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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 11 September 2014

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THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2014

 The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. I refer to statements made by the member for Thuringowa on Tuesday, 9 September, during debate on the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill 2014. The member erroneously claimed that the former Labor government's plan for the expansion of Abbot Point would have involved the dumping of dredge spoil at sea. This statement is untrue, as the former government's proposal involved the construction of a multicargo facility—

Madam SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, you put your point of privilege. You do not debate the points. You write to me about the matter.

Ms TRAD: I believe this was a considered and deliberate misleading—

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (9.31 am): Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. During the 5.30 debate on Tuesday evening, the member for Stafford misled the House. He told this House that the Newman government is 'continuing to release lists of schools, including those on the Gold Coast, that it plans to sell'. This is not true. Both the Premier and I have confirmed that this government will not close any more schools during this term.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Education.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will write to you about this, Madam Speaker. I ask you whether you would consider the induction program for new members to advise the new member about the standing orders.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Parliamentary Twinning

 **Madam SPEAKER:** This month we celebrate the first anniversary of Queensland Parliament's twinning partnership with the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea. In honour of this occasion and our commitment to strengthening our relationship with Papua New Guinea, I have distributed to members today our twinning lapel pin. As members of parliament, we have important and obvious responsibilities to our electorates and our state. In addition, we are also called to be good neighbours, sharing our long experience of parliamentary democracy. As PNG's Speaker Zurenuoc said when we signed this partnership agreement, with this arrangement comes the opportunity for both parliaments to exchange ideas and experiences on the development of democracy. We have a unique history with our neighbours to the north, and our parliamentary twinning agreement focuses us on building a mutually beneficial future.

PETITIONS

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

Public Assets, Sales, Referendum

Mrs Miller, from 2,639 petitioners, requesting the House to initiate the process for a binding referendum within the 2014 calendar year, asking the people of Queensland whether they support the sale, or partial sale through equity partnerships, of state owned assets [\[5923\]](#).

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

Rothwell Roundabout, Upgrade

Mr Gulley, from 2,293 petitioners, requesting the House to prioritise funding for redesigning and upgrading the Rothwell Roundabout on Deception Bay Road and Anzac Avenue and for the work to overlap with the construction of the Rothwell Railway Station which is scheduled to be operational by 2016 [[5924](#), [5925](#)].

The Clerk presented the following paper and e-petition, sponsored and lodged by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Orders 119(3) and (4)—

North Rockhampton, Flood Mitigation Project Funding

866 petitioners, requesting the House to allocate funding for Stage 1: North Rockhampton flood mitigation project [[5926](#), [5927](#)].

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

Mandatory Sentencing

258 petitioners, requesting the House to amend legislation so that offenders who commit serious offences against children are automatically given a 'never to be released' sentence, whether it is their first offence or not [[5928](#)].

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Revocation of Protected Areas

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.35 am): I lay upon the table of the House a proposal under section 70E of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal.

Tabled paper: Proposal under section 70E of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation—Excision from Baldy Mountain Forest Reserve [[5929](#)].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Revocation of Protected Areas

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.35 am): I give notice that, after the expiration of at least 28 days as provided in the Nature Conservation Act 1992, I shall move—

- (1) That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation under section 70E of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* the dedication of forest reserve as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today, viz—

Description of area to be revoked

Baldy Mountain Forest Reserve	An area of 0.6923 hectares, described as lot 10 on SP254827, as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "A".
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- (2) That Madam Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection for submission to the Governor in Council.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Anniversary of September 11

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.36 am): Madam Speaker, 13 years ago today the world was forever changed by a shocking act of terrorism in which thousands of people lost their lives. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the anniversary of September 11, 2001. I visited the site earlier this year in New York and laid a wreath at the World Trade Centre site. It was an incredibly moving experience that I will never forget. The world has become a different place since that day. There has been an increased level of security and a focus on intelligence gathering like we have never seen before. This sort of intelligence gathering is what allowed our law enforcement agencies to detect the activity that saw two arrests in Brisbane yesterday.

I want to remind all Queenslanders that this is about the alleged criminal acts of individuals; it is not about a specific religion or group of people. I will just repeat that: it is about the alleged criminal acts or intention to undertake criminal acts by individuals. Queensland is a state that is built on

respect, tolerance and friendship. I believe it is a happy place and that is the way it must remain. Now more than ever I call on Queenslanders to show the tolerance and friendship for which we are all renowned. The arrests yesterday should also reassure all Queenslanders that our police and law enforcement agencies are doing everything they can to protect us and keep us safe.

Queensland Economy

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.37 am): Just over two years ago, as a newly elected government, my team and I were faced with a huge challenge to get Queensland back on track as the economic engine room of our nation. One of the things that I and all government MPs think about every day is supercharging the Queensland economy to create jobs, ease the cost of living and provide opportunities for all Queenslanders. Fast-forward to today and Queensland is now a better place to do business, to work and to raise a family because of the reforms and decisions made by this government. There are positive signs that the Queensland economy is recovering and moving up the national rankings. Families will benefit from this happening now and in the future. Here are some of the facts.

Economic growth averaged just 2.2 per cent in the last three years of the previous Labor government, but in the first year of the LNP government it was 3.6 per cent. Over the next four years, economic growth is forecast to average more than four per cent. This year Queensland is expected to have the equal fastest-growing state economy in the country. Economic growth next year is forecast to strengthen to six per cent, at which time Queensland will be the fastest-growing state in Australia.

On trend, more jobs are currently being created in Queensland than in any other state. Retail turnover in Queensland was 3.5 per cent higher over the year to July 2014 and is now \$400 million higher than it was in March 2012. Building approvals on trend in July 2014 were 13.6 per cent higher than a year earlier and were also 35.4 per cent above the level when this government came to office. More than a quarter of all business investment has been happening in Queensland: \$55.9 billion in 2013-14. Queensland exported a record 208.3 million metric tonnes of coal in 2013-14, 16.1 per cent higher than in 2012-13. While Queensland faces widespread drought conditions, rural exports remain elevated having risen 25.3 per cent in the past three years. The government has now progressed more than 500 specific red-tape reduction initiatives with more than 370 of the reforms fully implemented.

These are all positive signs, but we acknowledge that more needs to be done and we will maintain our focus every day to grow the economy. I make the point that the economic good news that I have just read out did not happen by accident; it happened because of a strong government with a strong plan for a brighter future. Importantly, we now also have a collective vision as Queenslanders for the next 30 years of this state that goes beyond any election in the coming years—30 years into the future—the Queensland Plan. In contrast, what is the Labor Party's plan? The only one I can see is 'be patient and somehow things will change'. Queenslanders deserve more than the Australian Labor Party can offer. They deserve more than the Australian Labor Party could ever offer this state. My team will continue to work hard to deliver to ensure Queensland is the best state in the Commonwealth to have a job, run a business and, most importantly, bring up your family and have a great life.

Governing for Growth

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.41 am): Our government was elected on a platform of economic growth. By getting the economy back on track we can fund the infrastructure and services that Queenslanders need to grow a strong future. Governing for Growth was our strategy for delivering on this commitment and achieving sustainable high levels of economic growth over the decade. It details all of the government's major economic initiatives and provides the private sector with the certainty on government direction that needed to make informed investment decisions.

I am pleased to inform the House of the six-month progress report on the Governing for Growth Action Plan, and I table a copy of the progress report.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Governing for Growth Action Plan—Progress Report September 2014' [[5930](#)].

The Governing for Growth strategy was released in February this year and the action plan sets out the government's clear strategic priorities and around 300 actions to boost Queensland's economy and grow jobs. It complements the government's fiscal strategy to achieve a supercharged and competitive Queensland economy through responsible economic governance.

We have ticked off on three-quarters of the action plan identified in February, with substantial progress made within each of the six priority areas. We have simplified business regulation by reducing approval processes at all stages of the construction cycle. Impediments to business growth have been reduced by implementing the Great Skills Real Opportunities initiative to support Queenslanders gain the skills and training they need to get a job and to keep a job. We have undertaken consultation on RegionsQ, which will provide a clear, whole-of-government focus on all of our government's activities to drive growth in the regional economy. As we discussed yesterday, we have refocused the Royalties for the Regions program on to projects that will drive economic growth and provide a catalyst for further investment. We have released the InfrastructureQ directions statement that sets out the principles by which we will develop a credible pipeline of infrastructure projects. Shortly I will be announcing the funding details of the priority development infrastructure co-investment program, so long waited for by local councils. We are already working with councils to identify infrastructure that will unlock significant economic development opportunities such as major roadworks and intersections, water supply and wastewater projects, and stormwater management systems, all of which will be catalytic infrastructure for further infrastructure and development. We have fostered economic growth and resilience by establishing the Government Land and Asset Management division, GLAM, to drive property and land reform and implement the whole-of-government approach to manage our property assets.

The Mary Valley economic strategy continues to deliver benefits to that local community and 12 economic development leases have now been signed. I once again commend the member for Gympie for the great role he has played in ensuring capital investment of over \$10 million will create around 130 jobs and bring the Mary Valley back to life.

We are driving productivity growth in the public sector through our Procurement Transformation Program, getting greater value for money from the government's \$16.3 billion annual spend on goods and services. The first wave of procurement reforms was completed in late 2013 and realised between \$82 million to \$130 million in benefits. Wave 2 was launched in March this year and aims to identify the most cost-effective and efficient way to source government goods and services well into the future.

From day one our government has recognised that the only long-term solution to the crippling debt that was left to us by the former Labor government was to grow the state economy and to build the business of Queensland. Our disciplined, methodical approach is paying dividends. We will continue to recover the horrible financial situation that was left by the former Labor government. Governing for growth and driving economic growth are critical parts of that strategy.

Trade

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer and Minister for Trade.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.45 am): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister for Trade is appropriate today. Since this government was elected, we have set about working hard to grow our economy based on the four pillars of property and construction, tourism, resources and agriculture. An important part of fostering growth is support for our export industries. Queensland's export sector underpins our economy, supports jobs across the state and brings new ideas, innovation and technology to Queensland.

Around 6,500 Queensland businesses are engaged in exporting goods worth almost \$45 billion. So it is my pleasure to be able to welcome Commonwealth, state and territory trade and investment ministers to Cairns tomorrow for their regular meeting. It is hardly surprising that after what no doubt has been an arduous Canberra winter, the federal trade minister jumped at my invitation to hold the meeting in Far North Queensland. This meeting provides an excellent opportunity to further strengthen relationships with ministerial colleagues from all states and territories with regard to meeting federal government trade and investment priorities, while showcasing Queensland's strengths to decision makers.

The ministers will be discussing a range of trade related issues aimed at making it easier to invest and do business in Australia and, of course, in Queensland. We will also be discussing the benefits that can be derived from the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement and the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership, two agreements put in place by a strong coalition government in Canberra. We expect that the Korea-Australia agreement will come into effect this financial year. Korea is our third largest goods trade partner with trade valued at more than \$7 billion. When the agreement is fully implemented, 84 per cent of Queensland's exports will enter Korea duty free, increasing their

competitiveness and expanding the market. Queensland's beef and horticulture industries are expected to be big winners when that agreement comes into force. Similarly, when the partnership with Japan is fully implemented, more than 97 per cent of Australia's exports will enter duty free or receive preferential access. As an example of the benefits to Queensland, Japan will halve the current 38.5 per cent tariff on frozen Australian beef products and the tariff on raw sugar will be abolished.

At the inaugural trade investment ministers meeting earlier this year in Canberra, I also spoke of this state government's commitment to leverage the economic benefits of the G20 meetings to be held here in Queensland. The trade and investment ministers meeting is yet another high-profile meeting for Cairns in 2014. Northern Queensland will be on the international stage when Cairns hosts meetings of the G20 finance and central bank deputies next week, from 18 to 20 September, and finance ministers and central bank governors conference on 20 and 21 September.

Only this government has a strong plan to grow our economy. I look forward to these meetings opening up with new opportunities for Queensland and welcoming world leaders and trade ministers to Cairns.

Health Budget

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.48 am): A record budget for Queensland Health with record investment in front-line health services is a cornerstone of the can-do LNP government's strong plans for Queensland. This year, excluding the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Health budget is \$13.1 billion, a record. This investment in public health care is an 18.6 per cent increase on the last budget of the Labor Party, an increase of over \$2 billion. A record investment provides the vital surgery and preventive health campaigns that help millions of Queenslanders each year, plus a record investment in our front-line health workers and improvement in productivity has meant better patient services. Strong plans mean more health jobs, better pay and better career paths.

Everyone knows the LNP can-do government today pays nurses and midwives about 10 per cent more than at the change of government, so a Queensland Health nurse on a grade 5.5 level receives an extra \$242 per fortnight more in the pay packet than under Labor, when some nurses did not get paid at all. But in addition, this can-do LNP government's record investment strengthens career paths for the nursing and midwifery profession. Today almost 30 per cent of our nurses and midwives earn \$100,000 or more; 27 per cent of our nurses and midwives, roughly 9,600, earn \$100,000 or more compared to just 18 per cent in Labor's last full year in office. In the last full year of the Bligh government there were 34,040 nurses employed; as of June 2014 under the LNP that number was 35,538—an increase of 1,500. What a contrast for our health workforce compared to the long months of crisis, when Labor's infamous payroll debacle left thousands of nurses and health workers underpaid, overpaid or not paid at all. The can-do LNP government's record budget will fund about 2,000 additional health sector jobs by the end of this financial year. These new jobs will be publicly funded for public health care across government and non-government providers. These jobs will not be in the cooperate office of Queensland Health, as happened under Labor; they are at the hospital and health service level at the front line of patient care in the state.

This morning the bosses at the Queensland Nurses Union, who were as silent as church mice when their rank-and-file members were left without pay packets under Labor, are making false claims about job losses since the change of government. It is clear that they are also misreporting the many positions that were left vacant in early 2012 as a consequence of cuts under the previous government. In the last nine months between July 2011 and March 2012, Labor exited a total of 4,570 full-time equivalent Queensland Health employees from Queensland Health—that is 500 per month—in the lead-up to the state election, and once again there was not a peep from the union bosses at the QNU.

Outside of cooperate bureaucracy in the head office, the only jobs lost in Queensland Health since the change of government arise from two events: the \$150 million black hole which was unfunded as a consequence of Labor's payroll debacle, for which the opposition leader who sat there when this happened said nothing and has not offered a word of apology to Queenslanders; and the \$103 million largely retrospective health cuts of the Gillard government. I say, and the figures attest to it, that the 1,500 additional nurses that have been employed since the last full year of the previous government are doing fantastic work in providing better health services to the people of Queensland. There has been a virtual elimination of surgical long waits in this state; an elimination of the dental long waits; 27 per cent more people were given their initial outpatient appointments in the last

financial year; the elimination of the cochlear implant waitlist; and a whole range of other things attest to the fantastic investment of the Newman government in health care in this state and additional jobs in front-line health services.

Environmental Offsets Framework

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.53 am): Queensland's new environmental offsets framework introduced this year is an important step towards practical environmentalism and is assisting industry to get on with business, while delivering great benefits for our environment. Under Labor there were five different state government offset policies in use. This mishmash approach made it complex and confusing for business and produced poor environmental outcomes. Our government's offset framework reduces the time for businesses to commence works by cutting red tape, adopting a risk based approach and removing unnecessary duplication across jurisdictions.

Importantly, this offsets framework is enshrined in legislation and the expectations are clear. Further, Madam Speaker, offset payments are now primarily significantly cheaper and certainly no more expensive than under the old framework, whilst still delivering strategic environmental outcomes. Work is also progressing on strategic approaches to offsets such as strategic offset investment corridors, direct benefit management plans and advanced offsets. The Newman government continues to consult with industry groups such as the Property Council of Australia and the Urban Development Institute of Australia to discuss and test the new environmental offsets framework, and we will respond quickly and decisively to make improvements to the new framework where these are needed.

I recently had the pleasure of announcing that nearly two-thirds of Curtis Island near Gladstone would be permanently protected from development under one of the biggest offset agreements ever reached in Queensland. We are working hard to deliver environmental wins for the people of Queensland. We are building the roads and the infrastructure that our growing state needs, and this acquisition is an example of how we can create jobs for Queenslanders and deliver great environmental outcomes.

In summary, the new offsets framework delivers on what Queenslanders want: the best balance of environmental protection and economic development.

Jobs

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (9.55 am): Creating the right environment for employment growth is a priority for this government. We believe that employment is generated to the greatest extent when the private sector has the right conditions to expand and diversify, thereby creating extra jobs. We do not believe that the majority of taxpayers should have to foot the bill for make work schemes which have little benefit and are a big cost to government. That is the unproductive Labor way, pandering to the demands of their union bosses.

This government is working with businesses and industry to provide the right conditions for job creation, with initiatives like reducing payroll tax and cutting red tape. At a more specific level, my portfolio has embarked on an ambitious program of signing memoranda of understanding with companies to employ migrants, refugees and Indigenous Queenslanders. We are working with employment providers and individual companies to prioritise employment opportunities. We have signed MOUs with the pastoral company Stanbroke for the employment of 50 workers initially, rising to 500, and with the waste management company JB Swift in Central Queensland for 30 jobs. I recently signed an MOU as a starting point with the ANZ Bank for 30 jobs for migrants and refugees.

These MOUs are an example of how the Newman government is delivering on our Indigenous and Cultural Diversity Action Plans with private sector partnerships to generate job opportunities and provide an economic boost for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Queensland reaps significant economic and social benefits from the skills, knowledge and ingenuity of generations of migrants who have contributed to developing Queensland and enriching its social and cultural profile.

We will also continue to partner with the Queensland Resources Council to create employment and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the resources sector. The signing of a new MOU with the QRC is a significant milestone to ensure that all Queenslanders share in the state's rich economic future. Through this MOU, the QRC will deliver 60 jobs over the next year to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers to gain relevant

skills, meaningful employment and an opportunity to participate in economic prosperity. We are committed to equipping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the potential to meet the skilled labour needs of the resources sector.

Last financial year an extra 389 jobs were created by the department for Indigenous Queenslanders. So far this year an additional 120 jobs have been brokered. Each of these jobs does not just benefit the person employed; the ripple effect flows on to families and communities and will ultimately improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Vocational Education and Training

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (9.58 am): When it comes to vocational education and training, the Newman government's top priorities are making sure that Queensland's students get a first-class education and a job at the end of it. For those of us on this side of the House there is nothing more important. This is the foundation stone of our VET reforms, putting in place a concrete link between the jobs that employers and industry have told us will be available and the qualifications that the government pays for Queenslanders to undertake. That is why I am proud of our \$615 million 2014-15 VET investment plan. By making job outcomes our focus, we are giving young people the tools they need to get the best possible start to their working lives.

Those on the other side of the House like to think that there are certain issues only they can be trusted to truly look after, and one of these things is vocational education and training. But as usual, that could not be further from the truth because while they were in government, Labor funded training for the sake of training. What does that mean? Labor did not want to focus on linking training with job outcomes because they do not know how.

They spent a fortune in taxpayers money so that our young people could engage in endless training, undertaking endless certificates. It distracted them from the fact that they were not getting a job at the end of it. Labor did not see training as a means to an end—that end being a meaningful job—but rather as an end in itself. What is their plan for training if they were to be re-elected: to do exactly what they were doing when they were booted out two years ago? I do not think this would be accepted by Queenslanders.

Does the Labor Party have an issue with fee-free training for year 12 students who undertake training in priority skills areas? What about the certificate III guarantee that allows eligible Queenslanders to get not only their first postschool qualification but also an entry-level qualification that employers have told us is most important to getting a job. Would they get rid of that? Do they support the schools-to-trade pathway, where we incentivise employers to keep kids on when they have done a school based apprenticeship, or our Indigenous training strategy—our \$6 million plan to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in training?

Those opposite may not be able to admit it, but when it comes to giving young people the skills they need to get a job, the Newman government has the runs on the board.

(Time expired)

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2)

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

Cognate Debate

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (10.00 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 172, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, as follows:

- (a) one question being put in regard to the second readings;
- (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
- (c) one question being put for the third readings and long titles.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Report

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (10.01 am): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the 2014 budget estimates trial process.

Tabled paper: Committee of the Legislative Assembly: Report No. 12—Report on the 2014 Budget Estimates Trial Process [5931].

On behalf of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly I wish to convey our thanks to all Parliamentary Service staff involved in delivering a seamless hearing process in the lead-up to and during the 2014 estimates trial. However, as per the Premier's public comments on this matter, I can confirm that, following consultation and community feedback, future estimates committee hearings under this government will return to the format of earlier years, with hearings scheduled over seven days. I commend the report and the committee's recommendations to the House.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (10.01 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will be absent from the House today. Minister McVeigh is travelling to Charleville to attend a drought farm debt meeting with federal agriculture minister Mr Barnaby Joyce and federal Treasurer Mr Joe Hockey.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 47 of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee titled *Subordinate legislation tabled between 21 May and 3 June 2014*.

Tabled paper: Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 47—Subordinate legislation tabled between 21 May and 3 June 2014 [5932].

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Information Commissioner, Report

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 1 of 2014-15 to the Queensland Legislative Assembly by the Office of the Information Commissioner titled *Results of desktop audits 2013-14: review of publication schemes, disclosure logs and information privacy awareness in departments of hospital and health services*.

Tabled paper: Office of the Information Commissioner: Report No. 1 of 2014-15—Results of desktop audits 2013-14: Review of Publication Schemes, Disclosure Logs and Information Privacy Awareness in Departments and Hospital and Health Services [5933].

The report is not a report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. However, under the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Information Privacy Act 2009 I am required to table the report on the Information Commissioner's behalf. I commend the report to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Madam SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 11.03 am.

Public Service, Jobs

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.03 am): My question is to the Premier. Premier, I note that today is the second anniversary of the LNP government's massive job cuts, and I ask: was the Premier's decision to cut almost 5,000 Health workers too much too quick and another LNP broken promise?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. In giving my answer, I need to refer to that document which has been tabled in this chamber in the past—that is, the Labor Party's secret, undisclosed plan to cut some 41,753 people from the Queensland Public Service. When I go to the table and look at the row entitled 'Queensland Health' I see that the Labor Party clearly intended to cede just under 4,000 employees from Queensland Health alone.

Over the past two years we have seen a dramatic improvement in the performance of the public health system in this state. That is what we promised to do. We promised to revitalise front-line services, and that is exactly what we are achieving.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The opposition are focused always on politics. They are focused on what the unions are saying. They are not focused on health outcomes. The health outcomes are exciting. We have a better health system today than we have had for many a long year. I can point to the statistics, which are published openly and transparently for all to see at regular intervals.

I think this morning I should talk about the actual human face of the great reforms that have been undertaken. I will cover just a few. Recently—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I warn members on my left. The constant interjections are not being taken. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: I refer to the recent visit to the Gold Coast hospital to see the wonderful neonatal unit and to the great work that the nurses, doctors and midwives are doing there which means that young mums are not having to come up to Brisbane to be by the bedsides of their premature babies. What about the restoration of birthing services to Beaudesert or Cooktown? What about the fact that we now have a cardiac catheter lab in the regional city of Mackay so that people do not have to go to Townsville or come to South-East Queensland to get their treatment? Those are things that this government has delivered. Those are things that this government has achieved with its extra \$2 billion in the Health budget.

Strong Choices, Funding

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Premier. I refer to revelations at the last sitting that the government's budget allocation of \$11.4 million for the Strong Choices campaign does not include all payments to PR consultants, and I ask: will the Premier confirm that expenses for the numerous PR consultants working on this campaign have reached approximately \$1 million of taxpayers' money per month?

Mr NEWMAN: What I can confirm is that every hour the interest bill on the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt is between \$450,000 and \$500,000. I take no pleasure in reminding Queenslanders of that, but if they want to know who is responsible they should look to the Leader of the Opposition, who sits in this place and was in cabinet when the decisions were made. They should look to the member for Mackay, who was in cabinet when these poor decisions were made. They should look to all of them over there, who are an unrepentant and fiscally irresponsible group. We have had to deal with some very big issues since we came to office.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I am happy to answer their questions. You would think they would be polite enough to listen to the answers. That is all I ask, and I know that that is what Queenslanders ask. We see a lot of hubris from the Australian Labor Party and we see people who do not have a strong plan for Queensland whereas we on this side have a strong plan. We are delivering on our strong plan for Queensland. Every single day this state is getting stronger and better and is becoming the envy of every other state in Australia. Our health system has dramatically improved. Our state, its capital city and our regional cities are safer today. Yet those opposite would unravel the reforms that have allowed us to deal with criminal motorcycle gangs and other law-and-order issues.

We are seeing the opportunity for a dramatic reinvestment in the infrastructure of this state—an unprecedented infrastructure program to give Queenslanders the hospitals and schools, the roads, the bridges, the infrastructure of the future to take the state forward. We have a plan. We on this side of the chamber have a plan that will deliver these things, but those opposite have no plan whatsoever. They are hopelessly divided whereas there is strong leadership and a strong team ethos over here. We do not even know who will be in charge of picking the Leader of the Opposition. It could be the unions. I say quite confidently but with a tinge of regret that the unions will have a greater say than the people of Queensland, because Queenslanders deserve to have a say and know who the Leader of the Opposition will be. We will continue to prosecute our plan because it is the right plan for this state, because it is making a difference in every—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members on my left, I have warned you about your constant interjections. There is a barrage of interjections and they are not being taken. I now warn the member for South Brisbane under standing order 253A. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: In conclusion, we have a strong plan, it is the right plan and it is making this a better state, a safer state, a more prosperous state. It is creating jobs and it is bringing investment to Queensland. Our hospitals are working better, our streets are safer and Queenslanders are walking taller and prouder.

(Time expired)

Brisbane Central Electorate, Economy

Mr CAVALLUCCI: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline how the government's strong plan is helping to grow the economy in my electorate of Brisbane Central?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question and I am encouraged greatly by what I see happening in the Brisbane Central electorate, because construction in Brisbane city, in Fortitude Valley, in Teneriffe and in New Farm is kicking into gear. Building approvals are 93½ per cent higher in the year to July 2014 in inner-city Brisbane. That is almost double in just 12 months—double in just 12 months—and those opposite ran an antigrowth summit in 2009. How totally irresponsible when the global financial crisis and its shockwaves were going across the world! They crushed the property development industry at a time when it had been doing well but at a time when it was under threat. Only last week we heard that W Hotels was bringing its iconic brand to Brisbane. Other transformational projects such as 480 Queen Street with Grocon, 180 Brisbane with the Daisho Group and 1 William Street are being built. Cranes are once again dominating the Brisbane skyline. There are currently 48 cranes that we can see around this city—another great indicator of the confidence of industry and that jobs are being created.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I worry about the interjections from the member for Mulgrave. Do the hardworking men and women members of the CFMEU agree with him that it is not a good thing that they should be back on the tools? Is he once again mocking our efforts to get them back on the tools? I think it is a sad day when a supposed friend of the Labor movement would actually interject in such an offensive and silly way when we are getting people back to work.

