are becoming a place of pride for students, teachers and the wider community. It is no surprise to me that we are seeing for the first time in many years parents voting by placing their kids in the state education system, where there is better performance from teachers, independent public schools and well maintained school infrastructure.

### **Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Procurement**

**Dr DOUGLAS:** My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Allegations have been raised that Goldoc has not been transparent in the allocation of tenders to the detriment of local suppliers. I table the article from the local *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 20 August 2014, titled 'Games of Broken Promises' [[5784](#)].

I ask the minister: can the minister please inform the parliament what processes are in place at Goldoc to ensure that local suppliers are not discriminated against?

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I thank the honourable member for the question and for his interest in what is going to be the biggest sporting event of the decade which will be hosted by the Gold Coast in 2018, and I speak of course of the Commonwealth Games. This government recognises that some 30,000 new jobs will be created in the lead-up to and during these games and that there will be a \$2 billion economic benefit to our great state. Recently we released a forward procurement plan, which the honourable member may be familiar with. It was a first for a government to release a forward procurement plan at such an early stage, as we are still some three years and eight months away from April 2018. When we released that forward procurement plan, there was an overwhelming interest from the small business and trade sector of Queensland, so much so that our sessions were overbooked and we had to open up some webinars. Here in Brisbane we had record numbers, with some 1,000 people attending our seminars. I have posted photographs of this to show the overwhelming interest there has been—and why shouldn't there be? There was also of course overwhelming interest on the Gold Coast, where I launched the first seminar which had over 500 participants. In all, over 7,000 businesses have applied.

The process is that the tendering for venues goes through the Deputy Premier's office. Of course, the priority is to make sure that our local businesses get a fair deal. If we look at the Aquatic Centre as an example—that magnificent, state-of-the-art facility that recently hosted our Pan Pacs—we can see that 65 per cent of the businesses that worked on that was local content. In fact, 90 per cent or thereabouts was from South-East Queensland. So to even suggest that Goldoc have not honoured the fact that we are focusing as much as possible on local industry is a complete and utter furphy. I look forward to seeing more Gold Coast and Queensland businesses benefit from this amazing event that will happen in 2018. I encourage everybody to make sure that the whole of Queensland benefits, that the volunteer program is a success, that we look at the produce that is supplied and that the people from across this great state and this great country make it the very best games ever.

### Thuringowa Electorate, State Schools Maintenance

**Mr COX:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister explain how the LNP in government has invested in the schools of Thuringowa to repair the decades of Labor neglect?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I want to thank the honourable member for his question. Since campaigning for his seat in 2012, he certainly has been tireless in his support for local schools, students and communities. I have seen him in action and he is always on the phone to me advocating for various things in his local schools. I would like to provide some details to the House now.

We have spent \$3,010,881 on the five primary and three secondary schools in the honourable member's electorate. There are no longer air conditioners hanging out of walls creating a safety hazard for students and teachers. At Thuringowa State High School, more than \$100,000 was spent on badly needed repairs to roofing and gutters, air conditioning, new carpets for classrooms and a painting program which included the GS2 block and student walkways.

I have had the pleasure of visiting with Sam Cox, the member for Thuringowa, at Kirwan State High School a number of times. There is a wonderful Indigenous engagement program there. Indigenous leaders are a seamless part of the school and are valued and honoured in that program at that independent public school. John Livingstone, who is the executive principal there, reported that the school was struggling to present itself with pride to the community in the way that it had been before in terms of its maintenance and the situation it was in, and we are spending another \$300,000 there this year. Thanks to the Newman government, they have had \$1 million worth of maintenance and repairs and the school has regained its sense of pride. I know that in the whole of the North Queensland community Kirwan State High School is seen as an exemplary school.

The member for Thuringowa has confirmed that by going out to market the Thuringowa schools have saved thousands of dollars. Rasmussen State School, which works with three other local schools, has been able to increase the number of projects completed by combining the scope of works. The students now have upgraded toilet facilities which have been supplied and fitted by local contractors. Whether it is a fresh coat of paint or replacing a broken window, the maintenance repair program has been a massive boost to school pride, and this has happened in other schools in Thuringowa. Principals, staff and children feel more motivated and connected within their school environment.

The other aspect I have mentioned a couple of times this morning has been the maintenance issue that we inherited, and we are also dealing with the day-to-day issues in the future. The Great Results Guarantee funding has been something that I have mentioned. In Thuringowa, it has meant \$1,295,000 in direct funding so that teachers, principals and school communities can design and implement their own programs to get the prep to year 2 students up to the national minimum standard. As with maintenance, we have entrusted school communities to make decisions for the students they know best. I am looking forward to attending a principal roundtable with the honourable member in the future. I am sure I will hear more positive reports about the maintenance work that is restoring state schools in Thuringowa to the state they deserve.

### Coolum Men's Shed

**Mr WELLINGTON:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier provide particulars of the assistance he referred to yesterday when he said that they have assisted the Coolum Men's Shed group to access vacant buildings and land, because neither the Coolum Men's Shed group nor I have received any response to our requests?

**Mr SEENEY:** As I indicated yesterday, we are working with a number of groups interested in establishing men's sheds in unused government buildings. Men's sheds, as I have said in this parliament a number of times, provide a great opportunity for men in communities to come together for a whole range of very positive reasons. One of the gratifying things I have done as a local member—and I have done many gratifying things as a local member—is to see those men's sheds established in places like Gin Gin, which has been established for quite a while, and in Murgon just a couple of weeks ago. In that case we took an old QLink shed at the railway and made it available for the men's shed group there. They produce very positive results for people in communities.

I am happy to work with any member in this parliament who wants to bring forward propositions for groups in their electorate. In fact, the member for Bundaberg and I are working on a proposition at the moment in relation to a shed that is owned by the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

whom we have to get in a corner later and make sure he comes to the party on that particular project. Seriously, I say to every member in the parliament that, as the local member, they should be working with their local communities and with their groups to bring forward propositions that enable these facilities to be set up in their communities. I have been asked a number of questions by the member for Nicklin about this particular issue. He seeks to make a political issue out of this. Can I say to—

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. With respect—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. What is your point of order?

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I find those comments offensive. They are untrue and I ask for them to be withdrawn. I am following up a question—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Take your seat. Deputy Premier, you have been asked to withdraw because the comments have been found to be offensive. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr SEENEY:** I withdraw. I look forward to the day when Matthew Trace represents the people of Nicklin in this House because for the first time they will be represented by a member who is prepared to bring forward issues to ministers, to put the case to ministers, for the benefit of their local communities. Members need to know that I offered the member for Nicklin the opportunity to put forward a case on behalf of the people he purports to represent. He took that opportunity to shout at me as soon as I walked in the door which—

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr SEENEY:** I withdraw. I look forward to the day when there is a member in this House to represent the people of Nicklin in these issues and any other issue. I say to every member in the House quite genuinely, whether it is the members of the opposition or the crossbenches: support your local communities, support the people who want to establish men's sheds. It will be one of the most gratifying things you can do for your constituents.

**Mrs Miller:** I've got three.

**Mr SEENEY:** Absolutely. Let's make it four. Let's find another one in Bundamba and help the men's shed movement provide the great community services that they do.

### **Moggill Electorate, State Schools Maintenance**

**Dr FLEGG:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House what this government is doing to clear the long neglected school maintenance backlogs in my electorate of Moggill?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Madam Speaker—

**Mrs Miller** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Just pause the clock. I warn the member for Bundamba under 253A. I have been warning members about their interjections. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** They were interjecting earlier on in the session today about the maintenance issues in Moggill, if I recall correctly. It is great that Dr Flegg, as a very hardworking local member, has asked the question. I am very, very pleased to tell him that his schools, the 10 state schools in the Moggill electorate, will be receiving \$536,370, which brings the total funding to \$2.707 million.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I now warn the member for South Brisbane under 253A. Keep the noise down or go outside. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** As the honourable member will know and as we have seen in this matter today, right across the state—Moggill and everywhere—we saw neglect: neglect from those opposite, neglect which saw misplaced priorities, a failure to plan, a hang-up on solar panels on roofs when there were roofs leaking all around the shop. The schools were being let down, the kids were being let down, the parents were being let down and the teachers were being let down.

Particularly damning was the issue of asbestos. In 2005, Anna Bligh as education minister claimed that removing asbestos in our schools was 'not a priority'. The member for Moggill remembers how one child went home and complained of asbestos dust falling on him for days.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I do not think it is funny, actually. The Labor Party might think it is funny. The member for South Brisbane laughs when I tell a story that is true. Asbestos was falling on a child in a state school. The ceiling dust was subsequently tested and of eight dust samples, all eight were contaminated with asbestos. I say to the member for South Brisbane that Labor's track record is not funny.

Under the previous government, the Chapel Hill State School had a miniscule maintenance budget which was unable to provide either reasonable maintenance or safety. Chapel Hill State School had damaged and deteriorating asbestos falling in its classroom and administration block. The only response from the Labor government was to send out two guys from Building Services equipped with a roll of tape to fix the problem. Safety issues at Chapel Hill State School were only fixed after one student required eye surgery and several others needed first aid after falls in the school grounds. Again, I say to the Labor members of parliament that it is not funny. The member for Moggill had to show them examples of trip hazards, sharp objects such as metal sheeting and protruding wire as well as a deep culvert which was subject to flash flooding before any action was taken. In contrast, this government is dealing with it. This government is fixing it. This government is creating a safe work environment for teachers and a safe learning environment for the kids.

### **Queensland Health Awards, Government Advertising**

**Mrs MILLER:** My question is to the Premier. What is the total cost to taxpayers of running television, newspaper, online and social media advertising, including all related consultancies, as part of the government's campaign regarding Queensland Health awards?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I would ask that the honourable member put that question on notice. I would also reflect that only a few weeks ago we had an estimates process in which there were many long hours for the opposition to ask such questions. In relation to award matters, payroll matters and the entitlements of staff, I have a few reflections to make today.

The first one is that nurses have had cumulative pay rises of around 10 per cent. They have been handsomely remunerated. They are being well respected and they are being supported by this government to do great work looking after patients. I also reflect that we had a Health payroll debacle in which \$1.2 billion went out to sea; there is nothing to show for it. That track record of denial and obfuscation while nurses, doctors, administrators and leaders in our hospital system were not getting paid, or were overpaid or underpaid is the sort of mess that we have had to sort out.

When it comes to awards, there are complexities. What the minister, the Public Service Commission and the hardworking senior team in Queensland Health are trying to do is eliminate complexity to help people get a great deal and be well rewarded and recognised for the work they do in helping to heal sick people in this state. That is what we are doing.

There are many reforms going on in Queensland Health. They are all important and they are all coming together to do what is right for patients. We released a blueprint for Health at the start of 2013. We said very clearly what we would be doing to transform the health system, to make it the best free public hospital system in the nation. I think—and we have talked about this in recent days—the runs are starting to accumulate on the board. They are runs on the board for nurses. They are runs on the board for doctors. They are runs on the board for administrators. They are runs on the board for the independent health service boards. They are runs on the board for this minister, who has worked hard for Queenslanders. But most importantly, they are runs on the board for the men and women and boys and girls of Queensland who now have a better health system than they did three years ago. Three years ago the health system was in crisis, three years ago there was a fake Tahitian prince and three years ago there was a \$1.2 billion payroll debacle. Today we have a strongly performing system that is doing better every single day for Queenslanders. But as they say, that is not all. We are going to work harder and stronger. We are going to stridently go out there every single day to do a better job to create a better health system for Queenslanders and heal sick people. That is what we are about.

### **Ipswich Electorate, State Schools Maintenance**

**Mr BERRY:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister please inform the House about the major maintenance projects undertaken at state schools in my electorate of Ipswich?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I know that he is a passionate advocate for the children and communities of Ipswich. I will give the House a breakdown of where this over \$300 million in funding has gone overall: \$203.5 million for primary schools; \$84.4 million for high schools; \$6.2 million for environmental and outdoor education centres; and \$7.8 million for special schools. Ipswich schools will have an extra \$565,908 spent on them this year, which will bring the total maintenance spend in the Ipswich electorate to nearly \$1.9 million.

In May I had the great pleasure of attending Ipswich Central State School with Ian Berry, the member for Ipswich, and my colleague who is the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, where Geoffrey Watson is one of the longest serving school crossing supervisors, having been there for 30 years. This again shows the coordination between government departments—school crossing supervisors are not in my department—but we really appreciate citizens like Geoffrey Watson, the local member Ian Berry and ministerial colleagues working together for the benefit of Queenslanders.

At the principals' forum I was pleased to hear how the spending has transformed schools: Churchill State School has spent more than \$264,000 on painting and repairs; the Ipswich Special School has received \$166,000 to restore facilities; and at Ipswich Central State School \$204,000 was spent to bring the school back to the way it should look. The Great Results Guarantee in Ipswich schools has received over \$2 million, and I would remind members that that is the only jurisdiction in Queensland where we have handed over the federal government's Students First initiative funding straight to schools with no middleman and no creaming off the top. Principals, teachers and school communities know what their students need, and we want to support them.

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

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tours

**Madam SPEAKER:** I wish to acknowledge the following schools visiting today: Siena Catholic Primary School in the electorate of Kawana, Kedron State High School in the electorate of Clayfield and Chinchilla Christian School in the electorate of Warrego.

## EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

### Report No. 36, Motion to Take Note



**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.03 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 36 of the Education and Innovation Committee.

This particular report outlines the committee's consideration of the Auditor-General's Report to Parliament 3: 2013-14 *Follow-up—acquisition and public access to the Museum, Art Gallery and Library collections*.

The Auditor-General's report details the follow-up to an audit that was conducted in 2011. The previous Finance and Administration Committee reported on that audit, and I have to acknowledge that the work which that committee did formed a strong base for the final report that my committee presented. The FAC identified an additional issue: storage capacity for the arts bodies. That has been included in the follow-up audit from the Auditor-General.

One of the interesting parts of collecting the evidence towards this report was the tour that the committee was able to make of the arts precinct. I would particularly thank the minister and his department for arranging that, because it was a fascinating tour of the cultural complex. The committee was taken into areas of that complex which the public normally do not see, and it was great to see exactly what is on offer in that cultural precinct. Something that was particularly noted in the report is the strong focus that this government is putting on the state tourist agenda through Arts Queensland and the minister's portfolio to grow cultural tourism. When you visit the precinct, you can see how much we actually do have to offer.

The committee really only made one recommendation, and that was that the House note this report. We did also look at the problems that are being experienced in some of the areas for storage; however, this is certainly on the way to being addressed and the committee did note that.

I would like to particularly thank the research committee for their work and efforts towards producing the report. It is very easy to be a member of a committee, but the really hard work is done by the research director and the staff and for that I particularly acknowledge Bernice Watson and her

staff. I also thank the members of the committee, and I would particularly like to thank the executive officers of the Museum, the Library, the Art Gallery and QPAC for their hospitality and the highly informative tours that they provided.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

### Report No. 37, Motion to Take Note



**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.07 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 37 of the Education and Innovation Committee.

This particular report outlines the committee's consideration of the Auditor-General's report *Results of audit: education sector entities 2013 (report 16: 2013-14)*. This was the Auditor-General's report on the education sector which includes the universities and grammar schools. It was a very positive report which showed that the sector continues to produce reliable and timely financial statements and that the universities and most grammar schools remain in a sound financial position. All entities' financial statements received unmodified audit opinions for 2013. This was particularly good to see.

It is going to be very interesting to watch the Central Queensland University, which of course is the dual sector entity that has now come about, to see how it is working. From this particular audit it was pleasing as well to see that the Central Queensland University recorded an operating surplus for the first time in four years. The Ipswich Grammar School has also improved substantially.

The report noted the inclusion of better practice guidelines, which was a recommendation from the Auditor-General, and our committee has followed through and recommended that the minister request all statutory bodies within the education sector to consider and adopt the better practice guidelines in respect of delegations, supplier engagement and preparation of financial statements developed by the Queensland Audit Office.

I particularly wish to thank the research director and her staff for their work, and I thank the department and educational sectors for their input, briefings and assistance towards the production of this report.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Report No. 47, Motion to Take Note

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): There being no mover, in accordance with standing order 71 the notice of motion has lapsed.

## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Report No. 53, Motion to Take Note

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): There being no mover, in accordance with standing order 71 the notice of motion has lapsed.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction



**Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.11 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Biological Control Act 1987, the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Environmental Offsets Act 2014, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 and the Wet

Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993 for particular purposes, and to make minor and consequential amendments of the acts mentioned in schedule 1. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[5785\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[5786\]](#).

The bill amends several pieces of legislation to offer clearer and simpler processes to Queensland's businesses and stronger protection for Queensland's environment. The three key objectives are: to deliver green-tape reduction reforms, building on the first platform of significant reforms introduced in March 2013, further reducing cost to business and government while maintaining environmental standards; to support firm but fair environmental regulation and; to promote the recovery and use of waste within the economy.

In terms of delivering green-tape reduction, the bill fully implements the third-party certification system under the Environmental Protection Act, streamlining the development approval pathway for contaminated land. The bill requires auditor certification for contaminated land reports. This will halve decision-making time frames, provide a more agile service delivery model and save the government over half a million dollars each and every year. This approach is consistent with the government's Public Service renewal principles as it means the government becomes an enabler rather than a doer—an agile environmental regulator who no longer has its main focus on 'how we can stop you' but rather 'how we can help you'. In doing so, it recognises that businesses have the expertise to best meet relevant requirements.

Another key feature of the bill is to remove legislative barriers in the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act to provide a simpler process for the reclassification of waste as valuable resources. The bill amends the existing beneficial-use approval framework to meet the objective of increased resource productivity under Queensland's draft industry-led waste strategy. The more waste that can be considered as a valuable resource and not sent to landfill the better for the environment and the Queensland economy. This also removes red tape, as the use of materials will not be subject to waste management regulatory requirements. The bill also increases the maximum penalties under the Environmental Protection Act so that they are more contemporary and better aligned with the Regional Planning Interests Act and with similar offences in other jurisdictions.

This government has worked hard to make it easier for business to do business without compromising our high environmental standards. However, should those standards be compromised strong penalties are necessary to emphasise the seriousness of offences and provide an adequate deterrent from causing significant and potentially irreparable damage to the state's economic, social and environmental prosperity. They also reinforce the government's commitment to apply and enforce sound environmental standards and the perception of my department as a firm but fair regulator.

The bill also introduces enforceable undertakings in the Environmental Protection Act as an additional enforcement option, providing flexible and cost-effective ways of achieving good environmental outcomes in the face of noncompliance with the act. Enforceable undertakings are binding agreements used to remedy an offence and have proven to be a successful and popular enforcement tool. In appropriate circumstances, the use of enforceable undertakings provides a way of achieving outcomes without the need for costly and time-consuming litigation.

Amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act seek to further clarify the intended operation of the act about when an offset condition may be required so as to avoid duplicate offset conditions being imposed by different levels of government and that existing offset conditions must be considered during development assessment.

An amendment to the Nature Conservation Act provides for ministerial authority to require a local government to prepare a statement of management intent for as-of-right activities involving protected wildlife. These will assist in the management of urban flying fox roosts. A number of councils have already voluntarily adopted the use of such statements, which are proving to be important community engagement and education tools.

In addition to these amendments, the bill is also a vehicle for other more minor and technical amendments to improve the operation of various acts. This will further contribute to the government's regulatory reform and improvement agenda.

The Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 offers a substantial contribution to the LNP government's commitment to reduce regulatory burden and further facilitates the government's shift towards an enabler role, set out in the public sector renewal strategy.

The bill amends several key pieces of legislation to offer clearer and simpler processes to Queensland businesses that benefit industry and government as well as uphold environmental standards. We are getting out of the way of business and getting on with the job of delivering green-tape reduction reforms and building on the first platform of significant reforms introduced in March 2013, all of which have continued to maintain high environmental standards in this state. I commend this bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.16 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

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

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.16 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report to the House on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 October 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

Resumed from 8 May (see p. 1436).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (11.17 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am very proud to be the minister responsible for delivering to Indigenous Queenslanders the opportunity to own their own home in freehold in their local community for the first time. This bill delivers on the Newman government's commitment to provide Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people with an opportunity to access the same property rights in their own communities as are enjoyed by their fellow Queenslanders. This is a right that has been denied to them until now.

If agreed to by the House, the freehold model component of the bill will commence on 1 January 2015. The proposed freehold model will be a new option for the 34 communities that are either in an Aboriginal shire council or in an Indigenous regional council. An important feature of the model is that taking up the option of freehold is voluntary. Freehold will not be forced on anyone. The bill itself does not create freehold. Rather, it provides the mechanism for the trustee, in consultation with the community, to decide whether or not to take up freehold and, if so, where and how freeholding will occur. In short, it is the communities themselves that will choose and decide the outcome.

The bill also proposes to simplify the overly complex leasing arrangements that currently exist under the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act. Simplified leasing requirements will allow trustees to more effectively manage land to achieve the best outcome for local

communities. Importantly, the leasing simplification will apply to all lands managed under the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act, not just those communities where freehold will be an option under the bill. This means there is no pressure on Indigenous Queenslanders to take up freehold if they do not wish to do so to progress development in their local community.

I am also pleased to note that the bill includes amendments to the Land Valuation Act 2010 which will allow the Valuer-General to undertake statutory valuations within Indigenous local council areas. The Valuer-General regularly undertakes valuation programs in remote and rural parts of the state where there is limited comparable sales evidence. This is the case in centres such as Torres, Boulia and Croydon shires and other smaller rural and remote council areas across the state. In these centres, sales transactions are monitored on a regular basis and, where necessary, inspections are made and verified through spatial imagery. The process will be no different for the Indigenous local councils. Valuation comparisons will be made with other small rural and remote communities, with transactions within the communities being monitored as these markets mature.

The department of local government has engaged with Indigenous local councils over a number of years in relation to revenue-raising powers and is implementing a policy change to allow them to make and levy general rates based on statutory land valuations. Those local councils have consistently expressed a desire to be able to levy rates and charges in the same way as all other Queensland local councils—that is, to be able to raise revenue through general rates that are based on statutory land valuations provided by the Valuer-General. The amendments to the Land Valuation Act proposed in this bill will lift the existing embargo on the Valuer-General providing these valuations. It should be noted that these proposed amendments will apply from 2016. The delayed time frame is to allow for rateable properties to be identified, for technical changes to valuation systems to be made and for valuers to inspect and value the relevant land. This time frame will also allow for the department of local government to support Indigenous local councils to develop and implement ratings schemes and associated administrative systems.

I am also pleased to bring before the House amendments to the Land Act 1994 that will enable, by declaration, public access to areas of Queensland's beaches that, due to erosion, have shifted onto private land. Queensland's beaches are without doubt one of its finest assets and I am sure all members would agree that they are an asset that should be available for everybody to enjoy. Certainly that has always been the public expectation as well as the policy of Queensland governments of all political persuasions, with no government granting titles to land with exclusive beach access. Rather, a public reserve or community purpose reserve or esplanade is generally created between parcels of private land and the beach. It is only where severe erosion has taken away that public reserve or esplanade that a beach may fall within the boundaries of a private property. This occurs only rarely, with only about 250 lots identified across Queensland. Where it does occur the public would generally continue to access the beach, oblivious to the fact that that part of the beach is now private property. Technically, the owner could currently be entitled to fence off the beach. Generally speaking, landowners have not taken that option, instead allowing the public to continue to have access to the beach. Whilst this is a community minded response to the problem, it poses a public liability risk to the owner of the land and potentially higher insurance costs. Until recently there was nothing the government could do to assist with this problem. Earlier this year this was remedied through amendments to the Acquisition of Land Act 1967 in the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 that allowed the state to compulsorily acquire beach areas on private land, particularly in circumstances where there is a requirement to construct infrastructure. The amendments in this bill represent another tool that can be used in these circumstances.

It is important to note that an owner of a lot that includes a beach will not necessarily wish to have the beach compulsorily acquired because, once this happens, the land is lost to the owner forever. In contrast, if public access is declared, as is proposed in this bill, the land remains under private ownership. The owner may then regain full access to the entire lot if accretion occurs, moving the beach area seaward of the lot. Where access is to be declared, the owner will be consulted with regard to appropriate conditions that can be placed on that public access to assist in ensuring the owner is not adversely affected by public access. Importantly, if public access to the beach is declared, the owner of the lot will be relieved of public liability, except to the extent that any liability arises from the intentional or reckless act of the owner.

I thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its consideration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I note that the committee tabled its report on 11 August 2014. The committee's report

recommends the bill be passed with the amendments recommended in its report, and I thank the committee for its support. I want to address the committee's recommendations and clarify some points raised in the committee's report. The committee has recommended that a comprehensive education and engagement program by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines across the 34 communities to which the bill would apply. The decision by a trustee in consultation with the community to take up freehold is an important decision and one that some communities may not be ready to take for one reason or another. However, the optional nature of this bill allows communities to defer any decision about taking up the freehold option to a time of their choosing and when their community is ready. The result will likely be that each community considers freehold at a different time and therefore rolling out an education program across all communities would not be the most effective way to ensure communities make an informed decision. Additionally, the government does not want to place undue pressure on communities to take up freehold. This is a decision that communities need to take for themselves.

A number of communities have indicated that they would seek to have workshops to discuss the freehold option if the bill is enacted and officers of the relevant departments will be available to participate in any such community workshops if requested. Additionally, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines is proposing to hold a number of workshops with trustees, native title bodies and councils to work through the freehold model in detail. It is hoped that these workshops could form part of planned conferences and meetings such as those held by the Local Government Association involving Indigenous councils. My colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs will be announcing the details of a pilot program to enable communities wishing to proceed with freehold to apply to participate in the pilot project. The pilot program will enable the Queensland government to work closely with those trustees and communities that are actively seeking to take up freehold and develop an accurate assessment of the demands placed on trustees and any change management issues. The need for any additional support will be considered by the Queensland government after the pilot program is reviewed.

The committee has suggested that an arbitration process to hear disputes or appeals be included in the freehold model. The government thanks the committee for this recommendation but will not be progressing the recommendation for the reasons I will now set out. The government accepts the views expressed by some community members and submitters to the committee that there is concern about the role and function the trustee may undertake when implementing the freehold option under the bill. In particular, views were expressed that in some circumstances there may be a conflict of interest or that there may be aggrieved community members who may disagree with the decision the trustee may make. As a result, the committee recommends that the freehold process in the bill should be the subject of additional governance arrangements, including legislating for an external arbitration process independent of the trustee and further legislating for an independent oversight of the freehold process itself. Conflicts of interest are not new and there are already appropriate mechanisms and processes otherwise available to the trustee to deal with a potential conflict of interest. For example, there is nothing stopping a trustee choosing to utilise additional consultation processes beyond those minimum standards set out in the bill where the trustee considers the additional processes are necessary to properly undertake their responsibilities as trustee in making decisions for their community. While the views expressed to the committee are noted, they are fundamentally matters for the trustee to take into account when they, at the outset, outline to their community the processes they intend to undertake when proposing to implement the freehold model option for their community.

Fundamentally, the freehold model is about an option for the community and the trustee is responsible for making appropriate decisions for the benefit of that community. Where a trustee prepares their own freehold instrument, an independent probity officer must be engaged to oversee the process and key decisions by the trustee are appealable to the Land Court. Trustee decisions must be consistent with the freehold instrument for any applications for freehold to be approved. Accordingly, the government will not be progressing this recommendation from the committee.

The committee recommended that community based Indigenous owned corporations be eligible for the grant of freehold under the allocation process for available land where there is no-one with a registered interest in the land. The government notes that, based on the committee's report, this proposal follows a suggestion from a single representation received by the committee. The government, in developing the bill, considered the option of allowing corporations to be granted freehold as set out in the discussion paper released on 15 November 2012. The government received in response to that discussion paper and the 2013 consultation draft on the bill a number of

stakeholder submissions rejecting the option of any entity other than an individual being entitled to obtain freehold. It is based on those representations that the bill as drafted does not provide the ability to allocate land to corporations of any type or any level of government. Additionally, if a corporation were eligible to compete in the open allocation process as recommended by the committee, then it is possible that a corporation, which may have greater resources than any individual community member, would prevail in such circumstances, driving up the costs for everyone else at the same time. Accordingly, the government does not plan to progress this recommendation from the committee.

The committee has also suggested that the bill provide for special ministerial grants of freehold title outside of town areas. I understand where the committee is coming from on this point, as the freehold model was originally developed to apply to all community land, not just town areas. A feature of this model is that the freehold granted will be the same as any other freehold in Queensland and that means that it can be placed on the open market subsequent to the initial grant to a community member. That means that the land could move from Indigenous ownership. Therefore, it is understandable that the original purpose of making freehold available over all community land was not widely supported by communities as they were mindful of the potential area of land to be available for future generations.

Following the 2012 discussion paper on making freehold available, the responses indicated that freehold outside of town areas was not supported. The explanatory documents that accompanied the 2013 consultation draft on the bill specifically included a question on making freehold available outside town areas on communal land. The responses through submissions and face-to-face meetings were to restrict freehold to town areas. However, I note that at the committee's Cairns hearing a submission was made that freehold should be available outside of Indigenous local council areas as there are significant areas of Indigenous land in non-Indigenous local council areas. Although the freehold model in the bill was developed specifically for Indigenous communities and would, therefore, not be appropriate to extend outside of these communities, I can inform the House that the ability to obtain ordinary freehold already exists under the Land Act 1994. This also applies to Indigenous lands in non-Indigenous local council areas. Notwithstanding the availability of this facility, I have asked my department to look at streamlining the process for Indigenous land to be moved to freehold where all agreements and necessary preconditions are in place.

The committee has suggested that I report biennially to the parliament on the grant of freehold tenure in Indigenous communities. Although I accept the interest of the committee in attempting to monitor the success of this policy, the raw numbers on how many or how much freehold is granted will not be a true measure of success. An informed decision by a community to not take up freehold is just as valid as a decision to take up freehold. To be clear, I would judge it just as much a success if a community makes an informed decision not to take up freehold as one where freehold is taken up and granted. As such, reporting in this context is more appropriately a matter for the trustees of each community.

The committee has suggested that the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs report biennially to the parliament on the freehold pilot program and other government initiatives supporting homeownership in Indigenous communities. My colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs has advised me that the pilot project will include its own evaluation and reporting program. Similarly, for the various home ownership initiatives undertaken in conjunction with the Minister for Housing and Public Works, there are numerous reporting arrangements already in place and that will be dealt with as part of the pilot project.

I turn now to the committee's recommendation in relation to the amendments in the bill for the declaration of public beach access. The committee recommended that the bill be amended so that the minister would be required to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to negotiate and resolve beach access disputes directly with the affected property owners prior to the declaration of a beach area for the purpose of public access. Although I appreciate and agree with the committee's concern that a declaration of beach access is a significant measure that should not be made without careful consideration, I believe that the committee has not fully understood the purpose of these provisions. The power to declare public access on a beach is not intended as a tool to resolve disputes. Rather, as is the case with the right of way legislation in the United Kingdom on which it is loosely modelled, it is about ensuring in the public interest that the public continue to have access to areas that have traditionally been used by the public for their recreational enjoyment. It also supports the economy by ensuring that the state's attractions are available for tourists to visit and enjoy. As I mentioned earlier,

where the beach has moved to be within private property, currently the owner is legally entitled to exclude the public. So in that sense there can be no dispute, because an owner is merely exercising their legal rights. Those rights would be exercised to exclude the public who may wish to access the beach. Even if it is accepted that a dispute exists, there is no way that the government can settle a dispute between an individual and the public as a whole.