Confidence is returning to the property and construction sector, and this return to confidence is absolutely palpable in Brisbane Central. We are also seeing a return to growth in consumer spending, with retail trade up 3½ per cent in the year to July 2014. This means that people are spending more in shops throughout the city, stimulating activity and boosting jobs in the retail sector. It is obvious that retail business is also confident with what it is seeing here in Brisbane. This is what the National Retail Association CEO, Trevor Evans, had to say about the news international brands such as Gap, Uniqlo and Zara were preparing to set up shop here—

We are starting to see a lot of these overseas, giant retailers consider that Brisbane is one of the first locations they have to get to when they're starting to broaden their footprint of stores here in Australia ...

That's a huge vote of confidence in Brisbane and Queensland as an economy. It's a huge vote of confidence in the shopping habits of our local consumers and it's also a vote of confidence in the future of retail.

The government has a plan for growing the Queensland economy. The obvious activity in Brisbane Central is proof that our plan is working and we will continue to deliver on our vision for Queensland—a vision we have and those opposite do not.

Sale of Public Assets

Mr MULHERIN: My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to the appointment of Merrill Lynch and Macquarie Capital to start work on selling off our electricity network and the release by the Abbott government of the cost of its asset sales consultants, and I ask: how much is the LNP government paying these banks to sell our electricity networks without a mandate?

Mr NEWMAN: We have said that we will totally and fully reveal the cost of this important work which goes towards a strong plan to pay down Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt and relieve the interest rate pressures that we have where we are spending \$450,000 to \$500,000 each and every hour paying the interest on—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I now warn the member for Mulgrave. It is not your job to interject and debate the question that has been asked. The Premier is answering the question. The member for Mulgrave is warned under standing order 253A. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: As I have said, the important work being undertaken is to go forward with our strong plan to pay down Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt and to relieve Queenslanders of the burden of \$450,000 to \$500,000 worth of interest paid every hour. I note that the member for Stafford is shaking his head. The member for Stafford should know the facts—\$450,000 to \$500,000 of interest every single hour courtesy of the people who he sits amongst. The people who he sits beside are the ones who made those decisions and are the ones who accumulated that debt. In terms of this work, it is being done prior to an election so that if the people should give us a mandate then we will take this necessary activity.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: We will continue to talk about the need for these important, strong decisions and we will continue to talk about the \$8.6 billion that we have used to fund hospitals and schools, roads and bridges, and community centres and sports stadiums that the people of Queensland need. Queenslanders are continuing to say that we need these things to take this state forward and we are listening to Queenslanders in addressing that concern. But I say today that we have a plan. What is the Labor Party's plan? There is no plan. There is no teamwork. Indeed, when we look across into the eyes of those opposite we see time and time again that they are a house divided. They are at war with each other. We know the Left is now in charge, and the traditional AWU strong men and women do not like that one little bit. On this side of the chamber we have strength, we have unity, we have a plan and we have a way forward for a brighter future for this state.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: You do not hear raucous shouting and screaming from this side of the chamber; you only hear it from the Labor Party. As the old saying goes, empty vessels make the most noise. We see it day in, day out in this place. There are no policies over there so they fill the vacuum with this sort of nonsense. We are not interested in politics; we are interested in a strong future for Queensland. We are interested in jobs, we are interested in the economy being—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The interjections are not being taken. Earlier I referred to the barrage of noise from my left. I now warn the Leader of the Opposition under standing order 253A for constant interjections. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. They do not like to be reminded that this team over here has a strong plan for a brighter future, that we are getting the economy going, that we have revitalised front-line services, that we are sorting out Labor's debt and that we are taking this state forward into a bright future. That is what we are doing. They, in contrast, have no plan.

Nudgee Electorate, Construction Industry

Mr WOODFORTH: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please outline how the government's strong plan to cut red tape and grow the construction industry is helping businesses in my electorate of Nudgee?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank my neighbour the member for Nudgee for his question because, as a former small businessman himself, he understands the burdens that are placed on business by the dead, heavy hand of government, certainly under the old socialists from the ALP—never saw a tax they couldn't raise or a regulation they couldn't impose on business. I am particularly excited by what I see taking place in Nudgee and more broadly north Brisbane and of course my electorate of Clayfield.

More people have started looking for work in north Brisbane and businesses are employing more people. The government understands that we have to continue working hard so that we can see this positive growth continue. That is why we are vitally focused on growing the pillars of the economy and making it easier to do business here in Queensland. This week's official opening of the Geebung rail overpass, which has been mentioned previously—a joint venture between the Brisbane City Council and the state government—will improve the trading ability for those small businesses in the Geebung stopping strip. I note that the local member was one of those people in small business in Geebung and he has pushed for the overpass for a long time.

I also know that the property and construction industry is a major employer in Nudgee. In fact, 28 per cent of all businesses in the electorate are property and construction related. Like many areas of our capital, Brisbane north has seen an uptick in the construction industry. Building approvals are more than 50 per cent higher than they were 12 months ago and the value of these approvals has increased by more than \$200 million. What do those approvals mean? They mean more jobs, more people sourcing work from local contractors and activity right across the economy.

This government has been doing what it can to support the property and construction industry every step of the way. We started with our targeted \$15,000 Great Start Grant. Only a few weeks ago I was in the Nudgee electorate on a Saturday morning with the member for Nudgee to meet Lisa and Ben Durston, as well as their brand-new baby, Jack, who had just been brought home from hospital, who were the recipients of the 7,000th Great Start Grant—7,000 young Queenslanders receiving \$15,000 to help them get into their property. I was able to talk to them both about the value of the grant, which helped them realise their dream of home ownership. A total of 141 Great Start Grants have been paid to people in the Nudgee electorate.

I was also able to talk to Warwick Temby from the Housing Industry Association. He said—

The home building industry in Queensland is right behind this grant and actively promotes its value to clients.

It has been an important ingredient in getting first home buyers into the housing market, and because it is not time limited first homebuyers can plan and save knowing the grant is not about to expire.

This is just one example of how this government is helping families in the Nudgee electorate and across the state and at the same time stimulate activity for business. Unlike those opposite, we have a plan—

(Time expired)

CSG Industry, Water

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Minister, has CSG water been removed from the definition of regulated waste and, if so, how will government and communities know the impact of dewatering on their local aquifers?

Mr POWELL: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. The member for Gladstone has highlighted an important point that has impacted not only the coal seam gas industry but also the agricultural industries throughout Queensland. I can reassure the member for Gladstone that the Newman government takes very seriously our responsibilities to ensure that coal seam gas water is treated to high environmental standards. But we have also, through an extensive period of consultation—and I must commend the GasFields Commission for its role as part of coming up with our new CSG water policy—consulted with landholders around the opportunities for beneficial re-use of treated coal seam gas water. Our commitments have been to landholders throughout the state that we will always endeavour to ensure that those landholders most immediately impacted by the operations of the coal seam gas industry benefit from the re-use of that water. Those in the surrounding areas then subsequently benefit and then further afield to other opportunities as they are presented. That has proved extremely successful in recent times. We have seen great partnerships between the industry and the surrounding agricultural property owners that are producing a win for the industry, a win for the environment and a win for the agricultural industry.

I can reassure the member for Gladstone that I believe that this new water policy will go from strength to strength as the CSG industry continues to expand across Queensland and that it will produce fantastic agricultural outcomes. It makes available water that has never been available or never been used before by the agricultural industry because of, largely, the saltiness of it. By treating it, the industry is making it available and it can be beneficially re-used by the agricultural industry.

I want to stress to the member for Gladstone that, in doing this, again, my department takes very seriously our role of ensuring that that water is treated to high environmental standards—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr POWELL: Exactly. I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. Across-the-board about \$1 billion has been spent by the industry to make sure that their facilities can treat this water to the standards that we expect for use in agriculture and in other applications around the state.

So I reassure the member for Gladstone that we take seriously our responsibilities to protect the environment. We look at this as an opportunity that can be a win for the environment, a win for the CSG industry and a win for the agricultural industry.

Lytton Electorate, Construction and Manufacturing Industries

Mr SYMES: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline how the government's strong plan is supporting businesses, including the construction and manufacturing industries in my electorate of Lytton?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question. He is a hardworking member and an active member of the local chamber of commerce. He is making positive things happen in Lytton. I get that feedback all the time. In the electorate of Lytton and elsewhere across the state businesses are investing and expanding. In July, the member went with the transport minister and me to the Port of Brisbane to announce the final stage of the \$110 million port road upgrade—a great boost for the local Lytton economy, creating around 400 jobs. It is being funded by the private sector. We also opened a massive new Bunnings distribution centre at Lytton in recent months, with plans to invest \$810 million in Queensland over a five-year period, creating 2,500 jobs in 20 new stores and 5,900 construction jobs.

The member can be excited about what he has achieved for his electorate. But there is a lot more work to be done to grow the economy and to create jobs. In the last year, Queensland has had the strongest growth in trend building approvals of any mainland state. They are now 35.4 per cent higher than they were when this government came to office. In Brisbane east, building approvals are 29.6 per cent higher than they were 12 months ago. That did not happen by accident. It has happened because of the efforts of this government to make property development and construction activity more attractive in Queensland than in any other state. The government's efforts to grow this vital pillar after years of Labor neglect are working. We can see the runs on the board. We can see the activity on our skyline.

The construction sector is particularly important in Lytton, where more businesses are in the construction sector than in any other industry. Our economic strategy is about much more than growing construction, though. We know that the percentage of people working in manufacturing in Lytton is also well up on the state-wide average. So we have eliminated green tape for low-impact manufacturing, such as motor vehicle workshops, cabinet-makers and printers. That means that 9,420 Queensland businesses do not need to seek approvals for things that are not relevant to their business, saving about \$20,000 in application costs, 150 pages of paperwork and 68 days of processing time. We have also increased the payroll tax exemption threshold, removed the waste levy and fought and defeated the carbon tax with our federal colleagues. Manufacturing businesses and workers in the Lytton electorate will be thrilled that the carbon tax is finally gone. It helps their jobs and protects jobs and it has cut their electricity bills.

This government is committed to making Queensland the best place in Australia to invest, employ and grow their business. We believe in business. We support business. We understand business. We have a plan for business.

(Time expired)

Sale of Public Assets

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the appointment of Macquarie Capital to sell off our income-earning ports, and I ask: how much is the LNP government paying Macquarie Capital to privatise the Port of Gladstone and Port of Townsville without an election mandate?

Mr NEWMAN: Again, I give the answer that I gave before. The cost of this work will be revealed when the work has been undertaken and the full costs can be assessed and provided openly and transparently to the people of Queensland. In relation to a mandate, let us have a look at the difference between those who just asked the question and those who have to answer the question. Those opposite went to an election saying solemnly, 'We the Labor Party will not sell assets.' What they did is they sold assets—a complete and utter betrayal.

The member for Stafford sits there looking away. He must feel so bad at joining a group of people who are so rudderless, so divided and so devoid of policy ideas. I know it is not what he expected when he came into parliament. Certainly we know that he expected at least to be respected enough to get the Health portfolio, but I shall move on.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order, those on my left!

Mr NEWMAN: I have just covered what they did. What are we doing? We are talking about the issue in an open and transparent way. We are talking about \$80 billion worth of Labor debt. That is right. Debt that three of those in the front who were all in cabinet incurred: \$450,000 to \$500,000 worth of interest payments every single hour. That is the burden that Queensland families feel. If people are worried about their cost of living, about taxes and charges, they only have to look at the Australian Labor Party to see the reason for that sort of burden. Their plan is to increase taxes and charges. We know that because the man who calls the shots, Mr John Battams, the head of the Queensland Council of Unions, a key Labor figure, says that is what we should do. He says we should increase taxes and charges. This government does not agree. This government wants to force down the cost-of-living pressures on families. That is why we will go to the election talking about the sale or the lease of assets to deal with the Labor debt problem and to build the infrastructure of the future.

We have a plan and we are being open and upfront about that plan. We are not doing anything without going to an election in terms of that sale. We want to be ready because we want to move swiftly to reduce Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt, to reduce that \$450,000 to \$500,000 an hour interest bill and to build the infrastructure of the future. That is what we want to do. We have a plan. We have a strong united team and a clear vision for the future of this great state. In contrast, those opposite are hopelessly divided. They have a leader they do not support. They are at each other's throats. As I said before, empty vessels make the most noise.

Stretton Electorate, Economy

Mrs OSTAPOVITCH: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please outline how the government's strong plan is helping to grow the economy and support the small and medium sized businesses, and also the large businesses, in my electorate of Stretton?

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition under standing order 253A.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the honourable member for Stretton for her question. As I have indicated in the past, members on this side of the House come from a wide and diverse background, including business. They know what it is like to meet a payroll. They know what it is like to employ people. They do not come from the privileged background of the union movement where positions in parliament are handed down from father to son or father to daughter.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: We have people who go out and generate jobs in the economy. We have people who go out and actually make a contribution. The member for Stretton is one of those people, not emerging swamp-like out of the swamp of the union movement into their privileged positions.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I appreciate that the love is being shared across the chamber at the moment, but the noise is too great and it is making it difficult to hear. I ask people to cease their interjections.

Mr NICHOLLS: The member for Stretton comes from a business background. She works particularly hard to collaborate with the small businesses in her electorate. She does so with a monthly Stretton breakfast club to help small businesses network and connect with their customers. Last week during Small Business Week the member was also hard at work attending the Queensland Migrant Small Business Expo in Eight Mile Plains to assist aspiring business owners with all the necessary requirements to embark on their dreams here in Queensland.

On this side of the House we know that small and medium businesses are the lifeblood of our communities. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the Stretton electorate. Of the almost four and a half thousand registered businesses in Stretton, all of them are small to medium enterprises. So when we talk about growing the economy in Stretton and creating more jobs, what we are really talking about is giving those businesses a boost, knowing as we do that these businesses employ the vast majority of Queensland workers. How are we giving these Queensland businesses a boost? By maintaining our focus and commitment on our target to reduce red tape and regulation by 20 per cent. The former government had a culture that actively promoted red tape. The former government slugged businesses with taxes to cover budget black holes, taxes like the waste levy. The former

government failed to stand up for Queensland businesses hit by the carbon tax. This government has set about actively reducing red tape. We have got rid of Labor's waste tax, saving businesses about \$88 million a year. We have made it easier to buy or sell a home by doing away with sustainability declarations. We have overhauled and simplified the planning system to facilitate development. In our first year in office we lifted the payroll tax exemption threshold to \$1.1 million and we see 10,000 employers now exempt from paying payroll tax.

These are the kinds of changes and reforms the LNP remains committed to. It is all about getting out of the way of business. There are no new or increased taxes in the 2014-15 budget and we are continuing to give the business community confidence: confidence to employ and confidence to run their businesses, including in the electorate of Stretton.

Sale of Public Assets

Mrs D'ATH: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the appointment of RBC Capital Markets to sell off regional water assets and ask: how much is the LNP paying RBC Capital Markets to sell our state's income-earning water pipelines without an election mandate?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. I refer her to the advice I have given in previous questions today. It is the same issue. I just say that there is a reason that we are doing this work now. We are doing this work now because if we are re-elected after going to an election then we intend to sell or lease some assets to repay the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt, so that we make a dint in it and stop the state having to pay \$450,000 to \$500,000 of interest on Labor's debt each and every hour. That is what we are doing. These are strong decisions but they are decisions that are being made in an open and transparent way. We know there are concerns across this state about this approach, but I just say to Queenslanders if you want the infrastructure tomorrow to take this state forward, if you do not want these continued cost-of-living pressures from Labor's huge accumulated debt, then we have to all get together and get ourselves out of this mess collectively. We need to reject the Labor Party's line. We need to be careful of the snake oil that continues to be spun because here we are, potentially only months out from an election, and we do not know what the Labor plan is.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: We know that the leader of the Labor movement in this state, Mr Battams, says increase taxes and charges. We say no to that because increasing taxes and charges hurts families. It puts cost-of-living pressures on families. The honourable member who asked the question might reflect that she was part of introducing a carbon tax. The Labor Party told people that the carbon tax would not affect people's cost of living, but we have seen proof that that is completely untrue.

Mrs Miller: What about the GP tax?

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I now warn the member for Bundamba under standing order 253A. The interjections are loud and extensive and are not being taken.

Mr NEWMAN: The carbon tax did affect people's cost of living and it was in a negative way. We have seen the Brisbane City Council able to reduce rates. We have seen this government have a dialogue with Queenslanders about whether they want better services in public transport or lower fares. We have seen the pressure come off electricity prices and potentially gas prices. When Labor talks about new taxes and charges I say to Queenslanders, 'Run for the hills. It will cost you. It will hurt you. It will push up your cost of living.' Because of their poor and reckless financial management, we have seen \$80 billion of their debt accumulated. This government has a plan to deal with that debt. It has a plan to build the infrastructure in the future that Queenslanders want. We are a strong and united team. In contrast, those opposite have no plan and are hopelessly divided and at each other's throats.

Toowoomba North Electorate, Economy

Mr WATTS: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline how the government's strong plan is helping to supercharge the economy of my electorate of Toowoomba North?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. As we look across this state, even on a global level the state's economy is performing well. However, one of the things that concerns me is that there are regional economies that have not done so well in the past year and the government is working hard to make sure that those regional economies share in the re-energisation

of the Queensland economy. The Toowoomba North electorate is not one of those locations. The Toowoomba North electorate is going places. For example, the member told me about the recent opening of the Northpoint Shopping Centre, which is a \$30-million development in North Toowoomba that provides a popular shopping hub with two supermarkets and 20 specialty stores.

The garden city has so much potential, which is starting to be realised under this government. There are new schools, new roads and a great sense of vitality and optimism in the local economy. The Toowoomba second range crossing is a classic example of this government's work to grow Toowoomba. Yesterday, the government announced the short list of proponents to progress to the next stage. For almost two decades, Labor promised but it could never deliver this vital road link. It simply would not work hard enough for the people of Toowoomba, the Darling Downs and further west. In contrast, this LNP government has got on with the job. The second range crossing will happen and it will increase productivity in the Toowoomba region by \$2.4 billion over the next 30 years and create around 1,800 jobs during construction. It is going to increase or improve road safety and reduce congestion by taking up to 80 per cent of heavy vehicles off Toowoomba's streets.

That is not the only transformational project taking place in the Toowoomba region. Just last week, I landed at the Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport for another milestone announcement for the Toowoomba region. QantasLink was the first customer to commit to the airport, which was privately funded and built by the Wagner family. That investment will lead to more business and economic opportunities, as well as job creation for Queenslanders. Growth is also obvious in the increase in building approvals in Toowoomba, which is a key indicator of confidence in the local construction industry. In the past 12 months, building approvals have increased by 65.3 per cent and the value has increased by more than \$130 million. One hundred and ninety Great Start Grants have been issued to new homebuyers in Toowoomba North. We are building the Toowoomba CBD ring-road, upgrading equipment at the Toowoomba Hospital and building a new school at Highfields.

Some fantastic things are happening in Toowoomba, thanks to the members for Toowoomba South and Toowoomba North. I congratulate them on their work and their partnership with the Toowoomba Regional Council and the mayor.

Herberton Walking Trails, Abandoned Mines

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. The Herberton walking trails have operated for over a decade, attracting thousands of walkers who come to view the historical abandoned mine sites. However, the minister's department has desecrated those abandoned mines with no consultation.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Dalrymple, when you put your question, the preamble has to be tight and you cannot put imputations in that preamble. I advise you to take care with the question.

Mr KNUTH: Will the minister call for the immediate halt to the desecration until the department has held consultation with all stakeholders?

Mr CRIPPS: I thank the member for Dalrymple for the question. Having had an opportunity to reflect for a couple of weeks on this particular issue, I continue to be surprised at the lack of understanding that the member for Dalrymple has exhibited about this issue. Certainly I recognise the importance of regional tourism opportunities for communities such as the Atherton Tablelands. The communities around Ravenshoe and Herberton need those opportunities for attracting tourists, as well as for recreational opportunities for the local community.

The member for Dalrymple is referring to activities undertaken by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines Abandoned Mines Unit to make safe a series of abandoned mines located near the community of Herberton. The Abandoned Mines Land Program is a modest program within the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, but the staff works extremely hard on an annual basis to mitigate risk to the general public on public land. On this particular occasion, we have identified those particular abandoned mine shafts, which are close to the walking tracks that the member for Dalrymple—

Mr Knuth: No consultation.

Mr CRIPPS:—is talking about. We have taken the decision to make safe those abandoned mine sites by filling in those shafts. I am surprised by the continuing—

Mr Knuth: No consultation.

Mr CRIPPS:—attitude of the member for Dalrymple, because of all the electorates represented in this House, permanent abandoned mines units are located in the electorate of the member for Gympie as well as at Charters Towers in the electorate of the member for Dalrymple.

Mr Knuth: Don't smash them.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I warn the member for Dalrymple. You will cease your interjections or I will warn you under the standing orders. You are not to debate the question you have asked. I call the minister.

Mr CRIPPS: As a member of this parliament representing an electorate with a very long history of mining activity and communities that have benefited from those mining activities, I am surprised that the member for Dalrymple was not taken the opportunity to reflect on the very narrow and ill-informed attitude that he has taken. Having received correspondence from the community group expressing concern about the work that has been undertaken, certainly we will take the opportunity to discuss with them their concerns. However, I make no apology for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines putting the safety of the people of Queensland first and putting first the safety of people who visit Queensland for tourism purposes. As the minister responsible for the Abandoned Mines Lands Program in this state and the minister administering the mine safety legislation in this state, I shall certainly continue to put safety first.

Broadwater Electorate, Economy

Miss BARTON: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please outline how the government's strong plan is helping to grow the economy and support the local business community in my electorate of Broadwater?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the honourable member for Broadwater for her question. It is a pleasure to have a member such as the member for Broadwater who does take an active interest; she is a tremendous improvement on her predecessor. I am extremely positive about the direction in which Queensland is heading. There is so much to look forward to in this state and that much is obvious when we look at some of the fantastic things taking place in the Broadwater electorate and in the broader Gold Coast region. As the Premier has mentioned, Queensland is once again becoming Australia's economic powerhouse. By next year, we will have the fastest growing economy of any state in the nation. When looking at the activity taking place on the Gold Coast, it is obvious that it is one of the state's growth hotspots.

However, we also know that there are ongoing challenges and those challenges are being felt right across the country. That is why it is absolutely imperative that this government maintains its focus on building the four pillars of the Queensland economy. Unlike those opposite, this government has a plan and we will keep working hard every day to deliver on our plan. It is a plan to grow the economic pillars such as construction, knowing that in the Broadwater electorate there are more construction businesses than any other industry. Earlier, the Premier spoke about the return of confidence for Brisbane's property and construction sector and it is very much the same on the Gold Coast. Building approvals are 74 per cent higher in the year to July 2014—74 per cent higher in that year! The value of those approvals has grown by more than half a billion dollars, which is half a billion dollars that will flow through to all parts of the Gold Coast economy. The government has made every effort to stimulate activity in the property and construction sector. We have removed Labor's tax on the family home, saving people up to \$7,175 by reinstating the principal place of residence concession, which was a tax that Labor imposed without telling the people of Queensland about it. Our Great Start Grant has helped 865 people on the Gold Coast move into their first home, including 74 people in the Broadwater electorate.

We are also helping businesses by cutting red tape. Last week, I was pleased to announce that businesses with a payroll tax liability of less than \$20,000 a year will need to lodge their returns only twice a year instead of 12 times a year, once each month. That change is helping business owners in Broadwater such as Adrian De Lorenzo who owns the award-winning Manos restaurant at Paradise Point.

Developments will continue to ramp up as we move towards the 2018 Commonwealth Games—a milestone event for the people of the Gold Coast, Queensland and Australia. The development of the Commonwealth Games village at Parklands will support up to 1,500 jobs during construction. We will also continue to see other developments across the Gold Coast, including \$40 million at the Coomera Sport and Leisure Centre and \$114 million at the Carrara Sports Precinct. I know the member for Broadwater is committed to working hard every day to deliver for the people of her electorate and so is the government of Queensland.

(Time expired)

Peregian Springs State School

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Education. I refer the minister to his recent speech in parliament about state school principal Sands, and I ask: does the government have any plans to expand the student playing area at principal Sands' school?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This question refers to a speech I gave the other night about Gwen Sands from Peregian Springs State School and the issue of gymnastics injuries to students. It was more about not her decision but my support for the principal in the decisions that she makes on behalf of her community.

If there is anything that categorises this government's attitude towards leaders in our schools, whether they be non-state or state schools—but, in this case, state schools as they come under my jurisdiction—it is that our 233 principals are responsible people who know what is best for their communities. We have focused on the issues of teacher quality and autonomy and discipline. This was a disciplinary matter that this particular principal raised with her local community. She was then subjected to some significant email and social media vitriol, which I consider to be completely inappropriate. So I have made my views very clear on that.

When it comes to the matter of the playground area itself, obviously schools have different characteristics. As I understand it, this is one of the original PPP schools that was built by the former government. They are ones that we look at as we continue to build the 10 new schools that we are opening from next year and over the next few years. We also look at sites that have constrained space and are different from traditional models of schooling. We think that, just as communities have different needs within them, sometimes the recreational areas within schools are not exactly the same in every school.

The important issue is not whether we can magically create more space at a school like Peregian Springs State School, but whether the principal is in charge of their community and can make decisions. All parents, all members of the community and all students can come together to discuss an issue but in the end someone has to make a decision based on all of the information and all of the data about the activities in that school. People need to have a civil conversation about things. We need to make sure that we do not have online bullying and the sorts of things that we saw in this particular case.

This is a very experienced principal who has in her heart concern for all of her students. People have to respect the decision that that principal makes and work together for the best outcome for the students. The focus of this government has been giving resources to schools and letting principals make decisions. When it comes to issues like playgrounds and whether we can magically create more space, that is not really the heart of this question. It is about saying that we should all have respect for the principals in our schools and the leaders in our schools.

Lockyer Electorate, Economy

Mr RICKUSS: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer outline how the government's strong plan to grow the economy and provide infrastructure is supporting the great electorate of Lockyer?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank my good friend the member for Lockyer who also brings to this place the skills and ability of a businessman in the agriculture industry for many years—quite a successful businessman. As we all know, he is passionate about his local area in all sorts of ways. I have seen his fierce advocacy for local businesses.

In fact, I have travelled with him through the towns and small hamlets in the Lockyer. We visited those small businesses to see how they have rebuilt after the floods and devastation that they have experienced. He is someone with a real passion for helping those in his electorate not only in the good times but particularly and most importantly in times when it is as tough as it can be for people. I commend him and thank him for that.

At the end of last year I took up the member's offer to come to speak at a local business breakfast at Porters Plainland Hotel. Anyone who has travelled that road would know Porters Plainland Hotel. If you stop there you will get a pretty good steak and a pretty cold beer. We stopped the night before the business breakfast. We spoke to the Porters. Bob had been a bit crook, but was on the road to recovery.

It was a great opportunity to speak with local businesses and discuss with those local business owners what we are doing to deliver for the communities in the Lockyer by focusing on growing the four pillars of the economy and continuing to deliver on our strong plan. We are working hard to revitalise Queensland's agricultural industry, so vital to the Lockyer electorate and so many parts of Australia. Lockyer is one of the food bowls of Queensland.

When we consider that more than a quarter of all businesses in the Lockyer are agricultural, we get a real sense of how important this economic pillar is. But what has the government done to support agriculture? Under the leadership of the Minister for Agriculture we have made it a stand-alone department once again. We have outlined our ambitious plan for doubling food production by 2040. We have also done everything we can to help farmers through one of the toughest natural disasters on record, delivering a record drought assistance package.

This year's budget included a \$55 million investment in agricultural research, development and extension and \$18 million to upgrade research and operation facilities. We were also very proud to announce in the 2014-15 state budget that the family primary production concession would be extended to non-lineal descendants, opening up the opportunity for better succession planning for those on the land who want to keep the property in the family. We are doing what we can to cut red tape for primary producers. For example, producers are now able to conduct routine vegetation management activities on their properties without being tied up in red tape. We have also streamlined the state's leasehold land system to provide greater security of tenure for leaseholders. We are working to deliver infrastructure throughout the state to support those farms.

The government will continue working hard to create more opportunities for the people of this great state. There is more to do. But with hardworking members like the member for Lockyer we will succeed.

(Time expired)

Sale of Public Assets

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Premier. Given the Premier's failure to provide specific answers to questions today, I now table a list of 17 asset sales consultants appointed by the LNP government without any election mandate, and I ask: how many millions of dollars will taxpayers be forced to pay these consultants, the likes of Merrill Lynch, irrespective of whether they support his plan for the largest program of asset sales in this state's history?

Tabled paper: Document titled 'List of Asset Sales Consultants Appointed without an Election Mandate' [\[5934\]](#).

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Rockhampton for his question. I will reiterate what I have said today. The costs of this work will be fully revealed in an open and transparent way to the people of Queensland. Once again I reiterate that we will not be selling any of these assets or leasing any of these assets without going to an election.

People across this state can take comfort that there is a huge difference between the Australian Labor Party that says one thing and does another and this government. It is the case that the people of Queensland really should not listen to what the Labor Party say but actually look at what they do. Their past behaviour is a guide to what they will do in the future.

Let me give members some examples. Kevin Rudd said that if he failed to be re-elected in government—

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock! I warn the member for Redcliffe under standing order 253A. Leader of the Opposition, it is not appropriate for members to continue to interject contrary to the chair's instructions. There has been a constant barrage. It is not helpful. Members are not to interject and try to create debate in their interjections. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: Kevin Rudd said that he would soldier on if he saw the government lose the election, but no, he left. Anna Bligh said solemnly, 'I will stay on as the member for South Brisbane if the Labor government is not elected again.' We then had a by-election and the expense of that. We had the Labor Party saying that there would not be a carbon tax and then they implemented one. They said that the carbon tax would not actually increase people's cost of living. It did. The Labor Party said that they would retain the state's fuel subsidy and immediately after the election got rid of it. They said that they would not sell assets and then they did.

I say today to the people of Queensland that you have a group over there who have no policies, who have no plans, who have no leadership, who are hopelessly divided and who are at each other's throats. They do not actually like each other. We sit here on the floor of the chamber and we look across into their eyes and we see the enmity, we see the friction and we see the jostling of the factions. We know that if, God forbid, they ever got their hands on the levers of power over here again they would get us back into the same old mess. That is the sad thing.

Over here, we have a team that is strong, that is united, that has a plan and that is being open and upfront with the people of Queensland about these important decisions. We will not be selling anything without a mandate but we are doing the necessary work so that people can be informed prior to an election about what is on the table. We will not do it without going to an election. The final point I make is this: we are very reluctant on these matters, I have to say, and I have said it before.

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The only reason we are doing it is because—

Madam SPEAKER: Please pause the clock. I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition under standing order 253A and I ask you to now leave the chamber for an hour. I heard your interjection and I also heard you urging people to continue to interject. It is unacceptable behaviour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Mackay withdrew from the chamber at 11 am.

Mr NEWMAN: These sorts of actions and antics from the Labor Party just show they have no plans. As I have said a few times today, empty vessels make the most noise. When you are devoid of policy, all you can do is squawk and carry on rather than actually offer solutions. We are offering solutions. We are offering leadership. We are offering a strong plan. We will take this state forward into a bright future, having sorted out this colossal mess that the Australian Labor Party left this state in.

(Time expired)

Capalaba Electorate, Economy

Mr DAVIES: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please outline how the government's strong plan to grow the economy and restore the state's finances is supporting businesses in my electorate of Capalaba?

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer for two minutes.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Capalaba for his question and I think I might be able to provide an answer for him. The member for Capalaba is again showing the wide diversity of people on this side of the House. He is a man from a small business background who ran a family owned bank branch in East Brisbane. We have had many discussions about his times there running that bank. He knows what it takes to run a business, to manage a budget, to balance your incomings against your outgoings. That is something that patently those opposite, the ALP, never understood and are unlikely ever to understand.

This government was elected on two fundamental promises: we said we would grow the economy and we said we would work to fix the state's finances and get us back into the black. We are making good progress on both of those. We have heard today about all of the good things that are happening in the many electorates across Queensland. Whether it is growth in construction in Brisbane, the transformational projects that are occurring up in Toowoomba or the way the government is delivering for the agricultural producers in the Lockyer Valley, this government is focused on delivering for all communities across this great state.

We are also focused on giving businesses certainty that this government has control of its own finances, and we have made some fantastic steps forward in that regard. By next year, the budget will be back in a fiscal surplus for the first time in a decade. We have reduced Labor's projected debt by \$5 billion, while also dealing with revenue write-downs of \$5½ billion. We have put a lid on government expenses, which grew under Labor at almost nine per cent a year. Because of our fiscal responsibility, we have been able to put more money into health, education and community services while not introducing or raising any new taxes—unlike those opposite. We have stabilised the patient and now we are being open about what we need to do to pay down Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt. We do have a plan and it is a positive plan that reduces debt by \$25 billion and provides savings of \$1.3 billion a year in interest. We promised to deliver better infrastructure and planning, and that is exactly what we are doing.

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Abbot Point, Dredge Spoil

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.03 am), by leave: I have been very gratified over the last couple of days to hear of the bipartisan support that has been offered in this parliament to the government's plans in relation to enhancing state owned land at Abbot Point. In particular, we have had strong bipartisan support from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Brisbane, so much so that the member for South Brisbane tried to take a point of privilege this morning in relation to some comments that questioned her strong bipartisan support.

Can I advise the House that, with such bipartisan support and such support in the community generally, we are confident that we can have this project ready to accept the dredge spoil that will be produced in March. I think it is important for the House to understand that that old adage about failure being an orphan and success having many fathers is well and truly illustrated by the actions of the Labor Party. The member for South Brisbane said in the House last night—

... we have seen a complete trashing of the plans that the former Labor government had to use dredge spoil to reclaim the port area, to enhance it, to expand it ...

She went on to say—

On Monday, we saw Jeff Seeneey and the Premier do a complete backflip to go back to Labor's original position, which is to use dredge spoil in order to reclaim land in the port development area.

Mr Mulherin got into the act as well. He said—

No-one should be under any illusion as to who is behind the dumping of dredge spoil within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It was the Newman government, particularly the Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeneey.

He then went on to say—

The Premier and the Deputy Premier claim that Labor's plan involved the dumping of dredge spoil. This is a complete and utter mistruth ...

We see lots of accusations from time to time in this House of people misleading the House. Can I suggest that this is a real misleading of the House, because I want to quote from and then table a document with the heading 'Invitation for public comment: Draft public environmental report', which was issued by the Commonwealth government. It states—

The project comprises capital dredging of up to 3 million m³ of sediment to support development across the three coal terminals proposed for the Port of Abbot Point, approximately 25 km north-west of Bowen. Dredged material will be relocated to an unconfined offshore site approximately 20 km from the Port. As the Port Authority for Abbot Point, NQBP is acting as proponent for this project.

NQBP referred the action under the Act (EPBC 2011/6213) on 5 December 2011.

I repeat: 5 December 2011. Unfortunately, I was opposition leader at that time. I will continue with the quote—

On 6 January 2012 the decision was made under section 75 and section 87 of the Act that the project would be a controlled action assessable by Public Environment Report (PER).

On 6 January 2012, I was still unfortunately opposition leader. I will table that document that I quoted from.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Invitation for public comment—Draft Public Environmental Report of Port Abbot Point Terminals 0, 2 and 3 Capital Dredging Project' [\[5935\]](#).

I thought the federal government might be mistaken, so I went and sourced the original documents. This is the 'Referral of proposed action' on 5 December 2011. There are lots of things in here that I could quote, but I will quote just a couple. Question 1.15 asks—

Is the proposed action inside the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park?

The answer is yes. It then states—

Yes, you must also complete Section 3.1 ...

Dredging is outside Great Barrier Reef Marine Park however possible offshore disposal area is within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Would you like me to quote some more? I will also quote section 2.2 for the benefit of the member for South Brisbane, who claims this was all her idea. It states—

The principal disposal option is disposal to the existing offshore disposal area (Figure 1) which has previously been utilised for the initial capital dredging in 1982 and the most recent capital and maintenance works in August 2008.

So in 2008, 2011 and 2012, the Labor government was dredging and disposing offshore. For anyone who doubts where offshore is, figure 1 is included as well and it shows the area, which the member for South Brisbane might like to peruse. I table that.

Tabled paper: Australian Government, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities document, dated 6 January 2012, titled 'Referral of proposed action, Project Title: Abbot Point Terminal 0, Terminal 2 and Terminal 3 Capital Dredging' [5936].

I also table the 'Referral decision' that was referred to in the first document by the Commonwealth government with the date of 6 January 2012—when, unfortunately, I was in opposition and the member for South Brisbane was running a rather—

Mr Langbroek interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Yes, engaged in activities which she now no longer wants to take responsibility for.

Tabled paper: Australian Government, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities document, dated 6 January 2012, titled 'Notification of Referral Decision and Designated Proponent—controlled action Decision on Assessment Approach' [5937].

Just to complete the picture, I table the referral decision for the previous capital dredging of 2 October 2008 which was disposed of offshore.

Tabled paper: Australian Government, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts document, dated 2 October 2008, titled 'Notification of Referral Decision—not controlled action if undertaken in a particular manner regarding Abbot Point' [5938].

As I said, we see lots of accusations of members misleading the House in this place. I think what we have seen over the last couple of days is a real misleading of the House. I will certainly write to you, Madam Speaker, with regard to referring both the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Brisbane to the Ethics Committee.

While we in this parliament have many liberties in taking part in debates, I think there has to be some responsibility taken by members for the truthfulness of the statements that they make. Over and over again the member for South Brisbane comes in here and makes all sorts of accusations without any basis. She needs to be aware that sometimes there is a paper trail which makes the untruthfulness of her accusations clear to everybody. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and member for Mackay sat in the cabinet that made these decisions. He could not possibly be unaware of the fact that his comments were misleading the House.

Madam Speaker, I will be writing to you. If ever I saw a case that should be referred to the Ethics Committee, it is this one.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents and a map, regarding Abbot Point coal terminal [5939].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour

Madam SPEAKER: Before going to the next order of the business, I wish to recognise a school visiting today, Caningeraba State School in the electorate of Burleigh. Welcome to the parliament.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr DAVIES (Capalaba—LNP) (11.11 am): I move—

That the House takes note of Finance and Administration Committee, Report No. 48, *Inquiry into Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud risk management*, tabled on 28 August 2014.

This report presents a summary of the committee's inquiry into the Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud management risks. The Auditor-General's reports reviewed were report No. 5 of 2012, *Results of audits: internal control systems*, report No. 9 of 2012-13, *Fraud risk management*, report No. 6 of 2013-14, *Results of audits: internal control systems*, and report No. 1 of 2014-15, *Results of audit: internal control systems 2013-14*.

During the course of its inquiry, the committee found that the issues raised in these four Queensland Audit Office reports are largely interrelated and, therefore, agreed to present the findings of all four reports in this one report. While the report makes 13 recommendations, for the sake of brevity I would like to highlight five which, if adopted, I believe would make significant inroads in providing checks and balances to the ever-evolving threat of fraud and nefarious behaviour. Unfortunate as it is, the human condition means there will always be those around us who will endeavour to rot the system for their own benefit. We need only to look at the blatantly fraudulent behaviour of the fake Tahitian prince to realise that we need to be ever vigilant of fraud both large and small.

I will now list the five recommendations I would like to highlight. Recommendation 1 states—

The Committee recommends that all significant information on internal controls is shared between departments, and that one department has the responsibility of disseminating this information.

The second recommendation I would like to highlight is recommendation 2, which states—

The Committee recommends that the government continue to invest in the upgrading of IT systems to enable the use of automated delegations systems for financial transactions.

Recommendation 5 goes on to say—

The Committee recommends that DPC coordinate with DSITIA to implement a standardised (whole-of-government) policy on IT controls, data analysis and monitoring.

Recommendation 8 states—

The Committee recommends that departments conduct surveys to identify areas of concern or gaps particularly where early warnings or 'red flags' have been previously ignored and to ensure policies or clear reporting avenues are available to employees and the learnings from these surveys be coordinated by DPC and/or QTT and shared with all departments.

Recommendation 9 states—

Regular testing of fraud prevention protocols are also considered to be mandatory in each department. The Committee recommends that DPC and/or QTT liaise with all departments to conduct random testing of fraud prevention protocols.

The final recommendation I would like to highlight is recommendation 11, which states—

The Committee recommends that fraud awareness training be followed up with ongoing monitoring by DPC and/or QTT to ensure that employees' awareness level remains consistently high in all departments.

Many of the committee's recommendations stress the need for departments to be proactive in their management of fraud as this activity is a continually evolving process. The maintenance of internal controls is a substantial part of this process. The committee also considered that testing of fraud and internal controls is essential to ensure the systems are working as anticipated. It also considers that sharing of the information will also assist in both promoting awareness and ensuring that any lessons learnt in one department are available to others.

On behalf of the committee, I would like 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. As a state, we are well served by the Queensland Audit Office and particularly by our Auditor-General.

Finally, I would like to thank the other members of the committee for their hard work as well as the committee secretariat for their hard work in producing a report which I believe provides some very beneficial recommendations that will strengthen and empower the Public Service. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (11.15 am): I rise to continue the discussion on the Finance and Administration Committee's report No. 48 into the Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud risk management. Fraud is an ever-present risk in all government departments due to the important resources that government oversees and the sensitive and financially valuable information it holds. The Finance and Administration Committee wishes to stress that departments need to be proactive in their fraud mitigation measures and to review their internal control mechanisms on a regular basis. The tools and strategies of fraudsters are continually adapting and we need to be equally adept at evolving our own risk management processes. To use a trite expression, it is pointless to shut the gate after the horse has bolted.

Interdepartmental communication is also an important aspect of fraud containment and prevention. Our internal control mechanisms are failing us if the lessons learned by one department are not available to other departments. Information sharing is one of the 13 recommendations that the Finance and Administration Committee has put forward and one I consider to be highly important.

However, a free-for-all of information exchange is also counterproductive. Things go undelivered, get lost or are unaccounted for. That is why the committee has recommended that one department has the responsibility for disseminating this information. Another important recommendation of the committee is for the government to continue to invest in upgrading its IT systems, especially when it comes to financial transactions. Technology is in a constant state of flux. This brings enormous benefits, fast exchange of data, increased connectivity and expanded digital resources. However, it also brings its own risks, including giving perpetrators of fraud more things in their toolkit than ever before. To counteract this, our government needs to be vigilant in rolling out the latest electronic security systems. This is expensive but it is a necessary expense.

However, it is not enough to have the technology in place if no-one knows how to use it to identify potential security threats. That is why the committee recommends that we continue to conduct fraud awareness training in all departments. Constant vigilance of staff must be used in conjunction with the technology to build a barrier against cyberthreats and other fraud. Fraud in many instances has the element of surprise. This unpredictability is what makes us all at times susceptible to the deception and breach. That is why I think random testing of fraud prevention protocols is extremely important. The testing of fraud protocols must be a standard across all departments as this will ensure that awareness of fraud is also mirrored in each government sector. Internal control systems have both a technological and a human aspect and it is important not to neglect either in managing risk. We must invest in our information technology resources but we must also invest in our human resources. Much of fraud prevention and risk containment comes down to due diligence and tried and tested procedures and protocols, working in conjunction with IT. Managing these two resources, the technological and the human, is at the crux of each of the recommendations put forward by the committee.

I thank the chair of the committee, Steve Davies, for his discussion on the Auditor-General's reports, and I acknowledge the contributions of committee members from both sides as well as the independent member for Gladstone. Appreciation goes to the Finance and Administration Committee's support team for their invaluable assistance. Finally I thank all of those who assisted the committee's inquiry, especially the help provided by the Auditor-General and Queensland Audit Office.

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (11.20 am): Thank you for the opportunity to speak in this chamber on behalf of the electorate that I represent. I note for the chamber that Murrumba is the Aboriginal word for good place.

Today I will be commenting on report No. 48 of the Finance and Administration Committee dated August 2014 entitled *Inquiry into Auditor-General's reports on internal control systems and fraud risk management*. I wish to commend the Auditor-General for undertaking reviews of government internal control systems and fraud risk management. I wish to confirm at the outset my support for all of the recommendations held within the report.

For those of us with accounting backgrounds, when we see the word 'fraud' we instantly recall the Enron bankruptcy scandal of the early 2000s which was largely based on a series of premeditated accounting frauds using special-purpose entities and loopholes in accounting standards. But most of all, we think of the award-winning Enron 'code of ethics'. Publicly they may have written the Holy Grail of corporate governance documentation, but all along within the same organisation there was a small group based around their financial controller who at the time was committing the then largest corporate fraud in history and which subsequently also took down one of the world's largest audit firms, Arthur Andersen. Where I am going here is that you can have all of the rules and documentation but if there is greed, ethical failure and collusion, even the best and most independent minds will be fooled in the short term and in the long run careers and reputations lost forever.

I refer to section 2.1.2 of the report, 'Summary of audit results' and say that I was gobsmacked to read that in 2012 there were 221 significant control weaknesses. Many of these weaknesses could politely be described as undergraduate level oversights. I also move on to section 2.3.2 of the report, which notes that by 2013-14 there was a significant decrease in the number of internal control weaknesses attributed to the maturing of financial control systems put in place since the government changed in 2012.

Reading the work of the Auditor-General took me back to my prior life in corporate accounting and being a commercial manager in the not-for-profit sector. It was refreshing to see an Auditor-General who understands best practice—which I applied and was trained under during my career—and I compliment him for his approach on guiding the Queensland public sector to best practice. I wish and implore that all public servants in Queensland remain vigilant in the application of

best practice and remain firm and consistent in applying not only the highest written standards but, probably more importantly, the highest unwritten ethical standards. If these tenets are applied, I believe Queensland will never face its own Enron, and never again will the taxpayers of Queensland fund the lavish lifestyle of a self-titled Tahitian prince.

I conclude by thanking the other committee members, committee staff and departmental staff who participated, but most notably the Auditor-General and the staff from the Queensland Audit Office. Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish you well and I thank you again for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Murrumba, a good place. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (11.24 am): I rise to contribute to the discussion of the results of the Auditor-General's report on fraud risk management. This was a very interesting inquiry indeed. The Auditor-General's report examined whether selected Queensland public sector agencies work effectively in managing fraud risks. Recognised best practice criteria were used to assist the control measures in three agencies for preventing, detecting and responding to fraud. Managing fraud risk includes a range of pro-active and reactive measures and may involve strategies which prevent, detect and respond to the risk of fraud whether perpetrated by internal or external parties. Surprisingly to me, there is no strategic whole-of-government approach to fraud control, which may be one reason why a fake Tahitian prince was able to defraud the Queensland people of over \$16 million. This audit by the Auditor-General was extremely important and obviously overdue.

Right after the election of the Campbell Newman government three departments had audits conducted between May and November 2012: Queensland Health, the Department of Housing and Public Works, and the Public Trustee of Queensland. It was discovered that each agency has a fraud control policy and some processes for managing fraud risks. In two agencies there was evidence of a well publicised zero tolerance attitude to fraud. Two agencies had fraud controls at the time of the audit. It was found that there was little fraud-specific training in any of the agencies. Awareness of who owned the fraud policy or how it was given effect to was not sufficient. It was found that most employees did not know what to do. There was inadequate management and processes and detection was difficult. As a result, each agency has recently developed new fraud control documentation.

The Finance and Administration Committee conducted public hearings and asked questions of each of these three departments. It was interesting to hear that Queensland Health had 219 suspected fraud cases, three of which were considered significant—being over \$10,000—however, most of those cases concerned timesheets. It is interesting to note that misrepresenting one's timesheet is actually fraud.

It is important that the majority of Queenslanders do not pay for the dishonesty of a few. The committee came up with 13 recommendations which are largely based on the importance of education, awareness and training. Agencies need the tools and systems to enable them to detect fraud easily and quickly. I will read some of the committee's recommendations, as some of them have already been covered by previous speakers. But before I do may I thank the Auditor-General, the tireless hardworking staff and my colleagues on the Finance and Administration Committee.

In my opinion, some of the more important recommendations are that we have regular testing of the fraud prevention protocols that are considered to be mandatory in each department. Recommendation 9 states—

The committee recommends that DPC and/or QTT liaise with all departments to conduct random testing of fraud prevention protocols.

Recommendation 10 states—

The Committee recommends that DPC and/or QTT undertake an analysis of the level of fraud awareness in the departments and maintain statistical information on the reporting of suspected fraudulent activities as a record of vigilance in the workplace.

Recommendation 11 states—

The Committee recommends that fraud awareness training be followed up with ongoing monitoring by DPC and/or QTT to ensure that employees' awareness level remains consistently high in all departments.

Recommendation 12 states—

The Committee recommends that DPC and/or DSITIA investigate the data analytics testing and to examine whether there is a whole-of-government sharing of information.

Recommendation 13 states—

The Committee recommends that DPC and/or QTT investigate whether communications of outcomes of fraud investigations are being distributed to business units and all departments, and that a standard procedure for such communiques be implemented.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (11.29 am): I rise to speak to the committee's report in relation to fraud risk in the Public Service. This parliament has observed some very serious incidents, particularly in relation to the Health department. The member for Murrumba referred to the Tahitian prince, and that is certainly a relevant event. We would also remember the absolute debacle—that is the wrong word—of the rollout of the new payroll system. Well could one ask what that had to do with fraud. It did not have anything to do with fraud, but it did have something to do with human failure combined with the wrong or incomplete use of IT and the effect that can have on not only departments but also people. Certainly there has been plenty of experience for the current Minister for Health to deal with.

Rather than seeing the current health issue—I know that we have not discussed this in this House for obvious reasons—as a negative, I would like to believe, until there is information to the contrary, that it shows positively that some of the new processes that have been put in place actually work, that problems are intercepted early and are dealt with appropriately. As I said, until there is other information to the contrary I will certainly see that as a positive.

The committee made 13 recommendations, as has been stated. I think the role of the Auditor-General in this process should not be underestimated. That department has to be fiercely independent in order to carry out these audits to highlight failures. It is only in highlighting the failures that proper and effective remedies can be implemented. I think that is one of the reasons—there are many—that the role of the Auditor-General has to not only be independent but also be seen to be independent and not influenced by any other parties. I would also like to thank the departmental staff who were involved in the audits that were used as a basis on which the Auditor-General made a report and which our committee used in great measure for its investigation.

Critically important in all of this in fraud management has to be that within departments it is more than just a sheet of paper with 'fraud awareness' typed on the top, some information and then at the bottom a box for each individual person to tick once they have read it. It has to be very proactive and interactive because fraud is not something that smacks you in the face; it is subtle and it is done by somebody who has usually well thought out the process by which they will execute their illusion and their deceit.

Certainly I think there is room for what would be affectionately called a 'secret shopper' in relation to some of the departments. Some would say that that could be termed 'entrapment'. I do not believe that it would be; I believe that it would be an immensely valuable training tool and an immensely valuable investigative tool, simply because it would highlight whether departments with high turnovers, or indeed low turnovers, do have vulnerabilities. Often fraud starts over small amounts just to test the waters, to see whether that payment would be made undetected. So I believe the use of some very practical training tools—and by that I mean humans—would go a long way in highlighting any deficiencies in our fraud detection systems and also in ensuring that staff who handle money and who handle validations of expenditure—invoicing et cetera—could be kept more aware of the responsibility of their role not only to the department but also to the people of Queensland.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY PAYMENTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 10 September (see p. 3188), on motion of Mr Mander—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (11.34 am): I rise to make a brief but hopefully helpful contribution on the proposed amendments to the Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill. At its heart there are three matters that this bill seeks to address, and all of them are worthy: the imbalance in time frames between claimants and respondents; the current inability for a respondent to provide additional information; and, the one I want to speak about today, the appointment process and the skill of the adjudicators. I will focus my comments based on what I have seen in the area of local government, but I hope that in doing so those in this House can see this for what it is—that is, positive reform.

I listened to some of the contributions made last night. I listened to the contribution of the member for Redcliffe. I say to everybody that anyone who cares about value for money—whether that be value for money for taxpayers, value for money for an individual or value for money in the way society operates—but, equally, anyone who cares about fairness should support what the minister is doing here. I will use an example of what I have seen—without naming businesses—that highlights why these changes, particularly the one relating to the appointment of an adjudicator, are so very fair and so very useful.

At the moment we have a system whereby people can effectively embark on adjudicator shopping. They can choose somebody who, either via not having the adequate skills at best or at worst having a vested interest in getting a particular outcome, can deliver a disastrous situation. I have seen situations in which companies have come into this state and have sought to use this process to rip off councils, to rip off ratepayers, to rip off the people we should all be representing in this place and should be doing so with pride. We have had a culture whereby people have been prepared to buy jobs. They go in, they put in a price to deliver a job that they know full well they cannot deliver for that price, but they get the job. They get their claws into it. Once they have that, the games start. Then the claims for unexpected works start. When, in good faith, the company or the council that has issued that job says, 'Hang on. That is not in the original scope,' they then use this act and use the knowledge of a friendly adjudicator to milk the system dry.

I say to all members here today that this is sensible reform. It is sensible reform in terms of value for money, but it is also sensible reform for fairness. It enables both parties to find a common ground. It does not enable, at the 11th hour, information to be tucked onto somebody's desk in the dark of the night. It does not allow people to adjudicator-shop. It does deliver value for money. We should all support it. I commend the minister on finding what I think is an excellent middle ground. I implore everybody in this House to support what is a common-sense amendment.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (11.37 am): I rise to participate in the debate on the Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill. I note that this week it has been reported that another significant construction company in Queensland has shut down, with liquidators appointed on Monday. The construction company I am referring to is Glenzeil. It has been reported that earlier this week tradies who turned up to work on the \$35 million Pure Kirra development tower on the Gold Coast were turned away. The gates were locked. Suppliers were asking when they would get paid for the goods they had provided.