I would now like to clarify some other points raised by the committee. The committee has requested some clarification regarding the pilot project. If the bill is agreed to by the House, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs will call for expressions of interest from Indigenous communities interested in participating in a pilot program, as a key part of this bill is for these communities to self-nominate if they wish to proceed with freehold. The committee sought clarification about what evidence I will consider when approving a freehold instrument. Proposed section 32L of the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and proposed section 28L of the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 respectively set out the powers of the minister. They are to approve, conditionally approve or refuse the freehold instrument. In making a decision about the freehold instrument the minister must have regard to the information provided to the minister by the local council for the freehold instrument. This will occur, in effect, after the local council has published at least one notice about the freehold instrument in a newspaper or other publication circulating generally in the local council area, has carried out public consultation about the freehold instrument and the local council has provided the minister with a summary of the matters raised during the public consultation outlining how the local council or the trustee dealt with the matters raised. This process will have followed on from the trustee having consulted about the making of a freehold instrument so as to enable the trustee to be reasonably satisfied that it is appropriate for the freehold option land to be granted in freehold. Under the provisions proposed in the bill, the trustee must consult the native title holders, determine how the trustee will notify the community about the freehold instrument and allow suitable and sufficient opportunity for each person the trustee consults to express their view about the freehold instrument.

The bill requires the trustee to keep records about the consultation undertaken and how the consultation was undertaken consistent with the process determined by the trustee. This is to ensure that persons are given suitable and sufficient opportunity to express their views and explain why the trustee is reasonably satisfied that it is appropriate for the land to be granted in freehold. Accordingly, the minister will consider the material provided by the local council and trustee in making a decision whether to approve, approve subject to conditions or refuse the freehold instrument.

The committee requested that I explain the basis for not including native title as an interest under the bill. The bill provides for a particular allocation process where there is an interest in the land. The definition of 'interest' in the bill provides a level of certainty as to who the person is as they can be searched on a register. This is not the case for native title. The committee identified this clearly in its comments on page 21 of the report, noting that the proposed inclusion of native title as an interest would indeed be administratively difficult and may result in adverse and unintended consequences. For example, there could be more than one interest eligible to apply for freehold where there was a lease in place—the lease holder and the native title holder. I would, however, like to point out to the House that the flexibility built into this freehold model will certainly allow native title holders to apply for freehold in priority if that is the community's wish. Firstly, the native title holder could be granted an interest over their traditional land. This would prevent anyone else being able to apply for freehold over that land. The native title holder could apply for freehold at any time of their choosing. Secondly, the flexibility of the freehold model means that freehold can be made available so that only native title holders broadly, or even specific individual native title holders, are eligible to apply for freehold over particular lands. However, this is a matter for the trustee and the community. I would also add that, as native title consent is required for the grant of freehold, the interests of native title holders have the highest protection possible and that is provided through the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993.

Clarification was sought regarding the outcomes of my department's consultation with the Office of Queensland Parliamentary Counsel and what, if any, amendments will be made to the bill in relation to an owner's potential liability over a declared beach access area. Firstly, I would like to advise the House that the government's intention is for an owner to be liable for any intentional or reckless action by the owner in the beach access area but should not be liable for any actions of members of the public in that beach access area. As a result of consultation between my department and the Office of Queensland Parliamentary Counsel, I will be moving an amendment during consideration in detail to clarify the government's intention.

The committee also sought clarification that the concerns raised by the Local Government Association of Queensland about maintenance responsibilities over declared beach areas have been resolved. The intention of the government is that a local council, where it agrees to administer a beach access area, carry out a similar level of maintenance as it would over other areas of the beach that it administers. It is not intended that the local council be required to carry out works to prevent erosion or that it be required to carry out expensive works to remedy erosion if it occurs. I can inform members that to address those concerns I will be moving an amendment during consideration in detail that will clarify the extent of a local council's responsibilities for management of declared beach areas where the local council decides to accept that responsibility.

The amendment will confirm that the duty to maintain the beach only extends to what is reasonable and practical and that the principles as set out in section 35 of the Civil Liability Act 2003 apply. That section specifies certain principles that are to apply when assessing whether a public authority has breached a duty of care. These principles are peculiar to public and similar authorities and relate to the decision-making power required to allocate resources in circumstances where the authority has certain functions. Under the section, the functions required to be exercised by the authority are limited by the financial and other resources that are reasonably available to the authority for the purpose of exercising those functions. Also under that section, the authority may rely on evidence of its compliance with its general procedures and any applicable standards for the exercise of its functions as evidence of the proper exercise of its functions in the matter to which the proceeding relates.

It should also be noted that local councils are not, under these amendments, ever compelled to maintain a beach area. Rather, the local council must agree that it wants to take on that responsibility. Accordingly, if there is a structure on the beach within a proposed declared beach area, the relevant local council could negotiate a satisfactory outcome regarding its maintenance with the state. This could involve, for example, declaring an area for beach access that excludes the structure or the state negotiating with the owner to remove the structure. If the local council was not satisfied with the negotiations, it is able to decline to accept responsibility for maintenance.

I would now like to respond to a number of other issues that were raised during the committee briefings and hearings on the bill. First and foremost can I stress that the freehold model is optional. This approach by the Newman government to make freehold available as an option has been very well received. Community members and stakeholders have all appreciated that this is not being forced on Indigenous people. The government accepted at the very beginning that not every community may want to introduce freehold into their community and there was no single one-size-fits-all approach to this issue. This bill provides for freehold as an option and allows each community to tailor the mechanism to its individual needs.

The second issue raised is that community members need to be well informed of what taking up freehold means and that the state needs to pay for trustee consultation. The purpose of consultation by the trustee is to enable the trustee to be reasonably satisfied that it is appropriate for the land to be granted as freehold. Therefore, the nature and extent of any consultation is a matter for each trustee to determine. I want to stress that consultation by the trustee with the native title holders is mandatory under the bill and the consent of the native title holders is required for the grant of freehold where native title continues. In particular, the bill provides that the trustee must undertake consultation so that the trustee is reasonably satisfied that it is appropriate to grant land as freehold in that community. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will continue to work with Indigenous communities in preparation of the bill's implementation with priority given to communities that wish to proceed with freehold. At the end of the trustee consultation process, community members should be well informed of what taking up the freehold option will mean for them and their community.

A number of stakeholders have also requested that the state pay any compensation requested for the surrender of native title for the purposes of granting freehold under the model. The state will require that compensation is dealt with in any Indigenous land use agreement consenting to the grant of freehold. Compensation and the amount, if any, is a matter for the proponent to address, just as it is for any other Indigenous land use agreement. The native title holders, in deciding whether to consent to the grant of freehold, will do so knowing that the land will be granted to an Indigenous person in the first instance. This should be a factor in their decision and to what, if any, compensation they seek. Ultimately, if the native title holders value native title over freehold title then that is their value judgement or perhaps, more appropriately, a cultural judgement which should be respected that is rightfully their choice.

The transfer of land under the Aboriginal Land Act or Torres Strait Islander Land Act and/or negotiating an Indigenous land use agreement before making freehold available were also raised as issues. The bill allows for these two issues to be addressed. It is a matter for each community as to how and when they choose to address them. Again I stress that no freehold will be granted, or be able to be granted, simply by the bill being enacted. The transfer of deed of grant in trust, or DOGIT, land is not required for the freehold model to operate and, as such, it is not a legislative prerequisite.

A township-wide ILUA is strongly supported from a cost-efficiency perspective and, importantly, freehold cannot be granted where native title continues without an ILUA in place. However, as the freehold model is optional, it is a matter for trustees whether they wait until an ILUA or transfer is in place before they commence on their community's freehold instrument or proceed in advance. The decision and the timing are all matters for each trustee and individual local communities.

The final issue is that the introduction of the bill could significantly change the character of Indigenous communities. Under the model, taking up freehold is optional and the bill simply provides the mechanism for communities to take up freehold if they choose to. The bill also limits the initial grant of freehold to Indigenous persons, their spouses or ex-spouses. The possibility of the freehold land being subsequently sold to persons from outside the community is a real possibility and trustees, community members and native title holders specifically need to consider this possible outcome before taking up the freehold option. However, this is a choice for the community itself; the government is not imposing this decision on it. If a community does take up the freehold option, then that is a clear indication of its views on these issues. Additionally, it should be noted that where native title continues no freehold can be granted without the consent of the native title holders through an Indigenous land use agreement.

In relation to the amendments to the Land Act to provide for beach access, the Queensland Law Society and the North Queensland Land Council have submitted that compensation should be paid where a declaration of beach access is made. I do not agree with this contention. As I have already stated, the general policy in Queensland is that freehold land should not extend to the high-water mark. The land over which it is proposed to declare a right of access is, in the majority of cases, not land originally surveyed with beach frontage. Rather, the land has been separated from the sea by an esplanade or reserve. It could be considered a windfall to the owners that the esplanade or reserve in front of their properties has completely eroded away, leaving them with a beachfront property. In addition, where a right of access is created the state will take over the landowner's occupier liability for the area over which the right of access is created. Conditions will also be applied to the right of access to alleviate the burden on the owner. Significantly, should accretion occur, the beach will move seaward and the right of access will accordingly cease to apply.

There is one part of the committee's report that I think also needs to be responded to specifically. Indeed, I read that part of the committee's report with some concern. On page 13 of the report the committee commented on how my department went about the task of consulting on the freehold model. It states—

The committee is disappointed by DNRM's approaches to consultation for this Bill. The committee notes in particular the department's apparent failure to consult and engage with communities and their representatives during the development of the freehold proposal and drafting of the Bill in ways that would be considered culturally and regionally appropriate.

I am very concerned about this statement and I take issue with the committee, because the departmental consultation was undertaken by two senior and highly experienced officers who are very familiar with engaging effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders on a variety of complex land and tenure issues. Another observation from the committee reads as follows—

The committee shares the concerns raised by residents at its public meetings about the failure of some trustees to pass on information about the Bill to residents who will be directly affected, and the capacity of these same trustees to consult with their communities as part of the freeholding model.

To me it seems that these two committee comments touch on two difficult but interrelated issues, both of which I think are poorly understood by many, including the committee. I take this opportunity to consider those issues and provide some commentary. The first issue is about how government goes about consulting and engaging with Indigenous communities and their representatives. The second is the role and responsibility of trustees of Indigenous land.

On the first issue, I am quite satisfied with and express my confidence in how my department undertook consultation on the freehold proposal and the bill. In this regard, let me remind members how the bill was developed. The origin of the bill relates to the Newman government's election commitment to provide the same ordinary freehold as is enjoyed by other Queenslanders. In doing that, my department has conducted extensive consultation that has informed the preparation of this

bill. The most direct consultation has been with Indigenous councils, trustees and the native title representative bodies. Consultation was undertaken in this manner as the bill does not cause freehold to be granted but rather sets up the framework. The community can only choose to take up that option of freehold after consultation by the trustees.

Nevertheless, community members had the opportunity to comment on the freehold model through the release of a discussion paper in November 2012. The Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs visited several Indigenous communities between December 2012 and April 2013 to meet with Indigenous local councils, native title representative bodies and native title prescribed bodies corporate. During March 2013, advertisements seeking submissions from the public in response to the discussion paper were also placed in the *Courier-Mail*, the *National Indigenous Times* and the *Torres News*. In all, 14 submissions were received. A consultation draft of the bill was released for public comment in December 2013, with the closing date for comments extended to 28 February 2014. Again, advertisements were placed in the media and 13 submissions were received. I responded in detail in writing to each submitter, addressing the points that they raised, identifying proposed changes to the bill at that time and setting out the key steps still to occur before the bill could become law.

It seems to me that sometimes what is or is not culturally appropriate can be used as an excuse to do nothing or to avoid doing something. It is sometimes used as an excuse not to raise prickly issues when, in my view, those issues must be raised. I must say that I am very comfortable that my departmental officers responded to a number of issues raised during the consultation process in both sensitive and culturally appropriate ways. Having said that, in their explanations and responses to questions my officers never shied away from the fact that the freeholding option may be a challenge for Indigenous communities. From the Queensland government's perspective, this is a matter for trustees, as is how they choose to go about informing their own particular community about how the benefits and consequences of the freehold proposal will affect them.

I come to the second issue, that is, the role, function and responsibility of trustees of Indigenous land. I think it is necessary to go over some of the basics. A trustee or the holding of a trusteeship refers to a person or persons who hold property, authority or a position of trust or responsibility for the benefit of another. In the strictest sense of the term, the trustee is the holder of property on behalf of a beneficiary. In the case of trustees of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land, their specific responsibility includes managing the land effectively and thereby contributing to the sustainable social and economic development of their communities. A trustee of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander land must act according to good corporate governance practices and comply with its legislative responsibilities. To fulfil trustee leasing responsibilities, corporate government responsibilities must also be met.

The minister administering the Land Act appoints trustees to fulfil management and administrative responsibilities for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander deed of grant in trust land or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander freehold land. For simplicity, I will describe this as Indigenous land. The minister decides an entity is suitable to be appointed as the trustee of Indigenous land because members of that entity have a particular association with the land, the relevant expertise in managing land for the benefit of Indigenous people and knowledge of the local community. To carry out those responsibilities, trustees are empowered under the act to make decisions and undertake actions regarding land management and use and are empowered under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land acts of 1991 to decide on the grant of leases.

After appointing trustees, the minister retains a charter of responsibility. Therefore, the minister, supported by his or her department, is responsible for ensuring that Indigenous land is properly and effectively managed by trustees in accordance with the Land Act and that the benefits of the land to Indigenous people or for Indigenous purposes is not diminished by the trustees. For example, it is the case currently that Aboriginal shire councils, formerly Aboriginal community councils, are also trustees of Indigenous land and those councils have their roles and responsibilities set out in the Local Government Act 2009. Therefore, those councils have dual responsibilities, first as a local government under the Local Government Act and, second, as the trustee of Indigenous land under the Land Act or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land acts. Indigenous councils must be aware of the differences in their role and responsibilities as a local council on the one hand, and as a trustee of Indigenous land on the other hand, and ensure that a clear separation between the roles is maintained. Under the two acts, the main responsibility of trustees is to manage the land in a manner consistent with achieving the community purpose for which the land was dedicated, that is, for the benefit of Indigenous people or for Indigenous purposes.

Running briefly through these responsibilities, they clearly include such things as controlling pests and plants, protecting and maintaining any improvements on the land, exercising a duty of care for the land and taking all necessary actions for its maintenance and management. They also include managing the leasing of land. In seeking to grant a lease over land, trustees must ensure compliance with, for example, the Commonwealth Native Title Act and relevant planning legislation and ensure that trust land management responsibilities are passed on to leases through the conditions of the lease. As to lease payments received from a lease of land, they must generally be spent by the trustee on the maintenance and enhancement of Indigenous land.

To fulfil their responsibilities in an informed and effective manner, trustees of Indigenous land may need to have knowledge about the values and appropriate uses of the land, existing interests in the land and community opinion about the proposed development and have internal policies relating to the leasing of land. The trustee should have access to information about appropriate and desirable uses for the land and refer to this information in making decisions about granting a lease. This ensures that the lease is not granted for an unsuitable purpose for a particular piece of land.

The trustee should develop internal policies and processes appropriate to their community to determine how they will undertake any necessary consultation. The trustee should make information available to potential lessees, including members of their local community, about leasing options and the processes for expressing an interest in, and being granted, a lease. The trustee should include advice about land that is most suitable for various purposes and would receive the most favourable consideration. Whilst these obligations might, at first blush, appear onerous and tedious, they are essential to the role and function of the trustee and to ensure that the land they hold in trust is managed effectively and efficiently for the beneficiaries.

Finally, in addition to the amendments to be moved during the consideration in detail stage that I have already mentioned, I will be progressing other amendments to correct a small number of minor drafting errors in the bill and make other minor amendments such as removing sections in the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 that this bill will make redundant; amending the definition of 'urban area'—the land to which the freehold option applies—in the bill to ensure it operates as intended; amending the Aboriginal Land Act and Torres Strait Islander Land Act to prevent the perverse outcome of land becoming incapable of being transferred as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander freehold where ordinary freehold is not taken up; amending proposed Land Act 1994 provisions to ensure that the appropriate area of land may be within a declared beach area by amending the definition of 'seashore' to capture land between the high-water mark and the lot boundary located seaward of the high-water mark; and removing an appeal provision which relates to a purchase price decision which was inadvertently left in the Land Act 1994 when the purchase price provisions were transferred to the Land Regulation 2009 by the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014.

My department is currently working on an amendment to the Land Regulation which will ensure lessees' current appeal rights are maintained and amending the Land Act to confirm the government's intention in the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014 to issue freehold title rather than freeholding leases for applicable state rural leasehold land. I now table the government's response to the committee's report and the explanatory notes to the amendments that will be moved during consideration in detail. I commend the bill to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 44—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, government response [\[5787\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. Andrew Cripps's amendments [\[5788\]](#).

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.01 pm): I rise to speak on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I wish to advise that the Labor opposition will not be opposing this bill and supports the bill in principle. This is due in the main to the fact that this is an opt-in arrangement rather than being mandated. However, I will be raising a number of issues which we and indeed the wider community still have some concerns and reservations about.

As honourable members would know, this bill was introduced on 18 May 2014 and sent to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for review. The bill deals with two main tranches of legislative change: firstly, amending legislation to allow freehold land options in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and, secondly, allowing the minister of the day to declare on a

case-by-case basis conditional right of public access over a property where erosion has meant that access along the area of the beach has been compromised and the only access would be to traverse existing private property.

The legislation before us today is a watershed bill where the outcome of this legislation, if passed, may not be easily predicted. It may mean we see an increase in Indigenous homeownership in some areas but potentially not in others. Only time will tell what impacts the legislation will have in practice.

The land on which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are currently located is usually deed of grant in trust land, or DOGIT for short. It was introduced by former Aboriginal affairs minister Bob Katter many years ago. DOGIT land, which is held in trust, is community level land which came about via the enactment of the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act and the Community Services (Aborigines) Act in the early 1980s. This involved the local trustee group determining the use of the land on behalf of the entire community. The land was not owned by one individual or organisation.

In addition, there is what has been called Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander freehold which allows approved and designated Aboriginal corporations to be granted land to operate a business for a community group or corporation which benefits Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. Both DOGIT land and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander freehold land cannot be sold or mortgaged and possess many other requirements which protect the collective interests of all community members, in particular native title holders who have fought for many years and, in fact, decades for their land rights.

What this bill proposes to do is amend the existing Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 and the Land Act 1994 to allow the trustees to act for the relevant communities. There are 34 communities subjected to this legislation that will have to determine, in consultation with their communities, if they want some or all of their land to be converted to freehold land. This extinguishes the collective community interest and native title interests.

As I just mentioned, this bill will allow 34 communities, via their trustees, to determine if they want to opt-in or opt-out of this freehold land option. Those communities include Aurukun, Badu, Bamaga, Boigu, Cherbourg, Darnley, Dauan, Doomadgee, Hammond Island, Hope Vale, Injinoo, Kowanyama, Kubi, Lockhart River, Mabuag, Mapoon, Masig, Mer, Mornington Island, Napranum, New Mapoon, Palm Island, Pormpuraaw, Poruma, Saibai, Seisia, St Pauls, Ugar, Umagico, Warraber, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal, Yam and Yarrabah, located in my electorate of Mulgrave.

The reason I listed the names of every community that will be able under this bill to go down the freehold land path is because there are many communities and, in turn, community members that need to be (a) consulted and (b) informed of their new rights and obligations and about what it will mean, not only to them but fellow residents and future residents of their community.

We all know that consultation is a sore point for the LNP government, and we have seen it displayed yet again. I take on board the minister's comments in response to the committee's report, but I think that the committee has taken the sum of all comments put forward and made its determination. The parliamentary committee stated in its report—

Despite there being broad in-principle support for the freehold option, concern was raised in the majority of submissions and in evidence at the committee's public hearings, that there has been very little direct consultation and engagement with traditional owners, residents and community representative groups within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands communities by the Government prior to the introduction of the Bill.

But let us not just take the committee's word for it. Take a look at some of the submissions received during the parliamentary committee's deliberations on this bill. The Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation indicated in its submission that, whilst apparently extensive consultation has occurred, there has been no direct consultation with native title holders or individual traditional owners. Just like the opposition, the Cape York Land Council holds concerns that the key stakeholders are still not fully aware, nor do they completely understand, the implications of this legislation and what it could mean for their native title rights. The same concerns have been echoed by the Kaurareg Aboriginal Land Trust which stated, 'Despite being the traditional owners of this area, the Kaurareg people have not been adequately consulted about the bill.'

But the prime example of how those opposite have failed to consult properly on such an important piece of legislation came out of a hearing on Mornington Island on 23 July 2014 when a crossbench member asked a question regarding how a witness felt when the bill was announced. The witness, Mr Wilson, replied, 'To be honest I just heard about this last week.'

I note that the government has pledged \$75,000 for further consultation in the pilot communities. However, this may not be adequate to ensure that all stakeholders who reside in the 34 communities are aware of the situation and their rights. This has been echoed by the Torres Strait Island Regional Council in its submission, which stated—

The \$75,000 pledged by the State for consultation by Trustees for 'pilot' communities, is grossly insufficient and would likely not even cover the travel and accommodation costs of Council officers to each island for a single consultation.

The submission went on to state that the council—

... do not wish to see the 'baby thrown out with the bath water', that is a scenario where Trustees are unable to successfully 'sell' good public policy, due to under-resourcing.

TSIRC has called on the government to meet the cost of consultation to ensure that proper consultation is undertaken.

While the opposition will not oppose the freehold land proposal, we do however believe that the process is as important as the end outcome. We agree with the submissions to the committee that consultation has not occurred appropriately and to the depth required. Properly resourced consultation is required before any community can confidently go down the path of freehold land ownership, aware of all the facts and potential ramifications. As the Local Government Association of Queensland stated—

Land administration matters in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are complex ... The LGAQ understands that the State Government is eager to move forward with improved land tenure arrangements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; yet cautions that this must proceed at a pace whereby all stakeholders are well-informed and at ease with the process.

When it comes to engagement practices, and certainly in terms of future decision making by the government and trustees, I think Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mr Mick Gooda, said it best and laid it out in his 2012 social justice report. He stated—

Three key elements are involved in ensuring our effective participation in decisions that affect us. They are contained in Article 19 of the Declaration:

- Duty to consult—Governments (or States) have a duty to consult with Indigenous peoples 'whenever a State decision may affect indigenous peoples in ways not felt by others in society', even if their rights have not been recognised in domestic law.
- Good faith—Governments must consult and engage with us in good faith which ensures that decision-making processes are fair, cooperative and consistent with our cultural practices. Consultations should be 'carried out in a climate of mutual trust and transparency'; this includes providing sufficient time for Indigenous peoples to engage in their own decision-making process, and participate in a manner consistent with their cultural and social practices; and the objective of consultations should be to achieve agreement or consensus.
- Free, prior and informed consent—The principles of free, prior and informed consent requires that third parties in decision-making processes affecting Indigenous peoples enter into equal and respectful relationships with us. This principle applies not only to administrative acts and decisions, but also to the legislative process itself. Communities can also apply this principle in their local governance arrangements. There should be no coercion or manipulation used to gain consent. The principle is not a right of veto, but if consent is sought in good faith, it allows Indigenous peoples to say no to a proposal.

Together, these aspects of the right to participate in decision-making mean that Indigenous peoples must be recognised and treated as substantive stakeholders in the development, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and legislation that impact on our well-being.

There is no magic bullet for this situation. The government needs to take heed and understand that it cannot go about this process like a bull in a china shop and just tick a box and meet a commitment. As such, I ask the minister and the government to increase the funding available to trustees in the 34 communities to ensure that proper consultation occurs and ensure that this legislation is fully understood.

While I have always held the view, both privately and publicly, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues should not be treated as a political football for one side of politics or the other to score cheap political points, I do wish to correct the record and refute some of the claims which have been made by those opposite, in particular the shareholding ministers and the Premier. In a joint media statement by the Premier, the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs on 8 May 2014, the day this legislation was introduced into this House, it was claimed, 'Despite 20 years in office, the former Labor government failed to deliver for Indigenous people, denying them an opportunity enjoyed by their fellow Queenslanders.' This statement is fundamentally untrue.

By way of example, this bill further refines previous Labor policy and legislation in the case of the current lease agreements and the proposed simplification of these agreements. It was Labor that amended legislation to increase the 30-year term on leases to 99-year terms in 2008, thus providing the framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to have security over their property for 99 years with an option to renew. This was akin to ownership and also allowed native title rights and other community rights to be maintained. It is pleasing to see that the minister is keeping these leases in place for those communities that do not wish to transition to the freehold model and is proposing to streamline the lease process.

While on the subject of Labor achievements, it was the former Labor administration that established the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office. As members of the House would know, this program office was established in 2009 and I have always been a proud advocate for the work of this office during my time as minister. The program office provides cross-agency leadership, coordination and support to ensure that large capital works programs, such as the building of new dwellings and premises, are undertaken not only in an efficient manner but also in a way that brings the whole community along with it from start to finish.

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

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

**Mr RICKUSS:** I have listened with interested to what has been said, but it is starting to stray a long way from relevance to this bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The long title of the bill I think is still being referred to. I ask the Manager of Opposition Business to continue. I will listen carefully.

**Mr PITT:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was responding to comments about this bill made by the minister in the media on the date this was introduced. I think they are entirely relevant to this bill. As I was saying, I want to make special mention of the leadership of Allen Cunneen, who has worked tirelessly to deliver on this ethos. However, the program office does not just coordinate the building of new premises. It also manages Indigenous land use agreements to obtain native title consent for 99-year homeownership leases. Importantly, as it says on the department's website, it ensures that—

Land Use Planning Schemes are completed for all communities which will provide each Council with information to make decisions about the sustainable use of the communities land. This process forms the foundation for communities to transition to freehold land via the assistance of surveying which is a requirement under this bill. Through the remote program office, the former state and federal Labor governments worked together via the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing to work with local communities to build more dwellings, to decrease overcrowding and to plan for the future via the surveying of the land. The work of the Labor established program office has been the essential foundation that will enable any increased opportunity for homeownership under the former government or the current government.

I note that the minister in his introductory speech stated that 'freehold can only be granted in a community with a planning scheme instrument in place'. I would ask the minister to point out where he has provided any further funding under the proposed bill to allow communities to develop the required planning scheme instruments, including for detailed surveying.

I have noted already that the minister has stated that \$75,000 is available for further consultation, which I say is still far too low, but there does not appear to be any funding grants or programs made available to assist communities undertake further surveying and planning scheme development to ensure their communities are ready to implement the freehold land model if they choose to do so. I ask the minister today to ensure that further funding is made available to communities that require assistance in going down the freehold path to not only conduct the detailed consultation I covered earlier but also assist them in undertaking the necessary work such as surveying. This is the only responsible action to take. I also ask the minister to provide a greater level of detail including the next steps in terms of how this legislation's implementation may impact council's town planning schemes, particularly in terms of sequencing. We do not want to see a situation where we are putting the cart before the horse and there is an outcome in the community which is not in the community's best interest.

I now turn to the type of land that can be granted freehold status. The bill in its current form defines that land which can be made available for freehold as land which is located in an urban area, which is identified as an area intended specially for urban purposes, including future urban purposes. While there is support and I understand and agree with the reasons why the bill in its current form limits the granting of freehold land to the township areas to reduce the chances of large tracks of land

outside of the township being bought up and locked away for years, there is an argument that on a case-by-case basis land outside of the township area should be allowed to be converted into freehold land if that is what a community wants.

At this point I wanted to highlight a few points that have been raised by Vince Mundraby. Vince and I have had many discussions over the years about the need to increase Indigenous homeownership and the need to support economic development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and surrounds. As outlined in the committee's report, Mr Mundraby 'submitted that block holders of land outside of the township where people had established residences and successful farming business should be afforded the opportunity to be issued freehold title'. Therefore, the opposition welcomes the committee's recommendation that the minister of the day be given power to grant a special ministerial grant of freehold for community land outside the township urban areas to be classified as freehold, if the proposal put forward by the trustees meets all requirements. I note that the minister's amendments circulated earlier this week deal with the definition of 'urban area'. However, I seek further clarification from the minister as to what is meant by the term 'urban area', and explain whether properties, either business or dwellings, will be allowed to be considered for freehold land conversion.

Under the current provisions in the bill before us today, freehold land will only be afforded to an eligible person, excluding corporations and other bodies. During the so-called consultation undertaken prior to the introduction of the bill by the minister's department, it was deduced that stakeholders consulted wanted the eligibility class to be restricted to individuals rather than organisations. While this may have been the case, evidence was provided by stakeholders during the committee's deliberations on the bill, including a manager of a community owned Indigenous corporation, Bamaga Enterprises Ltd. Bamaga Enterprises gave evidence that excluding Indigenous corporations was a short-sighted move and that not allowing Indigenous corporations to acquire an interest in freehold land would effectively stifle potential economic development.

The committee has recommended that the bill be amended to allow community based Indigenous owned corporations registered under the Commonwealth Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 eligibility for the grant of freehold under the allocation process only if the available land in question does not have any current interest holder. While on the face of it this will not further the goals of the bill by directly increasing Indigenous homeownership, by allowing a dwelling to be purchased and lived in, it may have consequential and peripheral benefits in the long term. The opposition supports this recommendation.

I would like to turn now to how this bill may affect native title. Honourable members would know that native title has been a right that has been fought for in and out of the courts over many years and decades, cemented in the landmark case of *Mabo v Queensland (No. 2)* handed down by the High Court of Australia on 3 June 1992. It is concerning that (a) proper and full consultation has not occurred with all stakeholders in the affected communities, in particular native title holders; and (b) this bill will require native title holders to give up their rights voluntarily without compensation by the state after they have fought for many years to obtain those rights. As the North Queensland Land Council stated—

It has taken approximately 20 years to achieve recognition of native title in Yarrabah and asking native title holders to voluntarily surrender their native title when attaining it was a very hard-won battle is both unrealistic and unfair.

There have been concerns raised that adequate consideration has not been given regarding the extinguishment of native title. The opposition believes this is a critical issue which needs to be addressed. I understand the department's argument that putting native title holders in the eligible person criteria would exclude all other persons and that native title holders would automatically be the only category of people open to enter into freehold land arrangements. However, under this bill, the only way that native title holders can gain access to freehold land is if (a) they currently hold an interest in the land, such as a lease, or (b) there is no current interest in the land and then anyone could apply for the freehold land. The committee noted that—

... steps can be taken by traditional owners to establish an 'interest' in order for them to be eligible for the grant of freehold.

This is concerning as the legislation as it is before us today will put an onus on current native title holders to seek an interest in the land to be eligible to apply for freehold land or rely on the trustees of the land to make a special condition of the freehold instrument that native title holders have a higher interest than those who are not. If native title holders are required to voluntarily extinguish their rights, then further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that all stakeholders are

aware of the consequences of their actions. In addition, this bill may not simply extinguish current native title rights; it has the potential to extinguish future native title rights. With land being converted to freehold, future claims for native title will be limited or extinguished, which is also concerning.

Whilst the bill provides limitations and restrictions on who land can be granted to in freehold—namely, an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander, or the spouse or former spouse of an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander, or the spouse or former spouse of an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander who is deceased—it will not prevent the onselling of the land after the initial transaction. I note that the North Queensland Land Council stated in its submission that this—

... has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of land held in Aboriginal ownership at Yarrabah and on Palm Island, and which, over time, could effectively fracture the Aboriginal communities residing there.

A recent article in the *Cairns Post* entitled 'Could Yarrabah lose its way of life? Leaders say community at risk if bill passed', dated 23 August 2014, dealt with this issue. It said—

Yarrabah's traditional owners and some councillors fear that people's vote of approval for this option could mean ownership of homes, and land, may ultimately pass into the hands of "outsiders", including investors with their sights set on buying up Yarrabah's beachfront blocks notionally worth seven figures.

Henry Fourmile, a traditional owner of the Gunggandji people, was quoted as saying—

Even if they can afford to buy but then can't afford to make repayments the bank will step in, they'll lose the house and the land, and then it's anyone's.

Mr Fourmile went on to state—

Indigenous people may not realise when they sell it or lose it, but anyone could take it, then they can get rid of all our sacred sites and our stories there.

Members, this bill regrettably has the potential to not increase Indigenous homeownership but reduce it, as there are no safeguards in place to counteract the potential for onselling to outsiders. This is a delicate issue and I understand the complexities. I understand that potentially allowing external investment in housing could be a positive move which could create jobs and benefit the community. However, there is a real concern, and it is not just held by me or the opposition but by the community members on the ground in the 34 identified communities. They are already questioning the long-term effects of the legislation. It would only take falling behind in the mortgage repayments and a potential foreclosure of the loan to see land up for sale again. But this time it would not be restricted to community members; it would be available to the community at large. This is a concern, especially in my electorate of Mulgrave, which includes Yarrabah, where there is a large tract of beautiful beachfront land which could be snapped up by anyone with no restrictions.

This leads me to the point I have already raised—consultation is the key here, both before and after. As Yarrabah Councillor Malcolm Canendo stated—

There needs to be more clarity in the community about what this means for them ... Community consultation is definitely needed.

I call again on the government to ensure that adequate resources are available to the community's trustees to undertake not only proper and extensive consultation but also an education campaign outlining the potential benefits and, importantly, the risks involved.

I would like to briefly touch on the arbitration process and the potential conflicts of interest which may arise as a consequence of the bill before us today being passed. Clause 321 of the bill outlines the minimum requirements that the trustees need to undertake in order to satisfy their consultation requirements. There were concerns raised during the committee's deliberation on the bill that a conflict of interest could potentially arise and that the arbitration process would be out of reach for many of the communities, with their only option being the Land Court for any issues. The Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Kaurareg Aboriginal Land Trust expressed concern. They said—

In some cases regional and shire councils are not representative or trusted by community residents, and there may be a conflict of interest in the role of councils acting as both the local government authority and the land trustee.

I note that the bill requires that a probity officer be appointed to oversee freehold allocation where there are no existing interest holders. However, the legislation before us today does not require a probity officer to be allocated if there is an interest holder and thus begs the questions: where is the oversight of the process, in particular if the trustee is the council and the council possesses land, and what happens if there is conflict? I support the committee's recommendation that a 'community arbitration process' be established which will act as an intermediary step before disputes and/or

appeals go to the Land Court. This process will allow local community members to voice their concerns at the local level in a more open and transparent manner to ensure that issues are solved quickly and with minimal cost.

Before I turn to the amendments in this bill dealing with beach access, I want to address another issue. While it is well intentioned to introduce legislation into this House which establishes the framework for freehold land to be created, in order to gain access to the housing market, people need a steady income. They need a job which they will be able to derive income from to not only make their mortgage repayments but also pay utilities and maintenance on the dwelling. As members would be aware, many in the 34 communities identified in this bill rely on social benefits to support not only themselves but also their families as well. As the North Queensland Land Council indicated, the bill may lead to the possibility of creating a two-class strata system of the haves and the have-nots—those who can afford to purchase a dwelling and support the repayments and other associated costs, and those who cannot. The same *Cairns Post* article that I referred to earlier stated—

Councillor Bevan Walsh said property ownership would give Yarrabah's residents a sense of responsibility, but he admitted most of the community was "not well-off enough" to buy, as demonstrated when the council recently discovered that "about half" of the block holders who council last year issued leases to still hadn't paid for them.

While on the subject of Yarrabah, it has been an issue of mine and the local community for many years now—right back from when I made my maiden speech in this place—that Yarrabah needs to be granted remote status by the federal government to ensure that the Yarrabah community has access to the same level of grants and support as other communities outlined in this bill. Yarrabah is the largest mainland Indigenous community, and while it is not remote in terms of geography, it is isolated. Despite the relatively short distance between Yarrabah and Cairns, the only transport route currently is a one-hour-plus drive over the range and around the inlet. The community has a low percentage of vehicle ownership and no public transport. Despite being a massively improved road, the range access to Yarrabah is problematic for some vehicle types.

I know I am not alone in calling for Yarrabah to be granted remote status. There are many individuals in Canberra and indeed state and federal public servants who think this would be a good idea in terms of health, transport, employment, training and housing. I ask Minister Elmes, Minister Cripps and indeed the Premier to join with me in lobbying the federal government to this end to allow greater opportunity for this community by giving it remote status.

Members, the bill before us today is but one component of the work of government. A multifactor, multipronged approach is required to tackle the solution. Other policies and programs are required to ensure that people have the ability to not only get a job but also maintain a job into the future. This will increase their opportunities for homeownership. Labor has already committed to reintroducing Skilling Queenslanders for Work to assist our youth and long-time unemployed get into the job market. Without the wraparound support services and the further programs and policies to increase Indigenous employment, Indigenous homeownership could stagnate and not progress. We all have to pull up our sleeves and do our bit. As I alluded to earlier in my contribution on this debate, even if a member of a community becomes a homeowner, without a job and adequate support services, foreclosure on their loan may be imminent, meaning the newly created freehold land would be up for grabs by anyone in the wider community, thus reducing Indigenous homeownership.

I would like to touch on the elements of the bill that relate to beach access. The bill before us proposes to amend the Land Act 1994, as stated in the explanatory notes, to enable the relevant minister of the day on a case-by-case basis to declare a conditional right of public access over a property where erosion has meant that access along the area of the beach has been compromised by the private ownership of the beach area. As outlined in the committee's report—

Whilst the purpose of this provision is to address specific beach access issues arising from erosion of beach frontage impacting three lots at Rules Beach in Central Queensland, the legislation if enacted could be applied to any future cases where beach erosion reduces the high water mark to within an existing private property.

While there were many submissions to the bill, only a few focused on this aspect of the bill. Concerns were raised regarding the public liability of allowing the public onto someone's private land and also who would be charged with the responsibility of maintaining the property once a declaration had been made by the minister.

I note that in the amendments circulated by the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines earlier this week further clarifications have been made to the owner liability and who is responsible for the maintenance of the area after its declaration. The further amendments indicate that liability will be borne by the manager of the declared land, unless there was a negligent act undertaken on the part

of the owner, which would make them liable. That means the state will assume the landowner's occupiers liability and the owner will only be civilly liable for a direct act or omission by the owner, such as setting up a trip wire across the land.

The further amendments circulated by the minister also clarify the definition of maintain, meaning that if a local government elects to be the manager of a declared beach area then the local government authority would only be required to take reasonable and practical measures to maintain the area in a safe condition. While the opposition supports this proposal, we support the committee's recommendation that the minister and his department should 'ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to negotiate and resolve beach access disputes with the affected property owners prior to the declaration of a beach access area'. We believe that it is only right that, if you are declaring a portion of a property owner's land to allow public access, the department and the minister should undertake proper and meaningful consultation, something which I know those opposite have had a hard time with, before the minister evokes a formal declaration. I would encourage the minister to ensure that his department implements internal policies to ensure that this occurs.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for their detailed examination of the bill, especially the hardworking secretariat, led by Mr Rob Hansen, and the Technical Scrutiny Secretariat, led by Mr Peter Rogers. They had their work cut out for them with this piece of legislation. In the limited time available to them, the committee conducted nine public hearings in Cairns, Woorabinda, Mornington Island, Napranum, Injinoo, Hammond Island, Cherbourg, Brisbane and Yarrabah and sought feedback, with 13 formal written submissions being received. While the bill before us today is not perfect, it shows that when the committee process is used correctly and bills are not introduced in a rushed manner and put through urgently, the committee system is able to scrutinise the legislation and make valued and considered recommendations based on submissions from the wider community.

In conclusion, this bill will be passed. However, that does not mean that it will solve the issue of Indigenous homeownership on the passing and commencement of this bill. It does not mean that when the Governor signs this piece of legislation into law that we can switch off and move onto the next issue. As I said earlier, this is just one step in a long line of steps that needs to occur in order for all of us to reduce discrimination in our community and boost the ability for Indigenous Queenslanders to have their very own slice of the Australian dream and own their own home. We on this side of the House believe—just as I am sure those opposite do—that governments have a major part to play in ensuring that adequate policies and opportunities are available and afforded to Indigenous Queenslanders to assist them in gaining access to the property market, in particular those Queenslanders who reside in remote Indigenous communities. A multifaceted approach is required—a bottom-up approach, where the community owns the process, where the community is properly consulted and that all aspects are taken into consideration, including but not limited to native title issues.

As I said earlier, it is disappointing that the LNP government have used this particular bill to attack the record of the previous government. As I said, announcements about this bill implied that homeownership was not available under the previous government, when in fact 99-year leases introduced under Labor provided rights akin to freehold without the extinguishment of native title. I say again: both sides of politics support Indigenous homeownership and this bill comes on the back of years of policy development and programmatic work under the former Labor government to get to this point. It was a Labor government in 2009 that established the remote program office and coordinated the accurate surveying of DOGIT communities to allow for the town plans. This work was the essential foundation that will enable any increased opportunity for homeownership under the former government or the current government.

Indigenous homeownership does not simply become a reality with the stroke of a pen. It also requires the resourcing on the ground, economic development and policies to support job creation. Neither the government nor the opposition should lose sight of the importance of job creation in the communities concerned because stable employment is an absolute necessity to give people a stable means of providing for their families and entering the housing market. Instead of playing politics, I hope that we will be able to work together in a greater bipartisan way in this particular area so that we can actually get the best and greatest opportunities for Indigenous Queenslanders in remote communities.

The legislation before us today is a building block; it is a stepping stone which builds on the work of the previous government and the governments before that in an effort to reduce the homelessness and overcrowding rates and to increase the ability for Indigenous Queenslanders to

own their own home. I stress again that the opposition is not opposing this bill because the freehold approach is voluntary, not mandatory. I hope that trustees will inform their communities about the benefits or otherwise of this legislation before making any decision they are going down the freehold path. We support this bill. We look forward to the bill's passage through this House.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.34 pm): I rise to make brief comment on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I must congratulate the minister and the DNR staff who are present, particularly Andrew Luttrell and Ken Carse. They have done a great job travelling around North Queensland with me. I would also like to congratulate my colleague the honourable member for Cook. He has done a great job talking to the communities up there.

This is a big change, and probably a very progressive change, for the communities. As the previous speaker has said, it is a voluntary process and one that needs to be worked through and worked at. The committee worked extremely hard. I would also like to thank Rob Hansen, Megan Johns and Brett Nutley, who did a lot of work on this proposal. Brett does a great job in assisting us in the communities. As was previously stated, we travelled from virtually 18 June to 29 July, from Cherbourg to Cairns, Yarrabah, Woorabinda, Mornington Island, Napranum, the northern peninsula, Torres Strait and Hammond Island. We went and talked to a lot of communities. It was a great way of getting some information out there. I did some radio interviews, media interviews and TV interviews. In Rockhampton I was doing one at eight o'clock at night for WIN TV for the next night. It should have enlightened some of the communities a bit more about what was happening, and that is what this process was really about.

I will table a letter. It relates to a question that was asked on notice about land not covered by the bill. I would like to thank Minister Cripps for responding to that. At the time the question was asked I advised the community that I would refer that question on to him.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 22 August 2014, from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Hon. Andrew Cripps, to Mr Ian Rickuss MP, regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[5789\]](#).

As I said in my chair's foreword to committee report No. 44, this really is another tranche of legislation that is coming through to improve the communities. I would like to congratulate Minister Elmes on the work that he has done to get some of these areas surveyed. That was a real problem and that work needed to be done. A lot of the survey work has now been done and it has been tidied up. We have worked our way through the process. It is really good to see that this government is actually a doing government: it is actually doing things that are starting to improve communities.

The committee made a number of recommendations. A lot of the recommendations have been picked up by the government in different ways. The government's response to recommendation 2 is that the relevant departments are available to participate in community workshops if requested. There will be workshops with trustees. Of course, the recommendation was that more workshops be held and more assistance be given to communities. Recommendation 3 was that some type of arbitration process be put in place. There is a probity adviser for appeal rights. There will be a probity adviser and the trustees need to take things into account. We are working along the same lines.

Recommendation 4 is that the bill be amended to allow community based Indigenous organisations to be eligible for freehold in certain circumstances. In terms of land outside Indigenous local government areas, some of that land can be applied for under other pieces of legislation. Options were recommended for specific ministerial grants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land outside of Indigenous local government areas. Issues were raised about areas like Mornington Island—and I am glad to see that Minister Elmes is in the chamber taking so much notice. People on Mornington Island feel that their land area is very tight. They stated that they had taken one of the playgrounds from the kids to build houses on. They are the sorts of issues that need to be resolved. The community has to work with the departments as well.

**Mr Elmes:** Individual communities.

**Mr RICKUSS:** That is right. The individual communities have to work with the departments as well to solve some of those issues. Recommendation 6 is that the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines report biennially. There is an old saying in quality assurance that if you can't measure it, you can't do it. This sort of reporting process will occur between the two departments. The Minister for Housing, Tim Mander, is also involved in some of the housing issues.

We then went on to some of the other issues and in terms of social housing, Minister Mander, some of the families have lived in social housing for three or four generations. As I said to people at the committee hearings, if you have a good record of paying your rent, then have discussions with the

department about whether they will give you a discount if you want to purchase that house. If they have been there for 40 or 50 years and been good, responsible tenants, surely they would be given some credit for that. I can see the minister nodding, so I am sure he will take those sorts of things into account.

As has been highlighted here previously, it is a difficult issue. This piece of legislation will not solve all of the problems that there are in Indigenous communities, some of which are jobs related and some of which are social issues. As I said to a number of communities, and as I think one of the department people advised, it is a piece of legislation that just sits there on the shelf and if you want to implement it, you can. It is a bit like a driver's licence. You know what you have to do to get a driver's licence: you have to be 16 to apply for a learner's permit, you have to fill out a logbook for 100 hours and then you do a driver's test. It is the same sort of thing with this. When all of the boxes are ticked, then it can be put into operation. It is complex because you have prescribed body corporates, land trustees, local councils, Indigenous owners and long-term landholders. Hammond Island is one of the classic cases where the traditional owners were moved off the island and then when they came back, the land was held by other people.

Mayor Fred Gela of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council is very keen to look at this legislation. He told me that he wishes to be involved in a pilot project, so hopefully he will contact the minister's office about that too. The process needs to be fully looked at and gone through, but it is really up to the communities, councils and trustees to make these decisions. There was some confusion. When we went to Yarrabah, they were concerned that we were going to sell the land to China. To give you an idea of some of their concerns, I will quote Mr Percy Neal, who said—

In this process here now, we have an opportunity to protect them. I do not think I am a racist, I have never been a racist, but we have to be very careful of Migaloos and that. I do not know whether you put that in the thing there or not. I do not know how you protect that, but that is one of those things that we should be very wary of. Not all Migaloos are bad, but there is the stigma.

**A government member:** Is he talking about white whales?

**Mr RICKUSS:** No, I think he is talking about whites. That is quoted directly from the *Hansard* committee transcript, so I do not think I am slandering him in any way. There is some concern about what white government officials have done to communities in the past, and I think that highlights some of the issues that relate to these matters.

I think this will be a very progressive step forward. As for consultation, I realise the minister stated they received 13 responses from 32 communities. It is a matter of moving forward with this now and doing the right thing.

As for the high-water mark on beaches, that is an interesting statement, 'The public has right of way to land, as it always did.' The fact is that they never actually had right of way to the land that is the high-water mark because that was private land before. So it is a complex issue, and it might be something that we have to revisit in the future as issues arise. The Local Government Association did raise some concerns about it, and I think at the moment it only really affects a bit under 300 blocks of land, so that is something that we will have to look at in the future.

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (12.44 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak in support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Can I just say to the member for Lockyer at the very start that in my particular case I may be about the size of Migaloo—and I know the gentleman who made the comment well—but we certainly ensure that we treat Indigenous people with a great deal of respect.

Improving economic circumstances for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders has been the focus of this government as the key to addressing decades of historic disadvantage. This bill will provide opportunities for Indigenous and Island communities to own their own homes or to be involved in business just like every other Queenslanders. This is something which has been denied for inhabitants of the state's 34 Aboriginal and Islander communities.

The question we should have at the forefront of our minds is not what will happen if this legislation is enacted but, more importantly, the question of what will happen if it is not. If we leave things the way they are now, then there is every likelihood that in 10 or 20 years time Indigenous communities will still be more or less the way they are now. That means remaining dependent on welfare with little prospect of any community growth or personal development and, importantly, the absence of a real future.

The availability of freehold land in Queensland's Indigenous communities will be a first for Australia. Different governments have wrestled with the issue but have not been able to make it happen. I believe that this legislation is similar to other historic Indigenous determinations like Wik and Mabo in the way it opens the doors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to experience increased autonomy and self-determination. Importantly, it provides a way out of the welfare dependency which has characterised so many Indigenous communities and denied them a viable future for so long.

The bill implements the government's commitment to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the same access to freehold title as is available throughout Queensland and to remove barriers to homeownership and economic development in these communities. The bill provides the single biggest benefit that the government can bestow on Indigenous Queenslanders: the opportunity to own their own home on their traditional lands. This bill recognises the important connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with land and their rights to own a home on that land.

The bill does not force freehold on any community or any individual; it provides the power for communities which see freehold as part of their future to be able to have it. It provides flexibility for a community to take up freehold over only a part of the community if it wishes. We want to work with communities to identify what is best for each one and to what extent—if at all—freehold land can be made part of their community.

A former member for Cook, Eric Deeral, almost 40 years ago saw a better future for Indigenous Queenslanders and he had a practical vision for how it could be achieved. He recognised that welfare was a self-perpetuating problem which created dependence and eliminated enterprise within communities. Unfortunately, the challenge that he saw 40 years ago remains the case today. There is a link between social problems and economic disadvantage. The more a community can be normalised through employment and business opportunities, the better the chance of dealing with social problems like alcohol and substance misuse and violence towards women and children.

This government's approach to addressing Indigenous disadvantage is to see jobs created and local economies developed which support homeownership and the creation of small businesses. If we can create jobs, most of the rest of the social problems in the community will take care of themselves. I do not for a moment think that it will be a quick and easy task to make freehold land available across all Indigenous communities. There are major issues for communities to consider which could have enormous impacts on their lives. For example, a community that wants to make freehold land available must consider that freehold extinguishes native title over the area of land subject to freehold. Rights to land for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional owners have been hard fought for many generations, so the question of extinguishment is a very, very big decision.

Also, once a piece of land is declared freehold and purchased by a community member it is then available to be onsold at a later date by the owner to someone else, even a buyer from outside the community. If people have their own home on freehold, they are responsible for paying rates and maintaining the property. These are just some of the issues to be considered and discussed at length so that each community can come to an informed decision. Communities do not have to take up the freehold option. Some might choose to test the option by taking it up over a limited area within their community.

It is anticipated that making freehold land available will provide the opportunity to access a capital pool in terms of equity in commercial property, local business and homeownership. This will result in the ability to offer security for attracting investment to provide increased opportunities for employment and skills development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Limiting freehold to townships removes the concerns—I heard what the member for Mulgrave said earlier but he was wrong—that large tracts of land can be granted as freehold and potentially lost forever to community ownership. It will also reduce the need for significant consultation, as the land available will have already been identified through the planning scheme and, in most cases, already utilised. This bill gives choice to local governments in their role as trustees about whether individual freehold land ownership is the way forward for their communities, which are currently held under a deed of grant in trust. Prior to this bill, leasehold was the only option.

To enable this bill and to make ordinary freehold a practical and realistic option, the Queensland government has been putting in place a strong land administration system across the 34 Indigenous communities in Queensland. Much of this work is invisible, but it establishes the underlying requirements and systems needed for individual freehold, homeownership and commercial

leasing. This work is undertaken by a specialist part of my department, the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office. Its work is critical to reducing the significant transaction costs that exist for residents who wish to buy their own homes—by leasehold or freehold—or to start a new business. The principal function of the office is to provide land and services for the construction of social housing, but they also work on private homeownership. The office facilitates Indigenous homeownership through its homeownership team. The team works with Indigenous Queenslanders to assist them to secure loans and to complete the processes associated with building or purchasing a home. Land freeholding and homeownership would not be possible without the work of the program office in Cairns.

The office is rolling out a suite of programs across the 34 Indigenous communities which include: land use planning schemes, which are key to good planning and appropriate future development that will identify areas available for individual freehold in a schedule attached to the land use plan; whole-of-township surveys, which cover housing, roads, local government infrastructure, reserves and buildings like clinics, shops and schools; tenure resolution to resolve anomalies identified through the survey program such as an encroachment on a housing lot or a road which needs to be fixed; Indigenous land use agreements, which formalise the consent given by the traditional owner group for the township area for the introduction of freehold as an enabler for homeownership and commercial leasing.

Building blocks are being put in place—both literally and otherwise—to achieve easier, cheaper land dealings in communities where this has previously been a real obstacle. Individual freehold is a big change. Many communities are now ready to embrace this change, as they have embraced the program of work that puts in place strong and enduring land administration systems.

A key part of the bill is for these communities to self-nominate if they wish to proceed with freehold. If the bill is passed, I expect to call for expressions of interest from Indigenous communities interested in participating in a pilot program. This bill enables change. The security of individual land tenure is fundamental to attracting investment and economic development as well as to providing residents in these communities the same access to homeownership as any other Queenslanders.

Together we have come a long way through this, but this is just the start. The journey will be a long one, but with goodwill a family home where people have full-time work, the kids go to school and mum and dad can plan for a secure future—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (12.54 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I seek leave to have my speech incorporated due to illness.

Leave granted.

Land tenure in Queensland's Indigenous communities is complex, characterised by a mix of current and legacy land tenure regimes.

Decisions have historically been made for the communities, not by the communities.

This Bill will provide ordinary freehold land opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Ordinary freehold land ownership opportunities will be made available for the first time since the first tenures were created over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the 19th century.

The primary objective of this Bill is to introduce changes to the land tenure system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to allow for the option of converting community 'trust' land into 'ordinary freehold title', thereby giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the opportunity to own land and homes on their traditional lands.

This is an option communities do not currently have.

This Bill will allow the 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities located in either an Aboriginal shire council or an Indigenous regional council to obtain ordinary freehold title in their community. Within these communities, freehold can only be granted in town areas, which are defined as land identified in the relevant local planning scheme as urban or future urban use.

This decision will remove barriers to home ownership and economic development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Each community's trustee, following appropriate consultation, will make the decision as to whether or not to adopt the freehold model.

As a Member of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee I was delighted to be a part of nine public hearings on this Bill including hearings at both Cairns and Yarrabah in the Far North. The Committee also convened public briefings with Departmental Officers on 21 May and 6 August this year.

The Committee also invited public submissions on the Bill, accepting 13 written submissions.

This Bill provides for two processes for the trustee to allocate available land for freeholding.

These two processes are:

- Where there is an existing interest holder for the land; and
- Where there is no interest holder for the land.

Where there is an existing interest holder, the land can only be granted to the holder of that interest. If there are multiple interest holders for the land, then all of the interest holders must either apply or agree to the application.

Where the existing interest is as a social housing tenant then the freehold applicant must purchase the social housing.

The application to purchase social housing is subject to approval by the chief executive of the department administering the Housing Act 2003 (currently the Department of Housing and Public Works). The purchase price for social housing is set by the trustee using a valuation methodology agreed between the trustee and the chief executive of the department.

Where there is no interest holder, the trustee can allocate land to any eligible person using the allocation method (auction, ballot or tender) set out in the Freehold Policy.

To ensure the integrity of this allocation process, the Bill provides that the trustee must appoint a probity advisor to monitor and advise on the allocation process.

In summary, the freehold model proposed under the Bill provides a balance of flexibility and control that enables the trustee and their community, where they wish to take up the option of freehold, to provide freehold in a way that is best suited to their community.

As the Minister has said this Bill is about giving choices to the communities and it will deliver on this Government's commitment to provide land ownership opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Madam Speaker, I commend this Bill to the House.

**Mr TROUT:** I also table a speech relating to my electorate which I had prepared for tonight.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Tropical Learning Academy' regarding the Barron River electorate [5790].

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.55 pm): I rise to speak to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The intent of this bill is to be commended. The chair's foreword to the committee report states—

With surveying and town planning programs well underway, communities are now in a position to provide the option of freehold if the community believes it will be of benefit to them.

Importantly the legislation ensures all of the decision making is left to the traditional owners and community members in partnership with the trustee and councils and provides the flexibility for communities to determine how and when to provide freehold.

I think it is very important to allow communities to make that decision. I know that this legislation is not forced upon communities and is about giving communities the tools in order to take that option.

As a member of the committee that went to some Torres Strait islands, Mornington Island and other Indigenous communities, I felt to a certain extent there was a concern that there was a lack of information provided to those communities and that the legislation was rushed. The committee report states—

It was evident to the committee from its public meetings held in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that very few community members had prior knowledge of the freehold option proposal in the Bill, and that councils and Native title representative groups had not actively engaged with, or informed their communities, of the proposal. For example, at the hearings on Mornington Island ... the committee noted:

**Mr KNUTH:** *You mentioned the risk. I want to get a bit of a feel of where you are coming from. When this bill was announced, did you feel optimistic or did you feel it was going to be dangerous ...*

**Mr Wilson:** *To be honest I just heard about this last week.*

**Ms Linden:** *We had someone drop off this piece of paper and they said to come to this meeting on this day ... The lady who gave me the flyer could not tell me much about it ...*

I do feel that the intent of this bill is good, but I think the process should have been different whereby the departments gave the information to the Indigenous community so they were fully aware and had an understanding of this bill before it was put in place. Likewise, as that implementation was put forward by the department and the communities could get a bit of a feel for the issues, then we could have a public hearing and hear what the Indigenous people had to say. If that had been the case, I believe the process would probably be a little more positive.

Concerns were expressed with regard to freeholding. If you freehold a piece of land then obviously it is yours. A concern was also raised with regard to someone outside the area, such as from Brisbane, buying that freehold land, but I believe that is something that could be resolved.

I commend the government on taking this initiative. I also commend Bob Katter Sr for the work he has done over the years. The *Australian* states that as a member of parliament and also a minister for Aboriginal and Islander affairs—

First, he pushed self-management of Aboriginal communities by elected councils. Second, he introduced laws granting inalienable freehold title to Aboriginal reserves, to be held in trust by the councils. Third, he introduced laws to enable private ownership of lands by families through perpetual leases for home ownership, and term leases for enterprise development. Then he set about putting his program into action. He insisted Aboriginal people take up all jobs they could perform, from administration to roads and housing construction.

I acknowledge what he has done and I acknowledge the member for Cook for the work he has done. I also acknowledge the fact that the government has taken this initiative forward.

This is not going to be easy, of course, because there is a lot of ironing out to be done. I do know that, in terms of the recommendations, the minister has advised that the department has been able to provide much more information which I believe would have been beneficial if it was put in place first, but I believe this is a step in the right direction.

Debate, on motion of Mr Knuth, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Tropical North Learning Academy



**Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (2.30 pm): As I am not well, I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* my comments about a matter relating to my electorate.

Leave granted.

Last week in the Barron River electorate, we were very fortunate to welcome the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, John-Paul Langbroek, for the second time in the space of just a few months.

In May, Minister Langbroek took time out from his very busy schedule to chair a Principals' roundtable. I cannot stress how well received this was, and how grateful each principal was to have ample time to talk to the Minister about issues of concern, ideas and most particularly, praise for the Great Results Guarantee, which was uniformly accepted as a great initiative of this government.

This time, Minister Langbroek was in Cairns to launch the Tropical North Learning Academy.

The Tropical North Learning Academy is a strategic partnership between Trinity Beach State School, Smithfield State High School and James Cook University.

Trinity Beach and Smithfield form the Tropical North Learning Academy for the Department of Education, Training and Employment, with James Cook University being the tertiary partner.

The Learning Academy opens doors to tertiary education in many ways, creating a seamless educational pathway from the early phase of learning to university and adult life. It fosters a university focused culture that helps students meet their academic potential.

TNLA partners work together to provide a range of 'learning enhancements', called academies, for students at all stages of learning. Partners also work to ensure smooth transitions occur at the key junctures of schooling.

A key driver that underpins its educational direction is the question:

'Is life getting better in the tropics?'

Well, I for one consider life is certainly getting better in the tropics. And in the field of education, it seems school principals are feeling the benefits of this government's commitment to revitalise Queensland's education system to ensure our children get the best possible start in life.

Some of the signature programs offered include

- specialist JCU Learning Academies for high achieving, tertiary aspirants from Year 5 to 12
- Philosophy in Action—which explores future life in the tropics using the disciplines of philosophy and critical thinking
- a Jazz Academy for talented and aspiring musicians
- onsite Montessori early childhood programs for children up to 3 years
- Soccer and Baseball Academies for talented sportsmen and sportswomen and
- Vocational Training—a diverse suite of accredited Cert III & IV courses

Plans are in place to expand the current programs to include international learning partnerships through the Tropical Alliance of Universities, enhancing partnerships with industry and community groups and world class e-learning capabilities providing access to global learning communities.

With this week's announcement that children in Year 5 will learn a second language, it's great news for our electorate where we are keen to see young children have the opportunity to learn Mandarin.

Education has never looked better in Queensland and the mood is very positive for our children's future.

I would also thank the Minister for surprising many delighted Barron River Seniors by accompanying me to Senior Week celebrations in the electorate.

### Premier's Open Data Awards

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.30 pm): Today I rise in the House to update everyone on the recent announcement on behalf of the Premier of the 2014 Premier's Open Data Awards at the GovHack Red Carpet Awards announced on Sunday, 10 August. The Premier's Open Data Awards 2014 are on again and will bring together industry stakeholders, businesspeople, community organisations and the public to become involved in what has become an annual event in the e-government world. There are exciting new categories this year that focus on maximising app creativity, development and design. Those competition categories are the best use of open data, the best use of a community app and the best commercial app. For the first time this year there will also be prizes for the best school entry which will encourage all high school students to get into the megarich world of creating apps and also—and this is probably my favourite part of the competition that I have been personally in support of—the best Public Service entry which will be open to all Queensland public servants.

I remind everyone that there is a six-week time frame for the competition and entries need to be lodged by Friday, 26 September and winners will be announced in December by the Premier at the Premier's awards ceremony. Like the GovHack awards, the Premier's Open Data Awards are focused on the community, whether you are in business, a non-government organisation or association or someone just wanting to have a go to see what they can come up with. It is a fantastic opportunity for the development of creative useable apps. The GovHack awards competition is a great concept judged on the project page and three-minute videos submitted and was done over a two-day period from Friday, 11 July to Sunday, 13 July.

The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, the federal Minister for Communications, was the special guest and announced the winners of GovHack. This particular event showcased the collaboration that can be achieved between local, state and federal governments with regard to the development of the importance of open data. I am very pleased to say that a gentleman from the Gold Coast won the GovHack award. The Premier's Open Data Awards will give participants time to conceive the concept, ripen the approach and develop an app utilising our government's data. At the moment as of Tuesday, 26 August, there are 1,426 data sets with 5,315 resources to work with and many more to come. I call on the IT industry, businesses large and small, community groups and associations and the whole of the non-government sector, schools and all public servants to have a go and create an exciting app that will change the world in which we live.

### Kawana Electorate, Deaths

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.34 pm): It is with great sadness that I rise to acknowledge the tragic loss of four lives—three of them young children—on the Sunshine Coast at the weekend. Young Kawana mum Keisha Ann Jackson and three of her children—little Ryan, Joan and Matilda—died as a result of a car crash at Glenview on Friday. As a parent of children of a similar age, I cannot begin to imagine the immense grief and pain the family is suffering as they struggle to come to terms with such loss. As authorities continue to investigate the crash, my thoughts and prayers are with the family, especially Keisha's young son Ethan, the sole survivor of the accident, as he faces life without his mum, brothers and sisters. I know the Kawana community will rally around Ethan and his extended family during this difficult time. The Kawana community is a compassionate one in the face of tragedy. Sadly, it has been no stranger to tragedy in 2014.

Kawana mum and daughter Noelene and Yvana Bischoff passed away in Bali in January on what should have been an enjoyable family vacation. A memorial tree planted in their honour represents a lasting tribute to Noelene and Yvana and testament to Kawana's community spirit. Around the same time another local family lost their four-year-old son to drowning in a Kawana lake.

With each of these tragedies we have seen an outpouring of love from Kawana residents and I have no doubt little Ethan will receive the support he needs not only from his family but the community at large.