This follows on from last year's winding up of Walton Construction which forced many contractors and suppliers into bankruptcy, forcing them to sell their homes and take on significant new debts while the white-collar vicious, lawless, unscrupulous participant and associated fraudsters hid the money they took before they went into liquidation.

Subcontractors and suppliers in our construction industry sit near the bottom of the construction industry hierarchy, and history shows that this group of workers and suppliers in the construction industry is continually the biggest loser in the construction industry claim for payment.

Yesterday the minister said that the intent of this legislation was to improve security of payment in the construction industry and that it was important that the legislation was fair and equal for all. I think his words were that we will have a system of payment in the construction industry 'which is fair to all'. The *Hansard* record will show that the minister also spoke about the need for justice to not only be done but be seen to be done in Queensland. I do not believe this bill achieves those aims. If the government was fair dinkum in wanting to make sure that justice was done and the law was fair to all in Queensland, then the simplest way is to introduce amending legislation that simply requires that money that is paid for a specific contract must be secured for that particular contract and cannot be siphoned off to be used on unrelated projects. In other words, we should introduce an amendment to legislation to take action against the white-collar vicious, lawless and unscrupulous participant and associate corporate thieves who use money from one contract for another unrelated project. No-one else in Queensland can take money for one purpose and use it for another and then perhaps later on reimburse that money from someone else. We would be charged with stealing. Yet Queensland history is full of cases where we have regularly seen white-collar unscrupulous participant fraudsters posing as construction companies sending subcontractors and suppliers to the wall and not being able to be caught by the government when they transfer money from one job contract to another which has no connection whatsoever.

I understand that the big construction companies will never support my simple proposed change to the law in Queensland, because that is how they run their businesses—that is, they use money from one contract on another unrelated contract. And guess who are significant donors to the LNP? I will leave it up to members to guess. If a company is going to go to the wall, we would minimise the number of people who are caught out by that company's collapse if the contract money is quarantined for the specific job at hand and is not able to be juggled amongst a whole range of different unrelated contract sites. We can stop the fraudulent transfer of money within the large construction companies by their white-collar corrupt fraudulent participants by simply changing the law. I look forward to the day when we hear regular reports from our Premier on how 'task force clean up white-collar unscrupulous fraudsters' has arrested participants and arrested associates involved in unscrupulous money-shifting transactions in the building and construction industry. We would then see on the six o'clock news the exclusive media interview as the 'clean up white-collar unscrupulous fraudsters task force' raided the head offices of the white-collar criminals and arrested the alleged participant and associate fraudsters. But, alas, I am only dreaming. I do not believe we will see the Newman Liberal National Party government take action. It will be left to a future state government to take the strong action against this protected group of people who are closely connected with people of influence in the government.

Before I resume my seat I refer members to the minister's earlier comment on recommendation No. 4 of the committee. The *Hansard* record shows that the minister's response was—

Recommendation 4 suggests that the bill should be amended to implement recommendation 19 of the Wallace report which proposes adjudicators should fall within the jurisdiction of the CCC.

The minister went on to say—

Crown Law advice on this recommendation was that because adjudicators are not considered to be public officials they cannot be made subject to the CCC.

It is amazing that that was the same explanation the Attorney-General gave recently as to why the Deputy Premier in his skirmish with Clive Palmer could not be investigated by the Crime and Corruption Commission. Guess why? Because it did not fit within the definition of 'public officials'. That can be changed with the stroke of a pen. Here today we can amend the Crime and Corruption Commission legislation to specifically include adjudicators. We can also specifically amend it, while we are in the spirit of it, to include the allegations involving the Deputy Premier because the Crime and Corruption Commission Acting Chairman, Dr Levy, said, 'Sorry, it doesn't fall within the terms of reference of our powers.' We can change it if we want to. I say this government does not have the strength of character to ensure that everyone is equal before the law in Queensland. I will not be supporting this bill.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (11.44 am): This bill deals with a critical area of our economy. I have children involved in the industry and there would be many here who have either been in the industry themselves or have family and friends and many constituents involved in aspects of this legislation. The legislation as presented here today is insufficient for me to consider supporting it. I say this because it appears to either involve undue haste at the last minute to try to get something out or there was a lack of understanding of what the problems are or just that it was way too difficult to get around. The sad statement is that, in leaving this state with what will inevitably pass today, I do not believe this legislative step will leave us in any way better off than where we are now. It is arguable that it may leave us a little worse off. In that case, why would we be doing it or considering it at all? The committee report tells us a lot more about that which we will hear today and what we heard yesterday from government members and what they will admit to. The primary concern is that one might summarise some of those statements and the committee hearings by saying—and I would say this as a summary of it—that the proposals will not do anything to promote greater trust or impartiality, and that is a very poor result.

This is an industry adjudicating on building and construction conflicts. That is how the money is made. This legislation has significant impacts on the lives of many, particularly in my electorate where literally a third of people are involved in the building industry—and remain so—yet they are largely travelling to achieve it. They are the subcontractors, contractors or a variety of roles in that industry, and they want to stay in that industry. They are listening and watching today. The industry has a variety of issues facing it internally and externally. Whilst this is but one, it is one of the causes of much heartache and without doubt the amount of moneys involved are significant. To give the industry something less than what it needs is to fail it. It is an industry where margins of profit and less than the margins of profit are the currency of the game. Anything that impacts upon those margins is very important. It is about time that the current situation of these recurrent collapses, such as Glenzeil

and Walton Construction on the Sunshine Coast where builders and subbies were left without any money, and the phoenix companies that rise after their collapse stop. That is what we need to be doing. It is a tragedy that the adjudication component of resolving receipts, recovery payments, supply of goods and services and contracts has been so critical to the survival of many in the industry.

We have heard all of the different stories of what we need to correct, but in fact we are not correcting any of those things, and I will tell members why, and it is around perceived bias primarily. Those companies have used the process for the benefit of themselves over issues with councils, and we heard the member for Mundingburra, who is a former councillor, and my wife is a former councillor. We have seen this over and over because the councils are the biggest players in these games, but there are also other individuals, and we need to stop it. Some of the Gold Coast's major and smaller building groups have failed through no fault of their own but often due to disagreements between themselves, the clients, the banks and third parties. If it is not already hard enough to do business and employ staff and argue with councils, to end up arguing about getting paid because the major companies are going to screw you over is basically too much for these people and they are exasperated. Ultimately, too many good people are lost from the building industry for no other reason than they cannot live on free air and, sadly, there are too many sharks on the land and not in the ocean.

Under those circumstances, to run a viable business in the construction industry is very difficult. For too long there has been the culture that there is always someone else to fill in for those who are exiting the business or who will not submit an even lower price, including many below cost—again, as elegantly stated by the member for Mundingburra. The process of winning tenders and contracts with below-cost price and then clawing back those profit margins by a vigorous approach to variations that attract a cost-plus charge and building on a bare-bones price is almost immoral. It is also unsafe, it leads to a lower quality and it leads to very poor building outcomes. In some cases, as has occurred on the Gold Coast, because they do not spend money on the things that they should, it leads to the loss of life. In a very high proportion of cases that has been the genesis of these building and construction conflicts. In some cases, those who were successful using the adjudication prospered often at the expense of too many other builders and consumers. In that situation, it is not always the successful builder who is the best builder, as was said by the members for Moggill and Mundingburra. If you want a good outcome, you have to have prices from the word go that are reasonable. That way you can avoid all of these steps.

You introduce another problem when you have a perceived bias in favour of the person who sets the standards. That is not going to work. The building companies are very smart. One of the members here is a former solicitor who would represent those types of people. He would tell you that, as I would. Sadly, the consumer is all too often the loser in the process. In most circumstances they are paying a high-entry price for a new product and they are not getting a proper outcome. So when the market takes off in Sydney and, to a lesser extent, in Melbourne, and the price of apartments goes up to the \$600,000 mark, we are seeing exactly that happen. The public do not get to know the difference and, in many cases, the builders get dragged into conflicts and kill their cash flows when they are competing against a narrow but a very solidly funded group—largely coming from superannuation money—and then, with no mezzanine finance, they start falling over. The product and the consumers lose. That is what is happening in this market.

I look at this legislation and I think that we are now in a situation where we have 84,000 contractors being put at risk by a rushed strategy that is not going to deliver us the type of result that we need. We have seen this government do the same thing previously. Under the Newman government's WorkCover charges, 90 per cent of 2.5 million workers were sold out. That followed on from 20,000 public servants who were sacked straight after the election. This bill is the logical, consequential result of those types of decisions.

The key arguments as to why the legislation should not be supported were stated well last night by the members for Redcliffe and Yeerongpilly and also today by the member for Nicklin. I support those considered views. I take into account the considered views of the member for Moggill—the former responsible minister—and the Minister for Local Government, who spoke eloquently in his short presentation. But I share the concerns of the major speakers with regard to the negative case. We need to do something about the whole process of payment. It is not just obscure; it is hopeless. In the modern world, you cannot run a business with a cash flow that is basically in arrears and in a situation where the majors have it all over you from the word go. You are not going to get the results.

The problem with the government's argument is that it is not addressing the real problems. Major building companies are using funds for one project coming across from another project. They also have the benefit of the super funds, because they can access that money at lower-cost capital with no mezzanine finance. The end result is a dreadful result for all of us, but particularly for any government entity, including local government. We need to change that. This legislation should not have delivered us this sort of result. The government should have used its massive majority and harnessed the power of the committee structure to give us the type of legislation that would fundamentally change the issues that we need to confront. I would say that, primarily, it needed to address everything but also make sure that, if the government were going to introduce a perceived bias, it needed to introduce a structure that exited itself from it. The government has not done that, because it is appointing these adjudicators. The perceived bias will be built into it. They are the biggest player in the game. In other words, they are appointing the adjudicators. Nothing will change. Of course, the companies will get around the process. What can be expected? Nothing can come out of it. This is fatally flawed legislation and it should not go forward.

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (11.54 am): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the minister's Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill 2014. From the outset, can I say that it is my birthday today—not that that is important—but what is important is that this year is also—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr CAVALLUCCI: Stop it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Leave the birthday boy alone.

Mr CAVALLUCCI: This year is also the 34th year of my family's construction business. That means that my entire lifetime has been spent in the construction industry and 15 years of that lifetime was spent working directly in the family construction business. From what I have heard last night and in some of the debate today from the opposition and others, the extent and the limit of their construction knowledge could be attributed to maybe possibly watching an episode of *Bob the Builder* or something. What I have heard from them is absolute nonsense.

The elements of the bill that I support are the streamlining of the appointment of adjudicators and the proposed amendments regarding changes to time frames for payment claims and adjudication applications. These amendments will go a long way to supporting the building and construction sector, which so desperately needs them.

One of the reforms is in relation to the appointment of adjudicators and the adjudication process. A single adjudication registry will be established within the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, which administers the act. That will mean that claimants will have a convenient one-stop shop in relation to submitting a claim and claimants and respondents will access all relevant information in the one place. Under the current arrangement, the claimant submits an adjudication application to an authorised nominating authority—known as an ANA—and then the ANA appoints the adjudicator. In his report Wallace identified that the claimant chose the ANA and that that could lead to perceptions of conflict of interest and bias in favour of the claimant. This issue is one of the reasons some people were dissatisfied with the appointment process.

Wallace explored various options to solve this issue. The preferred option was to establish a single adjudication registry within the QBCC. Currently, the commission registered adjudicators and if the QBCC also appoints adjudicators, it will ensure greater transparency and accountability in the adjudication process. That should help allay any concerns regarding conflicts of interest or bias. It will also mean that the appointment process will be subject to scrutiny from the QBCC board, the Ombudsman and the Crime and Corruption Commission.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr CAVALLUCCI: The member for Gympie is giving me an extraordinarily difficult time here. The adjudication registry will monitor the performance of the adjudicators and will appoint them based on their skills, knowledge and experience. I know that the adjudication registry has been working hard on the process, which will be in place to monitor the adjudicators and has established transitional training for those who are interested in registering with the adjudication registry.

The commission will also ensure that there is an alignment of the skills and experience of each adjudicator and the nature and complexity of the adjudication. Additionally, this amendment will see adjudications resolved more efficiently and, thanks to the centralised registry, claimants no longer needing to shop around. To address any perceptions of favouring one adjudicator over another, the

registry will publish details of the appointment of adjudicators on a daily basis. The registry will also keep information regarding adjudicators' skills, experience and areas of expertise to assist with better aligning adjudicators with claims.

An additional change will be that adjudicators must determine if they have the jurisdiction to make a decision regarding an application. To encourage this, adjudicators will be entitled to be paid for their time if they conclude that they have no jurisdiction to decide on the matter. Another benefit that I would like to outline is that these amendments will save time and money by allowing claimants to withdraw an application, which is not available under the current legislation.

In relation to the second point that I raised earlier—the amendments relating to the changes to the time frames for payment by claimants and respondents—the Wallace report showed clearly that a one-size-fits-all concept simply does not work in relation to complex claims. Both claimants and respondents need to be given sufficient time to present a clear and strong case. To get the balance right, Wallace's report suggested implementing two models that will provide a fairer and more appropriate system for both claimants and respondents to deal with complex claims whilst maintaining the same provisions for standard claims.

This amendment recognises that 10 business days is not sufficient time for a respondent to provide a payment schedule for a complex claim. To distinguish between standard and complex claims, a complex claim will be defined as a claim in excess of \$750,000 and all other claims will be classified as standard claims. In recognition of the difficulties often involved with complex claims and the need to provide a wider range of information, respondents will be given 15 business days to provide a payment schedule, an increase on the 10 business days provided for standard claims. The amendment also makes provision to extend deadlines further for complex claims to 30 business days under certain conditions. The time for a respondent to provide an adjudication response will increase from five business days to 10, with a further increase to 15 business days for complex claims.

This amendment bill also deals with the issue of ambush claims by reducing the opportunity for claimants to wait for unreasonably long periods after work has actually been completed before lodging the claim. The bill reduces the period after construction within which a claim can be made from 12 months to six months to address the issue, with particular processes for a final payment claim. This amendment will prevent claimants from intentionally ambushing another party long after construction work has been completed. The purpose of this amendment is to encourage prompt payment in relation to work undertaken, and the amendments support this principle.

It is a fact of Australian life that many businesses and industries either close down or slow down during the Christmas and New Year period. This bill makes sure that the act takes sufficient account of this reality. The definition of 'business day' under the act will be changed to exclude the three business days before Christmas and the first 10 business days of the New Year to make sure that claimants and respondents do not inadvertently miss important deadlines because of the holiday season.

Although many of the provisions in this bill relate to the introduction of the complex claims category, it should be noted that the vast majority of claims under the new regime will remain standard claims. Statistics from the Queensland Building and Construction Commission show that on average between 85 and 90 per cent of claims have been standard claims, with the changes to such claims under this bill being an additional five business days for the provision of an adjudication response and reducing the time limits within which to lodge a claim. In other respects the time frames for claims equal to or less than \$750,000 will operate in the same way as they do under the current legislation. I have no doubt that this will ensure greater equity for both claimants and respondents.

The key change that will provide benefits to complex claims is when a respondent can provide additional reasons for withholding payment as part of their adjudication response. This can be done even if the reasons were not raised in their payment schedule. This will enable provision of additional information to support the claim and lead to fairer outcomes for the parties to the dispute. There have been a number of concerns raised in the industry, one of which is that a payment schedule must be compiled and served within 10 business days after receiving the payment claim, even though the payment claims may have been prepared over extended periods, up to 12 months in some cases. This was also identified as an issue in Wallace's report. Under the current act respondents are only able to provide reasons for withholding payment that were already included in their payment schedule. To address the issue of unfair time frames in regard to preparing payment claims and schedules for complex claims, respondents will be able to provide all reasons for withholding payment in the adjudication response. They will be able to do this whether or not they raised these matters in

their payment schedule. To safeguard claimants they will be entitled to raise any issues in response by way of written reply. This will allow the adjudicator to fully consider all information relevant to the payment claim and lead to better informed and fairer adjudication decisions.

The intent of the act is to create a speedy and efficient adjudication process and not to slow down the outcomes for contractors and subcontractors. However, for claims that are complex in nature, it is important that the adjudicator has the ability to consider all the relevant details to make an informed decision. The ability to provide additional information does not impact on standard claims of up to \$750,000, which are mainly lodged by smaller contractors. It is understood that between 85 and 90 per cent of the claims that reach the adjudication process are not complex so the majority of claims will not be impacted at all by this amendment. I am confident that there will be significant benefits to the building and construction industry as a result of this bill and I commend the minister for his great work in this area.

A government member: Can we fix it?

Mr CAVALLUCCI: We can fix it, Bob the Builder, yes, we can. Absolutely. I congratulate the minister and commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (12.04 pm): Along with all members of this House I wish the previous speaker a happy birthday and hope he has many more. The Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill is important because, when it all boils down, it is our local builders and subbies who are disadvantaged if the system does not work. It is often those people who are caught out in terms of non-payments. Our energy needs to be well and truly used to ensure that the amendments work.

I have listened to previous speakers, the member for Gaven and the member for Redcliffe expressing their concerns, and I am looking forward to hearing the minister's response to those concerns. I think valid issues raised here do deserve to have a response so I am looking forward to hearing the minister's response in relation to those matters.

There are a lot of matters to which one could give attention. There are just a few that I would like to comment on. I commend the appointment of adjudicators on an impartial basis. It is very difficult, no matter what situation you are in, if you feel aggrieved, to have a designated path that you must take and if you feel that down that designated path those who have to hear the issue have vested interests or are not impartial in their point of view, that does not help in any way practically, nor does it help the person who has the grievance in terms of their physical and mental health, because it works so destructively in terms of the process. Any changes that will assist in adjudicators being independent and being seen to be independent is certainly welcome.

I listened to the comments of the member for Nicklin in relation to the adjudicators being subject to the Crime and Corruption Commission. I again will be listening to the minister's reply with interest, because wherever individuals or groups are dealing with the expenditure of public money—and this is often not public money and I acknowledge that, but there is some construction that is public money—I think that anybody in the roles that the adjudicator fills and others do need to be subject to scrutiny.

I would be surprised if any member here has not had somebody in their office who has been duded by a principal contractor. It is a grievous position to be in, particularly small family builders. In my electorate—albeit too late—we have had a rush of building. Some of it occurred when the pressure for affordable housing was on. All the building that occurred was investment building so it did not help those people who were struggling with high rents. However, it did help those who had investment money, those from the south who had investment dollars and those who were on good wages and could afford to purchase. One of the outstanding issues in that whole building cycle was that our local builders greatly missed out on contracts. The family builders, who were usually just the builder, his wife who did the books and the local contractors who they used pretty much all the time, were excluded for the same simple reason: that the out-of-town builders undercut them on price and potentially undercut them on quality—I would say definitely undercut them on quality but I am in here so I have to be careful. They often did not use local contractors because our local contractors were people who did a good job, they stood behind their job, it was guaranteed whether it was a subbie or the principal builder, and they knew that they had done a good job because of the price that they had paid. What happened was that when any of these out-of-town building companies that got 30 or 40 houses went belly up, it meant that a string of subbies were left out in the cold.

I note that the time frame in which a payment claim can be made has been reduced from 12 months to six months and that the time frame for respondents to provide a payment schedule for claims of less than \$750,000—and that is 90 per cent of claims—will remain unchanged at 10 days. Claims involving more than \$750,000 will have 15 days. Ten days is a practical amount of time. There is paperwork that has to be accrued and investigation that has to be done. However, if you are a local individual builder, anywhere in Queensland, and you are carrying debts of around that level, in unpaid bills or whatever, that is a lot of dough. I know other members have talked very vehemently about the problems with the proposed legislation. I am looking forward to the minister's response, because I am going to support anything that will give assistance to builders, even if it is an incremental step of benefit, and there is more to be done.

I close by quoting the minister's second reading statement, in which he said—

For BCIPA to work to its fullest potential, people at all levels of the contract chain need to have faith in the system. The amendments put forward today will create a payment dispute resolution model that is simpler and easier to use, ensures disputes can be solved in time frames that are fair for all parties and, importantly, is free from the perceived conflicts of interest that have beset the current system.

I want to support our local builders and the building industry with a system that, as the minister said, works to its fullest potential, that is fair and that is trustworthy. I commend our local builders. They do a brilliant job. I commend our local subbies who also do a brilliant job. I want to support any legislation that will assist them not only to do a good job but also to survive in the process. I look forward to the minister's responses.

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.11 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their interest and their contributions to the debate on what is a very important issue. In particular, once again I thank the members of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for their diligence and the hard work that they put in to examining this legislation. Again I acknowledge all those who made submissions on the bill and took the time to present their arguments before the committee. I will address some of the issues raised by the various speakers.

The member for Redcliffe suggested that there has not been enough consultation on this legislation. With respect, on this bill there has been as much consultation as is humanly possible. In my time, the review of this act and the consultation process has been going for almost two years. If some parties are disappointed because they did not get their way, that does not mean there was not enough consultation. I note the member's comments about the 2002 Cole royal commission and its views on security of payment issues within the industry. My question to the member for Redcliffe and the Labor Party is this: what did they do about that? They had more than a decade in which time they introduced the current BCIPA regime, a regime that they are now complaining about as it does not do enough to protect subbies. Now they are saying that it ought to be expanded to include a complete overhaul of the building industry payment system. It is almost as though Labor's interest in the interests of subcontractors was born at roughly the same time they made the sad walk from this side of the chamber to the other.

Security of payment in the construction industry has been an issue for as long as there has been a construction industry. What did Labor do about it? Absolutely nothing! I have already told the House what this government is doing and will continue to do. Unlike those opposite who spent a decade sitting on their hands, we are committed to improving security of payment for contractors. However, you do not do that by expanding the scope of the BCIPA act so that it becomes a monolithic catch-all bill encompassing fraud, insolvency and phoenix activity. This bill is not the appropriate vehicle for bringing about that kind of change. The legislation before the House is about addressing specific issues around the probity and fairness of the current payment dispute resolution system.

I turn to the suggestion by the member for Redcliffe that there is no evidence of problems with the current process. Again I would direct her to the Wallace report and the litany of testimony questioning the probity of the current process and highlighting the potential for bias and conflicts of interest to prosper. If the member genuinely believes there is nothing wrong with a situation where vast sections of the industry have serious concerns about the probity of the process, then she is not on the same planet as the rest of us. I hark back to the examples I gave during my second reading speech of the mutual back scratching that allegedly goes on under the current system. Let us consider a situation where claim preparers, who are also adjudicators for a particular ANA, would allegedly recommend that the claimant use that ANA in exchange for the ANA providing the said adjudicator with work on another claim. That is an inherent conflict of interest in the process and, therefore, needs to be addressed.

Finally, I turn to the farcical suggestion that the bill has limited industry support. The bill has almost universally been welcomed by industry. Just because the member can fill her speech with extensive quotes from those who have different views does not validate those views. The fact of the matter is that, by and large, the only people who have taken issue with these changes are people with a vested interest in preserving the status quo. I note the comments of the member for Redcliffe about the need for an exposure draft of the legislation. I am very reliably advised that no such exposure draft was provided by the ALP during their introduction of the original BCIPA legislation.

I now turn to the comments of the member for Warrego and chairman of the relevant committee. I thank him for his support and his stewardship of the committee as it went through this process in great detail. I thank him for recognising that the legislation put forward by the government will be a significant improvement on the current system. I thank him also for his recognition that there could be no more qualified person to review the act than Mr Andrew Wallace, a man who knows the industry backwards, having worked at every level from the construction site to the court room. He is a builder, a solicitor, a barrister and an adjudicator.

I refer to the contribution of the member for Yeerongpilly, which can only be described as rambling gibberish that was very difficult to understand. I do not doubt that he is genuine in his concern for subcontractors, but I fear he has wasted his time babbling on about fraud and insolvency issues rather than discussing the issue of the payment disputes, which is what this bill is all about. I also note that he expressed a great deal of concern for the people of the Sunshine Coast. He said that the people of the Sunshine Coast are 'being failed'. Those were his exact words. I did not notice any concern for the people of Yeerongpilly. I wonder why that could be? The voters of Yeerongpilly must be delighted to have a member who has completely abandoned them halfway through his first term in order to pursue his own political interests.

One particularly ludicrous claim was made by the member for Yeerongpilly. Specifically, he said that the changes that we are proposing to this act will radically change the core purpose of the act. That is absolute nonsense. It just goes to show how little he understands the legislation he is trying to criticise. The changes under consideration do not at all change the purpose of the act. They simply ensure it can achieve that purpose without being subject to accusations of bias or conflicts of interest. I do not doubt the member's concern for people who do not get paid for services rendered. Who is not concerned about that? Not paying people when you owe them money is a low act and that is what he implied. On that topic, during his speech Mr Judge was very keen to read a number of newspaper articles and I thought I might do the same. I have one here, which I am happy to table, about the leader of the Palmer United Party, Clive Palmer, refusing to pay \$5,300 to a small country race club that hosted a calamari and chips night for his political party. I refer the member to this article and suggest that to avoid being labelled a hypocrite he should reassure the House that no similar bills have been left unpaid after PUP fundraisers in Yeerongpilly or on the Sunshine Coast or wherever this member might ultimately decide to pursue his self-interest.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media articles regarding Clive Palmer MP [\[5940\]](#).

I thank the member for Moggill for his common-sense contribution. He is a man who has had experience in this area. He is a man who was the Minister for Housing and Public Works. He knew about the uproar in the industry with regard to this particular act. Again, he brought some perspective to the debate. This is not about totally reconstructing—excuse the pun—the building and construction industry. It is a specific act that we are dealing with today. It deals with those who are involved in disputes in trying to get progress payments. I thank the member for Moggill for his contribution.

I thank the Minister for Local Government, Minister Crisafulli, for his contribution from a local government perspective.

I turn to the member for Nicklin's contribution. Like the member for Yeerongpilly, he focused his attention on things that are not within the remit of the bill being debated today. I refer the member to my previous speech about what we are doing to help protect subbies. I ask the member for Gladstone to listen to this too. There are two distinct things we are doing here. The first relates to BCIPA. We are making sure that disputes that come about in relation to progress payments are dealt with in a fair way.

The other issues about insolvency, companies falling over and the security of payments are totally separate issues. Those issues deserve attention. We remain committed to boosting the security of payments for subcontractors. We have begun investigating additional options to supplement BCIPA. Over the coming months we will be engaging with industry to develop a suite of initiatives that strike the right balance between the needs of all parties in the contracting chain.

The former leader of the Palmer United Party, the member for Gaven, made the same mistake as the current Leader of the Palmer United Party. He suggested that BCIPA can be a silver bullet to fix all the issues around security of payment in the construction industry, fraud, insolvency and phoenixing et cetera.