My thoughts are also with the students and teaching staff at Kawana Waters State College. The school's flag flying at half-mast is a sombre tribute to the students and classmates whose lives were cut short as a result of Friday's crash. I thank Paul Williamson, the college director, for the strength and determination that he has had over the last few days in keeping the school community together in such difficult circumstances and Education Queensland for providing the counsellors for students and staff at Kawana Waters State College. In terms of any assistance that anyone else has needed, I know that Paul Williamson, the college director, and all of the teaching staff have been there at the forefront to offer that assistance without question.

At times like this there is often a feeling in our community of wanting to help in some way. My office has received inquiries from residents seeking advice on how they might be able to help the family following the weekend's tragedy. Keisha's family has asked that residents wanting to donate money to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Those wishing to do so can visit the RBWH Foundation's website, [www.rbwhfoundation.com.au](http://www.rbwhfoundation.com.au). On behalf of the entire Kawana community, I extend my condolences to Keisha's family during this immensely difficult time. Whatever support the Kawana community can give Ethan, who has no mother and brothers and sisters left, we will give him.

### Overdose Deaths

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (2.37 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, what would your reaction be if I told you something preventable was killing more Australians than the road toll? Further, what would your reaction be if I said that hardly any Australians know about this? But, even worse, what would your reaction be if I said there is virtually no policy response to try to save those lives? At first you would disbelieve and then you would be truly shocked.

In 2011 and again in 2012 there were more fatal overdose deaths in Australia than deaths on the roads. In 2012, 1,427 Australians died by fatal overdose compared to 1,388 on the roads. But there is more that will shock you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Most members would think, like the rest of Australians, that this was something to do with heroin—that is, in surveys that is about 80 per cent. Only 11 per cent of Australians thought it was related to medical opioids. This could not be further from the truth. Medical opioids contributed to 71.1 per cent of the opioid overdose deaths in Australia and heroin only 28.9 per cent. This is four Australian lives lost every day. We are not talking here about just suicides. We are talking about accidental overdoses. In fact, most of them are probably accidental overdoses. There are more accidental overdose deaths in rural and regional Queensland, for example, than there are in Brisbane.

I stood in this place and warned about Endone and oxycodone very recently and I wrote to the federal health minister. There is an explosion in the prescribing of these drugs. There is an explosion in the illegal trafficking of these prescribed drugs. Prescriptions are up by 300 per cent in Australia and oxycodone alone is the seventh most prescribed drug in this country. It is a plague.

It is International Overdose Awareness Day on 31 August. This is an Australian initiative. We will never deal with this tragic loss of huge numbers of lives unless we make people aware of it. Taxpayers are funding this trade and these medications to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. It is a problem that people in the medical industry have become aware of. It is aggravated by the fact that the PBS subsidise these drugs whilst not subsidising many safer drugs. We need to make people aware of this plague.

*(Time expired)*

### Safe Night Out Strategy

 **Dr LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (2.40 pm): I rise to speak to a very important issue in this House and to all of Queensland, the Safe Night Out Strategy. We all come to this place to do good for our community. We all have as a goal to try to help our communities, to help the mums and dads, the kids in our electorate, the kids of Queensland. I, too, want to do good for our communities. I, too, want to do good for Queensland.

I have seen domestic violence. I have seen assaults in nightclubs. I have seen interpersonal violence that I wish no-one else would ever see. Like the members opposite, I want to try to stop this. I simply want to try to minimise the harm. Over many years I have spoken at many functions, many

medical group meetings, many LNP functions. Indeed, I have spoken with the Attorney-General, as he referenced. Many representatives on the opposite side support a comprehensive plan. Many members privately have come to me supporting our comprehensive plan. Everyone harps on the two-hour reduction, but may I say that our plan is extremely comprehensive. It is not only the two-hour reduction but also restricting the availability of alcohol times and also measures on punishment, which the opposite side of the House has also. We support many facets of the plan together.

I am just sorry to advise the members opposite that, with their plan, although they think they are doing well, they think they have solved the issue, they really have not. It simply cannot work. I cannot see how, by increasing trading hours and by increasing the availability of alcohol to our youth, this plan could possibly work to reduce harm.

**Mr Grimwade:** Your personal view is to shut pubs at one o'clock.

**Dr LYNHAM:** That is a matter of false representation.

**Mr Rickuss:** You're taking note of that interjection, are you?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I take that interjection. Our plan is not to close clubs at 1 am.

**Mr Grimwade:** I didn't say your plan. Your personal view is one o'clock shuts.

**Dr LYNHAM:** If you would just listen carefully to what I have to say—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Member for Stafford, if you could address your comments through the chair that would be helpful.

**Dr LYNHAM:** I am not aware of any other program in the world, any other strategy in the world, that seeks to reduce harm by increasing trading hours and increasing the availability of alcohol.

**Mr Cavallucci:** We didn't do that.

**Dr LYNHAM:** That is their policy: increasing trading hours and increasing alcohol. There was a lot of data brought to this House the other day. I am aware of that data. It is a discredited interpretation of data produced by the alcohol industry. That was the data that we were cited.

*(Time expired)*

### Gold Coast University Hospital

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.44 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to update the House on health services in my electorate on the Gold Coast and to talk about how the Newman government is delivering on our promise to revitalise front-line services for families. Yesterday, I toured the Newborn Care Unit at the Gold Coast University Hospital with the Premier and the Minister for Health to see firsthand how the expansion of services is impacting on families with premature and sick babies. The new facility at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit provides specialised treatment for sick babies. This is the first time that these services have been made available on the Gold Coast.

The burden and stress involved in travelling to Brisbane daily to see a sick child, not to mention the cost, will no longer be faced by Gold Coast families. The new service has already supported eight babies born at 27 weeks and over 400 mums with pregnancy complications.

Yesterday, the Premier, the health minister and I were fortunate enough to meet eight-week-old Alfie, who was born at 27 weeks weighing just a little over 800 grams. Because of the services now provided at the Gold Coast University Hospital, mum Penny was able to stay on the coast to be with Alfie during his time in hospital as well as being available for the rest of her family.

I also want to thank the emergency department director, David Green, and nurse unit manager, Jo Timms, for taking the time out of their very busy schedules to show me around the emergency department earlier last week. Dave and Jo provided a very insightful overview of life in the emergency department and explained some of the challenges of moving into a brand-new hospital nearly 12 months ago. The number of emergency presentations has increased dramatically—much higher than anyone could have predicted. Staff are now dealing with as many as 250 presentations a day when a very busy day at the old Southport hospital would have been 200 presentations. Dr Green has had over 30 years experience as an emergency department doctor. He spoke very highly of our current minister, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg. He described him as the most enabling health minister they have ever seen and said that the minister's common-sense approach to empowering local hospital and health boards has been extremely successful. The staff on the ground are seeing great results and the patients in our hospitals are seeing the results of this government's commitment to revitalising front-line services.

I am also delighted to advise the House that the former Griffith University Medical School building is to be refurbished to provide a one-stop shop for community health services. Sixty staff will start providing services from October this year and by early next year some 300 staff will be based at the new Southport CDB health precinct. Our government recently announced a \$12 million commitment in capital funding for the renovation of this building. We will now see patient based services in the vicinity such as oral health, renal dialysis support, children's health, child mental health, alcohol and drug services, sexual health and transition to care. It is my great pleasure to be the member for Southport. I am very proud of the achievements of our government in delivering better front-line services.

### Ipswich Jets

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (2.47 pm): I rise today to speak with a heavy heart about the Ipswich Jets, a great footy side up at Ipswich. Shane and Ben Walker are the coaches of the Ipswich Jets. The Ipswich Jets are fifth on the ladder. So I am astounded that they have not had one home game televised. How ridiculous is that! This is really disappointing. The silvertails from Easts are getting four home games plus three away games. But the poor old Ipswich Jets, which are coming fifth on the ladder, they have not had a home game televised. They and the Papua New Guinea team have not had a home game televised! Where is the member for Burleigh? Burleigh has had four home games.

This is a blatant abuse of the system. The Jets are fifth on the ladder. This year, they have had 14 wins. They are in the top five. Yet they have not had a home game. I cannot believe it. I know that the North Queensland Cowboys get done over in this sort of situation, too.

**Mr Newman** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** I take the Premier's interjection. I will table some of the sponsors for the Ipswich Jets just to give them a bit of a hand. None of their sponsors ever get any recognition because they get no home games televised. What sort of conspiracy is going on at Channel 9?

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Ipswich Jets Football: Jets Rugby League Club' [\[5791\]](#).

**Mr Bleijie:** Royal commission.

**Mr RICKUSS:** No, I will not go that far. The Attorney-General has stepped over the line there. I will not go that far. I think it is a travesty. The Jets is a good, hardworking football team and club. The *Queensland Times* and Luxury Paints are great sponsors of the Ipswich Jets. But they really need to have their home games televised.

In conversation with Jason Costigan, the member for Whitsunday, he has complained to me about the fact that the Cowboys get done over all the time in relation to these issues. I see the local government minister nodding his head in support. We have to have our fair share. How do these teams get decent sponsorship if they do not have any televised games? I say good luck to the member for Chatsworth that the Tigers have got seven games, but it is a bit unfair. I think there needs to be balance in relation to this issue. I call on Channel 9 to program appropriately next year so that home games of the Ipswich team are televised so sponsors and supporters get the advantage of it. This is the sort of stuff that makes the old fibros dirty on the silvertails. I can understand why. I will stand up for my community in Ipswich every time.

### Emergency Services Volunteer Cadet Program

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (2.50 pm): What a hard speech to follow! Last Sunday at the Raby Bay Volunteer Marine Rescue complex I was fortunate to join the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner for Emergency Volunteers at a combined operation with a group of about 30 emergency service cadets, surf-lifesavers and the Westpac rescue helicopter as well as quite a number of other people who came along to observe. I was very pleased to be a part of it. The cadets went through a program of checking out the helicopter. I have never seen a pilot pull the covers off a helicopter and let cadets look all over the helicopter to actually see how it works. The cadets also boarded the rescue boats and travelled out to sea. Last Sunday was quite a wet and windy day and some of the cadets came back quite wet. They also let off flares on the ramp which took a fair bit of organisation. They were exposed to all of the elements that emergency service volunteers partake in during their great service to Queensland.

The cadets came from the Cedar Creek Rural Fire Service which is in the hills behind the Gold Coast and also from St Laurence's College here in Brisbane. Tomorrow I will attend the opening of the cadet program at St Laurence's College. It is a real treat for me to be part of the Emergency

Services Volunteer Cadet Program throughout Queensland. We are setting up groups on Thursday Island and Palm Island, through the Indigenous communities and in places right up and down the coast and inland Queensland. It was a pleasure to be with Jennie Schoof, the cadet program manager from Police-Citizens Youth Club, and Rob Fiedler, the CEO of Police-Citizens Youth Club. It was also a pleasure to be there with Danny Donald who is a representative from Energex, which sponsors the helicopters. All in all, it is a great program for the volunteers to get involved in. They can actually partake in programs right across the field from the Rural Fire Service to the State Emergency Service across to Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Coast Guard. There is a real opportunity for kids to get two Queensland Certificate of Education points by participation in the Duke of Edinburgh awards. It is a satisfying program. One of the great comments that came out of the Raby Bay VMR group is that we should be doing this every six months to get our cadets involved and see how they perform in the public arena.

*(Time expired)*

### **Distinguished Visitor; Kurilpa Riverfront Renewal Plan**

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (2.53 pm): Can I start my contribution this afternoon by acknowledging that the Queensland parliament has had a special visitor today in the form of the former Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Naoto Kan. I acknowledge that it was his leadership that saw Japan through one of the worst environmental crises of its history and that was the meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear plant. I acknowledge all of his international efforts in trying to alert the world to the damages, environmental disaster and catastrophe that could befall us from nuclear energy. I put on record in this House the appreciation from the Labor opposition for Mr Kan's visit to the House today and for all of his efforts in advising the world of the dangers of nuclear energy.

The other contribution I wanted to make in this place today was in relation to a very special part of my electorate and that is the Kurilpa peninsula area of South Brisbane. The Kurilpa Riverfront Renewal Plan was launched last Thursday. It was launched to a room full of major Brisbane developers at a function that cost \$150 a head to attend. This is a public plan for an area of my electorate that is of enormous value and benefit to the people of Brisbane, not just the developers of Brisbane. Whilst I do appreciate the fact that the Business South Bank association invited me to attend, I do have to place on record the fact that none of the three local Labor representatives at a council, state or federal level were invited to attend this launch of the Kurilpa Riverfront Renewal Plan.

This area is 1½ times larger than South Bank. It continues along the river from the successful Gallery of Modern Art and it covers the last substantial land bank in Brisbane's CBD with a total area of 25 hectares. We will not see a redevelopment opportunity of this scale at all in Brisbane again. It is incumbent on the state government and the council to get this right. They will not get it right if they exclude the Brisbane public from a genuine consultation on this issue. While the government, council and developers had 10 months pulling this plan together that will see an increased density in the area of 11,000, the people of Brisbane are getting 30 business days. That is outrageous.

### **Weipa, Community Forum**

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (2.56 pm): Weipa, a Rio Tinto Alcan mining town and hub of the western cape, is set to have a facelift following a community forum I held there on Friday last week. This is the fourth community forum I have organised in my electorate to give people a say about their region and their future. At the forum there were representatives from a significant cross-section of the community, including Rio Tinto, Weipa Town Authority, Cape York Sustainable Futures, Cook Shire Council, Western Cape College, pastoral and tourism interests, residents and Indigenous groups. Guest speakers included Jan Crase, from Regional Development Australia, who gave a good regional perspective and outlined challenges, whilst Ian McNamara set out the Weipa Town Authority vision for the future of the town. Gareth Manderson and Vance Wallin from the chamber also contributed to the discussion with an emphasis on inclusiveness and the need for appropriate government response. The group explored options for the future direction of the region and prioritised outcomes.

It was no surprise to me that the availability of land was top of the list. Land for residential, commercial, industrial, and even rural lifestyle blocks, remains in constant demand. Our government will need to work with Rio, Weipa Town Authority and the community to deliver land for future needs. The sealing of the Peninsula Development Road and subsidiary roads is also on the list, as is greater utilisation of the port facility. Opportunities will open up for tourism, export and recreation if the port was able to be diversified.

It was no surprise to me, yet encouraging to see, opportunities for traditional owners and Indigenous people ranking in the top five priorities. The forum thought there needed to be emphasis on education, capacity and opportunity if the region's Indigenous people were to be given a fair go in the growing economy. Live cattle export also ranked highly, as did agribusiness and export. In the mix was renewable energy, small business expansion, regional governance, agricultural diversity and many other significant contributions. Weipa will move from a small town to a big town in a very short time and we will see an equal role to be played between big and small business in its long-term future. The challenge for our government is to understand and support the opportunities as they arise.

### **Broadwater Electorate, Education**

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (2.59 pm): Today it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House to acknowledge and thank the students from Coombabah State High School who made the trek up from the Gold Coast this morning to attend Madam Speaker's Future Leaders lunch, held during the lunchbreak earlier today. I pay tribute to Kharisma White, Alda Pelmelay, Ebony Vejrazka—and I do apologise to her if I have pronounced that incorrectly—Nicholas Hart and Aston Wharton and I thank their teacher Dhana Hafford for taking time out of their day to come to Brisbane to explore the parliament, to watch question time this morning and, importantly, to hear from both Madam Speaker and Andy Gourley whom we know as the founder of the Red Frogs charity.

Like many in this House, I am a big believer that education is one of the most important gifts that we can ever give to young children, the future leaders of this great state. It does not matter what side of the chamber we sit on, we all agree that education is a very powerful weapon and tool. Indeed, Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

That is why I am so proud to be part of a government that has really delivered in education for my electorate of Broadwater. I am proud that I was able to deliver flashing rights to Coombabah State High School and Coombabah State School. Coombabah State School had been promised flashing lights by the previous member numerous times. They had been waiting for nearly five years. There were broken and failed promises. It was a great pleasure for me to be able to deliver on my commitment to that community and ensure that our school at Coombabah is a lot safer for young children.

I am also really proud to be part of a government that has delivered at least \$1.5 million to schools in my electorate so that we can make sure that we fix up the backlog of maintenance left by the failed Labor government. I am proud to be part of a government that has delivered nearly \$800,000 in Great Results Guarantee funding for the schools in my electorate. I may have only five schools, but I am incredibly proud every time I go to those schools to congratulate students on their academic, cultural and sporting achievements.

I am proud to be part of this can-do government that has a strong plan for a brighter future and is looking to make sure that we invest in the areas that matter to Queensland. As we all appreciate, education is one of those areas in which we need to invest, because the future is in our schools. Students are the leaders of tomorrow. In 20 years time, one of the Coombabah students who was here today might be sitting in my chair.

### **Small Business Week**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (3.02 pm): Next week is Small Business Week. I take this opportunity to talk about what is really the engine room of my electorate's economy, small business. All the way from Ross River Road and Charters Towers Road to Nathan Street where my electorate office is located, the electorate really is based on small business. At the moment, that sector of the economy is doing it tough. That has to be acknowledged. For years, small business has been burdened with red and green tape. At the moment, in my city of Townsville times are tough. However, it is a city with a proud track record and a broad economy, and there are stronger days ahead. Local government will be at the forefront of that.

We have done some things to help local government and that should be acknowledged. Is there more that needs to be done? You bet there is! However, some forward steps have been taken that we must acknowledge. The first is the workers compensation scheme, which has been a roaring success. Across the state, we have seen premiums fall in the order of about 17 per cent. The other

day in my electorate I visited a local business, Lamberts Produce, which has seen a fall of nearly 30 per cent. That is real money that will be used, in the case of that family business, to put on another part-time worker. That is great news.

We have lifted the threshold for payroll tax from \$1 million to \$1.1 million. That is only a small step forward, but payroll tax is an insidious tax. It is an antigrowth tax. In this place we must all have a vision to reduce or eliminate it, because it strangles the ability of people to employ others. Everyone in this chamber should be about encouraging business to employ people. We got rid of environmentally relevant activities. In the case of some mechanics in my area, including Bob Parkes Muffler City, that has meant an annual fall in costs of about \$700 a year.

This week I am going to be doing the small business marathon, which involves going around to the businesses in my electorate, promoting them on Facebook and through the media, and encouraging people to use small business. I say to everybody in this House and, in particular, everyone in my beautiful home city of Townsville that you should support small businesses. I urge people to make a conscious choice to go to a small butcher or to fuel up at an independent retailer. I ask people to take the time to shop in store, rather than shop online. I suggest people buy some goods from the IGA, rather than going to Coles or Woolies. Of course, Coles and Woolies are also a part of the economy, but so too are the smaller retailers.

Small business is in my veins: my parents are in it, my sister is in it, and my wife and I have both run small businesses. However, right now it is a sector of the economy that is hurting. There is one way around that, which is to grow a stronger economy and for people in the regions to vote with their feet and support small business.

### **Bowen Temporary Local Planning Instrument**

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.05 pm): I rise to share the concern and frustration of the Bowen construction industry and many of my constituents and other investors who are keen to build in this proud town. The Whitsunday Regional Council has adopted a temporary local planning instrument, or TLPI, that has placed significant conditions on height in respect to the defined flood level and type of structures that can be built. While it is beholden on councils to adopt prudent local planning, that needs to be reasonable, reached through consultation and well communicated.

In December 2013, this government removed the requirement to factor in a forecast 0.8 metre rise in sea levels from the state planning policy. That was a stance taken to promote development and to allow councils greater independence in deciding their respective development issues. The Whitsunday Regional Council has chosen to retain this 0.8 metre requirement within its TLPI. Many in the community are concerned that this is an unreasonable approach and that the Whitsunday Regional Council has over compensated any potential flooding concerns with this restrictive TLPI.

This present TLPI also stipulates the requirement for non-habitable areas to achieve flood immunity. This imposes yet another additional expense onto the builder and client. It would and should be reasonable for the TLPI to only require habitable areas to achieve flood immunity. Habitable areas include bedrooms, kitchens, living areas and so on, and do not include bathrooms, laundries, utility areas, garages and sheds.

I have been told firsthand by builders how these TLPI requirements have turned investors and residents away from building and extending existing dwellings. They are being asked to build to a height that has never seen floodwater, and we are talking of an historic town that was founded in 1861. One builder told me that 10 houses that he quoted on were lost due directly to the rigid TLPI conditions. Another builder has \$7 million worth of projects on hold or, indeed, lost.

I am aware that the Whitsunday Regional Council has resolved to work with the state government and two experienced local members of the Bowen community to review this current TLPI. A meeting of this group was to have been held this week to see if the TLPI can be constructed in an improved manner. Improvements must be found and implemented from this working group, as without it construction in Bowen will come to a standstill. Factors such as only requiring habitable areas to achieve flood immunity and dispensing with the 0.8 metre height requirement need to come from this working group. One of our state's four pillars is construction and impediments to building in Bowen, such as this TLPI, must be worked through by this group. It definitely needs community consultation and it needs close working with the council. Whilst this planning instrument is of a temporary nature, surely this is the time for cool heads and a considered approach to prevail for the good of the business community and for the wider Bowen community.

### **Currumbin Surf-Lifesaving; Currumbin Estuary**

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (3.08 pm): Our dedicated surf-lifesavers on the southern Gold Coast have wrapped up another successful season with their keenly fought awards night. Each year since my election in 2004, I have donated a rescue board to the patrol club of the year. I wish to acknowledge that the Pacific Surf Life Saving Club in the Burleigh electorate was victorious this year. They were recognised for their overall outstanding commitment in all aspects involved in getting a patrol on the beach. The Point Danger branch comprises 11 affiliated clubs, eight situated in the Currumbin electorate and three in the Burleigh electorate. The branch is the first and oldest in Queensland, boasting century-old clubs in the Coolangatta/Tweed region. This coming year will mark a truly special milestone, its 90th anniversary. Honourable members would know that I speak often of the invaluable and selfless work of our volunteer surf-lifesavers because they epitomise the community oriented and generous spirit of Queenslanders. I thank outgoing manager Kerrie Barnes for her many years of committed service as she pursues other roles.

The sheer volume of locals and tourists we have visiting our world famous and truly spectacular beaches requires an army of volunteers. On behalf of Currumbin residents, I thank our surf-lifesavers for their dedicated efforts.

In a big win for Currumbin, I was recently able to secure more than \$300,000 in infrastructure funds for Currumbin estuary. I thank the minister for making these funds available. Funding will enable construction of two new public pontoons and a revamped boat ramp at Winders Park. These new and improved facilities will provide greater access to our beloved Currumbin Creek and allow the public to safely enjoy this natural beauty. Since the establishment of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority by this LNP government in 2012, I have worked closely with CEO, Hal Morris, and the local community to improve safety for all users of the creek.

I would also like to acknowledge two remarkable ladies—Rosemary Pye and Pamela Murphy—who are celebrating 30 years of service as school crossing supervisors at Coolangatta State School. This is a truly stellar effort and I thank them for giving so selflessly of their time for so long and helping numerous generations of schoolchildren arrive and leave their school safely.

I also wish to congratulate our swimmers who achieved some outstanding results at the recent Pan Pacific Games. Special mention must go to young gun Cameron McEvoy who trains locally at the Palm Beach-Currumbin pool. McEvoy won two gold and two bronze medals, with his 100-metre freestyle performance blowing the competitors out of the water.

I also wish a big happy birthday to Snapper Rocks Surfriders Club, one of the most decorated boardriding clubs in Australia. It will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this month. The southern Gold Coast has a number of iconic beaches, including Snapper, which are home to a bevy of world champion surfers, including Stephanie Gilmore, Joel Parkinson, Wayne 'Rabbit' Bartholomew, Wayne Dean and—our hometown favourite—Mick Fanning.

### **Member for Brisbane Central; Member for Toowoomba North**

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.11 pm): Today the opposition is calling for the Premier to stand down the member for Brisbane Central as the chair of the Safe Night Out Strategy implementation team. Serious questions have been raised over the use of crime statistics by the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Toowoomba North to justify the weakness of the government in tackling trading hours to reduce alcohol fuelled violence.

The opposition used peer reviewed research which formed the basis of our policy while the LNP has pandered to powerful liquor industry elements. The member for Toowoomba North, who is a former nightclub owner, said during the Safe Night Out Strategy debate—

We have heard a lot about the Newcastle experiment and how wonderful it is. I will run through some of the facts that come from ... the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. It is important that people hear these numbers. When that state first introduced the 1.30 lockout, the 3.30 close, the drink restrictions ... something did happen. For the first year there was a big drop—a 23.4 per cent drop in assaults in that first year. That is a really good outcome for the people of Newcastle ... Unfortunately, the following year when all of that legislation still existed, assaults increased by 21 per cent. To recap, the silver bullet that the opposition would have us load and fire at this problem has been fired in Newcastle. It had an effect for the first year and then the number of assaults jumped back up.

So we in the opposition decided to go to the experts, which this government refuses to do. We spoke to Professor Kypri, probably the leading authority on alcohol fuelled violence, for the source of the data that the member for Toowoomba North had used. He responded to us overnight. He stated— I'm not aware of any peer-reviewed report (any report for that matter) showing what is claimed here. I co-authored the 2009 BOCSAR Report which examined 12-months of post-change data, i.e., from April 2008 to March 2009.

The paper we published in *Addiction* covered an additional 6 months post-change, i.e., up to September 2009. I suspect whoever said the above is misinterpreting the data, perhaps failing to understand or deliberately misrepresenting the quarter to quarter random variation which is common with such data. The overall effect estimate was 37%, that is 25% per hour reduction in trading.

We have published a follow-up paper in the *Drug & Alcohol Review* ... which shows that the affects were sustained over the follow 3.5 years, i.e., for the 5 years following the imposition of the restriction.

I will table a further response to the claims made by the member for Toowoomba North and the member for Brisbane Central by Professor Kypri which outlines how this data can be misinterpreted.'

*Tabled paper:* Document containing comments by Professor Kypri in relation to members' comments made during debate on the safe night out bill 2014 [\[5792\]](#).

How the member for Toowoomba North could have sat through the committee process and ignored the Law Society, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, University of Queensland professors and many others to interpret crime data for a political purpose is a sad reflection on the LNP and this government who are only working for the liquor industry.

*(Time expired)*

### **Bulimba Electorate, Fundraising**

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (3.14 pm): On the night of Saturday, 23 August I had the pleasure of attending and supporting a number of fundraising events throughout the Bulimba community. The first event of the evening was to support the amazing Seven Hills State School community as they continue to work hard to raise money to supply students with new iPad and mini-iPad technology. For the second year in a row, I strutted my stuff down the catwalk in their annual fashion parade. It was not pretty. It was no Blue Steel moment. But I again survived the experience and no fall was reported or at least captured on camera, that I know of. Congratulations to Claire, her dedicated team and the P&C for this event. I look forward to supporting the school for the remainder of the year in their fundraising efforts, whatever it takes.

The second stop for the night was the St Oliver Plunkett Catholic School Casino Royale Gala event. What a fantastic school community St Ollie's is. I thoroughly enjoyed my time playing the tables with the wonderful parents who are so very happy to hand over the funny money to support the school in their major fundraising event for 2014. There were plenty of winners on the night; although, none of them were in attendance. The over 500 students who attend St Ollie's will certainly benefit from the P&F's efforts and the broader community's generosity.

The next stop was the Saints Peter and Paul parish black-and-white dinner. This dinner was in aid of raising much needed funds to restore and replenish the beautiful landmark church that sits on Riding Road. I must disclose to all honourable members that this is my family's local church and is also attached to my children's school. The church has had little significant work carried out on it since it was completed in 1926. The deterioration over that time has resulted in a final bill to restore it to its former glory of over \$1 million.

However, this is a true community church. It was originally built and paid for by parishioners. The fundraising committee are certainly well on their way to raising the necessary moneys to ensure that this unique church is available for future generations, including my children and my children's children. But they still have some way to go. I congratulate Father Tom and his team on their commitment to restoring Saints Peter and Paul church. I look forward to working with them on this most important project for our entire community.

The final stop for the evening was the Morningside Panthers AFL winter wonderland themed ball, where I caught up with my beautiful wife and a number of friends, and settled back to enjoy the company of so many of our wonderful community members. The Panthers seniors are having a wonderful season on the field and are currently undefeated in the newly reformed QAFL. With the finals just around the corner, I noted a few of the boys taking it relatively easily compared to past years as they certainly want to ensure the club walks away with the seniors title for 2014. Well done to Jacqui and all of her team for a wonderful night and for raising much needed money for such an important club within my community of Bulimba. Well done to all those who supported these events from both the Bulimba community and far and wide.

### Nanango Electorate, Somerset Region

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.17 pm): Today I would like to highlight a serious issue in a region within the electorate of Nanango, the Somerset region. Nestled in this region is the beautiful Brisbane Valley and the iconic townships of Toogoolawah and Esk. The area is just an hour from Brisbane and well known for its scenic drives, rich grazing lands and the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail and its pioneering history. It is an artist's paradise and a wildlife mecca for koalas and bird life. There are the two major water supply dams of Somerset and Wivenhoe located on the doorstep which have been designated key recreational destinations by our government, something locals had asked me for and I have worked towards. Importantly, it is a priority living area and is the main catchment for the population of Brisbane.

Recently there has been much speculation and community concern about a company with a current coal exploration permit over this area. I have been listening to my community on this issue and I understand their concerns. For this reason, I am speaking about this issue in parliament today.

There are three points I would like to make. Firstly, these types of coal exploration permits are granted by the department. There are similar permits which extend over significant regions of Queensland. The residents of the Brisbane Valley are not alone in this situation. Importantly, no exploration activity so far in the Brisbane Valley has resulted in an application for a mining lease to build a coalmine.

Secondly, this is an area which is the main catchment for Brisbane and it is also an area where there is high density of smaller landholders. I want to reassure the constituents of this area that I believe this section of the Nanango electorate is not the place for an open-cut coalmine.

Thirdly, planning: the former Labor government has left the people of my electorate with uncertainty because it failed to plan for situations such as this. As we all know, when you fail to plan, you plan to fail. But our government does plan. The Deputy Premier, the Hon. Geoff Seeney, has made it his priority to establish regional plans across Queensland. Work has begun to review the South East Queensland Regional Plan for the South-East Queensland corner and it will inform all levels of government about the use of land in the Somerset. It is the mechanism to help ensure that no open-cut coalmine is ever developed in the pristine Brisbane Valley. The plan is due to be finalised in 2015. Therefore, I reassure my constituents that I will be working hard on this section of the plan.

Finally, I would like to say to my constituents that I am listening and I am aware this is a very concerning issue. Once again, I assure them that I do not support an open-cut coalmine in the Brisbane Valley and in the water catchment. I will continue to advocate on this issue on behalf of my local constituents.

### Skin Cancer

 **Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): I call the Minister for Energy and Water Supply and member for Caloundra.

**Mr Crisafulli:** He got up last!

**Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.20 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, I do thank you for your good graces and protection from the members of the House. On Tuesday of this week I attended the Princess Alexander Research Foundation with linesmen from Energex to launch a world-first study. Energex has donated \$110,000 to fund a study into skin cancer using linesmen in Energex. They use a polaroid lens that attaches to a smart phone. Each week 100 male Energex field workers will take a photograph of a certain portion of skin on their body. That photograph is then sent through to the PA, looked at by a skin expert, and that skin expert will address week by week whether or not there has been a change in that skin, in that spot, in that mole to detect whether or not further expert attention is required.

It is groundbreaking work, and it is so important because clearly in this state and in this nation we have one of the worst skin cancer records across the globe. We have skin cancer rates four times that of Canada, the UK and the United States. It is sad to say that we have 1,600 deaths per year in Australia from melanoma and other skin cancers, and 430,000 people are treated for skin cancer each year in Australia. By the time we turn 70, we are likely to have on average between two or three skin cancers diagnosed.

This treatment is targeted at young men. A photograph is taken of a spot on their body that may be of concern to them. If they are then notified of a change because of the photograph that is taken, they can seek immediate treatment. The polaroid lens that is used accentuates the quality of the photograph taken and therefore allows a diagnosis to be undertaken by a dermatologist at the PA research centre.