What these amendments can do is make the existing dispute resolution system fairer, more transparent and free from the conditions that lead to perceptions of bias. The member claims that the process is rushed. As I have already mentioned, it has been ongoing for almost two years. Precisely how long would he want this current situation to drag on for? I agree with the member's comments about the need to do something about the payment issues that have beset the construction industry for decades. That is why, unlike the former government, which did nothing for the best part of 20 years, we are doing it. I have mentioned what we will do.

I thank the member for Brisbane Central for his contribution. I wish him a happy birthday as well. I know he is not feeling the love today. He is a person who has had plenty of experience in the construction industry.

For the member for Gladstone's benefit, I want to reiterate some of the things I have said. When the member was talking about one of the committee reports she mentioned the Auditor-General. She said that it was important the Auditor-General was not only independent but also perceived to be independent. That is very relevant with regard to the adjudication process. We have a situation at the moment where claimants can go adjudicator shopping and try to find someone they think will give them favourable treatment.

There is an inherent conflict of interest in the way the system has been set up. I am not saying that there have been issues of impropriety but there is definitely the perception that that can occur. We have had plenty of anecdotal evidence that suggests that sometimes people did cross the line.

We are trying to address a totally different issue to the insolvency issues. They are important, but we will address those with a different vehicle. This act is all about giving subcontractors an opportunity to receive progress payments even if it is not in the contract and to make sure that when there is a dispute about that, there is a process to actually bring about a resolution as quickly as possible. That is the idea of the act. The act has, in the main, worked, but there have been some unintended consequences. That is what we are addressing with these amendments.

In conclusion, I would like to thank once more all honourable members who have contributed to this debate. I thank the officers in my department who have been working on this for quite some time. There has been an incredible amount of work put into this and an incredible amount of consultation. I again thank Mr Andrew Wallace for his contribution to this. He is a man who lives and breathes BCIPA. In my opinion, there is nobody who knows this act better—other than the registrar. I thank Mr Chesterman for the role he has played in bringing this together. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 61:

LNP, 60—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, Menkens, Millard, Newman, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeneey, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Symes, Walker, Watts, Young.

INDEPENDENTS, 1—Cunningham.

NOES, 13:

ALP, 9—Byrne, D'Ath, Lynham, Miller, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Scott, Trad.

KAP, 1—Knuth.

PUP, 1—Judge.

INDEPENDENTS, 2—Douglas, Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 45—

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.32 pm): I seek leave to move the following amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr MANDER: I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 5 (Amendment of s 17 (Payment claims))

Page 6, line 24 and page 7, lines 1 to 4—

omit, insert—

Section 17(4) to (6)—

2 Clause 6 (Insertion of new s 17A)

Page 8, lines 12 to 20—

omit, insert—

defects liability period, for a construction contract, means the period, if any, worked out under the contract as being the period—

- (a) starting on the day the construction work is practically or substantially completed, or the related goods and services are supplied, under the contract; and
- (b) ending on the last day any omission or defect in the construction work or related goods or services may be required or directed to be rectified under the contract.

3 Clause 8 (Insertion of new s 18A)

Page 9, lines 2 and 3—

omit, insert—

- (1) This section applies if, in reply to a payment claim, the respondent serves a payment schedule on the claimant.

4 Clause 9 (Replacement of s 19 (Consequences of not paying claimant if no payment schedule))

Page 10, after line 30—

insert—

- (5) The claimant can not start proceedings under subsection (3)(a)(i) to recover the unpaid portion of the claimed amount from the respondent as a debt unless—
 - (a) the claimant gives the respondent a notice under section 20A(2); and
 - (b) the 5 business days for the respondent to serve the payment schedule, as stated in the notice, has ended.
- (6) If the claimant starts proceedings under subsection (3)(a)(i) to recover the unpaid portion of the claimed amount from the respondent as a debt—
 - (a) judgement in favour of the claimant is not to be given by a court unless the court is satisfied the respondent—
 - (i) did not serve a payment schedule on the claimant within the time that the respondent may serve the schedule on the claimant; and
 - (ii) failed to pay the whole or any part of the claimed amount on or before the due date for the progress payment to which the payment claim relates; and
 - (b) the respondent is not, in those proceedings, entitled—
 - (i) to bring any counterclaim against the claimant; or
 - (ii) to raise any defence in relation to matters arising under the construction contract.

5 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 20 (Consequences of not paying claimant under payment schedule))

Page 10, line 33, '(1)'—

omit.

6 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 20 (Consequences of not paying claimant under payment schedule))

Page 11, lines 5 and 6—

omit.

7 Clause 11 (Insertion of new s 20A)

Page 11, lines 10 to 34 and page 12, lines 1 to 21—

omit, insert—

20A Notice required before starting particular proceedings

- (1) This section applies if a claimant serves a payment claim on a respondent and—
 - (a) the respondent—
 - (i) fails to serve a payment schedule on the claimant under this part; and
 - (ii) fails to pay the whole or any part of the claimed amount on or before the due date for the progress payment to which the payment claim relates; and
 - (b) the claimant intends to—
 - (i) start proceedings to recover an unpaid portion of the claimed amount as a debt owing to the claimant; or
 - (ii) apply for adjudication of the payment claim.

- (2) Before taking the intended action mentioned in subsection (1)(b), the claimant must first give the respondent notice of the claimant's intention to take the action.
- (3) The notice must—
 - (a) be given to the respondent within 20 business days immediately following the due date for payment; and
 - (b) state that the respondent may serve a payment schedule on the claimant within 5 business days after receiving the notice; and
 - (c) state it is made under this Act.
- (4) However, this section does not apply if the claimant previously gave the respondent a notice under this section for the unpaid portion of the claimed amount.
- (5) The giving of a notice under subsection (2) does not—
 - (a) require the claimant to complete the action stated in the notice; or
 - (b) prevent the claimant from taking different action to that stated in the notice.

8 Clause 12 (Amendment of s 21 (Adjudication application))

Page 12, lines 26 to 31 and page 13, lines 1 to 3—

omit, insert—

- (2) Section 21(2)(a) and (b)—
omit, insert—
 - (a) the claimant gives the respondent a notice under section 20A(2); and
 - (b) the 5 business days for the respondent to serve the payment schedule, as stated in the notice, has ended.
- (3) Section 21(3)(a) and (b)—
omit, insert—
 - (a) must be in the approved form; and
 - (b) must be made to the registrar; and
- (4) Section 21(3)(c)(iii), '5 day period'—
omit, insert—
5 business days
- (5) Section 21(3)(e)—
omit, insert—
 - (e) must be accompanied by the fee prescribed by regulation for the application; and
- (6) Section 21(6), 'authorised nominating authority to which an

9 Clause 14 (Replacement of s 24 (Adjudication responses))

Page 16, after line 22—

insert—

- (7) If the claimant proposes to give the adjudicator a claimant's reply, the claimant must give the adjudicator notice of the proposal within 5 business days after receiving a copy of the adjudication response unless the claimant gives the reply within the 5 business days.

10 Clause 15 (Replacement of s 25 (Adjudication procedures))

Page 17, lines 29 to 36 and page 18, lines 1 to 3—

omit.

11 Clause 15 (Replacement of s 25 (Adjudication procedures))

Page 18, lines 4 to 34 and page 19, lines 1 to 16—

omit, insert—

25A Time requirements for adjudication proceedings

- (1) An adjudicator must decide an adjudication application on or before the deadline for deciding the application but not before the end of the minimum consideration period for deciding the application.
- (2) However, the claimant and respondent may, before or after the deadline, agree in writing that the adjudicator has additional time to decide the application.
- (3) The **minimum consideration period** for deciding an adjudication application is—
 - (a) the period within which the respondent may give an adjudication response to the adjudicator under section 24A; but
 - (b) if the claimant may give a claimant's reply under section 24B—the period mentioned in paragraph (a) plus the period within which the claimant may give the reply.

Note—

Only a complex payment claim may involve a claimant's reply. See section 24B.

- (4) The **deadline**, for deciding an adjudication application relating to a standard payment claim, is the day that is 10 business days after—
- (a) if the adjudicator was given an adjudication response in compliance with section 24A—the day on which the adjudicator receives the response; or
 - (b) otherwise—the last day on which the respondent could have given the adjudicator the response.
- (5) The **deadline**, for deciding an adjudication application relating to a complex payment claim, is the day that is 15 business days after—
- (a) if the adjudicator was given an adjudication response in compliance with section 24A—the day on which the adjudicator receives the response; or
 - (b) otherwise—the last day on which the respondent could have given the adjudicator the response.
- (6) However, if the claimant may give the adjudicator a claimant's reply under section 24B, the **deadline** for deciding the adjudication application is the day that is 15 business days after—
- (a) if the adjudicator was given a claimant's reply in compliance with section 24B—the day on which the adjudicator receives the reply; or
 - (b) otherwise—the last day on which the claimant could have given the adjudicator the reply.

12 Clause 15 (Replacement of s 25 (Adjudication procedures))

Page 19, line 23, '25A(4)'—

omit, insert—

25A(2)

13 Clause 15 (Replacement of s 25 (Adjudication procedures))

Page 19, line 22, 'attempt, but fail, to'—

omit, insert—

fail to

14 Clause 15 (Replacement of s 25 (Adjudication procedures))

Page 19, lines 24 and 28, '25A(3)'—

omit, insert—

25A(5) or (6)

15 Clause 17 (Amendment of s 32 (Claimant may make new application in certain circumstances))

Page 20, lines 11 to 13—

omit, insert—

- (1) Section 32(1)(b), 'section 25(3)'—

omit, insert—

section 25A or 25B

- (2) Section 32(2)(a), 'authorised nominating authority to whom the application was made'—

omit, insert—

registrar

16 Clause 19 (Replacement of s 34 (Authorised nominating authority's fees))

Page 20, lines 18 to 28 and page 21, lines 1 to 12—

omit, insert—

19 Omission of s 34 (Authorised nominating authority's fees)

Section 34—

omit.

17 After clause 34

Page 27, after line 17—

insert—

34A Omission of s 85 (Issue of adjudication certificate by registrar)

Section 85—

omit.

18 Clause 37 (Amendment of s 100 (Effect of pt 3 on civil proceedings))

Page 28, line 10, 'must'—

omit, insert—

may

19 Clause 38 (Omission of s 101 (Adjudicator must give copy of decision to authorised nominating authority))

Page 28, lines 15 to 18—

*omit, insert—***38 Replacement of s 101 (Adjudicator must give copy of decision to authorised nominating authority)**

Section 101—

*omit, insert—***101 Queensland Building and Construction Board's policy**

- (1) The Queensland Building and Construction Board may make a policy governing the administration of this Act.
- (2) The policy does not take effect until approved by regulation.
- (3) Section 19(4) of the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991* applies for a policy made under this section as if the policy were made under section 19 of that Act.
- (4) In this section—

Queensland Building and Construction Board means the Queensland Building and Construction Board established under the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991*, section 10.

20 After clause 41

Page 29, after line 12—

*insert—***41A Amendment of s 111 (Regulation-making power)**

Section 111(2)—

insert—

- (c) prescribe procedures for—
 - (i) the lodgement of adjudication applications with the registrar, including the last time during a day that applications may be lodged; and
 - (ii) the processing of adjudication applications by the registrar.

21 Clause 44 (Insertion of new pt 7, div 2)

Page 30, line 28, after 'registration'—

insert—

as an authorised nominating authority

22 Clause 44 (Insertion of new pt 7, div 2)

Page 30, lines 30 and 31—

*omit.***23 Clause 44 (Insertion of new pt 7, div 2)**

Page 31, lines 1 to 16—

*omit, insert—***114 Applications to authorised nominating authorities for referral to adjudicators**

- (1) This section applies to an adjudication application made, but not yet referred to an adjudicator, under section 21 before the commencement.
- (2) The adjudication application must be dealt with under the unamended Act, section 21 as if this Act had not been amended by the *Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Act 2014*.
- (3) In this section—

unamended Act means this Act as in force immediately before the commencement of this section.

24 Clause 44 (Insertion of new pt 7, div 2)

Page 31, after line 16—

*insert—***115 Existing contracts not subject to new recovery of progress payment procedures**

- (1) This section applies to a construction contract entered into before the commencement.
- (2) The existing recovery of progress payment provisions continue to apply for the recovery of progress payments relating to the construction contract as if the provisions had not been amended by the amending Act.
- (3) However, the changes made under the amending Act and relating to the functions of the authorised nominating authorities being transferred to the registrar do apply to the construction contract.

Examples—

- 1 Adjudication applications are to be made to the registrar in the approved form and be accompanied by the fee prescribed by regulation.
 - 2 The registrar refers adjudication applications to adjudicators.
 - 3 Claimants may ask the registrar for an adjudication certificate.
- (4) In this section—

amending Act means the *Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Act 2014*.

existing recovery of progress payment provisions means the unamended Act, part 3, divisions 1 and 2.

unamended Act means this Act as in force immediately before the commencement of this section.

116 Mandatory training about adjudication changes

- (1) The registrar may impose a condition on the registration of an adjudicator that requires the adjudicator—
 - (a) to complete the mandatory transition training prescribed by regulation; and
 - (b) to pay the cost of the training prescribed by regulation.
- (2) This section expires 6 months after the commencement.

25 Clause 45 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 32, lines 6 to 15—

omit, insert—

claimant's reply, for an adjudication application, see section 24B(2).

complex payment claim means a payment claim for an amount more than \$750,000 (exclusive of GST) or, if a greater amount is prescribed by regulation, the amount prescribed.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. Tim Mander's amendments [\[5941\]](#).

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 45, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. TL MANDER (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.33 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. TL MANDER (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.34 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.

WATER LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 3 June (see p. 1945).

Second Reading

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (12.34 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In opening, I want to thank the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee for its prompt consideration of the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. In particular, I thank the committee and the chair, the member for Gympie, David Gibson, for their deliberation and report tabled on 28 August 2014. As part of their examination of the bill, the committee provided an opportunity for public submissions and held a public briefing with departmental officers on 12 June 2014. One submission, from Unitywater, was received in support of the bill, and the committee decided not to convene a public hearing as a consequence. The committee made one recommendation—that the bill be passed—but raised one point of clarification in relation to the imposition of water restrictions, which I will address later in my speech.

I will now address the substance of the bill. Can I say that, although it was introduced to parliament prior to the launch of the 30-year strategy for Queensland's water sector, this bill is an example of WaterQ in action. It addresses smart regulation, responsible and productive water management and, most importantly, customer empowerment and community education. The Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014 amends three acts for a number of purposes. The key objectives of the bill are: to improve the state's powers to respond to and manage water supply emergencies and flood events before the next wet season; to improve the governance provisions for category 1 water authorities, that is, Gladstone Area Water Board and Mount Isa Water Board; and to bring the Queensland Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 into alignment with the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005.

Shortly after being elected, this government committed to implementing all 177 recommendations of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry final report for which it was responsible. One of the first acts I introduced into parliament in September 2012 was an act to substantially implement nine of the commission's recommendations relating to dam safety and flood mitigation. That legislation also relocated and streamlined the power to declare temporary full supply levels for dams which operate under an approved flood mitigation manual from the Water Act 2000 to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. These powers had been enacted earlier in 2011 on the basis of recommendations in the commission's interim report.

Since then, temporary full supply level declarations have been made on a number of occasions for both Wivenhoe and North Pine dams and have proved an effective tool in managing the potential impacts of flood events in South-East Queensland. However, the experience of the 2012-13 wet season, in which a number of declarations were made, including on non-business days, demonstrated the limitations of using the gazettal process to give effect to a temporary full supply level declaration. The bill addresses this issue by providing for a future declaration to be made and have effect when notice is given to the dam owner. However, the bill maintains a requirement for a copy of the notice to be published in the *Gazette* as soon as practicable after it is given to the dam owner, maintaining a public record of the executive decision. This process is appropriate and balances the need for immediate action with transparency and accountability.

The bill also clarifies the procedures that apply to operating the three major dams in South-East Queensland during a flood event—that is, Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams. The dam owner, Seqwater, must operate these dams in accordance with the approved flood mitigation manuals for the dams during a flood event. If there is a situation that arises for which the approved flood mitigation manual does not provide for or adequately provide for, the dam operator can request approval from the chief executive of my department to adopt a different procedure. The chief executive must consider the request and make a decision. However, there is a need to clarify when authorisation would be provided if the chief executive cannot be contacted or contact is made but lost before a reply is provided. The bill simply clarifies the step for requesting approval to adopt a different procedure to ensure that, if Seqwater has attempted to contact the chief executive and has not received a response within a reasonable period, it can adopt an appropriate operating procedure to manage the dam during the flood event.

I will now turn to the other major amendments relating to water supply emergencies. The bill streamlines the process for making and giving effect to an emergency water supply declaration and implementing water restrictions to manage the supply emergency. The provisions of chapter 2, part 2, division 2A, 'Other water supply emergencies', of the Water Act 2000 provide a legal framework to deal with both short-term and long-term water supply emergencies. These powers were first enacted in 2005 during the millennium drought and the regulation powers, the longer term mechanism, were

used to facilitate much of the drought response. Flooding and storms during the wet season are common events. The declaratory powers have not been exercised to date, but the Mount Crosby event of January 2013 when a spike in turbidity temporarily shut down the water treatment plants could have developed into a situation needing an intervention by way of a broad emergency declaration.

Under an emergency water supply declaration, a service provider may be directed to redirect water, including non-potable water, to other service providers or operate infrastructure in a particular way to facilitate these actions and impose restrictions on the use of water by customers. In assessing the options available to manage the Mount Crosby situation, it became clear that the current legislation is impractical and prevents an effective response to an emerging event on the same day or next day. The bill addresses this issue in two ways. First, the changes in the bill mean that the Governor in Council's approval and gazettal requirements for giving effect to an emergency declaration will not be required. Instead it provides for a declaration to have effect when made by the minister or at a later date stated in the declaration. The bill provides for a copy of the declaration to be given directly to affected service providers and for a copy to be published in the Gazette as soon as practicable after it is made. The time frame for the declaration period is extended from 15 to 20 business days but may be ended sooner by the making of an emergency regulation.

The committee's report agreed that the Governor in Council's process is too time consuming if short-term restrictions need to be implemented quickly to respond to a water supply emergency. Second, the bill provides for the service provider to impose water restrictions because of an urgent need or as directed under an emergency declaration to commence on the same day they are announced, removing the potential delay in implementing these actions to deal with the supply emergency. However, in these circumstances the service provider must give notice of the restrictions by public broadcast on radio or television or by using another form of electronic communication. Providing notice in an appropriate way is important for supporting implementation of the restrictions and to ensure customers are informed of the restrictions from the time they take effect.

While the committee report supports this measure, it asks for further clarification as to the actual steps that may be taken by a service provider in order to mitigate the risk of a person inadvertently committing an offence resulting from the restrictions taking immediate effect. The bill does not limit the additional steps the provider may adopt to notify affected customers. It will be expected a range of media would be used by providers to ensure customers are aware that restrictions apply in addition to radio and television broadcasts. For example, this may involve the use of social media, SMS alert, website messaging, public libraries, newspapers and letterbox drops. We have found the community is increasingly resilient in preparing for and staying alert to the impacts of storm events as they occur. Should emergency water restrictions be imposed, I have no concern about whether the community will be well informed and comply with the restrictions. I will now briefly mention the remaining components of the bill.

The government is committed to reducing red tape and regulation wherever possible and to maintaining its commitment to the national Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme. In this regard, the bill amends the Water Act 2000 to improve the governance provisions of category 1 water authorities—Gladstone Area Water Board and Mount Isa Water Board—reducing red tape, removing redundant provisions, increasing transparency and aligning the framework with commercial business practices; and amends the Queensland Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005—the Queensland WELS Act—to bring it into alignment with the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 following the outcomes of the independent review of the scheme in 2010. The approach to amend the Queensland WELS Act that has been adopted is what is termed the 'applied provisions' model of uniform legislation that has now been adopted in a number of other jurisdictions, for example, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia. This approach applies the Commonwealth water efficiency laws as laws of the state of Queensland. This not only brings about greater consistency in terms of how the scheme applies across jurisdictions but also reduces the Queensland statute book by more than 30 pages and should avoid the need for future amendments as the Commonwealth laws are modified from time to time. Importantly, however the state retains the ability to modify the effect of the Commonwealth laws by subordinate legislation. The bill requires that any amendment to the Commonwealth laws is tabled in this House within 10 sitting days after commencement.

The bill also makes minor amendments to remove redundant references to the Queensland Water Commission from the Water Act 2000 and includes Noosa Shire Council in the definition of the SEQ region. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.45 pm): On behalf of the Labor opposition I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. I wish to advise that the opposition will not be opposing this bill and will support the bill's aims in principle. However, I will be raising some issues with which we have some concerns and outlining the parts of the bill that we do support.

The bill has three broad aims: one, to change the procedures of the water supply system to deal with emergencies in an expedited manner; two, to amend the governing procedures of category 1 water authorities under the Water Act; and, three, to amend the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 to ensure state law faithfully mirrors the federal law under the intergovernmental Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards, or WELS, Scheme. I will address each aim in turn giving our comments and concerns in relation to each.

Over the past decade, Queensland has experienced severe flood and cyclone emergencies that have severely affected life and property. The speed at which emergencies develop can be fast and, as an opposition, we believe that the state should have the powers necessary to deal with emergencies and the threats to public safety that arise from natural disasters. These powers include the power to deal with threats to the water supply and threats to public safety from the water supply. That is why we are minded to support this bill's first aim to amend the procedures of the water supply system to deal with emergencies in a timely manner. In many emergency circumstances a timely manner may be measured in terms of hours, not days. This bill gives the minister, water suppliers and dam operators more flexibility and greater powers to act with urgency in the event of a flood emergency.

The bill effects this intention in several parts. Clauses 2 to 4 of this bill amend the Water Act 2000 to allow for an emergency water supply declaration by the minister to have immediate effect. The bill removes the Governor in Council approval and gazettal notice requirements for an emergency declaration. The life of such a declaration is also extended from 15 days to 20 days. Currently, the Water Act allows the Minister for Energy and Water Supply to prepare a water supply emergency declaration if the minister is satisfied there is a water supply emergency or a water supply emergency is developing. Under the declaration, the minister may require water service providers to carry out specified measures, for example, imposing water restrictions. During the State Development, Industry and Innovation Committee scrutiny of this bill, the removal of the Governor in Council approval and gazettal notice requirements for an emergency declaration was heavily scrutinised by committee members at the public briefing of the committee by senior officers of the Department of Energy and Water Supply. Departmental officers raised concerns that the Governor in Council approval process could take up to nine days and that would be much too long in the case of a flood emergency. Therefore, the amendments proposed by clauses 2, 3 and 4 of this bill are necessary to ensure that the state has the powers needed to deal with emergencies that affect the water supply system that arise from natural disasters and, thus, they have the opposition's support.

Clauses 38 to 40 of the bill amend the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to allow for water service providers to issue emergency supplier water supply restrictions with immediate effect. It was these amendments which raised the concerns of the committee as outlined in its report as to the implications that such immediacy of effect may have on water consumers unaware of the issue of emergency supplier water supply restrictions. The concern of the committee was highlighted in its only clarification contained within its report on this bill. The committee in its report sought advice from the department as to the specific steps that may be taken by a service provider to provide adequate notice of water restrictions in order to mitigate the risk of a person inadvertently committing an offence resulting from water restrictions taking immediate effect. The committee is right to raise this issue.

As a parliament, we should refrain from making laws which create offences which rest on certain variable conditions of which individuals may not be reasonably aware. However, my concern is mitigated on two counts. Firstly, clause 38 of the bill inserts a requirement into section 43 of the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 that water service providers must broadcast notice of emergency supplier water supply restrictions by television, radio or other electronic media. In an emergency situation, this allows for an immediate communication of the restriction to the general population in the shortest possible time.

Secondly, under the same clause 38, the immediate application of emergency supplier water supply restrictions can only occur where the minister has made a water supply emergency declaration under the Water Act or if there is another urgent need. In all other circumstances the effect of the restrictions will only come into force the next day. On both counts the immediate application of

emergency supplier water supply restrictions will only occur in an extraordinary situation where there is an urgent need, and in such cases notice of the restrictions will be made in as prompt and efficient a manner as possible. Given the emergency situation that would apply in such circumstances it is a reasonable trade-off, and the Queensland opposition believes clauses 38 to 40 of this bill are satisfactory.

I turn to clause 41 of the bill, which grants dam owners powers under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to adopt alternative operating procedures during a flood event without approval from the chief executive. Such powers would only be permissible if the dam operator had attempted to contact the chief executive and had not received a response in a reasonable period of time. I note that during the public briefing to the committee from the departmental representatives, it was advised that the rationale for this amendment was to allow dam operators to take emergency action in catastrophic circumstances where communication with the department was not possible. In my view this is a prudent rationale for this proposed change.

Clause 42 of the bill grants the minister the power to make, with immediate effect upon notice to the dam owner, a declaration of a temporary full supply level for dams that operate under an approved flood mitigation manual without the need for a gazettal process. Such dams which currently operate under an approved flood mitigation manual are the Somerset, Wivenhoe and North Pine dams. In effect, the only dam owner affected by this amendment is Seqwater. The ministerial power to declare a temporary full supply level was first enacted in 2011 following the recommendations of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry and has provided an effective mechanism to assist in managing the impacts of flood events in South-East Queensland. These powers were exercised multiple times during the 2012-13 wet season for both the Wivenhoe and North Pine dams, including on non-business days.

During the State Development Industry and Innovation Committee's scrutiny of this bill, they were advised by a representative of the Department of Energy and Water Supply during the public briefing that the previous gazettal notice process held up a pressing need in early 2013 for a declaration of a temporary full-supply level at North Pine Dam. Given this advice from the department, the Queensland opposition supports the streamlining of the temporary full supply level declaration process.

I now turn to the second aim of this bill: to amend the governing procedures for category 1 water authorities under the Water Act, namely, the Gladstone Area Water Board and the Mount Isa Water Board. While on balance the Queensland opposition supports these governance changes for category 1 water authorities, there is one change that gives me cause for concern. Clause 11 of the bill amends section 580 of the Water Act to remove the requirement for category 1 water authorities to give notice when buying or selling property of more than \$1 million. The category 1 water authorities of the Gladstone Area Water Board and the Mount Isa Water Board both have large holdings of assets as set out in their most recent public annual reports of 2012-13. In the case of Gladstone, the asset holdings of its water board are in excess of \$555 million. In the case of Mount Isa, the asset holdings of its water board are in excess of \$116 million. These are organisations with significant financial worth, and prudence suggests that the minister maintain oversight of these boards. On this basis there is merit in keeping the \$1 million notice threshold for buying or selling property.

I note that the same clause also amends and requires category 1 water authorities to notify the minister of all significant actions whether or not such action is specified in its performance plan. This requirement retains ministerial oversight on the actions of category 1 water authorities, albeit on another formulation, and this on balance makes clause 11 satisfactory.