It is sad to say that young men in this nation do not go to the doctor unless literally they are on their death bed in many cases. It is a sad reality that skin cancers can be detected quickly and treated very quickly provided we get the right treatment and are looking after ourselves on a regular basis. A regular 12-month check by a qualified practitioner can arrest what can be a very painful and very slow death. Importantly, this treatment, supported by Energex, is one more example of a GOC acting in conjunction with the community to treat and provide assistance and prevent slow, painful deaths. Young men have to understand that treatment is in their hands. This is one more exercise to ensure they treat themselves, and treat themselves efficiently.

### **Malanda Local Ambulance Committee**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.23 pm): The Malanda Local Ambulance Committee is passionate about delivering the best emergency service to members of this rural community. Over the last 18 months they have worked hard and have raised enough hard-earned funds to purchase a Lucas 2 compression unit for the Malanda Ambulance Service. Despite the system being recognised as valuable by the Minister for Health, the donation was rejected by the minister. I am advised that, since the minister's rejection, the Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane has ordered two such machines. Malanda is a small rural community suffering from the economic decline of the dairy industry. Residents of Malanda are deeply saddened by the minister's refusal to accept their generous donation and see this as a kick in the guts to have a lifesaving, well-proven, specialist machine rejected. The volunteers who worked hard to collect this money and those who donated hard-earned cash for the purchase of lifesaving equipment are offering the minister another chance to accept their generous offer which undoubtedly will assist paramedics in saving the lives of people in their community.

Lucas 2 has been shown to significantly improve quality and consistency of compression compared to manual CPR. This is mainly due to the fact that this device keeps the blood pumping at the correct and constant depth and rate, considerably reducing the risk of brain and neurological damage. The Lucas delivers compression according to guidelines of a five centimetre depth, 100 compressions per minute, equal time for compression and decompression, and full chest recoil. Performing manual CPR according to the guidelines is difficult and tiring, requiring strength not only of the body but also of the mind. Therefore, depth and rate must differ after some time has elapsed. It is possible that the officer may be alone and is responsible for transporting that casualty to hospital. The Lucas 2 would obviously be invaluable in such a case.

Lucas 2 moves with the patient from the emergency and continues to provide effective compression, helping to maintain good circulation, enabling the paramedic to continue observation. The patient is then transferred to a hospital. Lucas 2 facilitates the ongoing management of acute and threatening complications, further freeing up valuable time and resources in an emergency. I have the greatest admiration for our paramedics. They are on call to attend accident victims in the fastest, safest time. Many of these paramedics are called out in the late hours of the night or have been recalled for duty, but it is important that they are professionally equipped because we are talking about a life-or-death situation and a machine like this can prevent families losing loved ones. I was encouraged to hear that Lucas 2 has been approved for use at the Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane and urge the minister to accept the generous offer made by the Malanda Local Ambulance Committee and commend this group for their contribution to their community.

### **Cultural Diversity Week**

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.26 pm): A few hours ago I had the distinct privilege and a bit of fun in joining hundreds of others from many culturally diverse communities as we launched in the Queen Street Mall 2014 Cultural Diversity Week right across Queensland. I will inform the House what I informed those who were there this afternoon, who witnessed the exciting demonstrations and musical presentations from our culturally diverse communities, and that is I am as excited about them as I am excited that we live in this country, this fantastic state and this beautiful city where we are free together as a community to celebrate everything that we love about this place that we call home. There is so much to celebrate during Cultural Diversity Week.

When we came to government there was a thing called the cultural diversity festival. It was one day in Roma Street Parklands. The previous government thought all of our culturally diverse communities lived in the south-east corner of Brisbane. That was one of the first things we scrapped when we came to government because we believe that culturally diverse communities are right across the state. We value their contribution so this week is all about celebrating what they have done for Queensland.

It consists of over 57 different events right across the state from Mount Isa to Mareeba down to the Gold Coast. We have the Premier's Cultural Diversity Awards where we award and celebrate those who have contributed enormously to our state. We have the Taiwanese festival, the Philippine Festival, the Polish festival, the Serbian festival, the Mareeba Multicultural Festival and the Gold Coast festival. It is hard to remember all of them, but it truly is a real celebration of everything that it means to be a Queenslander.

The Premier's Cultural Diversity Awards gala dinner is this Saturday night. The awards promote the growth and development of strong, culturally diverse communities. The awards recognise the businesses, community organisations, individuals and partnership projects that are contributing to and celebrating cultural diversity in our great state. The award winners will be announced on the night on Saturday, 30 August which will also mark the opening of the week itself.

I want to pay tribute to and thank our partners for delivering the week with us. Our corporate partner is Di Bella Coffee, our community partner is Access Community Services and our media partner is News Corp Australia. Without them, we would be unable to deliver what we have right across the state.

I want to also mention quickly a comedy debate called 'Stop the Goats!' which is put on by the Multicultural Development Association. It is a bit out of left field and it is on at the Powerhouse. We look forward to seeing that. I will use the last couple of seconds to invite everyone to come on board. This year the theme is 'Everyone's Invited', so I welcome all Queenslanders.

*(Time expired)*

### **Cairns Electorate, Unsung Heroes**

 **Mr KING** (Cairns—LNP) (3.29 pm): It gives me great pleasure to talk about a few unsung heroes in my great electorate of Cairns. The first unsung hero I want to talk about is a bloke called Glenn Dutton. Glenn has been an absolute stalwart of the SES in my part of the world and he has been with the SES for many, many years. I first met Glenn during the election campaign in late 2011. I was at a stall outside a supermarket, and Glenn came up to me and he very bluntly asked me, 'So what are you going to do for the SES in Cairns?' He started telling me about some of the struggles that the local SES had had over many, many years—in fact over a decade. They had struggled to get brand-new headquarters. In fact, despite doing some of the most difficult and dangerous work in the state, particularly of course in our part of the world with cyclones, the SES were operating out of an old Queenslander, an old school building that was literally falling down around them. Under the former government, a couple of hundred amazing SES volunteers were forced to work out of crumbling, old, decrepit buildings. Some of the rooms were shut off because there was asbestos in the roofs. In fact, I remember going there with the then LNP leader, Campbell Newman, in early 2012 when the front of the SES was actually sandbagged because it was flooded. It was an absolute disgrace. Our great volunteers, led by Glenn Dutton, were treated with contempt.

For about 10 to 12 years, they had been fighting to get some new headquarters, and it was absolutely fantastic that just a couple of months ago I was able to join with Glenn Dutton, many SES volunteers and Minister Jack Dempsey to open the brand-new SES headquarters in Cairns. Our government put in over \$1.2 million for that fantastic, state-of-the-art, high-tech facility. The facility really is a tribute to Glenn Dutton. He worked tirelessly to make that happen and it was a dream he had had for over a decade. Last night he stood down from the SES. It was time for him to hang up the orange overalls and have a break. I want to pay a very heartfelt tribute to the dedicated work of Glenn over many, many years. I hope he can enjoy his time now in his real job, his day job.

The final point I make in the last few seconds is to thank the hardworking police from the Cairns Property Crime Unit. They have achieved some remarkable results, particularly with house break-ins and car thefts. On Monday I had the great pleasure of joining Acting Assistant Commissioner Paul Taylor to thank them for their incredible work and for some of the amazing reductions they have had in crime in the last 12 months.

## Coorparoo Junction

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.32 pm): The power of my community has never been more evident than it was in my electorate recently. Residents in Coorparoo and the surrounding suburbs have been empowered to take part in the process of consultation with the revising of the proposed plans for the redevelopment of the centre of their community, the old Myer site at Coorparoo Junction. On my election to office in 2012, I was determined to see this project through to completion. I have announced previously in this place that the development at Coorparoo Junction, which had languished under the former government for many years, was to finally go ahead with draft plans being released by Honeycombes. From the beginning, I have engaged in community consultation around the electorate and received a great deal of feedback on the draft plan in the process, which I have referred on to those involved in the development.

When the developer made their final development application recently, I was pleased to see that much of the community feedback was incorporated into the revised plan, with changes that will make for a much better focal point for the Coorparoo community. Much of the early feedback centred around areas such as the height and design of the new buildings. Residents were concerned that city views would be impeded and that many of the apartments did not have proper balconies. For anyone who has seen the updated plans, I am sure they will agree that this design is interesting and far more appealing to the eye. With one building being reduced to 13 storeys, obstruction to views will be reduced and the plans have been adjusted so that every apartment has a balcony.

In relation to the types of businesses that might be attracted to this new development, the community have told me that they want a variety of retail, business and restaurants. Significantly, the community would like to see space allocated for a cinema complex, all of which has been taken on board. The community and I would also like to see Australia Post return to Coorparoo Junction, and I hope they heed that call.

When I was growing up in Mt Gravatt, one of the things I remember most about Coorparoo was the iconic Myer sign at the top of the old Myer building. You could see that sign from as far away as the city. It was a real focal point for the community. I approached Myer shortly after being elected to ask if the sign could be salvaged and used in the new development as a tribute to the site's former life as the iconic hub of Coorparoo and the inner south in general. Throughout the feedback process, many community members also spoke of their fondness for the sign and their desire for its salvage. In this latest plan, the developer has made plans for the sign to be salvaged and restored. The laneway through the development between Old Cleveland Road and Holdsworth Street may very well be named Myer Lane in recognition of its previous life as the second regional Myer store in Queensland. The Myer building, along with other buildings at the Coorparoo Mall, have been vacated and fenced off in preparation for demolition at the end of 2014, with construction to begin early 2015.

This project is about more than just buildings; it is about the restoration of our community in Coorparoo. Like the dilapidated sign at the top of the empty Myer building, this community has been neglected for too long. What should have been the heart of a vibrant community—with thriving retail and businesses, living areas and community gathering places—has fallen into disuse, abandoned and forgotten. When this development is completed, Coorparoo will once more be restored to a thriving hub and I am proud to have played a part in that regeneration, fulfilling a commitment I made to the Greenslopes electorate prior to being elected. Our government did not cause this problem but we are certainly fixing it.

## Nicklin Electorate, Community Groups

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (3.35 pm): The member for South Brisbane earlier recognised the former Prime Minister of Japan's attendance here at parliament. On behalf of you, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham, and other members of the crossbench, I also thank the former Prime Minister of Japan for taking the time to share his experience with members of the Queensland crossbench.

I recently had the privilege of joining with many Bli Bli residents in the opening of a new men's shed at the Gateway Lifestyle Edgewater village in my electorate. It was a real privilege to be involved with another men's shed opening. In my speech at the opening, I paid special tribute to the hard work and effort that had turned a dream into reality and I made special mention of two people. Village manager, Heather Peterson, and Kevin Ussher conceived the idea of the shed as a place where men of the village could go—or, as Heather said, 'a shed where men could gather and do what women do'. The pair worked tirelessly to get the project up and running. They saw the potential of a disused village garage and set out to transform it into a workplace. Today the shed is an integral part of our

village life, providing a place where the men meet to share stories and use their extensive skills to create all types of items, including toys for underprivileged children and items to be sold at the village annual spring fair. Future plans include helping fatherless boys to learn woodwork and other trades.

I also recently chaired the Genealogy Sunshine Coast annual general meeting. The new leadership team are President Lynne Callaghan, Vice-President Alan Jeffery, Secretary Jan Partridge and Treasurer Nicola Butler. For over 35 years, the association's volunteers have been quietly going about their work helping thousands of people. Later today I will deliver to our Parliamentary Library two books from our organisation. The first book is a 209-page book titled *People of the Sunshine Coast*, and the second book is titled *Genealogy Sunshine Coast: 35 Years of Achievement*. I thank all of the Genealogy Sunshine Coast members for all of their hard work.

Last Saturday, as patron of our Nambour Meals on Wheels Association, I had the privilege of also chairing their annual general meeting. At the time, I thanked all of the volunteers for their help in delivering over 36,980 meals during the last 12 months.

**Dr Douglas:** Congratulations.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Thank you, member for Gaven. We have over 135 volunteers who have voluntarily driven over 40,000 kilometres in the last 12 months. I say thank you to our Manager Linda, President Lawrence, Vice-President Jim, Secretary Dianne and Treasurer Robyn. We are now in negotiations with the Sunshine Coast council to try to extend the duration of the lease of our kitchen past 2023.

### Mount Coot-tha Electorate, Events

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (3.38 pm): Last Wednesday I had the privilege of attending Rainworth State School to officially open the new general learning area, a \$5.16 million investment made possible by the Queensland government's capital works program. With 12 spacious classrooms as well as practical learning areas, withdrawal rooms and outdoor learning areas, it is a prime example of how we can maximise student outcomes by providing an innovative and interactive learning environment.

Rainworth State School is not just an exceptional educational institution; it is—and has been for the last 86 years—an integral part of the Bardon community. Rainworth's wonderful reputation of academic excellence and a friendly and welcoming environment has led more and more families to enrol their children there every year. Rainworth has more than 100 additional students enrolled today compared with only five years ago. So while it is great for students to have more classmates and friends to learn and play with, we need to make sure our facilities and resources keep up with the growing numbers.

Projects like this do not happen overnight. In addition to the departmental officers and builders, I would like to thank Principal, Adam Mathewson; Deputy Principal, Stephen Stocker; Business Services Manager, Katrina Mitchell; the P&C executive, in particular the Capital Works Vice-President, Pino Gentile; parents; and the broader Rainworth community. Most of all, I thank all of the students and teachers who were so patient throughout the building process. I know that they will create many happy memories in their new state-of-the-art learning centre.

I was also delighted to recently officially open the LA51 Art Gallery on Latrobe Terrace in Paddington as part of the *Behind the Red Door* exhibition. It was a pleasure to welcome Gallery Director, Laurence Barlow, and Art Director, Belinda Lownds, to our fabulous arts, culture and coffee precinct in Paddington. The gallery will be a great addition, offering weekly and fortnightly exhibitions for artists in a variety of visual mediums including oil paintings, watercolours, photography and sculptures. I have no doubt that local residents will extend their warm welcome and I look forward to seeing future exhibitions.

Finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, as you would be aware, next week is Small Business Week, which will end with Buy Local Saturday on 6 September. There are more than 7,500 businesses within the Mount Coot-tha electorate, of which over 95 per cent are small businesses. Over 50 per cent of Queensland's private sector workforce is employed by small business. I am very much looking forward to continuing to work with local businesses in my electorate to remind local residents to buy local because I know my community would certainly miss our local businesses if they were not there. So it is incumbent on all of us to support them.

As part of this support, last Thursday I was delighted to be joined by the Treasurer to meet with a number of local businesses in Paddington. This was a great opportunity to hear from businesses about what is important to them and how we as a government can ensure that we are being as

responsive and supportive as possible. I encourage all Mount Coot-tha locals to do something for our economy and our community, particularly next week and on Buy Local Saturday, and think inner west and buy inner west.

### Queensland Country Women's Association

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.41 pm): Recently the Queensland CWA held their Central Region training school and meeting in Hervey Bay. It was a great pleasure to welcome these ladies to Hervey Bay from places such as the Burnett, Port Curtis, Gympie, South Burnett, Sunshine Coast, Central Highlands, central west and Capricornia divisions.

Robyn McFarlane, the Queensland CWA State President, gave a most informed talk about the hardship faced in regional areas and the requests they receive for help every week. These requests included such things as replacing school photos that people lost when their houses were flooded during the Bundaberg floods. The CWA was happy to help. Other requests were for money for household items such as shampoo and soap. Meg Trimble, the CWA Vice-President of the Northern Region, was one of the most interesting ladies there. She had travelled a lot of the western areas and visited a lot of people in hardship in those western areas. After talking to some of the small businesses, she actually learnt that most of the items that go out there are not purchased from inland businesses. She said it would be a lot better if people just sent the money out there so it could flow through the local economy, especially in those drought affected and natural disaster areas. If that happens, the money will actually flow through the economy of the whole region. If we look at one small regional business that is carrying around half a million dollars worth of debt, that is quite considerable. Those communities do work together and they support one another.

These wonderful ladies from the CWA gather in friendship and always have lots of laughter at their meetings, as well as dealing with the serious side of the association. The recent state government grant of \$2 million to the CWA to help teach about healthier lifestyles and preparing healthier meals is a fantastic opportunity to showcase what the QCWA does in Queensland. I would like to thank the planning committee for holding this event in Hervey Bay. I appreciate their visit. I hope they enjoyed Hervey Bay during their extended stay after the meeting was held.

### Employment

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (3.44 pm): I rise to draw the attention of the House to some of the great initiatives taking place at schools in my area that are preparing students for a successful transition into the workplace. This government is committed to stimulating businesses that will create employment, but not by employing more people in unnecessary government jobs and creating a huge debt for all Queenslanders to pay off for many years to come. This government will continue to work towards reducing our unemployment.

One way to help achieve this is to encourage our schools and TAFE colleges to make our kids job ready. A number of schools in my Sunnybank electorate have definitely taken this message on board. Runcorn State High School is one of more than a hundred state schools that have engaged with local industries to develop the skills of students as part of a Gateway to Industry School Program. The school's manufacturing and engineering program is giving kids the skills they need for a bright future with lifelong career opportunities. I thank Elena Itsikson, Principal, and Fiona Harris, head of the technology department, for helping to ensure that Queensland has a strong workforce for years to come. St Thomas More College's Becoming MORE Mentoring Program has also been tremendous in getting students to meet, and learn from, successful men and women working in professions they hope to pursue. The program sponsored by Griffith University sees year 11 students mentored by professional and industry experts to help them better understand the future tertiary and career opportunities. The Principal, Peter Elmore; Head of Curriculum, Josephine Griffiths, and year 11 coordinator, Scott Booth, have been outstanding in orchestrating this development program. I would also like to thank the industry experts that so generously donated their time by helping our future industry experts.

Last week more than 60 young women from 20 Brisbane high schools visited TAFE Queensland SkillsTech at Acacia Ridge to get a taste of what trade and technical trader has to offer. Girls Try a Trade is an initiative allowing female high school students to have a go at different trades including tiling, cabinet making, painting and decorating in a safe, hands-on workshop environment. Thanks go to TAFE Queensland's SkillsTech Brisbane Manager of School Liaison Unit, Jennifer Mitchell, and Workskills Queensland Manager, Tony Wright, for their involvement in this event.

A litmus test for our government has been job creation. Queensland remains the leading state in the nation when it comes to job creation. However, it is not enough to create jobs unless we have a workforce with the skill set to fill these positions. That is why it is fantastic that Runcorn State High School, St Thomas More College, TAFE Queensland and many other schools across Sunnybank and Queensland have put in place programs to make students job ready in areas that have future employment opportunities.

### Grantham, Floods

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (3.47 pm): In January 2011, 14 people lost their lives in the floods of Grantham and a further seven died elsewhere in the Lockyer Valley. Nearly every house on the flood plains of Grantham was severely structurally damaged and 29 houses were lost altogether. There was an amazing series of heroic rescues and the town was later moved to higher ground. A subsequent inquiry was held and its conclusion would appear to defy much of the available information known at the time. Only one day of the inquiry was devoted to the disaster at Grantham. On 10 January 2011 an eight-metre wall of water destroyed many lives forever. It is, however, the actions of too many members of the Queensland government that would bring great shame on the integrity of governance in this state with regard to what has occurred in the aftermath since the flood. If this flood had occurred during the night, 300 people could have lost their lives.

There were two flood events in Grantham. One was at Lockyer Creek but another was a 300-metre-wide wall of water reaching heights of 4.5 metres, running east beside the railway line. This second flow of water caused catastrophic damage and resulted from the collapse of a constructed dam wall of the Wagner Quarry above Grantham. I table the photos and the hydrology studies—all 12 of them—showing exactly where that water went and showing that wall being demolished after the flood. I table both of those.

*Tabled paper:* Aerial Photograph of Wagner quarry depicting post flood wall demolition [5793].

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Reconstruction Authority: Town of Grantham, 2011 flood maps [5794].

It is very clear that the levee banks and dam wall built and operated by the Wagner Quarry on the Lockyer Creek had a significant role in causing both witnessed water obstruction to flow below and above Helidon to the main road as never seen before, rising a metre every couple of minutes. Additionally, when the wall overflowed and subsequently collapsed, that wall of water was released and flowed eastward at the rate of 60 to 70 kilometres per hour into Grantham, tracking along the railway line north of the Lockyer Creek, killing those people.

Yet, like many other statements from witnesses, these details were not included at the flood inquiry. In the weeks that followed after the event, those obstacles eight kilometres to the east of Helidon were quietly removed. I have tabled the photos showing this. None of the dam walls or levees was council approved. They did not have to be approved, but they do have a responsibility to those following afterwards. I am going to table a statement as to what occurred by Tom Friend, who is the brother of the councillor.

*Tabled paper:* Transcript, dated 12 December 2013, of an interview by Alan Jones of a resident of Grantham about 2011 floods [5795].

It is the greater tragedy that what occurred at the quarry was told after, and that is by Tom Friend. Subsequently at the inquiry Dr Jordan, the hydrologist from SKM, gave the explanation that the wall was an existing structure. That was not true, and I now have a letter directed to Steve Jones, the mayor of Lockyer, stating that the government will not investigate this. This must be reinvestigated! These people lost their lives; it is a tragedy.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 4 August 2014, from the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, to Councillor Steve Jones AM regarding 2011 flooding of the Lockyer Creek between Helidon and Grantham [5796].

### Transport Regulations, National Reforms

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.50 pm): I wish to share with the House the implications of the national reforms to transport regulations which have resulted in changes to permit processes for farmers and transport operators who operate in sugarcane and grain industries. The new process has taken the permit-issuing authority away from local police and centralised the permit-issuing authority in Brisbane.

In the Burnett electorate this has resulted in the locking out of the sugarcane industry from the local road network by not allowing the movement of farm equipment over 3.5 metres wide on critical major roads even to cross critical and major roads or to travel on minor roads. The new obligations

requiring police escorts are simply unrealistic. Higher regulatory obligations on both the farming community and transport operators who service the industry during the harvest season threaten the productivity and profitability of the sugarcane and agricultural sectors state-wide. Farmers, harvest operators and transport contractors must be allowed to travel on local road networks during critical times of the year.

Industry and stakeholders have attended a series of crisis meetings with the Department of Transport and Queensland police to resolve the issue. Negotiations between canegrowers and the Department of Transport have seen some progress in efforts to resolve the issue of valid permits for the movement of farm machinery and harvest equipment. All permits issued by Queensland police after 10 February 2014 are understood to be invalid, and future permits will be issued under national laws by the Queensland government. This has left growers and contractors exposed to potential liability in the event of an incident and unwittingly in default of existing transport negotiations. There is a clear need for the needs of Queensland police and the Department of Transport to be addressed, particularly around escorts, safety and the issue of access across or on major roads like the Bruce Highway.

In acknowledging our local Bundaberg Regional Council, the minister and the great staff, there appears to be some agreement that TMR will issue a group permit this month to allow the growers to move farm machinery and harvest equipment for the 2014 season. Permit lengths will need to be increased from three months to between six to 12 months to avoid the need for reapplication of permits. Crossing of, and driving on, critical and main roads is an issue being examined to assist growers who need to shift equipment short distances or to cross roads between properties. For the benefit of the House I table maps highlighting the critical areas of roads in Queensland to which I am referring.

*Tabled paper:* Transport and Main Roads map: critical areas and roads in Queensland, June 2011 [\[5797\]](#).

We need to be allowed to move on or over major roads like the Bruce Highway without complying strictly with the regulations. We need the regulations changed. These practices need to be allowed to continue as they have previously under police permits. This would save growers significant costs and would save the need for double piloting or for police to be present to merely cross a road.

### Carly Ryan Foundation

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (3.53 pm): I rise tonight to talk about a fantastic foundation: the Carly Ryan Foundation. I will give the House a bit of background relating to the foundation.

In 2006, Carly Ryan thought that she had found her dream boyfriend online. His name was Brandon Kane, an 18-year-old musician from Melbourne. Brandon was in fact the fictitious internet construct and cyberspace alter ego of Gary Francis Newman, a 50-year-old predator and paedophile. Carly fell in love with the Brandon construct during 18 months of online contact and phone calls. Gary Newman spent months masquerading as Brendan Kane and during this time was able to gain Carly's trust and love. It was through a number of these online meetings and hook-ups that this predator was able to lure this 15-year-old girl to a shopping centre, where she later lost her life through this internet predator's actions.

I wanted to talk about this tonight because I teamed up with BPW Caboolture, a local organisation in my area, to bring Sonya Ryan, the mother of Carly Ryan, to the Caboolture area to help educate our children in regards to internet predators and online safety. Sonya must be one of the strongest, most determined ladies that I have ever met in my life. For a mother who has lost a 15-year-old daughter to an online sex predator to be able to stand up and talk about this story is just tremendous. When we brought Sonya to Caboolture to talk about the Carly Ryan Foundation, she gave the children some techniques in terms of what to look out for, and the look on these kids' faces was priceless when she started to talk about things like location services. Then it started to hit home. She provided our children with some really good advice and helped to educate them in terms of what they should be looking for in regards to online sex predators and their interactions over social networking.

On that particular day I promised Sonya that I would bring Carly to the Queensland parliament. Whilst I know that the Queensland parliament does not normally allow placards, I wanted to bring Carly to this parliament today and I thank members for the opportunity to hold Carly's T-shirt up in her memory.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr GRIMWADE:** I know that Sonya will be watching this or at least reading the transcript of this speech here today. You are a strong lady and someone whom I admire. You have determination, and your daughter Carly would be in heaven right now looking down on you saying, 'Go, Mum! Keep going! You can protect other kids from these online sex predators.' My hat goes off to you, Sonya. Thanks for the great work that you do.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

### Moreton Media Group

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (3.56 pm): I rise this afternoon representing the electorate of Murrumba, and I note that Murrumba is the Aboriginal word for good place. Today I am fighting to save an iconic community organisation based on the peninsula. The Moreton Media Group, which runs the local community radio station 99.7FM, will be forced to close on 30 September due to multiple contraventions of the Queensland's Associations Incorporations Act 1981 unless drastic action is undertaken to save the station. The peninsula has already lost RCAMB and the Redcliffe Hospital Foundation, and I cannot and will not stand by and passively see my community lose another institution which serves the overlapping Murrumba and Redcliffe community. I table the Moreton Media Group constitution.

*Tabled paper:* Constitution of Moreton Media Group Inc., registered on 1 August 2008 [[5799](#)].

I note that the not-for-profit association was set up to hold a broadcasting licence, and that is the key here. The Commonwealth radio licence regulator, or ACMA, issues licences to an entity. If that entity fails the licence is lost and is not transferrable, hence the urgency to fight for my local community to keep this licence in local hands and on local airways. I table the 30 June 2011 annual return of the Moreton Media Group, being the last known document that I can source.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland government: Associations Incorporation Form 12-1—annual return of association for Moreton Media Group Inc. for financial year ending 30 June 2011 [[5798](#)].

I believe the directors and/or management are operating an insolvent organisation and are deliberately obstructing association members. My emails to the station have been ignored and the phone rings out. In fact, the front doors of the unattended station are padlocked shut, and I also table a photo.

*Tabled paper:* Photo regarding Moreton Media Group [[5800](#)].

I understand the station is usually run remotely by laptop for as little as an hour a day before a random playlist is put on. I call on the last known directors, Richard Haddock, Gregory Honchin, John Mustchin, Sean Keppie and Gregory Smith, to resign as soon as possible to allow a new executive to be appointed. I note the one conversation that I had with Sean Keppie, whose number I called before taking possession of the annual return. During that conversation he stated in a prickly manner that he was just the 'techie' who turned up at the station on rare occasions, did not know the directors and flatly refused to pass on my message to them. Well, Sean, you have been caught out attempting to deceive!

Under MMG constitution rule 18(8)(b), a special meeting can be requested by the ordinary members of the association. I call on the ordinary members of the MMG to join me on Tuesday night at 6.30 pm at my office in Rothwell if they want to save their community station. I offer an olive branch to the above mentioned members, excluding Mr Keppie. I note Greg Honchin's poor health and wish him well in his treatment. I thank the House for allowing me to speak on behalf of Murrumba and to fight for Murrumba and the wider Moreton Bay community.

### Lytton Electorate, Small Business

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (3.58 pm): Next week the Queensland government and public will celebrate everything about small business and local, family run businesses throughout this great state. Last night I had the pleasure to attend the Wynnum and District Chamber of Commerce AGM at the Shangri La Gardens. I heard about the busy year of activities held in 2013-14 to support local businesses and engage with the community—the successful Twilight Bay Run, WynnumCentral market days and gala nights, just to name a few. On Monday I announced that I will again run the Lytton small business of the day promotion—promoting local businesses on the bayside including Piccardi Legal, Electronic Pain Solutions from Manly West and Cafe Bullfrog, which opened just 10 days ago at Manly Harbour.

Over the past two years the Newman government has done a lot to help small business on the bayside as well as throughout Queensland through initiatives such as Think QLD and Buy Local as well as by providing a \$4½ thousand grant from the Caring for our Community program to assist the chamber of commerce's seaside volunteer scheme to help promote what makes Wynnum Manly a great place to live, work and play.

The Wynnum CBD revitalisation was a real issue in 2012 and remains so. However, it is wonderful to hear of three new businesses moving to the CBD in the last month, two multistorey complexes being approved for apartments with commercial space on the ground level in the Wynnum CBD and the Brisbane City Council's announcement only last week of the brand-new Wynnum library, to be built on Florence Street, which will be fully funded by a major supermarket chain investing in Wynnum's CBD and occupying one level of the facility, outlined by the Lord Mayor last week. This is on top of the announcement last month by the Premier, the Minister for Transport, the Port of Brisbane CEO and myself of a \$110 million privately funded Port Drive upgrade which will create more than 400 jobs on the bayside. Only the Newman government is serious about supporting small business and job creation through cutting red tape and other great initiatives to allow businesses in this great state to grow.

In the seconds remaining to me, I congratulate and wish the best to the mighty Manly Dragon Boat Club, which is actually over in Ravenna, Italy as we speak, competing in the world championships. Go the dragon boat!

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order! The time for members' statements has expired.

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

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from p. 2890, on motion of Mr Cripps—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (4.01 pm): On a windy morning on 26 January 1788, Captain Arthur Phillip was standing on the shore at Sydney Cove with a contingent of officers and marines. At about the same time a handful of mariners of a different ilk were setting off in an outrigger canoe from the beach at Mer Island in Torres Strait to hunt for turtle. They were Meriam people and their leader, an expert hunter, was quite probably an ancestor of Koiki Mabo. A few hundred miles to the south-west of Sydney Cove, a group of women and laughing children were fishing for cod in the Murrumbidgee River. They were from the Wiradjuri nation and were safe and relaxed as they were well inside their traditional lands and safe from any neighbouring tribe. All three groups were intent on the task at hand, oblivious that what was about to happen would forever reshape their lives and the lives of so many people.

Captain Arthur Phillip had rowed ashore at Sydney Cove early that morning, aware that the French, under the command of Captain La Perouse, were in close proximity. In his haste to beat the French to the prize and unable to wait for the rest of his contingent to arrive, Captain Arthur Phillip, with the usual pomp and ceremony true to British tradition, drove the Union Jack into the sands of Sydney Cove and thereby claimed the sovereign title to the great south land on behalf of King George III. It should be noted that the formal establishment of the colony of New South Wales did not occur on 26 January, as is commonly assumed. That did not occur until 7 February 1788, when the formal proclamation of the colony and of Arthur Phillip's governorship was read out. The vesting of all land in the reigning monarch, King George III, also dates from 7 February 1788.

By this simple act of proclamation, Captain Arthur Phillip wiped away the ownership of and entitlement to the lands of two entire nations—namely, the sovereign title of Aboriginal people of the Australian mainland and the islanders of Torres Strait. In the case of Mer Island, there was no warring party—no warriors from the south seas or headhunters from the northern tribes. There was no treaty or agreement with the foreign settlers. On the Murrumbidgee there was no invading force that conquered the Wiradjuri nation and no treaty negotiated. The invasion came much later.

The title to the traditional lands of these two nations were taken up by the British on the basis of terra nullius—that is, land belonging to no-one. This was not only factually wrong but also indefensible at law—a wrong that persisted for over 200 years and, amazingly, one of which many Indigenous

people were unaware for much of that time. On 3 June 1992, over 204 years after settlement, Eddie Mabo from Mer Island was victorious in his quest to convince the High Court of Australia that at the time Captain Arthur Phillip drove the flag into the ground at Sydney Cove there were in fact a peoples living on these lands who enjoyed an ordered society, a system of law and custom. The High Court rejected the doctrine of terra nullius in favour of the common law principle of Aboriginal title, or native title. These rights and interests were subsequently enshrined in the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993.

The impact of the Mabo decision for the Meriam people was to recognise that a system of customary law existed on the island at the time of sovereignty, a law that survived settlement and persisted to today. The Mabo decision recognised the traditional rights and interests of native title holders to lands in respect of which they exercised customary law; however, it did not return sovereign title in respect of those lands. It did not deliver freehold or any title as we know it. This did not come to Mer until the title held by the state was transferred to the Meriam traditional owners on 14 December 2012—20 years after the Mabo decision. Whilst this transfer effectively returned trustee title to the Meriam people as a community title, there remained an obvious anomaly. Notwithstanding the transfer of the deed of grant in trust in reserve areas to traditional owner groups across the state, no Indigenous person living in an Aboriginal community or on a Torres Strait island could own their own home. There was no process by which freehold could be granted to an individual. The Labor government, typical of its policy of control and paternalism, offered a 99-year residential lease as a solution to this inequity.

What started as a conversation with the Premier during the election campaign in 2011 has become the most significant piece of legislation to Indigenous Queenslanders in the short history of this state. I am proud and humble to have played a part in the development of this legislation and had the privilege of personally engaging the Indigenous people of Queensland in the process. I acknowledge the sincere interest taken by Minister Cripps. I commend the efforts of Ken Carse, Judith Jensen, Allen Cunneen, Andrew Luttrell and Chris Robson in supporting me in the engagement process.

I am disappointed that the committee was critical of the extent and nature of the consultation process. I personally worked with the departmental officers to engage with all Indigenous councils, traditional owner groups, community groups and land councils. I attended forums run by the LGAQ and other rep bodies. There was comprehensive engagement during the formulation, discussion paper and legislative process. To suggest that after 25 years of living in Cape York I am not culturally aware is regrettable. I reject the hypocrisy of the opposition's spokesman in his comments on the engagement process. It is time Curtis Pitt and Labor realised that this government intends to take the training wheels off and let these towns determine their own futures. All the doom and gloom Mr Pitt predicted does nothing to dim the bright opportunity Indigenous people face in the light of this bill.

This legislation does not impose freehold on any community. It simply places another tool in the tenure box should a community wish to take up the option. I have been a property rights advocate in Queensland for over 25 years, first as a lawyer and now as a member of this parliament. I was at the forefront of the historic settlement of the Wik claim. I met Des and Estelle Bowen from Hope Vale in 1988 and was mystified that they could not own the land upon which they brought up their children or the house in which they lived. It is with some satisfaction that I will report the passage of this bill to Des and Estelle Bowen.

It is significant that, notwithstanding the huge task Labor has left us, we as a government are not only determined to turn this great state around; we will bring all our people with us. I was appalled to hear in the media that Labor did not think the delivery of residential freehold was necessary for Indigenous Queenslanders as Labor's 99-year lease option was adequate to provide homeownership. I was very disappointed to hear these words attributed to Curtis Pitt, a former minister of the Indigenous affairs portfolio. However, I was not surprised as this attitude is the hallmark of the Labor years, both federal and state—a party that remains hell-bent on controlling Indigenous people across the country by prohibition, by penalty and punishment and, let us not forget, by paternalism. Labor talks about jobs yet is quick to buy votes by keeping people dependent upon welfare.

There is a simple philosophy underpinning this bill. Indigenous people are entitled to at least the same opportunity to have everything the rest of Queensland takes as a given. If we as a government shift from control to support and provide an opportunity to the Indigenous people of our state we will break the welfare cycle, and of course with every opportunity comes a responsibility. By supporting the development of an economy and encouraging community growth, we will see a quantum shift in the future of these towns. Too often we concentrate on the symptoms and never the

cause and we rarely ask the communities what they want. We intervene, control, reform, consult when all we need to do is get out of the way and lend a hand. This bill will deliver to the Indigenous people of this state the rights that have eluded them since 26 January 1788. This bill is the key to unlocking institutionalised paternalism. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (4.11 pm): I rise in support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This bill is the latest in what is a series of pieces of legislation going back to the 19th century that address Indigenous rights in land in Queensland, and I want to address some of these in my contribution and show how we got to this point today. Let me begin with the 1897 Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act and the subsequent amendment acts of 1901, 1927, 1928 and 1934. These acts became known as the protection acts which allowed the chief protector to remove any Aboriginal person and Torres Strait Islander to a reserve and to remove them from one reserve to another, controlling the fates of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. In establishing and controlling these reserves, the Queensland government controlled the movement, employment, wages and personal lives of the residents of these reserves. Many Indigenous people were moved away or dispossessed from their traditional lands and relocated to these reserves. Residents were not allowed to leave the reserve without the permission of the government, and quite often this was only given when residents were either placed under work agreements or transferred to another reserve.

In 1965 this parliament, in a sign of the times, passed the Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act 1965 to allow these Indigenous reserves to become temporary training camps which could service as springboards for Aboriginal people to instead be assimilated into the wider community. Six years later, the Aborigines Act 1971 was enacted to provide the minister the power to grant term leases of up to 30 years over reserve land. In 1978 the Queensland parliament passed special legislation by way of the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978 which saw the Indigenous communities of Aurukun and Mornington Island become local government shires with a 50-year underlying lease. From 1982 until 1988 various amendments were made to the Land Act 1962 which saw the historical reserve system partially replaced with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deed of grant in trust, or DOGIT, arrangements. Under these arrangements, Indigenous people were given some level of control over the land by way of trustees managing the land for the benefit of the Indigenous beneficiaries.

1984 saw the enactment of the Community Services (Aborigines) Act which established local Indigenous community councils to administer the former reserves or missions now under DOGIT tenures. One year later this parliament passed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 1985. This act enabled individual leases, perpetual in the case for residential purposes and up to 30 years in the case for non-residential purposes, for residents, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders residing in these DOGIT or reserve Indigenous communities. Six years later in 1991 the state land rights legislation, the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, was passed by this parliament to provide for the transfer of these reserve, DOGIT and shire lease lands—namely, Mornington Island and Aurukun—to Indigenous control by way of an inalienable freehold. Whilst freehold in name, this Aboriginal freehold or Torres Strait freehold under the Aboriginal Land Act or Torres Strait Islander Land Act displayed only a few of the characteristics normally associated with freehold. The Indigenous freehold was inalienable—that is, it could not be sold. It also remained a communal title with a trustee making decisions about the land on behalf of the Indigenous beneficiaries of the land. Individual interests in this communal land could only be obtained by way of leasing, with these leases initially being limited to a 30-year non-renewable period.

It then took a very long time—just shy of 20 years—for the amendments to be made to these acts by this parliament to allow for long-term—up to 99 years—leasing for both commercial or business and residential purposes. It is fair to say that these amendments displayed a level of practical enlightenment when judged against the restrictive and controlling nature of the amendments and legislation that had gone before. However, it remains the case that the circumstances by way of land tenure arrangements still practically disadvantage those Indigenous communities by denying them what other Queenslanders take for granted—the benefits of ordinary, individual freehold. This unique history has also denied residents of these Indigenous communities life experiences other Queenslanders take for granted—the opportunity of individual homeownership and the ability to invest, save and prosper and create wealth and an asset base to be passed on and to assist future generations.

I am able to say that these pieces of historical legislation are a creature of their time. They do not display the attributes of choice and freedom to enjoy the same rights that other Queenslanders take for granted, which this very welcome bill now does. This bill is about choice. It is not about that government telling Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders and their communities what they must do. It is about giving the state's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities an option to consider. It is an option that they can choose whether or not to take up. In some communities the ability to make a choice about the future of their community may be challenging. Indigenous communities can take their time and they can decide when and what is right for them. I am very pleased to see that this can all be accommodated under the flexible framework established by this bill. This bill provides a balance of flexibility and control which enables trustees in consultation with their communities where they wish to provide for the option of freehold to provide it in a way that is best suited to their individual circumstances and community. The freehold model in the bill offers the opportunity of a very different future by way of land tenure arrangements for our state's Indigenous communities. It is a future that those communities and the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders residing in those communities wholeheartedly deserve.

This bill is landmark legislation. This bill is legislation about the future and this bill is legislation which this government is very proud to deliver. This bill is about providing the option of ordinary, individual freehold to the state's 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This gives effect to the Newman government's commitment to provide the same access to freehold title that is available throughout Queensland and to remove barriers to homeownership and facilitate economic development in these communities. Further, this bill will enhance economic development opportunities through simplifying the non-homeownership leasing framework. Current restrictions on the terms and purposes of these leases will be removed, along with the requirement for the minister to approve the grant of leases except townsite leases. These amendments will make it far easier for trustees to now manage their land and places decisions about the land squarely in the hands of the trustee—where these decisions should always be. This truly is a bill about the future, and a very different future at that. It is perhaps a future many of these Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities would otherwise never have thought would be possible. Under this bill, what becomes possible and what eventuates in the future will now be within the control of the community, and that is how it should be.

As many in this House would be aware, before I entered this parliament I spent a period of time working for a not-for-profit organisation whose sole focus was to reduce Indigenous disadvantage and disparity across this state and across the country. That organisation that I worked for primarily tackled issues of disadvantage through employment and economic development opportunities. I was proud to work with that organisation and I was proud to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in an endeavour to provide a more prosperous future for all Indigenous Australians, no matter where they live and no matter what their background. For all the great work that we achieved whilst I was with that organisation, I am equally as proud today to be a part of a government that is implementing this historic legislation. This is a significant and historic step forward for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in our great state.

I thank the minister for putting this bill forward. I thank the minister and the department for the great work that has been done to bring us to this point and I am pleased to support this bill.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.20 pm): Firstly, I would like to thank the committee, chaired by the member for Lockyer, Ian Rickuss, and the other members and the research team who put in a lot of effort to work through this bill in detail. I also thank Brett Nutley and Ken Carse, who came along with us while we visited some of the communities during the consideration of this bill.

The primary objective of this bill is to provide the option for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to convert community trust land into ordinary freehold title. The significance of this bill is that it allows Indigenous people to have the opportunity to own land and homes on their traditional land. In other words, this legislation will give them the same access to land and homeownership that is available throughout Queensland.

Land tenure in Queensland's Indigenous communities is complex, characterised by a mix of current and legacy land tenure regimes and each community is managing a different set of imperatives. So it is not as simple as going out and changing all the land tenure to freehold and thinking, 'That's that.' This is a significant step for Indigenous Queenslanders, but it is not a change that will be imposed on communities without due thought and consideration. The legislation ensures that all decision making in relation to land tenure will be undertaken by the traditional owners and community members in partnership with trustees and councils. Under the legislation, it is up to each

community to take up this opportunity if the members of the community wish to do so. Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have the call. This bill is unique in that freehold is only an option being given once a consensus has been achieved by all stakeholders, especially the traditional owners.

At this point I think that it would be useful to look at how we have arrived at the current tenure situation. The current mix of land tenure provisions arose with the passage of the 1985 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act. The first leases granted under this act are more commonly known as the landholding act or Katter leases. Then in 1991 the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 were the next principal pieces of legislation applying to Indigenous land. These acts included lease provisions, but one of the major problems was that the provisions of these acts created issues for existing lease applications and also meant that no new applications could be made. Subsequently, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act received assent in February 2013. It was aligned with the 1991 legislation, but it sought to resolve outstanding lease matters from as far back as the 1985 landholding act.

So what is the situation today? There is no doubt that the home ownership rates of Indigenous households remain low in Indigenous local government areas—ILGAs. A number of facts from the 2011 census highlight the differences and the inconsistencies between these communities and non-Indigenous local government areas. Five per cent of private dwellings across these 17 ILGAs in Queensland are privately owned compared to the rate of nearly 64 per cent in non-Indigenous local government areas. Ninety-one per cent of private dwellings located in these communities are rented. Of those, the majority are either state housing authority dwellings—52.3 per cent—or housing cooperative or community owned dwellings, which is about 30.5 per cent. The communities in the Torres Strait shire, with 13.9 per cent; Doomadgee, with 9.9 per cent; and Yarrabah, with 8.3 per cent, have the highest rates of private homeownership. However, as the 2011 census shows, there is no private homeownership in the communities of Cherbourg, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Napranum, Pormpuraaw and Wujal Wujal.

There are some significant barriers to homeownership in Indigenous communities, where unemployment and social disadvantage is more prevalent and the cost and affordability of housing make homeownership difficult to achieve. Moreover, the cost of maintaining housing is higher in Indigenous communities owing to their remoteness and lack of availability of trade services. This cost could be lowered if we had more local tradespeople able to start up businesses in those areas. But they would require to take out mortgages on their houses for security, which again illustrates the fact that we need to deal in a positive way with the issue of land tenure. A further factor is the culture and awareness of the responsibilities associated with homeownership. Residents in Indigenous communities may have lived in rental housing all their lives. Residents who are confronted with this opportunity to purchase and own property for the first time will likely require some education and support in the initial stages. But from what I have seen during my visits to these communities for the public hearings, I am sure that this could be achieved in these communities in spades.

A range of policy and planning issues have also posed challenges to homeownership. They are issues such as the lack of surveyed lots in deed of grant in trust communities; land registry issues and delays; the absence of, or incomplete, town plans; a lack of skills and resources within Indigenous councils to progress land administration issues; and, of course, delays in the finalisation of ILUAs. But it has been pleasing to note that, under the LNP government through the 2013 landholding legislation, the survey of lots and other assistance for councils is already taking place. There is no doubt that these are challenges to the goal of homeownership, but the current land tenure provisions are also a significant barrier. This government is approaching the matter of tenure with an appropriate, reasonable and effective response.

In considering this bill, the committee held nine public hearings in Cairns, Yarrabah, Woorabinda, Mornington Island, Napranum, Injinoo, Hammond Island, Cherbourg and Brisbane. The hearings were attended by more than 220 community residents. During the hearings there was broad in-principle support for the freehold option, but some communities also noted the concern of traditional owners that they may lose traditional land to outside interests or non-traditional owners. We are confident that the bill includes sufficient flexibility for trustees to limit the allocation and grant of freehold in ways that reflect the values and wishes of their communities. Additionally, the committee notes that steps can be taken by traditional owners to establish an interest in order for them to be eligible for the grant of freehold. The committee noted the suggestion that conflict between native title holders and historical owners could dissuade communities from taking up the freehold option. The committee believes that the community information program that it has recommended will help to

avert these problems. During the committee hearings a number of trustees also expressed a keen interest in working with the Queensland government to explore the opportunities that would come with freehold for their communities, so I am pleased to see that there is a proposed freehold pilot program that Minister Elmes and his department are looking at closely at the moment.

I believe that this is an historic day for our state. This legislation provides an option that Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people had never had and had never been offered. I am sure that if we look back in 40 to 50 years time we will see this legislation as a small step made by a government but a huge leap forward for communities in their social and economic development and their rightful status as the original custodians of this state and country.

I grew up on my family's cattle property in North Queensland alongside families with Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander roots. The Lamptons and the Cobbos were families who were well known and respected in the district that I grew up in. I played, worked and lived alongside some of the members of those families. As a child, you tend not to think about housing and who owns what but, looking back, I would say that those families had options that were no different from the options of most members in this House. They had access to public housing, private rental or the purchase of private freehold property in the town they were born and raised in. Although that may not necessarily have been their traditional land—and in some cases it was—they had all of those options. The people and the communities that this bill is addressing have not had and do not have that range of options. The difference is that the communities that will be affected by this legislation were established to give Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people somewhere to live after being displaced, in some cases from their traditional regions. That is a sad historical fact and not something that this bill is intended to reverse.

I referred earlier to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act, which was introduced by this government in 2013. It, too, was not aimed at reversing some of the scars of history that affect Aboriginal people in this country but rather to start the process of ensuring that they have the same rights as all other Queenslanders in their towns: to give them the same freehold and respect to their land that their family house sits on or was built on while still respecting the traditional owners and the lands that surround most of these towns. I think that we have achieved that important balance in this legislation.

I have deliberately referred to these communities as towns, as I note the member for Cook has, and not communities. It is time that these proud people and communities are given recognition. I would like to point out that this bill only permits freehold status to be given in what they call the town centres. Towns create safe places to live, with a lifestyle that embraces the regional local economy, with schools, health services and road networks. Councils that want to plan for future needs will have, in time, a true rate base and not be dependent on handouts from government. I acknowledge that in some of these towns that vision has long ago disappeared with easy option policies that have not given individuals level footing and ownership of their home. In places like Napranum and Hammond Island I can see towns forming, with a new supermarket and council buildings where locals work and spend their money which goes back into their town. I can see tourism facilities which are commercial businesses and are part of their local surrounds and the lifestyles they cherish. When I was growing up in a small regional town this was possible for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals and families, but I am sure that is not the case in places like Mornington Island and Injinoo.

This is not just the end of past restraints; it is the beginning of future freedoms. Those communities that find consensus and the willingness to make this step will, I believe, look back and see the historical decision they made. They will see what the decision has meant for the ongoing viability and security of their families. As I have suggested today, the history of land tenure in Indigenous communities has been one of control and decisions being made for the communities, not by the communities. This bill is not about legislating to make people do something or to prevent certain actions. It is historical in that it legislates for Indigenous people, traditional owners, communities and future towns to have real ownership of their futures.

I would like to close by congratulating Minister Cripps, his staff and the department people who put a lot of work into the bill around the issues that I have spoken about today. I am sure that we will be remembered for this bill in times to come when we are all long gone from this House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.31 pm): I rise to speak to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Previous speakers have talked very passionately about the importance of this legislation in the lives of many in the Aboriginal communities throughout Queensland. I note that the previous speaker and the member for Cook talked about towns. I do not disagree with that sentiment, but towns are made up of

communities. Whilst perhaps there has been a negative use of the term 'communities' previously, I hope that this legislation will continue to build strong community in these towns or areas where this change is being made.

We have wonderful Aboriginal people in the state and in the nation. They have been people who have been custodians of this country well before we came. They have great connection to the land on which they live. I add to that by saying that as an Australian, born here, irrespective of our cultural background we have a connection to the land that we grow up on—our home turf, whether it is a city block or whether it is something out in the country. That sense of belonging, that sense of who we are that is tied up with where we live, will be enhanced by this legislation that will allow members of Aboriginal communities, and other members of communities in regional Queensland particularly, to have their connection with their land almost consummated to freehold title. That is not necessarily for everybody. It is not necessarily a step that everybody will feel comfortable taking. If you are in your later years it may be a step too far—it may be just too difficult—but I am sure for many younger ones in the community who have lived and contributed to the place where they live this will be an option that will be very welcome.

Additionally, the previous speaker talked about individuals who will need support in progressing into homeownership or land ownership. They will need financial advice. They will need advice about what is appropriate maintenance. They will need advice about what is the proper care regime for a property: how often should you paint it? But that is not different to many first home buyers. It is the same process that one goes through; it is a process of learning. I certainly hope that those who take this step to freehold ownership will be confident to go out and get that assistance.

The deed of grant in trust which this is moving on from, the DOGIT land, I believe was brought in at the time with the very best of intentions. I think it was intended to be supportive. This further step will allow people who have that great connection to the place where they live to take ownership of that property and to pass that property down to other members of the family. The problem with DOGIT land is that it is perpetually held in trust for the community; it cannot be on-sold or otherwise developed. I commend the minister for this move. I do agree with the previous speaker that it will require support and assistance for not all but some who make that step to ownership to understand the responsibilities that that brings, as I said, not unlike anyone else.

The simplification of the leasing framework and the access to valuations for Indigenous local governments to use is all a logical progression to the changes that are being proposed. I commend the minister for this step in the right direction. I wish every individual or family who considers this opportunity will do so wisely and, having made that decision, that they will enjoy their future as they develop their place, their property and their home.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.36 pm): I rise today to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I do so because I am incredibly proud to be not only in this House today but also part of this government as we progress one of the most significant reforms for the Indigenous communities of Queensland. For me this is entirely about philosophy. I said in my maiden speech that I believed in the inalienable rights and freedoms of the individual. I am a strong believer that property rights are one of the most empowering and enabling freedoms that we can ever offer any person in this land. Property rights not only empower people but also remove barriers to economic development. I want to be able to say to my children that I was here on what is a very historic day when we sought to give Aboriginal people in the far north of this state the same rights and freedoms that the members of this House have given to the rest of Queensland.

It is not about politics today. It is about doing the right thing and offering people one of the greatest freedoms that we can. The time for paternalism must stop. We need to be able to empower local communities so that they can advance their own future and their own economies. The moves that are being taken today in this legislation do that. We need to send a message to the current generation of leaders and the next generation of leaders in those communities that we believe that they have the skills and should have the responsibility to make decisions about what happens in their own communities.

No person in Queensland should be restrained or restricted from the rights of property ownership that I enjoy, that the member for Cook enjoys or that the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines enjoys. I said that my contribution would be brief. It is very rare that it is brief, but it will be. As I said, I am incredibly proud to be here today and I will be incredibly proud to vote for this legislation. I am proud to be part of a government that is leading the way across Australia in restoring and empowering property rights and individual freedoms for people in this great state.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (4.39 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to support the passage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This is a landmark bill that delivers to Indigenous Queenslanders the opportunity to own their own home in their communities, freehold for the first time. I will let my colleagues talk in detail about the opportunities to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities the same opportunities to secure freehold title that are available to all Queenslanders. I simply acknowledge the opportunities for homeownership and that finally real economic development is now available with the passing of this legislation. I highlight that the government will not be forcing any Indigenous Queenslanders to accept freehold title for their communities; it is simply empowering trustees, in consultation, to make that decision if they wish to do so. Freehold is voluntary and optional for those communities.

The bill provides a new tool that can be used to maintain public access to our wonderful beaches. The main reason that I am speaking to this legislation is to acknowledge the good work that has been done in this space. This government believes fundamentally that beaches belong to the people of Queensland. In weather events such as Cyclone Oswald, the surveyed beach access or esplanade can wash away and public access can be cut, such as happened at Rules Beach in the Burnett electorate. Importantly, this legislation contains provisions to correct the nonsense of beach-access red tape that existed under the Queensland Labor Party. Public access to beaches can be declared under the provisions in this bill. Under really important and significant provisions in the bill, the owner will retain ownership of the beach area and will also regain exclusive access to the entire lot if the beach re-establishes itself on the seaward side of that lot. Personally I am proud of the sensible, cooperative way that the minister and the staff have negotiated and delivered real solutions to a complex situation. The owner of the lot will not have public liability except where they have acted intentionally or recklessly to cause injury. Conditions can be imposed on public access to minimise any inconvenience to the lot owner. This bill means that the government can provide beach access for Queenslanders where it is being denied unreasonably.

I acknowledge local community supporters such as Dave Green; Paul Morgan; Roger, the owner of the Baffle Creek caravan park; John and Kerry Hovey, who own the Baffle Creek hardware store; Sue Robertson, the local real estate agent; and, of course, Robin Bridges. They are all key advocates and have worked to ensure that the anomaly was overturned. Special mention must go to local resident Tony Bridges, who worked tirelessly for his community on this issue in particular, but also on many other important issues. We started petitions in February 2013 after realising or encountering difficulties with the local council's ability to provide solutions. I finish with a quote from our local community, in recognition of the work that is being done for the community. It states—

So with Premier Campbell Newman and Minister Andrew Cripps decisive action, we have now had our access restored to at least the state owned parks on our beach, for the people who love the outdoors and the ocean, they have helped our economy, by bringing back the tourists to our region to go beach camping and four wheel driving, and fishing.

It is with pleasure that I support the passage of this legislation through the House.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (4.43 pm): I rise to make a short contribution, although that should not be misinterpreted as meaning that I do not have an interest in this area. A lot of fantastic things have been said about this legislation. It is a landmark piece of legislation. I have spoken on previous enabling legislation that the minister has brought into the House and I have certainly conveyed my passion for this area. This legislation will go a long way towards—as we talk about a lot—narrowing the gap. This sort of legislation is a very practical means through which that gap can be narrowed.

A few months ago I had the privilege of travelling to the Hope Vale community with Minister Elmes. Hope Vale has a type of freehold already. There was a bit of an anomaly there as land within the Hope Vale community was already portioned off as freehold. The Hope Valley Estate, which is a very small housing estate, is a wonderful example of the benefits that this legislation will bring to Indigenous communities that want to embrace freehold. It is important to highlight, as others have, that this is not something that will be required of Indigenous communities and towns; they can opt in. This is all about empowering Indigenous communities. This is a wonderful piece of legislation that will make a real difference.

As you travel through that very small residential estate in Hope Vale, you could very well be travelling through Carindale. The houses are wonderful and the gardens are beautiful. The folk there take the same pride in their homes as does anybody else. Homeownership is vital. Any student of history would know about the changes that happened during the Middle Ages in Europe, after the serfs or the peasants were allowed to own their own land. That changed Europe, which then became the super power that we know. That happened through people being able to own their own land, because that provides economic benefits that enable them to move forward.

I am very passionate about this topic. I commend the minister and the Premier for going ahead with this legislation to empower Indigenous communities and to make a real difference. I will close with quite a large quote, because I do not want to be accused of plagiarism, from the review that Andrew Forrest did for the federal government. Andrew Forrest puts it very succinctly, probably better than I could, so I will use his words. I want to put them clearly on the record. He states—

Land—the key to economic development and home ownership.

Anything that stops first Australians from owning their own land so that they can enjoy the fruits of ownership and pride in their own homes must be swept away.

That is exactly what this legislation does. He goes on—

The ability to purchase and use available land for home ownership and business is the key to prosperity and empowerment for most Australians. They build their wealth and security through home ownership, business development and investment. Individual ownership fosters individual responsibility and wealth creation. This capacity to own assets as individuals, such as the family home, is denied to many thousands of first Australians living in remote communities. As a group, first Australians lag behind other Australians in home and asset ownership and savings.

This legislation will narrow that gap. It is a fantastic piece of legislation. As someone who has worked in communities, particularly in Cherbourg back in the day, I know that it will make a huge difference to those communities. It will make a huge difference for people such as Cherbourg local artist Max Conlon. Now he can own his own home and, potentially, he can own his own art gallery, and that is just fantastic. I commend the legislation to the House. It is a great piece of legislation.

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (4.48 pm): I rise to support this very important piece of legislation. This afternoon there will be two aspects to my remarks, although I will be brief. Of course, one aspect will be about Indigenous homeownership and freeholding opportunities, and my other remarks will address the amendment on Rules Beach. Firstly, in relation to the main thrust of this legislation, which is the issue of freehold and the Indigenous home ownership provisions, this is an incredibly important day. I am so thrilled and proud to be part of a government, and to lead that government, that is bringing forward this legislation. I thank the minister, who has worked extremely hard on this with the support of all members of cabinet, particularly our colleague the Hon. Glen Elmes and Assistant Minister David Kempton. I especially thank the officers in Minister Andrew Cripps's department for the great work that has been done. This has not been easy. It has been incredibly complex. We get to this day after a heck of a lot of work. I say, upfront, thank you so much. Going forward, there is going to need to be a lot of goodwill here. I believe there is and we need to maintain that goodwill. It is with that goodwill that we will see the objectives of this legislation being met.

Let me now talk about that. Our approach is all about improving opportunities for Indigenous people to control their own destiny. It is not about imposing solutions. It is about giving people the tools to take their communities forward, the mechanisms to create a better life and to actually lift people out of despair, poverty and marginalisation and give them real futures. Real futures come with a real economy and a real opportunity to have a job and a real opportunity to have all the benefits of citizenship in this great state and great country.

This bill is an important step in this regard. It helps to improve those economic circumstances for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. It is indeed a new opportunity in the state's 34 Aboriginal and Islander communities to give locals a better say on land use, just as other Queenslanders have that say today, just as other Australians have that say today.

Freehold land, as a number of speakers have said, is the cornerstone of economic participation. This bill means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders can aspire and indeed then own their own homes. That homeownership is a symbol of economic determination and participation. But it is more than a symbol. When one talks to people, particularly in Cape York where we are seeing the first early signs of this—for example, on the outskirts of Hope Vale where there has been a small subdivision and freehold land sold and homes built—the pride, the sense of empowerment, the sense of a future is absolutely palpable. By providing the chance that we are we are saying clearly that Indigenous communities do not need to be dependent on welfare. Indigenous people should be able to benefit from economic growth. That is what this is all about.

It is a first for Australia. It is another Queensland first. It is another Queensland government first. We are showing the way for other states and territories. I hope—and I say this most sincerely—that they will see that this is something that they should either emulate or seek to adapt for their own circumstances. We should all be working together to make this a reality across the nation.

It will give families the chance to raise children in their own homes. It will encourage people to realise their dreams. It gives the responsibility to local communities to provide leadership for the future. The bill provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the same access to freehold title as all Queenslanders have. There has been inherently, as a matter of historical circumstance, a form of discrimination. We address that in this important legislation today. It does recognise the important connection to land and the economic independence that it can bring.

Economic development is the key to these communities attaining their potential. We hope it will help them to go well and truly past—miles and miles past—some of the current social problems that they face. We stand ready to work with them and to assist them in this process. But the bill provides communities with the power and the choice to have freehold. It does not prescribe what those communities should do. It gives them the tools to make the best choice. A community can identify to what extent, if any, freehold suits them and then implement it. Again I stress it is their choice, but we stand ready as a government to support them in any way we possibly can. This is a proud day for this parliament and I urge the support of all members.

I turn now to the second aspect of the bill that I indicated at the beginning of my contribution I wished to address—that is, the Rules Beach amendment. This bill also provides a new tool that can be used to maintain public access to Queensland beaches. This government believes, fundamentally, that beaches belong to the people of Queensland—that that vital strip of land, that strip of golden sand, is there for the enjoyment of all Queenslanders. Sometimes it has been the case, due to accidents of history or coastal processes and the movement of sand, that some anomalies have arisen where access to a beach has been removed from the enjoyment of all Queenslanders. This amendment deals with that issue and ensures that we have a mechanism in the future. In a few places, the surveyed beach access or esplanade has been completely washed away and public access has been cut—like at Rules Beach in the member for Burnett's electorate.

I want to mention today the gentleman who brought this to my attention at a community cabinet meeting last year. It has taken time for a solution. I thank Mr Tony Bridges, who has been and continues to be a staunch campaigner for dealing with this particular anomaly. I praise him for the work that he has done. He was rebuffed on many occasions. He was given the run-around all too much by various people in government, both local and state. But, today, we deal with this important issue.

I thank him for that. By drawing attention to this matter and with this amendment we will actually deal with this problem in the future, once and for all. Public access to a beach can be declared under the provisions of this amendment in this bill. The owner will retain ownership of the beach area and will also regain exclusive access to the entire lot if the beach re-establishes itself on the seaward side of the lot. The owner of the lot will not have public liability except where they have acted intentionally and recklessly. Conditions can be imposed on public access to minimise any inconvenience to the lot owner. Make no mistake: this bill means that the government can provide beach access to Queenslanders where it has been denied unreasonably. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (4.56 pm): I agree with the words of the Premier with regard to this bill. This bill empowers the people living in the communities affected by this and gives them an element of economic self-determination. The first objective of the bill is to introduce the option of ordinary freehold title into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is the main objective that I wish to address in my short contribution to this debate this afternoon.

It is commonly said that a man's home is his castle. For most people in Australia and in Queensland that is the case.

**Mr Pucci:** Ah, the serenity.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I will take the interjection from the member for Logan—the serenity. Most people in Australia enjoy freehold title for the homes they own. For a section of the Indigenous community and Torres Strait Islander community, that has not been the case for a very long time.