I now turn to the final aim of this act: amending the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 to ensure state law faithfully mirrors the federal law under the Intergovernmental Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards, or WELS, scheme. The WELS scheme is a good example of the states and the Commonwealth working together with their respective constitutional responsibilities to deliver practical outcomes for all Australians. In 2004 the Commonwealth, state and territory governments agreed to establish a national water efficiency labelling scheme in the National Water Initiative. The following year the Commonwealth, state and territory governments entered into the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Intergovernmental Agreement, creating the WELS scheme. The scheme was established by the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005. States and territories enacted equivalent legislation which addresses those matters outside the Commonwealth's constitutional heads of power. The federal and state acts commenced over the course of 2005. Following an interim phase-in period, the scheme became mandatory on 1 July 2006.

The scheme's objectives are to conserve water supplies by reducing consumption through providing information to consumers about the water efficiency of products and by promoting the adoption of water-efficient technologies, including by setting minimum efficiency standards. These aims were keenly supported by the former Beattie government at that time, as it was a keen advocate of water conservation. The Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 had support from both the then National-Liberal opposition and the crossbench.

WELS was designed to improve the performance of the market for water-using products by increasing the sale of water-efficient products, thus contributing to water conservation. The WELS scheme provides for a single point of registration for WELS products and for the Commonwealth to be the regulator. On the demand side, the purpose of WELS is to guide consumers to more water-efficient appliances and fittings by providing information about water efficiency that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. The water efficiency star rating system, which the WELS scheme has made mandatory across Australia, is an excellent method for the provision of water efficiency that would otherwise be difficult to obtain.

After five years of operation, the Commonwealth government commissioned an independent review of the WELS scheme in 2010. The review found that the scheme was good public policy. A cost benefit analysis undertaken by the Institute for Sustainable Futures for the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts found that the scheme has generated water savings at a cost of \$0.08 per kilolitre to \$0.21 per kilolitre. This cost is cheaper than other measures with similar water savings aims; for instance, desalination can cost between \$1.19 per kilolitre to \$2.55 per kilolitre. The same study projected that over the period 2005-06 to 2020-21, WELS will reduce national water consumption by a total of 800 gigalitres, which is almost double the annual water consumption of greater Sydney.

The WELS scheme is a successful program and the Queensland opposition, as it did when it was in government, supports a commitment to maintain legislation that forms part of a national scheme for water efficiency labelling and standards. As a response to the findings of the independent review, the Commonwealth and all states and territories agreed to changes to the governance, compliance and administration of the scheme, including measures to improve the level of cost recovery from product registration fees and the introduction of civil penalties. The Commonwealth Act was amended in 2012 and 2013 in response to the recommendations of the independent review of 2010. Clauses 28 to 36 of this bill now amend the Queensland Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 to mirror the changes to the Commonwealth act to ensure the scheme in Queensland applies as it does across the nation. The Queensland opposition, consistent with its commitment to the WELS scheme, supports these amendments. I note that the applied provisions legislative method to ensure uniformity of laws is contemplated by clauses 28 to 36. This method applies the Commonwealth WELS legislation as laws of the state of Queensland. This approach to achieve uniformity with the Commonwealth act has also been adopted by other states and territories including New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia; however, as with other jurisdictions, the amendments provide for the state to modify the effect of the Commonwealth act by subordinate legislation if required.

Clause 35 of the bill also requires that the Queensland Parliament be informed of any changes to the Commonwealth WELS Act and any regulations in force under that Act as it applies in Queensland. Given these safeguards, these amendments are satisfactory to ensure the implementation of uniform state and federal legislation for this scheme without unduly impinging the sovereignty of this parliament.

Madam Speaker, the Labor opposition will support sensible legislation introduced by the government where it is in the best interests of Queenslanders. This bill has several varying aims. We as an opposition have considered the bill according to its aims, and on balance we are satisfied that it is in best interest of Queenslanders.

Debate, on motion of Mr Pitt, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member



Dr LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (2.30 pm): This morning the Minister for Education, Training and Employment brought to the House's attention an extract from my contribution to the private member's motion debate on Tuesday night. I have now had an opportunity to review the *Record of Proceedings*

and it appears that I inadvertently omitted two important words while making a point during the debate. I should have said 'the government is continuing to refuse to release lists'. I acknowledge my error and apologise for any confusion it may have caused. I had no intention of misleading the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Harlin State School

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.31 pm): I am extremely proud to rise in the House this afternoon knowing full well that approximately 45 wonderful students from Harlin State School have tuned in to watch Queensland parliament and to hear their local member speak. They will be seeing everything that is going on in the House.

One of the reasons I became a member of this great House was to represent my community. Back in 2012 I had an opportunity to visit one of my 36 schools, Harlin State School—a beautiful small community in the Brisbane Valley. On that day I entered a classroom, which those young children are hopefully sitting in today watching parliament. It was extremely crowded. The room was very small. I spoke to the then teacher, Mr Andrew Worthington, who said to me, 'We have been asking for years for a classroom and this will never happen.' I talked to the principal, Mrs Kay Rye. We worked very hard, together with the school community. I am extremely proud that last week, on 3 September, I was able to officially open the Harlin State School's new building. It was an extremely wonderful day for me. I really want to acknowledge the hard work of Mrs Kay Rye. I also acknowledge the senior class teacher, Kerry Derksen; the amazing admin officer, Narelle Maller; the music and HPE teacher Felicity; junior teacher Susan Hallas and language teacher Gladwyn Arwadi.

Also on that day we were able to hear from the school leaders: Taylor Williams, Katie Humphreys, Caleb Karreman and Amber Williams. These wonderful children stood up and spoke in front of a huge number of community members including other local principals. It was also wonderful to have an afternoon tea, put on by the local P&C. I must credit the president, Helen Golinski, for her amazing sponge cake; the secretary, Ngaio Deer; and the treasurer, Sharelle Cooper, for their hard work for this amazing little community.

Another fantastic thing that happened on that day was that Mrs Dallas Williams, who planted the first tree at Harlin, was able to plant another tree on that site along with five of her grandchildren, who have all attended Harlin State School. They planted a native tree to commemorate the opening of this new building.

This school, which is now 106 years old, is just a fantastic, wonderful little community. I stand here today and wave to all of those amazing students of the Harlin State School. Thank you for making me very proud.

Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.34 pm): It is official: Mermaid Beach is the new hot spot on the Gold Coast, with investment, lifestyle and employment opportunities bursting through the roof in one of the most enviable parts of the Gold Coast and Queensland that people could ever wish to live in. Now that the Newman government has exorcised the criminal bkie gangs living in the area, with the hopefully soon-to-be-High-Court-endorsed VLAD laws, and with the party house legislation passed by the Newman government which will see out-of-control party venues banned from the region by council enforced town planning laws, the liveability of the Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach area has soared to new heights.

The liveability of Mermaid Beach has been further enhanced by the ultramodern G: train arriving on our doorstep at Pacific Fair, delivering passengers from Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach to all points on the way to the colossal Gold Coast University Hospital in a seamless, comfortable, new-age mode of Gold Coast public transport that makes movement to and from Mermaid Beach by public transport an even more attractive lifestyle choice.

Recognising the opportunities associated with this increased lifestyle improvement and living desirability, our major retailer in the area, Pacific Fair Shopping Centre, has embarked on a stunning \$680 million investment in refurbishing and expanding what is probably the best known shopping centre in Queensland. This will escalate Pacific Fair Shopping Centre to the stratosphere of the top 10 shopping centres in Australia. Work is well underway already, and the projected outcomes, from visuals I have seen, will make this international destination a tourism icon in itself.

Joining the stampede of investment in the Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach area, Jupiters Casino has committed to a \$300 million upgrade, particularly to the establishment of a top grade hotel tower which will also seriously enhance the rejuvenation of the tourism and entertainment facilities in the Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach area. Intertwined with the increasingly popular and extremely well-utilised Gold Coast convention centre, the Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach lifestyle and entertainment precinct will be both world class and world acclaimed by millions of tourists and residents over the years to come.

This ringing endorsement of the Newman government's deliberate and well-executed strategy of cutting red tape, stimulating investment and upholding a strong sense of law and order has led to a plethora of jobs, jobs, jobs becoming available in the fabulous area of Mermaid Beach-Broadbeach. With a billion dollars worth of investment in the area, concreters, tradies, restaurant workers and takeaway food shops are booming in Broadie. Thank you, Campbell Newman, for supporting my beloved Mermaid Beach area and all of its wonderfully lucky residents. I look forward to a glowing future in my little patch of heaven on Earth.

Abbot Point, Dredge Spoil

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (2.37 pm): This government believes in strong environmental management supporting sustainable long-term economic development. We on this side of the House protect Queensland's unique ecosystems including its landscapes and waterways as well as its native plants, animals and biodiversity through streamlined and practical regulation. We on this side of the House put science before politics and green outcomes ahead of Greens preferences. In just over two years this government has achieved a very long list of tangible environmental outcomes for Queensland.

The solution that was reached earlier this week to protect the unique values of the Great Barrier Reef and allow for the staged development of the important port of Abbot Point is a win-win for the environment and economic development. This solution will see dredge material produced at Abbot Point beneficially re-used on land. Most importantly, this solution is about protecting the greatest single asset Queensland has and will always have: the Great Barrier Reef.

As the Deputy Premier has said, in considering this landmark proposal it is worth remembering that Labor's megaport plan involved dredging and disposing over 12 times the amount of spoil now being considered and dumping it at sea. Not only that, as the Deputy Premier so eloquently outlined this morning, the Labor solution up to now has only been to dredge and dump in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Let us not forget the fact that UNESCO's concerns for the state of the reef are completely due to the mismanagement of the previous Labor government.

I also note that this common-sense solution to what was a tangled cobweb of a problem left to us by the previous government was commended for the balance achieved in a *Courier-Mail* editorial this week. I agree with the comments in that editorial that not all stakeholders will be happy—some green groups oppose coal development in any form—but such is the nature of strong decision making. The editorial also noted—and I agree—that the Deputy Premier deserves congratulations for having negotiated a compromise which manages to minimise risk to both the environment and the state's economic development.

As I said at the outset, this government has a very long list of tangible environmental outcomes for Queensland: \$7 million, with \$5 million more to come, this year in funding for grassroots conservation and heritage projects, our Everyone's Environment grants; \$3.2 million for vital research into causes of disease and disease prevention in our faunal emblem, the koala; almost one million hectares of nature refuges; more than \$35 million being spent acquiring the best and most biodiverse properties for our protected area estate; the establishment of a Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership; commenced publicly releasing performance information relating to environment assessments and approvals across the state; continued an annual \$2 million commitment to the Healthy Waterways program in South-East Queensland; and rigorously monitored the impacts of the coal seam gas industry, including through site inspections and the approval of the first underground water impact reports and baseline assessment plans. These are only a few of a very much longer list. Ultimately, Labor measured environmental protection in pages of legislation. In comparison, significant environmentally beneficial outcomes have already been achieved, not least for our single greatest asset in the reef but right across Queensland, thanks to this government taking a risk based approach to our regulatory strategy, and the results speak for themselves.

Cleveland Electorate, Economy

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (2.40 pm): Since the LNP formed government in March 2012, Cleveland has been open to business. We have worked hard to grow the four-pillar economy in Cleveland. Tourism, construction, agriculture and resources sectors are all important and progressing locally. We are supporting the 4,400-plus local businesses, 98 per cent of which are small businesses with less than 20 employees. They create most of the local jobs in Redland City. As the local MP and as part of the LNP government, I have been working hard for businesses in four major ways. The first is running and supporting business events. We are running a series of interactive small business breakfasts with local traders. There have already been two at Main Road in Wellington Point and Bloomfield Street in Cleveland, with others to be rolled out. I will also attend the launch of a new small business next week in Wellington Point. We are also working closely with the chambers of commerce in Redland City and Straddie headed by presidents Garry Hargrave and David Thomson respectively. The second is busting red tape and compliance. The LNP government is making life easier for businesses by reducing government red tape by 20 per cent. We have already reformed fair trading regulation; reduced green tape, saving businesses over \$6 million in annual fees; and just announced that businesses with an annual payroll tax liability of less than \$20,000 need only lodge payroll tax returns twice per year instead of every month.

The third is funding and facilitating projects, big and small. Large projects like the Toondah Harbour PDA development will create large numbers of local jobs and opportunities in construction, tourism and hospitality and downstream jobs in retail and other small business. The government's decision to save sandmining jobs on North Stradbroke Island in a carefully planned transition and to work with the Quandamooka people to create Indigenous opportunities are also significant. However, I take this opportunity as a matter of privilege to correct a figure from my MPI speech on 26 August when I inadvertently said that the number of Indigenous jobs on North Stradbroke Island was 150. The figure that I meant to use was 50 Indigenous jobs, and I now correct the record. The government's decision to save Straddie means up to 600 direct and indirect jobs in Redland City have been saved. We are also partnering with the Redland City Council in small projects that help local businesses, like the \$200,000 towards the revitalisation of Penny Lane shopping area in the Cleveland CBD. The fourth is that we are keeping the cost of doing business down in Queensland. We have reduced payroll tax impacts by increasing the threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million. We have abolished Labor's \$300-plus million commercial waste levy. We have required government departments to pay their bills to small businesses in a timely manner and supported the repeal of Labor's carbon tax, saving businesses and consumers millions. In conclusion, Cleveland's businesses and job creation under the LNP government are back on track under our strong plan for a bright future.

Newman Government, Performance

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.43 pm): I rise today on the second anniversary of one of the darkest days in our state's history. On 11 September 2012 the Treasurer had the opportunity to deliver the conservatives' first budget on behalf of the new government. The Newman government's budget was its first chance in more than a dozen years to set out its vision for Queensland. After many long years in opposition, it could have empowered the Public Service. It could have worked with it to deliver the services that Queenslanders need. But that is not what the LNP chose to do. Instead, it went on a crusade aimed at gutting the Public Service. It took the axe to its own workforce. It lined up Queensland's hardworking public servants and kicked them out the door. Some 14,000 workers were gone in the blink of an eye, and we know since then that there have been thousands more in government owned businesses and the community sector.

That was all done because of the deceit this Premier showed during the election campaign. Do not forget that it was the then candidate for Ashgrove and the now Premier who stood there before everyone and said very clearly that public servants had absolutely nothing to fear. Two years on, the people out there will never, ever forget. When I am travelling across this state I meet those public servants day in, day out who lost their jobs. They will never forget the day that this government took an axe to them—took an axe to their lives, an axe to their jobs. Those opposite can sit here and laugh and shake their heads or bow their heads, but these are real people. These are real people with families and with bills to pay such as mortgages and rents and this callous government chose to ignore them when they could have been working with them to deliver services for this state. But would we expect anything less from this government? Would we expect anything less? Absolutely not!

The day of reckoning is coming. In just over six months time the people of Queensland will have their chance to cast their vote on whether this government has delivered on its promises. I can tell members that there are thousands of workers who have been sacked by this government who will have it firmly in their mind when they go to the ballot box how they are going to vote, and it will not be for this callous, arrogant, out-of-touch Newman government. Queenslanders will not forget. As I move across the multicultural communities as well they are all talking to me about the families who have lost their jobs and the impact that that has had on their communities, not just in Brisbane but right across the regions. Let this be a warning to those opposite. Within just over six months time there is going to be an election and people will finally have their voices heard.

Ipswich Electorate, Cost of Living

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (2.46 pm): I rise to talk about the cost of living in Ipswich. It is the most important topic in my electorate today. As I listened to the Leader of the Opposition, I wondered why it is the case. There is only so much money in the economy that is circulating, but the previous government left an \$80 billion debt equating to \$4 billion in interest or \$450,000 an hour. And they wonder why the economy had stalled under the previous government! The reality of life is that small business and employees do not spend if they do not have the disposable income in their pockets. What does that mean to small business? It means that people do not go to the coffee shop or make hairdressing appointments. They in fact withdraw, and that is what has been happening in our economy. The situation had got to the point where only the Newman government could save and is saving Queensland from the absolutely vacuous previous Labor government that just did not understand sound economic principles. It is money changing hands that allows the economy to function. There is nothing but a vacuous Labor policy of which we have not heard anything more, except for training. Yes, it is great to have training, but the difficulty with training is this: what is the point of somebody achieving a cert I, II or III if there is no prospect of a job? That is what in fact this government is doing. The fact is that we are creating the environment that creates jobs—not Public Service jobs, not the promise of the previous Bligh government. It did not do the hard work of priming the economy; it just hired people in the Public Service. Why the heck are those opposite complaining now about public servants? It is a bit late.

We have to reduce red tape, because red tape to small business means money and time. Where small businesses are concerned, if they have to spend time on red tape it means they cannot get down to the fundamental business of doing what they do best—that is, getting on with the job and making a profit. Do members know why? If they make a profit, they will actually hire people. They will actually employ people. It has taken so long for the Labor Party to understand a basic principle—that you just cannot hire people without there being some prospect of having a permanent job. But that is okay for my constituents of Ipswich because they realise that with the cost of living being so high as a result of the previous Labor government we are doing something about it. That has been made clear over the last few weeks as I have been doorknocking local businesses and railway stations, both this morning and yesterday morning.

In fact, that has been very clear. I think most of the people to whom I have spoken to at the railway station are saying that they want fares to go down, even though it is one of those things that the government is doing well. They want fares to go down.

(Time expired)

Southern Gold Coast, Law and Order; September 11, 2001

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.49 pm): The Rapid Action and Patrol—or RAP—group, housed on the Gold Coast, is providing significant benefits in the fight against crime and antisocial behaviour. On Friday, 5 September, Operation Mike Biota was conducted by the RAP unit. That saw the closure of a two-month operation targeting drug supply on the southern Gold Coast involving a feeder gang known as the South Side Soldiers. The operation was conducted with 100 RAP officers and two members of the Australian Federal Police drug dog detection unit, specifically targeting addresses in the suburbs of Palm Beach and Currumbin Waters. In total, 10 offenders were charged with 40 charges relating to the production of drugs, possession of drugs, possession of weapons and stolen and tainted property. Police seized in excess of 50 kilograms of cannabis and a total of \$67,000, which will be alleged to be the proceeds of drug sales.

Whilst it is disheartening to know that this behaviour was occurring in our backyard, these activities by RAP have resulted in the dismantling of the second feeder gang on the southern Gold Coast following a fragmentation of the Gold Coast Brotherhood through unrelenting police raids that saw the incarceration of many members. Illegal gangs have no place in our neighbourhoods and our officers are to be applauded for their thorough and detailed investigations resulting in these most successful outcomes. I commend all officers involved in the sound results achieved in raids on premises linked to serious crime. My regular contact with the commander of the RAP unit, Superintendent Jim Keogh, other senior officers and our local police will continue so that we can deliver positive results for our community. Currumbin is a close-knit community with some of the best sporting facilities, parks and beaches, not to mention a host of events that bring thousands of tourists to the region each year. We need to send a clear message to criminals: if they bring violence and antisocial behaviour into our streets and licensed premises, they will be caught and prosecuted.

In my role for the past decade as the local member, I have made community consultation and safety a high priority as I lobby for greater police resources and tougher penalties. Under the LNP Newman government, there has been a significant decrease in break-ins, assaults and other crimes, coupled with a significant increase in the presence of police officers around our streets. Recent police operations in my electorate are indicative of this government's strong stance on law and order. We will continue to provide the resources and legislative backing that our officers need so that they can get on with the job. Unlike those opposite, we have not buried our head in the sand. We are unapologetic about our tough stance and commitment to making Queensland the safest place to live, work and raise a family.

Let us all take a moment to reflect and remember the victims and families of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, as we celebrate what it is to live in this wonderful country in our great state.

Bribie Island Bridge; Moreton Bay Regional Council Plan

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (2.52 pm): I am thrilled to stand here today to give an update on the recent announcements for a replacement Bribie Island bridge. Recently I released the concept planning study, which identifies the location of the future replacement bridge for Bribie Island. We have also begun securing the corridor by resuming the necessary land on the island side. Currently, I am in the phase where I am seeking feedback on the design of this bridge and important features to be included on our iconic bridge. I am thrilled that last week I had Minister Emerson on Bribie Island to announce \$2 million to further produce a business case on the detailed design of our bridge.

It will come as no surprise that Labor opposed the bridge being built before its design life ended. The other day Labor also protested, sending out its ETU and its local Labor members. Labor also made wild suggestions of the bridge becoming a toll bridge, where there is no truth to that, and that this is all talk and that we are not getting on with the job of a replacement bridge for Bribie. Let me be very clear. I have delivered on the planning study for the replacement bridge for Bribie like I said I would. I have secured the funds to progress to a detailed business case like I said I would. I have begun securing the corridor like I said I would. Labor continues to oppose building a replacement bridge, just like it always does.

I would like to give a big thankyou to Vicki Wood and Jorge Branco of the Bribie Weekly for their detailed coverage of this important issue for my community and the wonderful front page that they gave to it. I also give a big thankyou to Minister Emerson and his team for recognising a replacement bridge as such an important issue for my community.

I would also like to give an update on the Moreton Bay Regional Council plan—the draft scheme that has just come off display. On 25 February this year there was a resolution put to Moreton Bay Regional Council's coordinating committee that stated, with the information provided to that committee from the Deputy Premier, that the state government was no longer going to be taking into consideration in its documents the 0.8-of-a-metre sea level rise. We also advised the council that it no longer was required to incorporate that sea level rise. It is surprising to see that the council has still decided that it was going to take into consideration the predicted 0.8-of-a-metre sea level rise. It actually requested that the Local Government Association rally all the councils of the coastal communities to adopt that resolution.

I encourage the council to listen to the concerns of its community. I also encourage the council to base its flood mapping on historic data, not predicted sea level changes. I also encourage the council to follow the lead of this LNP government and take the Deputy Premier's advice and remove the assumed 0.8-metre sea level rise from its planning scheme and present our community with a positive plan for future growth.

Cowboys Rugby League Team; Intrust Super Cup

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.56 pm): It is very rare for me to stand in this place to speak solely about sport, but what I am going to talk about is far more than one game of rugby league. This Saturday night many members would know that the Cowboys are playing the Broncos in Townsville. Whilst we are all very proud Queenslanders, I am an extremely proud North Queensland and I wish nothing but great things for my home team on home soil.

The reason I want to raise this issue today, though, is that I want to outline to the House how important economically this game and this team is for not only my home city of Townsville but also North Queensland as a whole. When the Cowboys are performing well, the town is in a good place mentally. Those who are not passionate about rugby league may think that that is a bit of an overreach. It is not. A successful Cowboys side leads to the community having a real vibe about it, a real buzz. That is what is happening at the moment.

As of today, over 20,000 tickets to the game have been sold already. That is leaving some extra capacity. I can confirm to the House that all of the major hotel chains are fully booked, but there is still some spare capacity for some of the smaller operators. I urge people to support them. The flow-on effects of this game are incredible for the restaurants, the pubs and for the everyday attractions. People come to the city and they stay longer. The Cowboys are not just Townsville's team; they are regional Queensland's team. We are passionate about them and we want to see them do well.

I remember well in 2005 when we made our one and only grand final. I remember the parade where we farewelled our boys off to Sydney. There were people lining the streets from Thuringowa into town. I was a young first-term councillor and I remember being in one of the streets in my area in Cranbrook, standing shoulder to shoulder with an army of community members. People who were not even supportive of rugby league turned up that day because we are proud North Queenslanders and we want to see our side do well. For many years we have been unfairly the butt of Sydney's jokes.

Mr Johnson: Poor refereeing.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Our success on and off the field has proven those people wrong. The member for Gregory has mentioned poor refereeing. I will not engage in that, because inevitably I will end up sledging one of my colleagues who I like very much. I will not embark on that journey. Needless to say, this is a big moment for the Cowboys.

I also want to take the remaining time to congratulate the announcement of the decision by the Intrust Super Cup that from next year there will be a Townsville side in that competition. That is a great competition—a competition that has proven that it is bigger than Brisbane. It has gone into regional Queensland. Already it has a proud association with Mackay and Cairns through the Cowboys. This decision will give Townsville a side in that competition. It is the feeder side for our next generation of stars. This is the year of the Cowboys.

Safe Night Out Strategy

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (2.59 pm): On 27 August 2014 the member for Stafford rose on a matter of privilege claiming that I had misled the parliament in relation to my contribution on the Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Bill. I table a copy of my speech for the benefit of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Extract from *Record of Proceedings*, dated 26 August 2014: speech by the member for Morayfield, Mr Darren Grimwade MP [\[5942\]](#).

I therefore wish to clarify my comments in this regard. On 16 September 2012 Dr Anthony Lynham stated—

Licensed venues should have to be more spread apart and closed by 1 am.

I table a copy of the *Herald Sun* article for the benefit of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Herald Sun*, undated, titled 'Doctors plead for an end to the "dumb drinking culture" in Australia' [5943].

As members can see, the member for Stafford has previously referred to the lockout time as being 'closed', similar to the way I described the situation in my speech. Then on 28 August 2014 the member for Stafford delivered a speech in relation to Labor's policy. During this speech the member took an interjection from myself—

Your personal view is to shut pubs at one o'clock.

This was followed by a response from the member for Stafford—

That is a matter of false representation.

I table a copy of the *Hansard* for the benefit of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Extract from *Record of Proceedings*, dated 28 August 2014: speech by the member for Stafford, Dr Anthony Lynham MP [5944].

The position of the member for Stafford has been very confusing with his comments flip flopping on many occasions and this has made it extremely difficult to understand exactly what the Labor Party's policy is. It is my understanding, under the Labor Party policy, that if a patron was to arrive at a club just after 1 am they would be advised that the club is either shut, closed or entry is denied. Words to that effect would be used. If the patron is refused entry by security it is fair to say they would be thrown out and left in a vulnerable situation. I make this point to specifically clarify the terminology that I had used throughout my speech.

The member for Stafford also referred to my comments about the effects of youth unemployment under Labor's policy. I am very concerned about the impacts the Labor Party's policy will have on young people who work in the hospitality industry. It is my belief that having a 1 am lockout and stopping the service of alcohol at 3 am will cost jobs and result in reduced hours for young people, further putting pressure on the youth unemployment rate. The Valley Liquor Accord shares my concerns and recently distributed a media release that states—

The VLA feels that the belief that venues would continue to trade until 5 am is misguided. 'The fact is, venues will respond to the market and close early. This will put more people on the street at one single time and lead to further problems. Jobs will be lost, businesses will close, and Brisbane will lose out.'

I table a copy of the media release for the benefit of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 21 January 2014, from the Valley Liquor Accord, titled, 'Labor Misguided and Shortsighted' [5945].

I am very passionate about ensuring our young people have the opportunity to have a safe night out and are not penalised for the sins of a few. I am also absolutely dedicated to protecting the jobs of our young people who work in the hospitality industry that I feel will be jeopardised under Labor's knee-jerk plan. Therefore, unlike the member for Stafford who was forced to correct the record and apologise to the parliament for a misleading statement today, I do not feel there is any need to correct the record in this regard and I stand by my comments.