This bill provides the option for communities to apply for freehold title to be applied in their community. People who have lived in their home for many, many years or people who live on land that has been in their family for sometimes generations will be able to say, like other Australians, that their home is their castle. They can have freehold title and all the rights and privileges that attach to that title in the legal system. We have laws to protect that land.

Although in the communities affected there have been leasehold rights extended to residents, leasehold rights are not the same as freehold rights. That is well understood by everyone in the community. In particular, it is well understood by banks and other people who may be involved in the economic development of a region.

When I was a member of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee we undertook an inquiry into a bill that amended the Aboriginal landholding act 1991 as it dealt with deed of grant in trust land, DOGIT land, upon which many people in these communities live. The strong message from members of Indigenous communities and Torres Strait Islander communities that came through that inquiry when we spoke about fixing anomalies in that legislation and surveying lots where people lived to correct any encroachments that had occurred over the years was that they wanted freehold land to be an option for their communities. They want to be able to own their own home and own the place where they do business. They want the option of mortgaging their property to be able to finance their business venture or do whatever they want to do when it comes to their family or business.

It is pleasing that the minister, in conjunction with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, put in place a process for those leasehold lots to be surveyed over the last couple of years. That means that when this bill becomes effective on 1 January next year a lot of the work will already be completed. We have surveyed lots where people have been living, so communities that want to take up the option of freehold land will have parcels of land surveyed and ready to go for a freehold land plan under this bill.

I make the point that this is an option for communities. The bill creates an option for communities to enter into these arrangements; it is not being forced on them. There is no coercion. In fact, it is a requirement of this bill that trustees of land under the deed of grant in trust land must consult widely with the community, and the bill contains minimum consultation requirements. It also gives them flexibility to adjust those requirements for their particular communities because each community has different characteristics which need to be taken into account. It is great that that survey work is underway, and I am sure it will continue to provide the options for these communities.

In summing-up, I will say that the overwhelming object of this is to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can own their own homes and pursue commercial interests in the same way as other citizens. It is amazing that it has taken so long for this bill to be brought before this House and that there is not similar legislation already in place anywhere else in the nation. It is 22 years since the native title determination in the Mabo case and this is long overdue. A fair amount of time has lapsed between that decision and this legislation coming before the House.

As I said, the feedback from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that the committee received about two years ago in North Queensland was that this option was highly sought after but that they did not want to be forced into it. They wanted to go their own way and determine their own future, and this bill sets that path for them. I am very glad to support the bill on this historic day in the Queensland parliament.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (5.03 pm): I support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Its time has very much come. It could be said that it is a case of better late than never, but what is unsaid is that the great tragedy here is that it has taken so long to get to this situation where we have a level playing field for all Queenslanders, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, in their aspiration to own freehold title to property.

Far too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have lived in departmental housing in many different structures, largely DOGITs, remain entrenched with a fringe-dweller status and are condemned to a life of being forever renters and having no capacity to build their wealth for themselves or their families—and that was mentioned here earlier—and then progress from there. They have the same aspirations as everyone else, and of course others just want the security of having their own block of dirt or a house in which to bring up their families. These are normal aspirations for everyone else and it is exactly the same for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland, and of course Queensland has the highest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia. These are powerful motivators for change in people, communities and those they interact with. The reasons are many, but overwhelmingly they are a very different type of consumer. They have a responsibility for their property in this situation, and an equal responsibility to their neighbours and their community.

This will mean that councils will have a small capacity to more reflect the demands of freehold title holders, and equally people will pay rates to assist the endeavours of their own community. This will ensure greater self-regulation. Certainly, it will be progressive, and we will have to assist them

both financially and administratively for a long period of time, and this is reasonable, but change is incremental and if the direction is positive we should achieve a very mutually successful outcome for these families and these communities.

I note the original exceptions when they talked about this bill were Mer and Aurukun. This has now changed, and I spoke to the assistant minister today just to confirm that Mer and Aurukun had changed. Mer was reserve land. The land was originally held in trust in Mer and there was a shire lease in Aurukun. I asked about these because there are issues that relate particularly to Murray Islanders. They are a very mobile population in Queensland and they have a long history of traditional service into the Army, the Navy and in some cases the Air Force, which some people may not know about.

The Aurukun people have three Wik clans. They are very much a different community, as people in the north would know. They were a very warlike tribe originally. They all chose to live in one community and this was a great success, but certainly it has been difficult. Unfortunately, I see today that Glencore has been announced as the potential developer of the massive bauxite deposit that the Aurukun community has waited 40 years to see commencing—mainly to employ their local families and see their community prosper. It certainly seemed like the Aurukun people were favouring the proposal of the Pearson plan and an Indigenous landmining company set up for the purpose. Unfortunately, they appear to have missed out.

I would hate to think that this was another tragedy for Aurukun and that they will again be punished by a distant neglect, with the government awarding a very prosperous mining lease against the wishes of a very needy and isolated community which has a lot to show for its history, and I will explain that later. If the legislation has not allowed Aurukun the same kind of flexibility that it sought so that the state can claim the resource, that will be against the benefit of that community. If this legislation gives them some kind of benefit that they as a community can agree to and live with, then that is a good thing. Otherwise, it may be all for nought. Aurukun is but one cape community but it is very important, as they all are. Aurukun has enormous numbers of social problems, economic challenges and a very discrete Wik culture. They must not be left behind. They are great Queenslanders and they are much deserving of procedural fairness.

At this stage, I would like to raise one of the issues from page 24 of the committee's report. It highlights some of the problems that these communities will face, and I would like to make a point particularly about Aurukun. I have had a lot to do with these people in a variety of ways, including as part of my childhood and then subsequently when I was looking after them through the prison system, sadly enough. Aurukun is an amazing community in some ways, and people have forgotten that. There has been an intergenerational problem. They used to train every person in the community to do a certain role. In other words, they had electricians, plumbers, carpenters et cetera, and they were almost meticulous about the way they taught their people to do these things. A lot of the issues that were raised were addressed in the way that they ran their communities. In other words, they were a formative township in the past, and they certainly can be in the future. It is not to say that all of the other communities are not the same, but there was a great tradition there. With the things that are listed on that page, we could almost say that, if we address those issues within that community, we could go a long way to solving the problems in a lot of the other communities. That is not to say that they are all the same thing, but I thought I would just make that point.

I acknowledge that the changes relating to the freeholding will be at the discretion of the communities to decide, and I think that is a good thing. I support the decision of the department to increase the flexibility of leases and the use of the Valuer-General's ability to make valuations; that is a good thing. It is progress. I acknowledge the multiple different types of freehold. It reflects the native title. I think the progression of including issues like native title and traditional owners' rights is positive.

I listened to the extensive second reading speech by the minister and a variety of other speakers. The critical inequity is the five per cent homeownership by ATSI people compared with 65 per cent of the general community. I think the member for Thuringowa talked about 97 per cent rental of dwellings. That has been a major problem. These things will change and for the good. We all hope for that. Certainly it is well deserved and I agree we must assist to make it work. I do accept there are difficulties, and I do not know where they were raised. I was waiting for the minister to mention it. If honourable members go to these communities they will realise that a lot of homes are locked up. Currently, they are locked up for a variety of reasons. That often has to do with issues of death, people have moved away or family ownership structures. There are going to be some difficulties. That has certainly been a problem. Often there can be situations where there is overcrowding in one property and there are literally empty houses in another house, but those houses

cannot be used. This may well be a situation where we might see some resolution to the problem of selective overcrowding which should not exist because there are houses there. I cannot say that will be the case. It will be interesting to see whether freeholding actually resolves part of that problem. We see the idea of the mobility of property titles being the same as with the mobility of the grants. In other words, they have to earn an income from the property in order to pay the rates.

I have not tried to single out one community over another, other than I did mention Aurukun and I said it was a good little example. If we can solve one set of problems, we might solve the wider set of problems. I look forward to those communities that have a proud tradition already being able to become the type of towns, as has been mentioned here, that those communities are morphing into under this legislation. It is a good change. It is a good thing.

I do not think this is quite the panacea for all that has gone wrong in many communities throughout Queensland, but it is a good step into the future. It was interesting to hear the quote from Andrew Forrest, because the idea of building wealth is certainly the best way of hopefully getting people to progress from being fringe dwellers to the middle class. I have always thought it was one part of one piece of the puzzle that might be part of the wider solution. It grants dignity and equity to a very long-suffering group of Australians who have more than earned that right. I wish them well under the changes.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (5.12 pm): I rise today to speak to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Firstly, I would like to thank the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Hon. Andrew Cripps, for introducing this landmark bill into our parliament. Despite not being part of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, I wanted to speak to this bill because I have a very personal interest in this bill as my electorate of Townsville takes in Palm Island, the largest Indigenous community and Aboriginal shire council in our state. Since the time of becoming the local member for Townsville, I have seen very significant and steady progress made by the Palm community. I do not make this point for any self-aggrandisement. I wish I could. Regrettably, I am not so good to have attained these achievements for Palm. This has been a ground-up achievement and it speaks volumes for the Palm community itself but, more directly, its leadership. I know that the Palm council and community are particularly interested in the passage of this legislation.

The Palm community leadership, in particular the Palm Island Mayor, Councillor Alf Lacey, and his councillors, is very vocal on taking its community forward to enable economic participation, economic development and economic sustainability. They have a plan, the Palm Island economic action plan. Whilst innovative and bold, it is also inherently achievable. The Palm Island economic action plan is a real, and the best, chance that the community has to access an alternative to the vicious and moral-sapping cycle of welfare dependency. I know that they as a council are very supportive of our government's plans to provide the Palm community and residents with the choice to have freehold title over their land and the choice to own their own home. This bill is a cipher that can unlock the decades of ALP inaction and lip-service paid to our Indigenous communities.

This new legislation will enable—only if the community chooses—the provision of ordinary freehold land ownership opportunities to Queensland's 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Freehold title provides the comfort of security—security of tenure, the blanket of a formalised and recognised connection to land, but it will go further than that. This bill provides the opportunity to access equity—equity that can be invested in economic opportunity that our mainland communities simply take for granted. This legislation will enable residents in these communities to have the same property rights to the land enjoyed by other freehold property holders. To me, it is a no-brainer. Palm Island residents, as well as many other residents in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, should have the same rights as those on the mainland and that is to own their own home.

Why should the House support this bill? I will tell honourable members in some simple and stark terms. The home ownership rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people living in the state's Indigenous communities is five per cent, compared to nearly 65 per cent or more, as we heard earlier, for the rest of Queensland. Sadly, in my electorate on Palm Island the percentage of people who own their own home is even less than the state average of all the Indigenous communities. On Palm Island it is only 4.4 per cent of residents who own their own home. Despite 20 years in office, the former Labor government failed to deliver for Indigenous people, denying them an opportunity enjoyed and taken for granted by their fellow Queenslanders elsewhere. Indeed, this bill will introduce the option for ordinary freehold title into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It will simplify the leasing framework that applies to Indigenous land to reduce the regulatory burden on

trustees and lessees. It will amend the Land Valuation Act 2010 to enable Indigenous local government areas to be subject to statutory valuations. It will provide for the repeal of the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978 upon transfer under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 of the remaining shire lease land. The bill will also amend the Land Act 1994 to provide the minister with power to declare on a case-by-case basis a conditional right of public access over private land where, due to erosion, the access along the area of the beach has been compromised by the private ownership of the beach area. We heard the Premier speak eloquently on that earlier this evening.

Under this bill, trustees must talk to their communities before deciding about making freehold land available. This includes undertaking appropriate consultation with the community and the native title holders in the area if they have been determined. Whether or not the trustee elects to take up the option of introducing freehold title into their community, the current leasing provisions within the Aboriginal Land Act and Torres Strait Islander Land Act will remain available. This freehold model takes into account the unique features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The bill provides a balance of flexibility and control which enables the trustee to provide freehold in a way that best suits each of our very distinct and different communities. This includes setting out where freehold can and cannot be granted and the details of how and to whom the land can be allocated. It could be that a trustee and community might make the decision to make the whole township available for freehold or just certain parts.

As I have alluded to earlier, this bill also represents an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to not only achieve homeownership on their traditional lands but also pursue economic development interests. It accords nicely with the key actions of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Participation Action Plan, released in July 2014 following the Queensland ATSI economic participation framework.

I note for the record my gratitude to this government and, in particular, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Glen Elmes, for publishing the framework and the recently announced action plan. While not trying to reduce the honourable minister's work, I can reassure him that the Palm Island economic action plan was pre-emptive and in lockstep with the fundamental tenets of the minister's plan for Queensland. This will provide Palm Island residents with the opportunity to tap into ecotourism ventures, investing in new aquaculture, catering and retail services which is the key to future economic development on the island and providing more jobs for locals.

I have spoken in this place, as has the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, on the outstanding success of the Palm Island tourism open day held on 16 April this year. I remain on, and co-chair with the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, the very active and well supported Palm Island Economic Development and Transport Committee. I am happy to report to the House that the support and the energy of this committee is refreshing.

I can assure honourable members that, in the words of Mayor Alf Lacey, Palm Island is open for business. Palm Island is also known as Great Palm Island and is a community of about 5,000 people—despite the ABS thinking in 2011 that it was only about 2,600. On 1 July I was very fortunate to visit Palm Island with our Premier Campbell Newman, his lovely wife, Lisa, and the honourable transport minister Scott Emerson to officially unveil a number of newly delivered projects including the upgraded ferry pontoon, the motel expansion and the rebuilding of the seawall.

We have seen an increase in the number of people commuting to and from and visiting Palm Island, and more than 40,000 passenger ferry trips are taken each year between the island and the mainland. The state government continues to invest in vital infrastructure on the island, as we know that it is the key to unlocking the future economic development of the island. The state government allocated more than \$500,000 of the \$1.7 million upgrade for the ferry pontoon. The upgrade widened the pontoon and made it non-tidally dependent; in other words, it improved accessibility for wheelchairs and prams regardless of the tide.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the efforts of the local ferry operator SeaLink, who also contributed to the funding of this pontoon upgrade. SeaLink has shown great a commitment to the Palm Island community. On the same visit the island received an economic boost thanks to the state government's support in expanding the island's motel. The Local Governments Grants and Subsidies Program provided more than \$1 million towards the expansion of the motel, and it is now almost double the size with an additional 10 rooms, increasing the capacity to 23 rooms. Further jobs were created with the construction of a new seawall. The Palm Island foreshore sustained significant

damage from Cyclone Yasi in early 2011, and the early stages of the project were delayed through the design and approval stages. We had also seen what the NDRR provided, but the council could add to it and make a significant contribution to the whole seafront on Palm Island.

These types of projects go to the heart of providing opportunities for economic development on the island as well as providing more jobs for the island's residents. The state government and the Palm Island Council will continue to work together to invest in the future of the island. Without a doubt, providing the community with the ability and choice to freehold, providing a pathway to owning their own homes, is another major step in growing a stronger economy on Palm Island.

This bill is about removing the barriers to homeownership in Indigenous communities like Palm Island and allowing residents the ability to determine their own destinies. As Palm Island mayor Alf Lacey has stated, this initiative will inject a sense of pride into the community. I fully support that the House enables this legislation because of the benefits it will provide to the community on Palm Island.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (5.22 pm): This bill is about facilitating homeownership. We have come to this point after decades of paternalism, treating Indigenous Queenslanders as second class with rights which do not equal other Queenslanders'. Minister Cripps well knows how I feel about this measure, and I want to very sincerely congratulate the minister. This has not been an easy exercise and this is a very major reform. The challenges of this reform are as large as they are essential. I also want to especially thank Minister Elmes for his support and involvement. Queenslanders are bombarded with negative messages about politicians. They get excessive political analysis, negative attacks and personal vilification, often at the expense of a true discussion of issues. But I want to say that in Minister Elmes and Minister Cripps we have people who genuinely personally truly care about Indigenous Queenslanders and their future, their opportunities and their families. That is something very special to me.

I believe that this bill is the single most important social justice reform of the 54th Parliament. Thirty-four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands communities are subject to these changes. We are Australians. We widely believe in homeownership. It gives us respect, engages us with our community and makes us feel like we belong. It empowers us as we own it and we make it fit in with our family and our lifestyle. It has become a store of individual wealth, and for some of us it is the security that we need to start a business or another enterprise. I am one of those examples and I know of others here too.

As owners, we are empowered as our life's phases change. We can move if we wish to go somewhere for a better job. If we wish to access secondary or tertiary education for our children, we have the power to choose in which community we live because we own our own homes. When we get older and when the kids leave home, we can downsize and sometimes have some retirement money because the smaller property is less costly. Even more important to some of us, perhaps, is that there is something of value that we can leave to our children which will help them make their way in the world.

All of this has been denied to Indigenous Queenslanders in these communities. If you have a look at the challenges you see today in those communities, they are communities that in many respects have failed to develop into viable communities. As a minister for a short period, I feel very privileged that I was able to support these measures and, in a small way, give some practical support, particularly in trying to address the fact that many of these communities had not even been surveyed to see where the streets and homes belonged. Nobody had even bothered to put that much effort into these communities. I was humbled to have the privilege to visit so many of these communities and to be welcomed into them to develop a better understanding.

This legislation has many safeguards built into it, as it must have. To guard against speculators seeking to secure tracts of Indigenous land, freehold applies only to township residential areas. It is entirely voluntary and is within the power of the communities themselves to decide. Queensland's Indigenous people are being entrusted to determine their own futures and make their own choices. The processes for communities to go down this path are laid out in the bill and they have many levels of protection. In many cases people will purchase social housing. I looked at the pricing mechanisms that were being considered at the time and they will be affordable for people, but they can also acquire property that they have a relevant interest in. Where there is no relevant interest holder, there may be an open allocation process should the community so decide. The actual freehold owners in the first instance must be Indigenous members of that community with a right to that land. Importantly, this will also facilitate the lease of non-residential land because these communities will never thrive without freely available land on which businesses can be developed to create employment.

You will not get a history lesson on native title from me, nor will you get a dissertation on its finer legal points. What you will get from me is the passionate belief that all of us are equal. We should have equality in our rights and in our opportunities. Egalitarianism is a cornerstone value of mine, and I believe it is a cornerstone value of this government and the vast bulk of Australians. How dare some suggest that Indigenous Queenslanders should not have the right to sell their own home on the open market at the best price? This would in fact remove one of the great values of having your own home and being able to achieve its true and best market value.

I respect the Leader of Opposition Business, but I heard him today make reference to valuable waterfront land in Yarrabah and elsewhere, with the implication that there was a concern that Indigenous Queenslanders might sell this land and it might be very expensive. Of course Indigenous Queenslanders who live on waterfront land should have the right to own that home and to sell it if they wish. I hope that many Indigenous Queenslanders find homeownership a way to make wealth with which they can better their families.

For the first time, many of these people will have equity in something that they can use to establish a business. For the first time, they will have a choice, for example, to raise their family when young on traditional communities but choose later, as many of us do, to sell and move to a bigger centre for a better job, better secondary or better tertiary education. Many of us have done this for our families. How dare anyone suggest that those rights should be taken away from Indigenous Queenslanders, simply on the basis of the ethnic group to which they belong?

The commercial activity that this bill will assist with is one of the few ways in which we will see a break to the terrible cycle of welfare dependency, massive unemployment, social dislocation and despair. It will create opportunities that are very important. Without an economic base where people have assets, where people have a job or where there is the opportunity to go out and set up a small business, these communities will largely be failed communities fraught with social problems, surviving on welfare and with little prospect of their children breaking the cycle and making a better life.

There is nothing this government has done of which I am more proud than this particular measure. It is a measure underpinned by the belief that we are all equal here in Queensland. It is a measure that delivers justice and fairness to all Queenslanders, no matter what their race or origin. Above all, it is a measure that will deliver hope where in many cases there is currently very little hope. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.31 pm): I rise to make a contribution to debate on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. At the outset, I commend the government on having the good judgement to follow the concept of providing freehold land in Aboriginal communities. This concept is about as familiar to me as the Bradfield scheme, transmission line or ethanol. I was brought up on these things with my father, ever since I was a kid.

I think it is very appropriate that I acknowledge my father's contribution to the start of this journey, which is the genesis of what we are seeing today. I refer to the title deeds on Thursday Island—a very radical and much fought against move in the day and one which almost cost him his job in the ministry and one that many people I still mix with—public servants—still commend him for. At the expense of some humility, I would like to acknowledge his contribution. I acknowledge the rather negative connotations the minister put on that the last time we discussed this process in the House, but it was the start of a process that was not finished. It is finished today, and I commend the government for that. But I think it is important to acknowledge where this started.

I will relate an anecdote from when the last bill on this matter was before the committee. Fred Gela from Thursday Island kept mentioning the Katter leases. I thought he was saying the 'cattle leases', quite naively. Afterwards I was intrigued to know what the Katter leases were. He said, 'That's what we want, the Katter leases.' Here we have an improvement on that. I acknowledge that. I think there will be a lot of barriers and a lot of heavy work to be done from now on to have this implemented anywhere, because there will be a lot of interests that converge within the individual communities themselves.

While I am on that subject, I refer to the debate we had last night on the idea that policy development never comes from outside of government or the major parties. I did not hear much of this from anyone other than my father over the years. It just goes to show that if you call for these things—it is not to take away—

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** It is not to take away what is being done here by the government, but it is something that has been pushed outside the parliament for years and you have adopted it—and that is how it should work. It gets developed when it gets into parliament. That is how it should work. That is what we were debating last night.

I think it has been discussed quite extensively here today so I do not want to labour it too much, but I do need to relay to the House my own personal examples. Doomadgee and Mornington are the two Aboriginal communities in my electorate. They struggle a lot and there are a lot of big challenges there. To the outsider it is sometimes hard to see the appeal for people who want to stay in those communities, but there are people who love those communities and want to stay there. They want the best for their own communities. A critical component—arguably the most critical component—of them staying there and having some hope is owning their own home, which is what we are delivering.

Building on this concept—this has also been discussed—it is also about them building their own homes. There was a scheme that was very effectively applied in Doomadgee in, I think, the late 1980s. A number of houses that went out there most recently were modular. They were all built off-site and plonked in there. Whilst there was some local labour involved in putting those in, the social benefit of training the local workforce by building those houses from scratch far exceeds the much higher per unit cost of building homes that way. It might be cheap to put in modular homes in the first place, but you are denying yourself a lot of social benefit from training.

The other point I would like to address is alienable versus inalienable rights. I think that is a critical part of this legislation. At the end of the day it could be debated quite extensively. I would have to fall on the side of inalienable. I acknowledge that I think it is not a bad middle ground the government has found. I understand that the first sale cannot go outside the community or has to at least be to another Indigenous person. Particularly in the infancy of the scheme, I would have preferred to see inalienability, which I guess would deny people some opportunities. It does address some of those concerns that people have. I think it is a pretty good middle ground that has been reached in terms of the first-sale clause.

I think the consultation period—I just read that in the committee report—could have been handled better. On my two visits to the community they did not seem well aware of the legislation. I think a bit more engagement earlier would make the rollout of this much easier.

In closing, I am happy to acknowledge the good judgement to carry this forward. I pay tribute to where this all started. I would like to see it go further whereby we actually carry out home building in these communities. I think that is the next step.

I think this has been laboured here already, but in these communities at the moment there is a lack of hope because if you cannot buy a house you cannot get a mortgage from the bank to buy a tipper truck that you are going to hire to the council in order to make a living, for example. That generates your own sense of self-worth and when you have that sense of self-worth the family unit becomes stronger, you are looking after the kids better and we have better social outcomes. The delivery of this will be a long and difficult journey but it is a journey that we have to start to provide some hope and prosperity in these communities, because where there is an absence of hope despair prevails. This is the start of the journey. I commend the government for putting it out there and taking it this far. I will be supporting the bill in the House.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (5.39 pm), in reply: Today is, of course, a momentous day. Today is an historic day for Indigenous Queenslanders as this government delivers on its promise to afford Indigenous Queenslanders an opportunity that their fellow Queenslanders have had for many years—the opportunity to own their own home in freehold in the Indigenous community in which they live. This bill is a landmark piece of legislation for Indigenous Queenslanders who live in these remote and regional communities. The bill introduces the option of freehold into these Indigenous communities but it does not force freehold upon them. The individual communities make the decision whether or not to freehold and it is an option if they wish to take up that option. That is at the core of the mechanism that has been put forward in this bill. A matter that I did not mention at any great length during my second reading contribution was a matter touched on by the member for Gaven—that is, that this bill provides for the repeal of the Aurukun and Mornington Shire Leases Act 1978. This repeal occurs after the transfer under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 of the remaining shire lease land, and I am happy to report that the transfer of the remaining shire lease land in Aurukun occurred in mid-June.

I turn now to the issues raised by members during the second reading debate, and they were variously raised by the member for Mulgrave and the member for Dalrymple and the member for Mount Isa in their contributions to the debate. The first was that trustees do not have the resources to

run the process in terms of making freehold available to the communities concerned. I note that this was one of the issues that was raised time and again by non-government members during the debate—that is, that trustees do not have the resources to run the process required under the freehold proposal—but I do not agree. I do not think that that is the case. The purpose of the trustee consultation under the freehold proposal in the bill is to enable the trustee to be reasonably satisfied that it is appropriate for the freehold option land to be requested and granted to freehold. This obligation is really no different from what the state already asks of trustees in undertaking trustee decisions about the land. Under the bill, the nature and extent of consultation with their community is a matter fundamentally for each individual trustee to determine to their satisfaction. The development of the freehold instrument by the trustee can be used as a means to inform and consult their community about what freehold tenure means and the responsibilities of owning freehold along with the proposed process to make freehold available. Trustees do not necessarily need to run separate and sometimes expensive consultation processes but instead they can, for example, use existing opportunities to raise the issue of freehold with their community and the respective native title holders. Trustees, if they wish, can also adopt a model freehold schedule which will be prepared by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to fast-track and simplify the process of providing freehold in these communities.

The government appreciates that a number of the processes under the bill relating to the freehold option will initially appear foreign to trustees and that freehold for residents of the state's Indigenous communities is a novel form of land tenure which may not be well understood initially. Accordingly, if requested by the trustee, departmental officers are available to attend community workshops on the freehold option. I note that there has been some comment about whether providing the option of freehold will lead to the loss or fragmentation of the Indigenous estate and diminish the integrity of these, what are in reality, closed communities. This bill is providing opportunities to access the same freehold title that is available elsewhere in Queensland. The subsequent potential sale of the land by the initial Indigenous recipient of the freehold grant to people outside of the community is entirely possible at some time in the future. We all acknowledge that. This is a matter that the trustee, the native title holders and the community must consider carefully before deciding to take up the freehold option, but it really is their decision and no-one else's. This government is not deciding for them. We are not telling them that they cannot aspire to what other Queenslanders aspire to, and that is of course achieving ownership of their own home in freehold title in the Indigenous community in which they live.

**Mr Rickuss:** They can always lease it, too.

**Mr CRIPPS:** Indeed. That is absolutely correct; I take the interjection of the member for Lockyer and chairman of the committee that, should they freehold, to realise some of the value of that freehold property they can of course lease that property and realise some of the value in that property from an arrangement of that nature. But the freeholding option in the bill applies only to the town area of the state's remote and regional Indigenous communities, and I think that goes some way to also answering the charge that there is a risk of the loss or fragmentation of the Indigenous estate. So these communities really have absolutely no need to be concerned about or fear the potential loss of all of their land. In most cases there remains, as I mentioned, significant amounts of land outside of the town area and that land remains in place for the use and for the benefit of the local community. Additionally, the freehold option is flexible so that the Indigenous community can restrict what town area plans may be made available for freehold and thereby any subsequent potential sale on the open market. As the member for Lockyer interjected a moment ago, freehold does not have to be sold to generate wealth or income from the land. You can have a lease over that freehold land, and many successful businesses operate on a lease over freehold land throughout Queensland. If this bill is passed, then the same can now occur in Indigenous communities if that is their choice.

The issue of whether particular Indigenous communities are ready to be granted freehold has also been raised. The bill, if enacted, simply puts in place a mechanism for taking up freehold. No freehold will be granted simply by this bill being enacted. The granting of freehold is a decision for each trustee to make when they believe it is appropriate to do so. Firstly, in order to grant freehold, a planning scheme must be in place and the consent of the native title party to the grant of freehold is required. Additionally, there are a number of other matters a trustee may believe is required for the community to make an informed decision about taking up the freehold option. These additional matters include, for example, the survey and subdivision of the land that may be available and negotiating Indigenous land use agreements and/or the possibility of transferring the land under the Aboriginal Land Act or the Torres Strait Islander Land Act prior to making any decision about taking

up the freehold option. However, as the freehold model is optional, it is a matter for the trustees whether they proceed with consulting the community or taking up freehold or waiting until these additional matters are in place before commencing consultation.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs are undertaking a coordinated program in Indigenous communities involving surveying and subdividing all lots in townships, and this will support communities to be ready to consider taking up the option of freehold. I think that that was a matter referred to by the member for Moggill in his contribution to the second reading debate, and I acknowledge that his time as the Minister for Public Works and Housing contributed significantly to the progress of the current work that is being undertaken in a number of these communities to improve the survey of those communities which will prepare them adequately indeed to adopt the freeholding model and will contribute significantly to them taking up the option of freehold. I think the matter was also mentioned by the member for Beaudesert in his contribution and it was a question asked I think by the member for Mulgrave in his second reading contribution to the debate about how this matter was progressing. The program that is being undertaken includes preparing planning schemes that are compliant with the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 resolving road alignments and tenure anomalies, including those resulting from the now repealed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 1985, and seeking to negotiate Indigenous land use agreements. The majority of this work is anticipated to be either completed or well underway prior to the bill's proposed commencement of 1 January 2015. This work, as I have mentioned already, will greatly assist communities if they are wishing to take up the freeholding option.

Regarding the beach access amendments, the general policy in Queensland is that a privately owned lot should not extend past the high-water mark on the beach. The land over which it is proposed to declare a public right of access is, in the majority of cases, not land originally surveyed with beach frontage. Rather, the land has been separated from the sea by an esplanade or reserve. It is a windfall to the owners that the esplanade or reserve in front of their properties has eroded away. Of course, compensation is paid when land is acquired by the state and acquisition of beach on private land remains an option available to the government. However, it is an option that is expensive for the state and does not always deliver the best outcomes for the landowner. Where a right of access is created, the state will take over the landowner's/occupier's liability for the area over which the right of access is created. Conditions will also be applied to the right of access to alleviate the burden on the owner. Finally, if accretion occurs, the beach will move seaward and the right of access will accordingly cease to apply.

As I advised the House when I introduced the bill, there has been a very long and varied history of tenure legislation applied to Indigenous lands and Indigenous communities. The objective of this historical and current legislation have varied with the times. As we move forwards towards a greater emphasis on autonomy for local Indigenous communities, promoting opportunities for homeownership and seeking to provide arrangements to better capitalise upon economic development opportunities comes into focus. These various acts have achieved some significant outcomes. For example, 4.9 million hectares of land in Queensland has been transferred under either the Aboriginal Land Act or the Torres Strait Islander Land Act and numerous commercial and government leases have been issued. I am very pleased to report that the first home ownership lease was recently granted. However, although these achievements are significant and very welcome, by any reasonable measure they still fall short of achieving the goal that most people in the community share and that is freehold homeownership and opportunities to access economic development in their local community. There are a number of possible reasons for this, but one of the clearest reasons is the inability to attract ordinary finance and investment because of the inability to sell the land to the wider market as a consequence of the restrictive tenure arrangements in Indigenous communities under the current legislation. The bill will provide access to ordinary freehold land in town areas where the trustee community and native title holders agree. Additionally, the current leasing regime will be simplified, which will better allow for development of the land regardless of whether the Indigenous community decides to take up that option of freehold.

I have already circulated to the House and tabled the explanatory notes associated with the amendments that I plan to move during the consideration in detail. The amendments will correct a number of drafting errors and unintended consequences and make other minor amendments. There are two amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991. One amendment removes sections in these acts that this bill will make redundant and the other

prevents the perverse outcome of land becoming incapable of being transferred as Aboriginal freehold or Torres Strait Islander freehold where ordinary freehold is not taken up by the trustee of the Indigenous community.