Brisbane Valley, Mining



Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—Ind) (3.02 pm): Last week here in this parliament the member for Nanango sought to allay the concerns of those landholders in the Brisbane Valley directly upstream from the Wivenhoe Dam. I table her speech.

Tabled paper: Extract from *Record of Proceedings*, dated 28 August 2014: speech by the member for Nanango, Mrs Deb Frecklington MP [5948].

This dam, as members know, is the major water catchment and flood mitigation strategy for Brisbane. I am concerned that what the member has stated in her speech is inconsistent with what is actually occurring in the upper reaches of the Wivenhoe. I table those maps.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Lake Wivenhoe—Google Maps' [5947].

Tabled paper: Document titled 'State Electoral District of Nanango' [5946].

I am further concerned by the fact the member comes from an established track record of deceit. Previously the member had stated she was opposing Acland stage 3. This electoral promise was reversed immediately after her success in Nanango. The New Hope colliery is now producing four million tonnes of coal annually, progressively to rise to 7.5 million tonnes annually. Despite what the assistant minister says, there is a Chinese coal company, Coalbank, drilling for coal using ATPs in

the Wivenhoe catchment along primarily Cressbrook Creek in the vicinity of Toogoolawah. There is coal in accessible open-cut seams there. That has been known for a long time. This major exploration company is confident it will be granted permission to mine. I table the mine ATP in mapped form and the wider mapping of the area.

Tabled paper: 1 of 2 maps titled 'Exploration and production permits' [5949].

Tabled paper: 2 of 2 maps titled 'Exploration and production permits' [5950].

Local landholders are protesting and, significantly, they recently interrupted a parliamentary committee hearing dressed up as Sadie, the cleaning ladies, to gain attention. It was led by Mrs Deb Edwards who lives in the local area. I table the PowerPoint presentation about Coalbank and the Brisbane Valley regarding those mining plans.

Tabled paper: PowerPoint document titled 'Potential Mining Sites in the Brisbane Valley under EPC2239' [5951].

The member for Nanango further claims, 'I believe it is not the place for an open-cut coalmine.' Furthermore, she claims that the 2015 review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan will 'ensure that no open-cut coalmine is ever developed in the pristine Brisbane Valley'. We have heard such statements before regarding other pristine prime agricultural areas, such as the high-quality food-producing region of Acland on the Darling Downs, but that is not in the major Brisbane water catchment as this proposal is. The reality is that neither the member for Nanango nor the Deputy Premier can be trusted in these matters because they have hitched their wagons to the big mining groups at the expense of food security, regional economies and, now, the water security of Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba. This is now about landholders, residents and all those people in Brisbane, Toowoomba and Ipswich losing out and the miners profiting. Moreover, the plan for the Brisbane Valley puts our South-East Queensland water supply at risk. What guarantees could the member for Nanango or the Deputy Premier provide that could reassure anyone that the Brisbane Valley is not their next port of call for rape and pillaging after what they did on the Darling Downs on their watch?

Surf Life Saving Queensland

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.05 pm): On Monday night I was delighted to attend the Surf Life Saving Queensland event that was held in the Premier's Hall. This event not only launched the official start of the surf-lifesaving season but I, along with the member for Maroochydore, also had the pleasure of announcing the establishment of the first Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving Queensland, which we will be co-chairing. I would like to thank all members who attended Monday night and those who have already signed up to the friendship group. For those who could not make it, it is not too late to join. This is a bipartisan friendship group. I call on all members in the House to consider joining. Just contact the Burleigh or Maroochydore electorate office if you would like to become a member.

I think it is also worth mentioning that this group is not only for coast based members but is inclusive of all regional and rural members. Surf-lifesaving benefits not only local residents but also those who visit our world-class beaches less regularly. The sole purpose of the friendship group is not only to foster relationships between parliamentarians and surf-lifesaving but also to promote the great work, value and community spirit that is the surf-lifesaving movement.

From Coolangatta to the cape, over 30,000 members of the surf-lifesaving community volunteered their time in the last patrolling season alone and this season will see those same volunteers, as well as a new group of recruits, contribute an estimated 350,000 patrol hours to this upcoming season. As a patrolling surf-lifesaver myself, I know the hard work and dedication it takes to keep our beaches safe. I am sure members will agree with me when I say there should be zero preventable deaths in Queensland waters. That is why we will be working to foster relationships within the parliament to assist in reaching that goal.

I would like to thank John Brennan and Ralph Devlin for helping to organise the night and for emceeing. I am an active surf-lifesaver at Pacific Surf Live Saving Club at Palm Beach. I am also actively involved with a whole group of other surf-lifesaving clubs such as Palm Beach, Tallebudgera, Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park, North Burleigh, Miami and Neptune Royal Life Saving Club at Neptune Beach. I will be on patrol next Saturday on the very first patrol of the year at eight o'clock in the morning if you want to see this on the beach.

Mrs Frecklington: In budgie smugglers.

Mr HART: In budgie smugglers. Come down to Pacific Surf Life Saving Club and help me push out the IRB, put up the patrol tents and put those boards out on the beach and let us have no deaths on our beaches this year and wish everybody a safe and successful surf-lifesaving season.

Child Protection Week

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (3.08 pm): This week is Queensland Child Protection Week with many events being hosted around the state to thank all of those who do so much. It really is a great opportunity to thank those who do so much to protect the most vulnerable and fragile members of our community. We must reinforce that protecting children is everybody's business. There are some wonderful people in our society who go above and beyond to look after our little ones in need and I would like to pay tribute to them today. Last week I had the privilege of attending the CREATE Foundation's fancy dinner for Child Protection Week. What an uplifting, joyous occasion this was. It was not called a fancy dinner for nothing. They were a really smartly dressed group of young people. They had their new outfits to wear and they obviously enjoyed that. The evening had a great atmosphere.

The purpose of the evening was for children in care to nominate someone special in their lives for an award. This is the second year that I have attended. During this part of the evening, many beautiful stories were told. I was very impressed with the way the young people expressed their appreciation for the special people in their lives. Some nominated mums, dads or grandparents; others nominated their foster-carers, youth workers or pyjama angels. The children tell their stories better than I can and I would like to share some of them with the House. One child said—

My pyjama angel brings joy to the house every Friday when she comes to visit. She is more than a volunteer to me, she is a great friend and feels like a family member. She is a lovely, bright and special person, a great person to have around and I love her to bits.

Another child said—

When times are hard I know I can always talk about my feelings with my youth worker and rely on him to do what's best for me.

Another child said—

My foster-carer is probably the definition of love. She's always happy and proud of me, even when I haven't been well-behaved or I let her down. I love her as if she was my mother. Deep down I know she loves me more.

And lastly, another child said—

I have learnt from my respite carer that when something serious happens that I'm scared to tell anyone about, then I can be brave and tell the truth and learn from my problems.

What important life lessons these children are learning from those special people in their lives. Often we are so focused on the doom and gloom in Child Safety that we overlook the positives. Truly the stories of children coming into care can be heartbreaking, but this week we celebrate the people who have taken the broken pieces and glued them together with acceptance, understanding, compassion and love. I cannot praise those people enough. The fancy dinner highlighted the resilience and strength of both those who need and those who give and it proved that they can all shine. My thanks go to the CREATE foundation.

Ayr Ambulance Station

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.11 pm): Next Sunday is going to be a great day for the Burdekin. I will be representing the Minister for Health to officially open the new \$460,000 Ayr Ambulance Station following renovations, officially hand over a new \$250,000 Mercedes ambulance vehicle and present awards to a group of dedicated ambulance officers and volunteers. It will give me even greater pleasure because it is going to occur during Ambulance Week which, as we know, is a time to celebrate and honour the lifesaving work and the remarkable commitment of Queensland Ambulance Service staff and volunteers. I have seen firsthand the gratitude and appreciation that Queenslanders have for this state's Ambulance Service. I know that this sentiment is shared by all in the chamber. I have also witnessed firsthand the amazing work that paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, first responders and patient transport officers undertake, often under very difficult circumstances when patients and their loved ones are in their hour of need. There is no doubt that their work mates make all the difference to those staff. I express my thanks to them for the work that they do.

The Ayr Ambulance Station was built in 2007 and the current renovations have expanded and improved those facilities. There is now space for five vehicles, with a wash-down bay supplied by a 5,000 litre rainwater tank that will reduce the station's reliance on town water. The expanded facility also includes a larger meeting/training room for the use of staff and LAC members, new on-site accommodation that will provide savings of \$25,000 per year on rental costs and a new 33-kilowatt generator to ensure full and continuous power supply to the site. The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 319 ambulance will be formally handed over to Home Hill.

I wish to mention the staff members who will be presented with awards: the local Ambulance Service network or LASN national medal is awarded to advanced care paramedic Lindsay Rapp, two 10-year service medals to Jane Arthur and Lisa Smith and two 15-year LAC service badges to Mr Brian Sorohan and Mr Brian Roderick. We have quite a few recipients of five-year LAC service badges, which will be awarded to Maria Bawden, Christine Hitchcock, Doug Kelly, Beverley Roderick, Dorothy Jensen and Rachel Chatfield. Those people do a magnificent job and I acknowledge the outstanding contribution that they make.

(Time expired)

South Brisbane, Cycling Fatality; Job Cuts

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (3.14 pm): I rise to offer my heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of a young woman who died this morning while cycling in South Brisbane. I have no doubt that my sympathies are shared by all in the House and across the South Brisbane community today. Every day many South Brisbane residents cycle along Stanley Street and Annerley Road, travelling to work, school or simply to enjoy our beautiful city. In February, the Department of Transport and Main Roads released a list of Queensland's bicycle crash hotspots. Out of the list of the top 10 spots in Queensland, five are in my electorate of South Brisbane. Indeed, Annerley Road, which is the street where the young cyclist was attempting to turn into when she was killed this morning, is the No. 1 spot for accidents in Queensland, with 34 recorded incidents between 2007 and 2011. Therefore, my community understands more than most the serious safety risks faced by cyclists and, over the coming weeks, it is critical that we work together to investigate all options for improving safety on our roads.

On another matter, I turn to the unparalleled arrogance of the Newman LNP government and, in particular, that of the transport minister which has been on display in this House this week. Today is the second anniversary of Campbell Newman's job cuts. Today, by the release of new unemployment data, we have been reminded again of the damage done to the state's economy by the government. Today's figures show Queensland's unemployment rate is 6.7 per cent. That is significantly higher than the national rate of 6.1 per cent and only Tasmania and Victoria have recorded worse results. One would think that the transport minister might use this as an opportunity to pause and think about the job cuts that he inflicted upon his own department and the agencies under his direct control. However, that is probably too much to ask from a minister who thought it appropriate to announce the thousands of jobs that would be cut from his department through a dorothy dixer in this House on 31 July 2012.

The list of job cuts that came at the hands of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads does not make for happy reading: 600 workers from Roadtek, 930 from his own department and 1,439 jobs cut from Queensland Rail, which represents a reduction of almost 20 per cent of that agency's entire workforce. When you add it up, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads is personally responsible for sending almost 3,000 Queenslanders to the unemployment queue. From a government that promised that public servants had nothing to fear, this is a broken promise of staggering proportions. Queenslanders have woken up to the Newman government and they do not like the direction it is taking in this state. At the next election, Queenslanders will have a very clear choice: the choice to either give this type of arrogant and duplicitous behaviour a big tick of approval or use the next election as an opportunity to send this government a very strong message that its arrogance and behaviour just will not do.

Bulimba Electorate, Buy Locally Saturday

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (3.17 pm): Today I rise to speak about Buy Locally Saturday, which was celebrated across the Bulimba electorate. As members would be aware, last week was the 2014 Queensland Small Business Week, which culminated in Buy Locally Saturday, a Newman government initiative designed to encourage Queenslanders to shop locally in support of local small businesses. To promote Buy Locally Saturday, I ran a special campaign in conjunction with a number of small businesses in the Bulimba electorate. Those businesses came on board and ran special offers and deals to celebrate Saturday 6 September. At my stand at the RSL Bulimba Festival, which was held the weekend before Buy Locally Saturday, my volunteers and I handed out flyers detailing all the special deals on offer to the thousands of locals who visited the festival. The response was fantastic, with many locals acknowledging the important role of small businesses in our community and congratulating the government on undertaking initiatives to support their efforts and creating jobs.

In Bulimba, we were very fortunate that Buy Locally Saturday coincided with a lovely sunny afternoon. That morning, I held my community corners and was delighted by the number of families I talked to on their way to coming to or going from sports finals and shopping locally for father's day presents in-between. I am proud to be a member of a government that has an unwavering commitment to supporting small businesses through reducing red tape and regulation. Previously, business in Queensland was suffocated by regulation as a result of the actions of the former Labor government. In stark contrast, the Newman government is committed to reducing red tape by 20 per cent by 2018 and we are well on our way to achieving that target with over 9,000 regulatory requirements having already been abolished. The Queensland government has a strong plan for the state's small businesses that will deliver a brighter future for them, as well as the mums, dads and families who operate them. We are delivering on this plan by establishing a robust economic environment that will allow small businesses to prosper.

Queensland now leads the nation in job creation with almost half the jobs created in Australia last year being in Queensland and more than 70,000 jobs created since the last election. In the Bulimba electorate we have already seen improvements in small business with the majority of business owners reporting, through their response to my 2014 Bulimba business survey, an increase in sales, revenue and employment over the past 12 months. Not only does supporting local businesses stimulate economic growth and job creation, but in turn local businesses support their local community.

The Bulimba electorate is very fortunate to have a dynamic and supportive small business environment with local businesses sponsoring many local sporting and community groups as well as community events such as the recent Bulimba and Morningside festivals. As such, supporting local businesses achieves a healthy cycle of support in our local community benefitting everyone.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of our government in promoting small businesses and their valuable contribution to Queensland communities, to acknowledge the small businesses of Bulimba that are largely responsible for the unique vibe and character of our community and to acknowledge the locals who support our local businesses not only on Buy Locally Saturday but all year round.

Grealy, Mr E



Ms MILLARD (Sandgate—LNP) (3.20 pm): Every year I like to take on some work experience students from my local schools. Each time I do that I ask them to write a speech on whatever topic they like. I sit with them and look at ways to write speeches. This one is prepared by Ethan Grealy from Bracken Ridge State High School. His topic is 'Social media—not preparing children for the real world'. These are his words—

Social media is a resourceful and interactive tool that can be used to gather a vast amount of information about current events whilst also connecting with people from across the globe. It's easy to admit social media has made an impact on our lives and has made day to day life much more efficient, but it's not always used effectively and could be a contributing factor to the corruption of our youth's future.

Whilst screen-based activities for a child should be balanced with other events, limits are not being implemented. When interacting with social media, abbreviations have been formed for almost all basic conversation, throwing proper grammar out the window. Our youth are relying on social media as a prime conversational tool. All of these degrading features are going to have a huge social impact on future generations, causing an unhealthy cycle for our youth's future development of social skills.

Social skills are one of the most important set of tools a person can acquire and are used in almost every task performed throughout the day. These skills are used to obtain a job, and if a person does not possess any social-skills, it ultimately restricts their ability to enter the Work force, meaning no source of income. Without a source of income, unemployment benefits will face mass amounts of pressure, ultimately burdening the average tax payer.

Although these problems regarding social media seem like a difficult task to resolve, this is not the case. Many solutions are available regarding this social media defect. Encouraging kids to spend more time with friends, for example movies, sport or just to talk without the screen. More initiatives like encouraging youth employment as well as engaging in an active lifestyle will benefit our youth breaking this growing trend. Another alternative is teaching the mind to have a break. Adolescents who access social media through mobile use can install apps that restrict certain app usages, for example just before studying, restricting Facebook could be a necessary action to take.

In conclusion, it is no doubt social media will only grow, but we must become more aware of how to manage it, and to not let our youth become slaves of social media.

I would like to thank young Ethan, who wrote this. He put a lot of work into it. He is very passionate about this particular area of social media. These words are straight from the mouth of a youngster. I appreciate his contribution.

Nicklin Electorate, Public Transport

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak about public transport services in our region. Last month as I returned from parliament to Nambour on the early morning train, I saw hundreds of regular commuters lined up at our train stations all ready to make their train trips to work. The continuation of the duplication of this railway line from Brisbane to Nambour needs to be prioritised as a Nation Building Project because it will both release significant pressure on our roads and also drive development for our whole Sunshine Coast region. Hopefully then the state government will look to identify the railway corridor between Nambour and Gympie for the continuation of the railway line duplication.

Work has finally started on the extension to our Nambour Railway Station car park, but—and I say ‘but’—it appears we will need a change of state government to complete the work on the disabled access lift at our station because it is not a priority of the Newman LNP government. I table 599 submissions calling on the government to save our Hinterland Connect bus service that connects people from Nambour, Kurulpa, Mapleton, Flaxton, Montville and Maleny.

Tabled paper: Bundle of letters to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads regarding the Hinterland Connect Bus Service [5952].

We say it is about time this bus service had its status changed from a trial to a permanent bus service for our hinterland community. I thank the Mapleton and District Community Association for its ongoing work in highlighting the importance of this bus service.

Anthony Smith, a Nambour local who relies on public transport, has also made a submission calling for the 610 and 612 bus service from Nambour to Maroochydore to be extended into the evening. This is a reasonable request as the alternative is a \$50 taxi fare from Maroochydore to Nambour.

The community of Bli Bli continues to be a significant growth area. It is disappointing that TransLink has to date refused to maintain the previous important 622 bus service through Bli Bli. The recent changes to this service now have the 612 bus avoiding altogether the River Markets precinct, a refurbished centre containing medical facilities, a post office and a new super IGA, effectively denying our elderly locals the right to shop locally. I hope as a result of our submissions and our calls to the government for change we will see improvements to our important bus and train services.

Later this month I will be joining with other Sunshine Coast locals to support the retention of the council's planning scheme proposal for the Halls Creek area. I believe we need to stand together and send a clear message to this Newman LNP government that there is no place for the state's latest proposed intervention in our local planning scheme. Our council planning scheme is the foundation of all council decisions. We have just finished thousands of hours of community consultation on our planning scheme and it has only just been signed off by the state government and the local council. Now the LNP government wants to start again and change the planning scheme to help the government's mates. We must stand together and fight this Newman LNP government's interference in our planning scheme so everyone is equal before the law.

Domestic Violence

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (3.25 pm): Domestic violence has been defined as a pattern of behaviour which involves violence or other abuse by one person against another in a domestic context. Domestic violence can take a number of forms, including physical, emotional, verbal, economic or sexual abuse and can range from subtle, coercive forms to violent physical abuse. It is well recognised that women are most often the victims of domestic violence.

Prior to my election to this House I was a member of the Maryborough Quota Club. The effects of domestic violence on the lives of women was brought to my attention through the work of this club in supporting the local Yoorana Women's Domestic Violence and Resource Service—a service which provides emergency housing as well as support to women and sometimes children who have taken the often courageous step to move away from a violent relationship. Sadly, many of these women and children had only the clothes they stood up in when they left. The club regularly made up toiletry packs for women and children as well as supported the organisation financially.

With this knowledge as background, I was pleased when the Premier announced the implementation of a task force, led by former Governor-General Dame Quentin Bryce, to examine the issue of domestic violence and to find ways to better protect vulnerable women and children. It has become very obvious that there is a desperate need for domestic violence issues to be addressed.

My office sourced figures in relation to domestic violence in Maryborough and the figures paint a tragic picture. These figures are not official Police Service statistics but they are accurately sourced. In the 2013-14 financial year there were 672 applications for domestic violence orders in the Maryborough patrol group, both police and private applications. Contraventions of domestic violence orders in the Maryborough police district were 79 in 2011-12, 146 in 2012-13 and 160 in 2013-14.

These increasing numbers do not include those households where domestic violence occurs but for which there are no domestic violence orders. There is increasing pressure on organisations such as the Yoorana Women's Domestic Violence and Resource Service and on people like Acting Senior Sergeant Hayley Skyring who work to support these victims.

I am pleased to advise that the state government has allocated Yoorana \$450,000 in funding for 2014-15. There has been much good work done, but more needs to be done. Domestic violence is an insidious and private form of violence that must be curbed and stopped. We need to understand that the perpetrators are also victims. No-one wins in domestic violence cases. I urge Queenslanders and particularly our local residents to support the work of the government's domestic violence task force.

Seeto, Mr T

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (3.28 pm): I rise to inform the House of the sad passing of an inspirational community leader, Mr Tom Seeto. Tom was the founder of Cathay Club, now the Cathay Community Association Inc., and was a much revered and respected community advocate. The Cathay Club was officially registered in 1981 and was located in Fortitude Valley from 1984 to 2014. It recently relocated to new premises in Coopers Plains, which is in my electorate of Sunnybank. I was proud and privileged to officially open the new building earlier this year.

Tom was a major influence in ensuring that Cathay has grown to become one of the biggest and most active community organisations in Brisbane. Tom was a great advocate for the local Chinese community, especially for those who found themselves disadvantaged because of age, disability or language barriers. He was a great believer that everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to community life and he set about founding the Cathay Club as a barrier-free environment.

Tom's achievements in the Cathay Club were many and varied. He was instrumental in allowing the club to employ a full-time social worker to help newly arrived migrants. He also established a Home and Community Care Program to assist the elderly and frail Chinese in Brisbane. This remains a core aspect of the Cathay Community Association's work today. He was also heavily involved in the teaching of English to Chinese migrants. Tom was honoured by the Australian government for his work with a Centenary Medal and an Australia Day community service award. His life of self-sacrifice and dedication to others was also acknowledged by the Queensland government when he received the Premier's senior award and the Premier's ethnic community service award.

Above all, Tom was a great servant of the community and he gave so much to improve the lives and circumstances of those with whom he came in contact. Tom will be greatly missed but will be remembered through the continued success and community involvement of the Cathay Community Association. I extend my sincere condolences to Tom's friends and family in what must be a difficult time for them. I would also like to acknowledge all community volunteers in Sunnybank and across Queensland, as it is times like this when we are able to look back at a small start-up community group and acknowledge the important work that has gone on behind the scenes. The people in these positions are a great asset in our communities. Thank you, Tom, for your legacy of community support, and I thank all of the volunteers in our community associations for the continued support they provide to make our communities more inclusive and resilient.

Albert Electorate, Events

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (3.31 pm): On Thursday, 4 September, I had the great privilege of attending the Wolffdene Rural Fire Brigade when they had their emergency service cadets in attendance. This is an absolutely fantastic program which is put on by the local PCYC. One of the ideas of this cadets program is that it gives these students life skills which they can use in their future career pathways if they want to go into the fire service, the police et cetera. More importantly, potential employers can actually say, 'This student is proactive. He is getting out there in his community.' It was a great night with the local first officer, Col Veivers, who is certainly a great role model for these young students. They learnt the value of teamwork and how to work together to put

out a fire using pumps and water hoses. Overall, it showed them that when you work together you can certainly achieve massive outcomes. I hope that program continues in the long term because I think it is very interesting for the students.

Another topic I want to quickly talk about today is Mount Warren Park State School, which is one of the jewels in my electorate. It is a school with around 780 students. It recently got its NAPLAN results back and it achieved outstanding results—and I mean outstanding—and I will highlight those results. Mount Warren Park State School is making good progress academically. The school made improvements in mean results for 13 out of 15 NAPLAN areas from 2013 to 2014. The school made gains in 12 out of 15 areas in numbers of students above the national minimum standard and upper two bands from 2013 to 2014. These are outstanding results for this little school. The school also has a brilliant program called Bring Your Own Device. It is making inroads into helping the students, especially the ones who are a little bit shy, because they can go away and learn at their own speed. The program is actually proving its worth, and that is certainly evident in the NAPLAN results. I say to Colin Torr, the principal, and to his deputy principals, Michael Burkin and Melissa Bailey, that you and your staff are doing an absolutely fantastic job at your school, so keep up the good work.

Nurses

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.35 pm): This week the last of the Queensland Nurses Union's right-to-information requests on job cuts to all hospital and health services have been finalised. Despite the Minister for Health's rhetoric and spin this morning, the evidence is clear; it is clear in the numbers. Nearly 5,000 Health positions have been axed by this Newman LNP government since it took office. We have seen the jobs of security staff, maintenance workers, cleaners and catering staff gone, and their future employment prospects have been threatened. We have also seen 1,800 nursing positions go right across this state. The minister may try and blame anyone and throw mud pies across this chamber, but I can tell him that the people outside know that this minister tells porky pies.

Nurses have been contacting me to tell me their stories of how staff cuts affect them in their wards, their clinics and their homes. You cannot cut 1,800 nursing positions and not know that those who are left to carry on in the wards will feel the pain and the exhaustion that goes with working long hours when they are short-staffed. One nurse said that she could not take annual leave or even sick leave because there were not enough experienced staff or specialist nurses to keep her unit going. She was exhausted by being asked to stay for the day shift after finishing the night shift. An extra hour turned into an extra shift and her husband had to miss work to manage the child care and also the school drop-offs and collections.

This is what happens to people's lives when job cuts and service closures start to bite—and, boy oh boy, are they biting in our hospitals. When healthcare staff are overworked, they themselves become ill and the quality and safety of patient care suffers. Labor knows what is going on in the hospitals. The LNP cuts to clinical and support staff have meant that the staff still there have to do more administration work and they have less time with patients. More casual and agency staff mean less secure careers for nurses and fewer senior nurses in clinical leadership roles. The LNP does not understand or value the role of the nursing profession in our health system. Labor does. Labor certainly appreciates the work of our nurses and we thank them for their commitment.

Logan Electorate, Small Businesses

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (3.38 pm): I rise today to speak about how local businesses within Logan are charging ahead with a renewed confidence that was lost in past years. This LNP government's commitment to reduce the red tape that strangled our businesses beyond choking point is paying off. Small business owners are now free from the excessive burden of bureaucracy, thus allowing them to get on with their job and contribute to our local economy. In just over two years, we have implemented over 320 initiatives aimed at reducing red tape. For instance, the waste levy has been removed, saving businesses across Queensland approximately \$7 million a month. We have simplified the approval processes, saving an average of \$20,000 in applicant costs, 150 pages of paperwork and 68 days in processing. Furthermore, changes to regulations now see thousands of small business operators no longer needing to apply for a licence, pay an application fee or submit an annual return.

Small business growth is essential if our local communities are to capitalise on the opportunities that lay before us. A strong local economy provides employment opportunities that unite a community. Small businesses are often the leaders within our communities and are always at the

forefront when it comes to local sponsorship and fundraising for charities and community organisations. Without this vital support, community organisations would struggle significantly in keeping pace with the growing demand of an ever-expanding community.

Many non-government organisations—Rotary and Lions Clubs, RSLs and Men's Sheds, just to name a few—are supported by local businesses. An example of this is the charity golf day that Browns Plains Real Estate is running this weekend to support the Make-a-Wish Foundation, which grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions. I salute this initiative.