The definition of 'urban area' in the bill, which is the land to which the freehold option applies, will also be amended to ensure that it operates as it was intended. I will be moving three amendments, all to the Land Act 1994, in consideration in detail in relation to the beach access provisions in the bill. Firstly, I will be moving an amendment to clarify the government's intention that an owner should be liable for any intentional or reckless action by the owner in the beach access area but should not be liable for any actions of members of the public in that beach access area. Secondly, I will be moving an amendment to clarify the maintenance responsibilities of a local council which agrees to manage a beach access area. The amendment will confirm that the duty to maintain the beach extends only to what is reasonable and practical and that the principles set out in section 35 of the Civil Liability Act 2003 apply. That section specifies certain principles that are to apply when assessing whether a public authority has breached a duty of care.

Finally, I will be moving an amendment to ensure the appropriate area of land that may be within a declared beach area by amending the definition of 'seashore' to capture land between the high-water mark and the lot boundary located seaward of the high-water mark. I will also be moving two more amendments to the Land Act that are related to amendments made through the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The amendments made in the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which moved purchase price provisions for conversions from the Land Act 1994 to the Land Regulation 2009, inadvertently overlooked moving the appeal provision from the act to the regulation. The amendment to the Land Act and regulation will correct this oversight. The final amendment is to support the government's policy that rural leasehold land moves directly to freehold title. This will stop lessees being restricted under the terms of freeholding leases administered under the Land Act.

In relation to the contributions by non-government members to the debate on this bill this afternoon, I thank the opposition for its in-principle support for the legislation. I appreciate the member for Mulgrave indicating that he does not intend to oppose the bill. That is most welcome. I must say that it was unfortunate that some of the commentary that came from the member for Mulgrave during his contribution appeared to make it sound like that support was grudging. I think it was particularly unfortunate that the spirit in which this initiative has been brought before the House could not be accepted or acknowledged by the member for Mulgrave on behalf of the opposition.

**Mr Stevens:** Jealousy.

**Mr CRIPPS:** I will take the interjection from the Leader of the House. I do not think it was jealousy, because I know the member for Mulgrave. I do not think that he would hold that particular point of view. I think it was unfortunate that the tone of his contribution gave some grudging acknowledgment to the government for this initiative. But I am pleased that he indicated that the opposition would support in principle the passage of the legislation.

I do not want to spend too much time on the contributions that were made by the member for Dalrymple or the member for Mount Isa. During their contributions, they sought to protect some sort of legacy that they believe exists in terms of a former member of this House. The legislation that was put in place related to the issuing of perpetual leases in DOGIT communities. It did not envisage, it did not provide for, it did not facilitate the opportunity to secure freehold title in Indigenous communities in Queensland. Indeed, some of the legislation that was referred to by the member for Beaudesert during his contribution to the debate drew the attention of the House to a previous debate that had occurred when we passed legislation to repeal the landholding act 1985 and replace it with a modern framework that allowed for the significant deficiencies of the 1985 legislation to be overcome. In many cases, a lot of tenure anomalies had resulted from the administration of that flawed piece of legislation. Unfortunately, that flawed piece of legislation has prevented a number of Indigenous Queenslanders from securing a perpetual lease that they were entitled to access. In terms of logic, I think it is quite a leap to attach that initiative from 1985 to the initiative that the House, hopefully, will agree to this afternoon.

I would like to take a moment to thank the Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs for his role in leading consultation with stakeholders in the development of the freehold model that forms the centrepiece of this bill. I would also like to genuinely thank the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs for his support in developing the bill. I

would like to particularly thank the staff of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Services Unit within the Department of Natural Resources and Mines for their efforts to achieve the government's commitment of providing freehold as an option for Indigenous people living in their own communities. I have found these officers to be extremely dedicated to their work and quite passionate about facilitating the government's election commitment to provide Indigenous Queenslanders with the opportunity for the first time to own their own home in freehold in the community in which they live. I congratulate them for their commitment. I thank them for their cooperation with what can sometimes be a difficult task—to cooperate with their minister—and to achieve the outcomes that he pushes them hard to achieve. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the officers from the Department of Local Government and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs for their assistance with developing this bill. I offer my thanks and gratitude to my ministerial staff who have been with me on this journey to deliver this outstanding result for Indigenous Queenslanders.

I take one moment to give a special thanks to the Premier, who has a personal interest in delivering on the election commitment that he gave to Indigenous Queenslanders. He has supported me very strongly in the pursuit of this particular outcome and my ministerial cabinet colleagues have also given me strong support. I explained to the cabinet the significant philosophical leap that the government of Queensland has taken to make these amendments to the legislation governing the use of deed of grant in trust land in Queensland. It is a significant philosophical leap that I have been supported in taking by the Premier and my cabinet colleagues and, of course, my parliamentary colleagues from the government who have endorsed the work that we have done in this regard. Queensland is leading the way. We are ahead of other states and territories and we are ahead of the initiatives being pursued by the Commonwealth government to provide equity, dignity and fairness to Indigenous Queenslanders in this country.

On a personal note, I think about the Indigenous people who I know and are friends with, people like Philip Rist who is the CEO of the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation in my electorate of Hinchinbrook, a very progressive and dedicated Indigenous man who seeks every opportunity to progress the interests of the people who he represents. Philip will be very pleased with the outcome of this debate and I think that a progressive organisation like his will be able to see opportunities for Indigenous people in Queensland as a result. Elders indigenous to my local area in my electorate of Hinchinbrook, such as my friends John Andy and Claude Beeron, I will be able to report to with some satisfaction of the passage of this bill. They have grown up under a number of regimes in terms of the management of Indigenous land in their area of Queensland in my electorate and they will see the opportunity that it will provide for future generations of their families. In that regard, a few people who I grew up with in Tully, who I went to school with, who I played rugby league with and who I have worked with, people like Robbie Ketchell who is a Torres Strait Islander man and Shane Muriata who comes from the Jumbun community just south of Tully, who are people I know and who I call my friends, who are my age with families of their own now, I think when I see them next will genuinely be very happy about the change in circumstances that they and their families will be able to endeavour to achieve from the initiative that the House hopefully will agree to tonight. Lastly, can I say to all members that it has been very rewarding to be involved in this process personally and professionally. With all the sincerity that I can muster, I commend this bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail



Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2 postponed.

Clauses 3 to 65—

**Mr CRIPPS** (6.04 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

**Mr CRIPPS:** I move the following amendments—

**2 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 10 (Lands that are transferable lands))**

Page 15, lines 2 to 12—

*omit, insert—*

Section 10(2)—

*omit, insert—*

- (2) However, land mentioned in subsection (1) ceases to be transferable land to the extent either of the following applies—
- (a) it is taken, under the Acquisition Act, by a constructing authority;
  - (b) it is available land approved for a grant in fee simple by the chief executive under section 32C.
- (3) Also, land mentioned in subsection (1) is not transferable land to the extent it is the subject of any of the following—
- (a) a declaration in force under section 16;
  - (b) an offer to allocate available land under section 32T, while the offer is in force;
  - (c) an allocation process for available land under part 2A, division 6, until the process ends.

**3 Clause 5 (Insertion of new pt 2A)**

Page 19, lines 7 to 18—

*omit, insert—*

**urban area** means an area identified as an area intended for either urban purposes or future urban purposes on a map in a planning scheme used to show zones.

**4 Clause 34 (Amendment of s 9 (Lands that are transferable lands))**

Page 74, lines 11 to 21—

*omit, insert—*

Section 9(2)—

*omit, insert—*

- (2) However, land mentioned in subsection (1) ceases to be transferable land to the extent either of the following applies—
- (a) it is taken, under the Acquisition Act, by a constructing authority;
  - (b) it is available land approved for a grant in fee simple by the chief executive under section 28C.
- (3) Also, land mentioned in subsection (1) is not transferable land to the extent it is the subject of any of the following—
- (a) a declaration in force under section 13;
  - (b) an offer to allocate available land under section 28T, while the offer is in force;
  - (c) an allocation process for available land under part 2A, division 6, until the process ends.

**5 Clause 35 (Insertion of new pt 2A)**

Page 78, lines 17 to 28—

*omit, insert—*

**urban area** means an area identified as an area intended for either urban purposes or future urban purposes on a map in a planning scheme used to show zones.

**6 After clause 60**

Page 131, after line 16—

*insert—*

**60A Amendment of s 170 (Purchase price if deed of grant offered)**

Section 170(2)—

*omit.*

**7 Clause 61 (Insertion of new ch 7, pt 3B)**

Page 132, line 29—

*omit, insert—*

- shingle; and
- (c) any land that is below the low-water mark.

**8 Clause 61 (Insertion of new ch 7, pt 3B)**

Page 138, lines 25 and 26—

*omit, insert—*

- (b) is responsible for taking reasonable and practical measures to maintain the area in a safe condition.

*Example of a reasonable and practical measure for paragraph (b)—*

It may be a reasonable and practical measure to restrict public access to a part of a declared beach area that has significantly eroded rather than carry out extensive restoration work for the part.

*Note—*

See the *Civil Liability Act 2003*, chapter 2, part 3, division 1, for civil liability principles that apply to public and other authorities, including local governments.

**9 Clause 61 (Insertion of new ch 7, pt 3B)**

Page 139, lines 5 to 8—

*omit, insert—*

- (b) is not, and can not be made, civilly liable for an act or omission of the person in relation to the declared beach area unless—
- (i) the act or omission creates a risk in relation to which the person would, other than for this section, be civilly liable; and
- (ii) the person intends to create the risk or is reckless as to whether the risk is created.

**10 After clause 61**

Page 140, after line 25—

*insert—***61A Omission of s 469**

Section 469—

*omit.***61B Amendment of s 471 (Right to a post-Wolfe freeholding lease)**

Section 471(1), after 'non-competitive lease'—

*insert—*

, other than a lease for grazing or agricultural purposes,

**61C Amendment of s 478 (Right to a post-Wolfe freeholding lease)**

Section 478(1), after 'special lease'—

*insert—*

, other than a lease for grazing or agricultural purposes,

**61D Amendment of sch 2 (Original decisions)**

Schedule 2, entry for section 170(2)—

*omit.*

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 65, as amended, agreed to.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): The House will now consider postponed clause 2.

Clause 2—

**Mr CRIPPS** (6.04 pm): I move the following amendment—**1 Clause 2 (Commencement)**

Page 14, after line 11—

*insert—*

- (3) Also, sections 60A and 61D commence on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

**Third Reading**

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (6.05 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (6.05 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (6.05 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 9 September 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (6.05 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Health System

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (6.06 pm): It is no wonder the public have not given credit to this government for its supposed fix of the health system. So many have personal experiences to tell, which brings me to a very serious case which I am close to. I refer to a seriously ill young woman aged 19. She had been admitted to Logan Hospital twice with acute renal failure. Each stay was for one week. Four days following her return home her condition worsened. Her carer rang Logan Hospital. However, she deteriorated further and an ambulance was called. They attended within 10 minutes, but were told there were nine ambulances ramped at Logan. QEII, Mater and PA advised they could not take her so they pulled into a side street in Mount Gravatt. They discussed taking her to Tweed Hospital, however decided to take her to PA due to her deteriorating condition. PA had six ambulances ramped with corridors crammed with stretchers and ambos. Most had been there for over two hours. It was 10 pm. The ambos who took them to PA had not had any lunchbreak and at 11 left them in the hands of another team. The ambos complained of the dreadful shortages of doctors and their other staff in ED. The patient was finally seen by a doctor at 3 am who ordered blood tests. ICU was discussed but they decided they would admit her to a ward. Her face and stomach were swollen. She had difficulty breathing. Her blood pressure was 214 over 138. The renal specialist attended her at 3.15 pm and at 6.20 pm she was finally taken up to a ward. Nurses were constantly apologising that they had huge staff shortages. She was discharged after seven days. Staff at PA complained that they had no hospital records from Logan which would have been of assistance in her case.

On 17 August this young woman was again rushed back to hospital. She was found on the floor of her bedroom having a seizure. Her blood pressure was 260 over 160. She was rushed back to hospital unconscious, having seizures. This time she spent seven days in ICU, three of which were in an induced coma. Twice they almost lost her and the prognosis was very bleak indeed. It is a credit to the medical staff that her condition has now improved. She has been discharged. However, we constantly hear of the gross understaffing in our hospitals with staff constantly run off their feet and always mindful of the risk of mistakes in such circumstances. Metro South Hospital and Health Service has had 205 nursing and midwifery positions and 13 medical positions abolished. The figures so often quoted by this health minister are meaningless. Our health professionals live the stress of inadequate staffing every day. We on this side of the House know it and the public know it, too.

### Small Business Week

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (6.09 pm): I rise to inform the House about the 2014 Queensland Small Business Week and the Think Queensland, Buy Locally in Burleigh campaign that I am running within my electorate. The Think Queensland, Buy Locally campaign is the government's initiative to

encourage communities to buy locally, thereby reinvesting in this great state. Members may be aware that every dollar spent in a local business returns many times that amount to the local economy through employee wages, rates and the purchase of goods and materials.

Small Business Week is an opportunity for business owners and groups to reach out to and connect with new and established businesses. It is an opportunity for small business to create a network from which to build upon and further contribute to the state's economy. As the House is aware, the Newman government is committed to working with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland to support, inspire and empower small business. I encourage all Queenslanders to join in and participate in the campaign so that together we can give back to the small business community of Queensland, which is the core of the state's economy.

In the week of 1 to 6 September, there will be a range of free and low-cost events and activities across the state. Businesses are encouraged to host an event, enjoying free promotion and rewards. Last year the event attracted 4,500 attendees, 70 per cent of whom were small business owners and 53 per cent of those owners have been in business for over 10 years. In my electorate of Burleigh, I have been campaigning for small business since my election and I will be holding a Buy Locally in Burleigh stall at the Gold Coast Show this weekend. There will be Buy Locally show bags containing vouchers and brochures from local businesses in my electorate encouraging Gold Coast residents to shop on the southern end of the coast on Buy Locally Saturday.

Think Queensland, Buy Locally is a fantastic initiative and I commend Minister Stuckey for her work in this field. As we all know, small business is a major part of the economy in Queensland. It is a major employment driver and it deserves every little bit of support that we can give in what is, after all, quite a tough time. I urge those listening tonight to, please, get out and spend your money locally, especially people in Burleigh. I encourage all members to come down and spend a week at Burleigh, shop in our many fantastic local shops around James Street, the CBD, Stocklands, Treetops and other shopping centres at Palm Beach, Varsity and Miami, and enjoy the great Buy Locally weekend.

### **Bushfire Preparedness**

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferry Grove—LNP) (6.12 pm): This afternoon I rise in the House to raise the level of awareness of risks as we head towards what is almost certain to be a fire season that will impact many lives across Queensland, often as a result of poor decisions or lack of preparedness. I can commence by acknowledging the great work of our rural fire brigades and, in particular, those in my electorate of Ferry Grove: Clear Mountain, Samford, Mt Nebo, Samsonvale, and Closeburn Rural Fire Brigade, which I have recently joined. I have already experienced a couple of fire events.

The work of the rural fire brigades has been ongoing over the past few months where, under Operation Cool Burn, QFES, along with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, local councils and landholders across the state have begun to prepare ahead of the traditional bushfire season. Throughout this period, bushfire-prone areas have been identified, mitigation or hazard-reduction burns have been undertaken and landholders have assessed the level of risks at their properties. Given that if you own the fuel you own the fire, it is critical that all rural or semirural landowners do all they can to reduce their risks and make proper and adequate bushfire survival plans.

It is also critical that the communities have a proper understanding of the warnings that might be issued. Lower-level advisory and advice warnings are largely designed to inform communities of fires in their local area, and suggest early planning. Watch and act warnings indicate that there is a fire in your local area and you could be impacted and, therefore, should prepare to enact your bushfire survival plan. The issuing of an emergency warning is indicative of the fact that there is a fire in your area and you need to enact your survival plan immediately and prepare for impact. These warnings are issued through local news broadcasters and are pre-empted with the standard emergency warning signal, which I will not attempt to emulate right now. I encourage all landowners to obtain and prepare their bushfire survival plans, which are accessible through the [ruralfire.qld.gov.au](http://ruralfire.qld.gov.au) website and ensure that each family member is aware of the actions required at each point of escalation.

In closing, again, I thank all the volunteer firefighters, support staff and officers of the brigades right across Queensland. I hope that the recent fires we have experienced in the south-east serve as a timely reminder to all who might be affected by wildfires to take the time to reduce the risks and make adequate survival plans.

### Redcliffe Electorate, Newman Government

 **Mrs D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (6.15 pm): I rise to speak about the issues facing the people of Redcliffe and the failure of the Newman government to listen. It has been six months since the Redcliffe by-election, that is, six months since Campbell Newman said that he has heard the message and will be listening to Redcliffe more. In response to a question in question time this week on the Moreton Bay Regional Council draft planning scheme, the Premier said, 'I am not aware that the member for Redcliffe has even corresponded with me on this matter.' The Deputy Premier then interjected, stating, 'Me neither.' The Premier then went on to say, 'The Deputy Premier also seems to be unsure whether he has received any correspondence.' For the benefit of the parliament and the Deputy Premier, I table my letters forwarded by email to the Deputy Premier on 13 and 20 August. I also table the acknowledgments of receipt from the Deputy Premier's office dated 13 and 20 August 2014.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 13 August 2014, from the member for Redcliffe, Mrs Yvette D'Ath MP, to the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jeff Seeney, regarding Draft Moreton Bay Regional Planning Scheme [\[5801\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 13 August 2014, from the Office of the Deputy Premier acknowledging email received [\[5802\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 20 August 2014, from the member for Redcliffe, Mrs Yvette D'Ath MP, to the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jeff Seeney, regarding Draft Moreton Bay Regional Planning Scheme [\[5803\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 20 August 2014, from the Office of the Deputy Premier acknowledging email received [\[5804\]](#).

My message to the Newman government is clear: every time they ignore me, they are sending a clear message to the people of Redcliffe that they are still not listening, that they are not willing to accept the decision of the people of Redcliffe who elected me as their member to represent them in this place. That is a sign of a very arrogant government. The Deputy Premier should urgently respond to my letters written on behalf of the residents of Redcliffe and the broader Moreton Bay region and commit to requiring further consultation on the Moreton Bay Regional Council's draft planning scheme.

Another important issue to the people of Redcliffe and those across the Moreton Bay region is a say on de-amalgamation. The Newman government made promises to give residents a say. Its former LNP member promised the people of Redcliffe a say. Scott Driscoll claimed to circulate through the electorate a petition, tabling that petition in August 2012 with 191 petitioners' signatures. Due to the absolute failure, and many locals believe the deliberate failure, of Scott Driscoll to properly circulate the petition, he failed to get the required signatures. It became very clear that few people actually saw the petition. The residents then had to take the matter into their own hands, which resulted in a petition being tabled on 1 May 2013 with 11,633 petitioners and another 12,062 signatures in supporting the submission.

As much as the Newman government likes to put all the blame on the former member for Redcliffe, the fact is that the LNP government sat by while Scott Driscoll neglected Redcliffe. On this matter the LNP was very aware of the views of the people of Redcliffe and residents from across the Moreton Bay region. The Newman government was complicit in Scott Driscoll's failure to give residents a say on de-amalgamation. For this reason, it is time that the Newman government acknowledges that it has failed not just the people of Redcliffe but also the people of Caboolture and many other residents across the Moreton Bay region. The Newman government should step up and finally commit to allowing the residents a say—

*(Time expired)*

### Pine Rivers, Rugby League

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (6.18 pm): Last Saturday I joined hundreds of Pine Rivers rugby league fans in making the journey to a very wet Langlands Park for the Open 2s grand final, which saw two Pine Rivers teams, the Pine Rivers Bears—although technically they are based in the Kallangur electorate—and the Pine Central Holy Spirit Hornets face off for their shot at the 2014 premiership. Whilst I would have been happy to see either Pine Rivers team bring home the premiership, as a patron of the Pine Central Holy Spirit Hornets, I was particularly pleased to see them win their first senior premiership since 1990. It was a tight game, with the Bears ahead 18-4 at half time, but the Hornets came back to lock the scores at 22 all at full time. Mitch Blackman was the try scorer in extra time, giving the Hornets a 26-22 victory.

Congratulations to club captain, Wes Henry, and the entire team on an outstanding 2014 and for a well-deserved premiership. Pine Central is an outstanding rugby league club. It is celebrating its 35th year this year and over that time it has produced many talented rugby league players. But more

than that, great clubs like Pine Central are getting our children and youth active and playing team sports. It is clubs like Pine Central that our government is pleased to support through initiatives such as our highly successful Get in the Game program.

In 2013, Pine Central was the recipient of a \$100,000 Get in the Game grant, which is being put towards a new change room, first-aid room and club office facility at its home ground. This is a huge step forward for Pine Central and certainly an exciting time for the club. This project is also being supported by the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the federal government. I want to particularly thank Peter Dutton, our outstanding local federal member, for securing \$500,000 towards this project.

Pine Central has also had many children and families benefit from the \$150 Get Started vouchers which have gone towards paying sign-on fees. This program has seen in excess of 600 children in Pine Rivers given the opportunity to play sport, many for the first time. This initiative, an initiative of our government, has been a resounding success in Pine Rivers.

Pine Central has also benefited from our government's ongoing commitment to community organisations through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. The club received a \$35,000 grant, which allowed the club to install lights on its junior fields, which means its under 6s can now train and play under lights.

Pine Central is getting our children, youth and adults active and involved in team sport. I am pleased to be able to support them and I am pleased to be part of a government providing funding for great Pine Rivers clubs like the Pine Central Holy Spirit Hornets. Since 2012 our government has provided around \$1 million in various grants to sporting and recreation clubs in Pine Rivers. This is just another way we are building a better Pine Rivers.

### **Gaven Electorate, Public Transport; Events**

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (6.21 pm): As I have said on many occasions, second-rate public transport, or largely no public transport, is the biggest issue facing constituents in Gaven, particularly after the LNP government decided to slash services to Nerang in the evenings and on weekends—there are no services—in January.

I tonight voice the concerns of the riverside over 50s home park residents, on the edge of my electorate, next to Metricon Stadium, who need to walk 1,200 metres to catch the 740 bus from Nerang to Surfers Paradise at a bus stop near the Royal Pines Resort in Ross Street. This is just outside my electorate. It is actually in the Surfers Paradise electorate, which is represented by the education minister.

I have written to the transport minister to seek his support to have this bus stop moved closer to the village, which has 135 sites, but to date I have not had a response. As I have said before, it is the elderly who have been hardest hit by the bus changes in my electorate. Once again, both residents from this over 50s home park and the neighbouring 158-site Casino Village, which is in the electorate of the member for Mudgeeraba, have been disadvantaged when it comes to bus services to Surfers Paradise. I have also asked the minister to consider running a minibus to at least give them some service. These are huge numbers of people affected.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Yvonne Cody of Nerang, who 25 years ago started a pets for therapy program on the Gold Coast. Members may be unaware, but at a large number of places across the coast people are not allowed to have pets where they live. This program is the means by which people can access them.

Last week Yvonne won an annual award I organise for the most community minded senior citizen in the electorate, presented during Seniors Week at my annual morning tea for seniors. Through the program, volunteers and their dogs visit aged-care homes and respite centres and interact with patients and people who do not have access to pets because, as I said, pets are banned in a majority of these places.

Behind the scenes Yvonne and her team work tirelessly to ensure the service is of the highest standard. Much of her time goes into the selection process, the coordination of the program and the training of dogs, as well as liaising with aged-care homes and respite centres. Yvonne's program demonstrates her commitment to the community and I applaud her for her lengthy service to the Gold Coast.

I have also hosted a professional development seminar at Nerang for about 60 JPs and commissioners of declaration in my electorate. It is important that justices of the peace and commissioners of declarations attend professional development days to keep abreast of any changes. Unfortunately, the Attorney-General was not able to attend but he sent some staff, which was great.

I am pleased with the emphasis on professional development by the JPs branch because many JPs at the seminar are long-serving. A number received awards for 40 years of service. There were three such people, which is pretty impressive. Over that period there have been major changes in our legislation and signing regulations. These people often put many hours of voluntary service into serving the community, often at shopping centres, and they deserve the gratitude of the public because frequently their work goes unnoticed.

### St Mary's College

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.24 pm): I wish to bring to the attention of the House some of the highlights of recent activities and events in the Toowoomba North electorate. I was particularly pleased to attend St Mary's College in Toowoomba, a great Catholic school in my electorate. 'Team Toowoomba' were all present. The Hon. Ian Macfarlane, the Hon. John McVeigh and I were there. This school is in my electorate, but it was great to see John there as well.

Children from all over Toowoomba and the wider region attend the school. The principal, Michael Newman, invited us along. We had the great pleasure of opening some buildings that have been funded by this government. As has been mentioned this week in this place, the government has funded nearly \$8 million of capital works in my electorate. St Mary's College has been the recipient of some \$890,856. It was great to see the Bishop of Toowoomba, Robert McGuckin, the director of the Catholic Education Office, John Borserio, and the assistant director for School Improvement Services, Margaret Hendriks, there. The school captain, Jarred Tuite, and vice captain, Jacob Montafia, welcomed us.

What was really pleasing as we went around and had a look at the buildings was gaining an understanding that the projects were born out of the need for year 7 to move into high school but that there was great community participation from parents about the sorts of facilities they wanted. There were three general learning areas that were improved. Two industrial arts areas will be developed. A computer lab was converted into a home economics facility. Interestingly, the parents of this all-boys school want their young boys to learn how to look after themselves from a food and nutrition point of view as well as make sure they have some skills in hospitality.

The funding for these projects was \$470,000. We opened the Archbishop Duhig Building, which involved the refurbishment of three learning areas, and the Archbishop Roper Building, which included the tuckshop upgrade, a hospitality kitchen and a food technology area and restaurant. The other project that will be completed in term 4 is the two industrial arts areas. It was interesting to hear on the day the member for Toowoomba South, John McVeigh, say that he came and did some of his arts there when he was a student at St Joseph's College.

It was great to be at St Mary's. It is great to be part of a government that is investing in the future of our children and making sure that education is improving, whether it be at independent schools in my electorate, Catholic schools in my electorate or state schools in my electorate. Everybody knows that we are building a new high school for the people of Highfields. Things are going really well with education in my electorate of Toowoomba North. With that, I will sign off.

### Algerie Electorate, School Maintenance

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algerie—LNP) (6.27 pm): As we heard this morning, this government continues to put significant investment into our educational facilities across the state. My wonderful electorate of Algerie is no different. I welcome with open arms the continued investment of funds into addressing the backlog of maintenance in our schools.

We have heard some horror stories of what our new members walked into when they visited their electorate's schools. I have one like that. Between 2009 and 2012 I continued to work in my community. I continued to go to P&C meetings. At every meeting of the Algerie State School's P&C the junior school toilets were raised—the condition of them, the smell of them, the maintenance of them.

After I was elected, one of the first things I did was set up an appointment with the principal of that school. I went along and he showed me the toilets. I have photographs on my phone of those toilets. They were atrocious. They had not been maintained since the school was built some 30-odd years ago. We got onto the facilities people and within months of me taking office that toilet block was condemned. We are in the process of getting a new one at that school as soon as we can get the money.

This is an example of a local member listening to their community. The parents at that school wanted a proper facility for their children. They did not want to send their kids to school because they did not have proper toilet facilities to use. That is just another example of the atrocious condition that we found the schools in. I welcome with open arms the education minister's announcement of more money to fix the maintenance backlog.

I also had the opportunity last week to attend the Early Learning Expo at The Spot in Parkinson. This was an initiative of a number of child-care centres within my electorate. I was very happy to meet Kiri Richards and Alisha Barnes of the Active Kids Early Learning Centre based at Hillcrest. I also had a good chat with Lesley and Heidi from the Goodstart Early Learning centres, and there were representatives from Parklands Drive Early Education and Kindergarten. They do a great job for my local community by educating the young children coming through to our schools. Madam Speaker, I must say that I think I found a new skill. One of the activities there was moulding clay, and I sat next to a lovely young girl about nine years old and we had a competition to see who could build the best bird's nest out of clay. I had to give it to her, she did do a better job, but I think she had a lot more years of training. I will sign off with that.

### **Curtis Island, Environmental Offset Agreement**

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (6.30 pm): I had the pleasure last week of having Minister Andrew Powell in my electorate. After a breakfast meeting, a group of us went over to Curtis Island where the official announcement was made of an environmental offset agreement between the government and the three LNG companies. We had representatives from QCLNG, Santos GLNG and APLNG. The upshot of this agreement is that an additional 25,000 hectares has been newly protected. It will set aside the island into areas such as state forest, conservation park, national park or an environmental management precinct. The remainder of the island is for Monte Christo freehold, a designated ecotourism area, the Curtis Island industry area and freehold.

This offset is unique—for my electorate anyway. It recognises that an area of the island has been taken for industrial use and that in the process we have lost some environmental values. The brilliant thing about this offset is that it is located right beside where the area was lost. We have had other Port Authority offsets and they are 50, 60, 70 or 80 kilometres north of Gladstone, so those residents who lost amenity had to travel a significant distance to regain access to like areas. This environmental offset is on the island, and that is really welcomed.

A number of people who either reside there 100 per cent of the time or have holiday houses there were also able to meet with the minister, including Cheryl Watson, Jane Bell, and Ken and Cynthia. They took the opportunity to speak with Andrew. There are still concerns about the environment and the industrial development, and those concerns need to be respected. With this environmental offset, 59 per cent of Curtis Island will be protected under one conservation value or another. LNG takes up two per cent but, as I said, the concerns about LNG cannot be disrespected. I thank the minister for his visit. I thank him for his attitude and his kindness to the people who were there. On behalf of the community of Gladstone, I thank the APLNG and the government for setting aside and maintaining this area with a fund worth \$34.5 million over 25 years.

### **Education; Law and Order**

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (6.33 pm): I would like to speak this evening on two topics of interest—firstly, matters relating to education and, secondly, law and order. My wife, Robyn, and I would like to thank you, Madam Speaker, for hosting the luncheon today for future leaders here in parliament—

**Mr Young:** Hear, hear!

**Mr GRANT:** It brought together students from as far afield as that Central Queensland electorate, Keppel. I enjoyed the company of the school captains from Springwood State High School, Renee Holdstock and Irimana Keepa-Winiata, along with their maths master, and also the school captains from Shailer Park State High School, Christina Ng Lam and Nilsson Jones, and their acting

school principal. These young students are beneficiaries of the funding that this government is putting in to improve the condition of their buildings. They are enjoying the uplift. They are enjoying something of the inspiration that you gave in what you said, and indeed what the founder of Red Frogs, Andy Gourley, had to share at the luncheon today. It was truly uplifting.

With respect to funding, the LNP government is currently providing another \$730,362 for the maintenance of schools in the Springwood electorate, bringing the total to \$3,337,738 that will have been spent on the backlog of school building maintenance. A high school manual arts teacher told me that this was the first time in approximately 35 years that his work area has been rejuvenated. I must leave it there and move to matters of law and order.

Recently, the Minister for Local Government, David Crisafulli, came to Logan to spend a bit of time with the Logan City Council as he had provided a grant in the order of \$200,000 for Logan's safety camera program. I am pleased to be able to say that we now have safety cameras in these locations: the corner of Rochedale Road and Fitzgerald Avenue; Fitzgerald Avenue in Springwood; the corner of Cinderella Drive and Fitzgerald Avenue; the corner of Mandew Street and Feluga Street; Springwood Park; Underwood Park; Barbaralla Park; Roselea Park; and Bill Kohlman Park. These devices are wonderful. When I was a councillor prior to being elected to this House, I could view footage and watch a crime underway, and before the perpetrators had left the site the boys in blue had come in from each side of the camera and caught them in the act.

I want to share very briefly some statistics in my electorate from the last two years: armed robbery, down 31 per cent; unarmed robbery, down 56 per cent; unlawful entry with intent, down 41 per cent; and unlawful entry without violence, down 42 per cent. These are the outcomes from what the LNP government has invested in law and order, and I thank cabinet for it.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.36 pm.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, D'Ath, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Lynham, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young