Small businesses are an essential part of the Logan community and we must continue to show our unwavering support by thinking locally. I believe a job provides people with a sense of belonging and a much needed direction. Unlike those in the Labor Party, who are always looking to increase taxes or put more regulations on small business, I understand it is businesses, not governments, that create jobs. I will never underestimate the value of small businesses and the role they play in providing jobs and shaping our community. I salute all the small businesses in Logan that are contributing to our growing economy—small businesses of all kinds from Mega Meats and J&P Barbers in Browns Plains, and Regents Park Pharmacy, Longboard Pizza and Browns Plains Real Estate in Regents Park all the way to the Strawberry Farm in Chambers Flat, the Logan Village Hardware and Yarra House Restaurant in Logan Village to the Greenbank Newsagency and the Bloomin' Vet in Greenbank. Our community is filled with over 3,500 small businesses that help keep Logan charging.

I recently met with Mr Tony Langridge, a successful local and small business owner of Bullant Bobcat Hire. With Logan charging ahead of other regions with home loan applications up by 23 per cent in the year to August, Mr Langridge spoke of how confidence and discretionary spending is returning to the market, creating opportunities for small proprietors to work locally and support the growing Logan economy. We still have work to do, but a brighter future is there for the taking if we work together to keep Logan charging.

Cultural Diversity Week; Small Business Week



Mrs OSTAPOVITCH (Stretton—LNP) (3.40 pm): I rise to share with the House some amazing events that occurred in the Stretton electorate recently. As I have said many times in this House, I am privileged to represent all the peoples of the Stretton electorate. My last week was one of the busiest ever with both Small Business Week and Cultural Diversity Week coinciding with each other. The migrant small business expo held by Access at Eight Mile Plains was an outstanding success, inspiring many of our newest Australians to become entrepreneurs. I was also privileged to speak at the QSBW medical devices forum held at Cook Medical which was organised by Mario Pennisi from Life Sciences Queensland. Additionally, I managed to run all over the electorate of Stretton taking photos with my business owners holding up the Small Business Week tokens, which I posted on Facebook. What an outstanding idea from Minister Jann Stuckey.

The Stretton electorate also saw a number of festivals during and around Cultural Diversity Week, mostly moon festivals from every Asian background—China, Vietnam, Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia—but also a number of Linking the Nations functions. However, the highlight of the week had to be the Taiwan festival, which this year went for a whole week under the guidance of ATCCQ President, Paul Shih. The festival started in Sunnybank with a pork rice cooking competition followed by a film festival. The spectacular performers from Taiwan, Hannah, that I co-sponsored entertained us at four shopping centres throughout the week. I just had the pleasure of taking the six boys and one girl to lunch before they leave to go back to Taiwan.

The grand finale, of course, was the Saturday night celebration at Calamvale Central that featured a traditional Taiwanese night market. It is hard to say how many attended but it would easily have been 50,000 people as there was hardly room to move and the food stalls had lines 200 metres long. The entertainment was amazing and it was awesome to draw out the winner of the Mazda car Art Union prize as well as the iPad that I donated. Fortunately for the electorate of Stretton, the multicultural night market will continue every Saturday night, giving people an opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial spirit, creating jobs for the local people while creating a fun experience for all. Indeed, with the united help of my community, we are putting Calamvale on the map.

North West Community Health Centre

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (3.43 pm): I rise in the House this afternoon to inform members of the fantastic work that is being undertaken at the North West Community Health Centre in Corrigan Street, Keperra. As we know, breast cancer will affect one in eight women by the age of 85. However, early detection significantly increases the likelihood of successful treatment and positive outcomes.

Last week the Minister for Health, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, and I visited the facility. We were met by Mary Slattery, the Executive Manager and Director of Nursing, and Mark Butterworth, Executive Director of Allied Health of Metro North HHS. The primary purpose of the visit was to congratulate the Director of BreastScreen, Dr Jane Brazier, and her staff on their outstanding work in improving the screening rates at this facility, which replaced the mobile BreastScreen Queensland van in 2005. Across Metro North HHS, 41,122 women were screened in 2013-14, which was an increase of more than 2½ thousand over the previous year. The North West Community Health Centre contributed to this total by screening 4,363 women during that period. This increased rate of screening will likely be increased further this year through the recruitment of two new radiographers.

The government has extended the free screening age to now include all women between the ages of 50 and 74. When coupled with the extended and after-hours services provided at this facility to include the early morning and late afternoon as well as some Saturday morning appointments and the new equipment that is now available to perform a screening procedure in around 15 minutes, the future looks bright for the centre to continue its upward trajectory.

Following the walk through the screen facility, we took the opportunity to walk through the remainder of the facility and were informed of the other fantastic work being undertaken at this site. Some of the additional services also include child health, child and youth mental health, community palliative care, a wound clinic, podiatry and diabetes services. During the walk, one of the staff members who worked there indicated to us that Indigenous health in the local area in particular had been improved significantly through the centre. That is because they feel very safe coming to this local community hub, interacting with the staff and having their mental health and other health concerns addressed appropriately. It is great to see the interactions of the Indigenous community and to see them utilising this facility very well.

I would like to take this opportunity this afternoon to thank the staff at the North West Community Health Centre for the dedication to the roles that they are fulfilling. I know that the community thanks them very much as well for the great work that they continue to do, particularly in BreastScreen Queensland.

Capalaba Electorate, Schools

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (3.46 pm): I rise today to inform the House of the great strides that are taking place in state schools in my electorate of Capalaba. Over the past 2½ years we have seen some amazing outcomes in my schools, including having filled three perennially temporary principal positions with full-time permanent principals. These principals are providing the direction and leadership that is vital to the harmonious learning environment that our students deserve. Additionally, as a state, in 2014 \$131 million has been invested to improve student performance in Queensland schools as part of our Better Results Guarantee, with \$2 million being shared by schools in the Capalaba electorate. This ongoing investment sees \$800 million being invested in Queensland state schools over four years, facilitating significant benefits for young people in literacy and maths right across the state.

Finally, one of the huge improvements in my electorate has been the school maintenance program. The 2012 to 2015 school maintenance backlog allocations under the Advancing our Schools Maintenance and Fixing our Schools initiatives saw over \$3,958,000 invested in the schools of the Capalaba electorate. Alexandra Hills State High School has seen over \$699,000. Birkdale State School saw \$322,000 worth of investment in its school to actually fix up the tragedy that was the maintenance backlog in our schools.

For me the highlight was Capalaba State College, which has seen \$1.5 million invested into the school to get it up to speed and to provide the great learning environment that our young people deserve. In the last allocation they received the highest in the state, which was \$971,000. Not everyone was happy about this significant funding. In fact, some of the local Labor luvvies saw it as pork-barrelling. If the program developed and budgeted for in 2012 is pork-barrelling, I happily plead

guilty. The ultimate issue is schools in my electorate were severely neglected by the previous mob. In fact, in 2011 a TV expose featured one of my schools, Capalaba State College, which is the school that received \$1.5 million, as one of the worst maintained schools in the state, hence, the need for this \$1.5 million for backlog maintenance.

How have we delivered these fantastic outcomes? We have delivered them through sound fiscal management; we have lived within our means. Every time you borrow money, you are robbing your future self. Balancing our budgets is the key to having enough for the good things we need. That is what we as a government have done and what we will continue to do, and that is why we can deliver for our schools, our hospitals and our front-line services.

White Balloon Day

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.49 pm): I rise to speak today about White Balloon Day, which is tomorrow. Tomorrow is the 18th anniversary of Bravehearts' annual awareness day, and since my election as the member for Broadwater I have created something of a tradition in my electorate with the Labrador State School. Tomorrow I will have more than 100 very spritely and happy year 4 students from Labrador State School join myself and Ditto, the Bravehearts mascot, as we tie the special White Balloon Day balloons onto the boundary fence of Labrador State School.

White Balloon Day is a fantastic opportunity for those in the community to send a message not only to the victims of child sexual abuse and child sexual assault, but also to the perpetrators, that it is not okay. This government is committed to making sure that Queensland is the safest place to live, work and raise a family, and by supporting fantastic organisations like Hetty Johnston's Bravehearts and the great work that they do, it gives us an opportunity to send a message, alongside the community, that we want to support people who need it most. White Balloon Day not only does that, but it also raises vital funds. I would like to particularly thank the community of Labrador State School because if it weren't for them and their principal Brian Ragh, we would not be able to send the message.

One of the things that Bravehearts is talking about is making sure that we as a community talk about who we are protecting. They encourage people through all forms of social media, whether it is Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, to take a photo to indicate who they are protecting and to put up a hashtag. Those hashtags are #whoRUprotecting and #WhiteBalloonDay. I am very proud to have written on my hand today that I am standing up for, and wanting to, protect all kids, because that is what this is about. It is about making sure that we protect those children in our society who are vulnerable. I would encourage all members to take the opportunity tomorrow not only to think about the great work that Bravehearts does, but to write a message on their hand—whether it is their children or their grandchildren—and put that up on Twitter or Facebook and take the opportunity to send a message to their community about who they are protecting. I am planning on standing up for, and protecting, all kids in our community. I will be tabling this document for the benefit of the House and all members.

Tabled paper: A piece of paper with two hashtag addresses [\[5953\]](#).

Murrumba Electorate, Initiatives

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (3.52 pm): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the good place, Murrumba. The Premier even came out to witness for himself the great community of Murrumba and together with my good colleague, the member for Kallangur, we had a great time touring the North Lakes commercial district, including hearing the concerns of the locals. We were even taught a thing or two about how to make good ice cream by James and Suzie Hay at Cold Rock Ice Creamery.

One of the big issues in my electorate is road congestion as a consequence of the previously elected representatives being asleep at the wheel and allowing the Rothwell roundabout and Boundary Road intersections to become bottlenecks. I want to thank Aaron Rench and the Hayes Inlet Action Group for organising the paper petition to upgrade the Rothwell roundabout and note that this petition was lodged just this morning in the chamber. Be assured that, as per my previous *Hansard* reports, I am fighting hard for this roundabout to be upgraded. Boundary Road is another intersection under immense stress. I can confirm that I have been fighting hard since 2012 and that the Minister for Transport, the Treasurer and the Premier are all very well aware of this intersection. I thank the member for Kallangur, with whom I share this intersection, for working with me to get our fair share of resources to upgrade this severe bottleneck. I am confident that the approval for the

design stage of this intersection is imminent. For drivers there is already good news, with works continuing on the Bruce Highway with upgrades to access ramps as part of the managed motorway project.

I was also proud to announce just last week that a further \$2.7 million will be spent on new road safety projects within Murrumba: \$1.7 million to be spent on modifying the traffic signals at the Deception Bay interchange at the Bruce Highway; and \$1 million for the Deception Bay Road near the Zammit Street intersection to install upgraded lighting and provide safer entrances to the caravan park access points.

At the last IMS I said that the local radio station 99.7 was in danger of closing. This remains the fact, and I know that Greg Honchin continues to be silent. I will table a media article about Greg.

Tabled paper: Article from smh.com.au, dated 4 September 2006, titled, 'Murrhly defends himself over tape allegations' [\[5954\]](#).

I believe that Greg and his associates are deliberately trying to bury this station to bury evidence of allegations of fraud, theft, bullying and deceit. I assure readers that I continue to make appropriate inquiries of the Office of Fair Trading and ACMA, and I will be calling a public meeting shortly.

I have been out and about across Murrumba during the last couple of weeks: I volunteered at a couple of tuck shops; ran in the North Lakes fun run; enjoyed watching a production of *Grimms' Fairy Tales* at the Deception Bay State High School; read to local school children as part of the Premier's Reading Challenge; and attended the Mango State School art exhibition, where I purchased an amazing art piece by the creative students from 6/7R which is now on display at my office. I table a copy of that artwork.

Tabled paper: Mango Hill State School Art Show program [\[5955\]](#).

Murrumba is a good place.

Metropolitan South Hospital and Health Service

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.55 pm): I rise in the House this afternoon to commend the Metro South Hospital and Health Service and the staff of two hospitals in particular that cover the Greenslopes electorate: the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth II hospital, or QEII as it is also known. It is only two years ago that our incoming government was faced with the difficult task of reforming Queensland Health. I would like to commend the Minister for Health for the work that has been done in resuscitating Queensland Health. This would not have been possible if it was not for the hardworking men and women in Queensland Health coupled with the administration of the Metropolitan South Hospital and Health Board. I would like to highlight some of the achievements so far.

With regard to the Princess Alexandra Hospital, in September 2013 the PA achieved full accreditation. With the new standards at the time, it was the best performing hospital in Australia. In October 2013 I had the pleasure of being present at the opening of a new day procedure unit and expanded oncology day care unit. In March 2014, following a patient survey, 93 per cent of patients were satisfied with the overall quality of care. In May 2014 the PA became the first hospital in the Southern Hemisphere to receive the Magnet designation for a third time. In June 2014 stage 1 of the new electronic medical records was introduced, and it is well on the way to being a fully digital hospital.

Other numbers of interest highlighting the outstanding work between June 2012 and June 2014 are: reduced elective surgery long waitlist, category 1, 130 down to zero; category 2, 1,108 down to 319; category 3, 286 down to 59. On top of that, the PA has had a 19 per cent improvement in the National Emergency Access Target, which is the greatest improvement in the country. The workload of the PA must not be understated. There are 88,417 admissions each year, with 60,614 emergency presentations.

Turning to the QEII Hospital, in November 2013 it opened a major expansion which included the redeveloped emergency department and new endoscopy unit. In March 2014, 91 per cent of patients were satisfied with the overall quality of care. In January 2014, stage 2 of the palliative unit was completed, including a new family room, consultant room and overnight stay room for families. In June 2014, by redesigning the clinical processes the QEII improved its performance in the National Elective Surgery Target by 29 per cent compared to the previous year. I could go on. Overall we cannot forget the reduction of the dental long waitlist in the metro south area from 6,758 in June 2013 down to zero.

Again I would like to sincerely thank all those who have played a part in turning the ship around and achieving those fabulous results. It is sad when some still chose to criticise Queensland Health with off-the-cuff, ill-formed comments which are usually for political gain. I am proud of the work of the Metro South Hospital and Health Board and all the staff. I do think that when political candidates criticise these two great hospitals, they are actually criticising the great work of the staff within. The results speak for themselves.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.58 pm): Following on from other speakers who have spoken of White Ribbon Day, I would also like to speak about the statistics of domestic violence in my area. The Capricornia Police District includes Biloela, Gladstone, Gracemere, Mount Morgan, North Rockhampton, Rockhampton, Blackwater, Emerald, Woorabinda and Yeppoon. Incidents of domestic and family violence are projected to increase by 10.9 per cent in the 2013-14 financial year. The Capricorn district is currently 97.4 per cent above the state reported average rate for DV incidents.

Over the past five years the following trends have been observed. Breaches of Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act orders have increased by 85 per cent. Calls for service for DFV incidents have increased by 89 per cent. During the period 2012-13 the following statistics were captured for the Capricornia police district. A total of 1,223 persons—that is, 0.5 per cent of people—were responsible for 1,401 offences. Of these, 82 per cent were male perpetrators compared to 18 per cent who were female perpetrators. Those increases are generally reflected in my electorate of Gladstone.

It is such a regrettable thing. I think state-wide there is an increase, thankfully, in the reporting of domestic violence but also, very sadly, an increase in the incidence. I commend the Premier and this government for establishing the domestic violence task force. I am certainly, along with other government and non-government members who have been appointed to that committee, looking forward to the opportunity to work with Dame Quentin Bryce and other community representatives on what will, I believe, be a very challenging issue.

We do have, however, businesses, both large and small, in my electorate, and I am sure elsewhere, who are equally working with their employees to raise consciousness about domestic violence and to equip and empower their workers. One such large company is Boyne Smelters Ltd, which has a special project, if you like, for a white ribbon initiative in November. I commend Boyne Smelters and all of those companies that work together to heighten awareness and prevention.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (4.01 pm), by leave: I table Ethics Committee report No. 148 titled *2013-14 annual report*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 148—2013-2014 annual report [[5956](#)].

WATER REFORM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.01 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Water Act 2000, the Alcan Queensland Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1965, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2001, the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957, the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Mineral Resources Regulation 2013, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the River Improvement Trust Act 1940 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes, to amend the statutory instruments mentioned in part 10 for particular purposes, to make minor or consequential amendments of the legislation mentioned in schedule 1, and to make minor amendments of the water resource plans mentioned in schedule 2. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [[5957](#)].

Tabled paper: Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [[5958](#)].

I am pleased to present the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 to the House. The primary purpose of the bill is to ensure the state's water resources are used responsibly and productively for the benefit of all Queenslanders while retaining certainty and security for existing water entitlement holders and balancing economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The Water Act 2000 is the primary framework for the planning, allocation and management of water in Queensland. However, it is now more than 13 years old. The previous Labor government was not interested in simplifying the act and was more inclined to increase regulation and make it harder to operate. The Newman government, on the other hand, believes it is vital that Queensland's water resource management legislation keeps pace with current best practice standards, innovations in service delivery and technology.

The bill forms part of a whole-of-water-business transformation being delivered by the Queensland government which will deliver an efficient, effective and modern water resource management framework and support the growth of the agriculture and resources sectors and create economic development opportunities for rural and regional Queensland.

The bill establishes a new overarching purpose for the Water Act: setting the direction for water resource management in Queensland. It has been realigned to deliver an efficient regulatory framework for the responsible and productive management and use of water and riverine quarry resources in Queensland that facilitates strong uptake of water resource development opportunities and strikes the appropriate balance between delivering on social, economic and environmental values for communities across the state.

In recognition that water is critical in the economic development of Queensland, whether it be through the resources or agriculture sectors, the new purpose will guide the Water Act to provide an improved framework to facilitate the operation of efficient water markets across Queensland. The new purpose will continue to recognise the importance of sustaining ecosystem health, water quality and water dependent ecological processes and biological diversity associated with catchments, watercourses, lakes, springs, aquifers and other natural systems. The Newman government is committed to ensuring that impacts on underground water from resource activities are managed fairly and consistently.

The bill expands chapter 3 of the Water Act to ensure that a statutory make-good obligation applies for any landholder whose water supply bore may be affected as a result of mining operations. Currently, such rights only apply to those situations where a bore is affected by petroleum and gas operations. This will ensure landholders have statutory certainty that any impacts to their bore water supply will be remedied in an agreed manner.

The cumulative management area framework under this chapter will also be amended to ensure the impacts of mining operations are appropriately managed where it is predicted that they will have cumulative impacts on underground water resources. The Galilee Basin in Central Queensland is the primary area where existing assessments have indicated a cumulative management area declaration may be beneficial to allow the potential cumulative impacts of future coalmines on groundwater aquifers to be appropriately assessed and managed. While the decision to declare a cumulative management area for the Galilee Basin will be a future decision by government, the bill provides a framework to manage cumulative impacts.

Importantly, any mines currently operating in the existing Surat cumulative management area will not become regulated as a tenure to which the cumulative management area applies. This is because it is considered that the impacts of existing mines do not contribute to overlapping impacts on groundwater associated with coal seam gas operations.

While these particular amendments will increase the level of regulation pertaining to groundwater resources, they will be offset by amendments to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 to remove the requirement for these tenure holders to obtain a licence or permit for taking water. The amendments will further minimise the regulatory burden, with new powers to establish an exemption from reporting requirements for low-risk activities in both the mining and the petroleum and gas sectors. The regulatory burden on existing tenures would also be minimised through an exemption from the requirement to produce a baseline assessment plan or an underground water impact report if they are located in an area where the take of underground water is presently unregulated or if they already hold a licence or permit to take.

Unlike the former Labor government, the Newman government understands the need for managing underground water impacts from resource activities to ensure the community has confidence in the management of our water resources. The bill also amends both the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 1984 to establish a consistent framework to manage the resource sector's access to underground water.

For the first time, the take of water by the petroleum and gas sector, other than where the water is taken as a necessary by-product of the extraction of petroleum and gas, will be managed under the Water Act planning management and allocation framework, which currently applies to all other sectors. This means the petroleum and gas sector will need to abide by the same rules as everyone else when they are taking groundwater for non-associated purposes such as providing water for workers camps, dust suppression, constructing and testing infrastructure or developing production wells. This reform is particularly important as the sector looks to expand its operations into areas such as the Cooper Basin, where the Great Artesian Basin is the primary water supply source for pastoralists and local communities.

I am committed to working constructively with the gas industry to ensure it can transition into the new framework with as little disruption as possible and that its existing rights are managed appropriately while ensuring this valuable resource is managed responsibly. Firstly, a transitional period of two years will be provided to allow existing petroleum tenure holders sufficient time to comply with the new arrangements. This will be extended to five years within the Surat Basin cumulative management area. Secondly, exemptions from the requirement to obtain a water licence or permit for low-risk activities will be provided by way of regulation, and this work will be progressed in parallel with the amendments to the act. Thirdly, during the transitional period, the existing use of water for non-associated purposes by the petroleum and gas sector and its legitimate future water requirements will be recognised by granting an authorisation under the Water Act through a streamlined process so that they can continue beyond this transitional period. Finally, a water supply strategy will be developed for managing areas of water demand for the petroleum and gas sector, such as the Cooper Basin, and this will be incorporated into a review of relevant water plans such as the Great Artesian Basin water resource plan. This will ensure the plans recognise and address the water requirements of this sector alongside other sectors and provide a basis for future development to proceed.

The new framework will increase the security of supplies for all water users. The Newman government is committed to supporting the growth of a strong and productive petroleum and gas sector. To achieve this, my department will work collaboratively with the sector and other stakeholders during this transition period to ensure they have a clear and certain pathway to secure the water supplies they need without unnecessarily compromising the needs of water entitlement holders, the wider community and the environment. The bill also transforms the water planning framework into a more efficient and easier to understand regulatory framework characterised by a catchment based water plan, which will be subordinate legislation, that specifies allocation and management of water resources of a river basin or aquifer system. Operational matters, such as water sharing rules, will be contained in either a water management protocol for unsupplemented water or an operations manual for water supply schemes. This framework provides a more flexible structure to ensure scheme operators and the government can respond in an effective and timely manner to the changing water resource requirements of a river basin or aquifer system. The new processes to amend or establish these regulatory plans are more efficient and flexible and will significantly reduce the time taken to undertake planning activities. Robust science, clear outcomes and strong community engagement remain key features of the water planning process.

The changes to chapter 2 of the Water Act will also provide for the accelerated conversion of water licences to tradeable water allocations through a suite of more efficient statutory instruments to deliver a fully realised water market by 2017. The new framework will continue to allow the government to engage in focused and targeted consultation with local communities on proposals to deliver tradeable allocations on a catchment basis. Introducing trading in catchments provides increased opportunities for users to access available water and promotes economic growth and development while still protecting the security of existing entitlements. The bill also amends the Water Act to remove the requirement to obtain many licences where the risk to the sustainability of the resource is low. Additionally, it will allow a water plan or a regulation to set thresholds in particular areas to remove the requirement for a water licence, for a certain take of or to interfere with water.

The bill will also provide for the development of a watercourse identification map to provide clearer and easily accessible information for users. The bill streamlines the process for water licences by amending the Water Act to ensure changes to a water licence that do not impact the resource are

not required to follow a lengthy and unnecessarily complex assessment process. On average, around 550 applications are received each year across Queensland for changes to water licences. It is estimated that at least 75 per cent of these applications will now be able to follow the new simple dealing process, removing the need to advertise and saving customers up to \$1,500 for each application and significantly reducing the time taken for a decision to be made. The new framework will significantly streamline the water licence process, allowing licence holders to do business more efficiently and deliver an outcome for our customers in a more timely fashion. The framework for the release of unallocated water is being reformed to allow faster access to unallocated water and a more rapid response from government to emerging water demands. The bill and supporting subordinate legislation will allow for unallocated water to be reserved outside a water plan area and will also significantly simplify the process and time frames for releasing unallocated water.

The bill amends the Water Act to establish a process to transition and normalise special agreement water rights into the Water Act framework by negotiation and agreement with the relevant resource companies. The transition of these rights will provide more consistency in the allocation and management of the state's water and more clarity of water rights for those relevant companies. The bill proposes to amend the Water Act to introduce a 'water development option' which provides a process for the government to give a commitment of access to water resources for coordinated projects, where appropriate and at an early stage in the environmental impact assessment process, to facilitate the responsible development of large scale projects requiring water resources. The amendments will also enable the minister to amend a water plan, if appropriate, to implement the outcomes of an environmental impact statement process by reserving unallocated water for a large scale project. This will provide more certainty for developers and will encourage and facilitate greater private sector involvement in major water infrastructure developments.

The bill includes a number of amendments to the Water Act to cut red tape and provide more flexibility for category 2 water authorities to operate more efficiently and autonomously. These amendments include support for the transition of water authorities to alternative institutional arrangements, including the provision of transitional supply contracts to allow these entities to continue to rate and charge, provide disclosure statements for a prospective water allocation buyer in a distribution scheme and allow more flexible board proceedings. The bill also makes a number of amendments to the River Improvement Trust Act 1940 to contemporise the language in the act, reduce red tape for trusts in carrying out their activities and streamline many of the existing provisions in the act where other laws take precedence. These amendments include improving the processes for commencing, amending, amalgamating or dissolving existing trusts. The act is being amended to overhaul the constitution and membership of trusts to allow a much more flexible approach to forming a river improvement trust area, naming it and deciding on the structure for the board of such a river management body. These amendments will also recognise the ability of a board to formally appoint subcommittees to provide expert advice to the board as and when required. Significantly, the act has been modernised through amendments to the long title of the act and its objects to allow trusts to invest in a broader range of activities necessary to act on erosion issues and improve water quality. This will allow trusts to work cooperatively with landowners and other catchment groups to plan for and implement activities beyond the bed and banks of a watercourse. For example, the trust may wish to collaborate to implement works to address gully or stream bank erosion by working with landowners to implement best practice sediment management practices. However, to be clear, the work of the trusts must focus on activities that directly benefit the health and resilience of rivers.

New development opportunities will also be opened up in Cape York Peninsula, with access to 9,800 megalitres of unallocated water reserves through amendments to the Great Artesian Basin water resource plan included in the bill. The availability of this water has been determined in a robust manner as a result of a thorough technical assessment undertaken by my department over the last 12 months and in consultation with local communities. The bill also makes a number of critical miscellaneous amendments, including provision to enable the surrender of a water allocation, to remove the reversal of the onus of proof to ensure standard prosecution principles apply for water related offences; providing more flexibility regarding public notices; removing the requirement for a second authorisation for embankments or levees; and removing spent transitional provisions.

The bill will amend both the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 and Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 to harmonise the coal and coal seam gas safety provisions that exist in both acts. These relate to 'joint interaction management plans' requirements, key terminology and inspector powers. They will ensure overlaps are addressed through risk management and the preparation of agreed joint plans before commencing overlapping operations to ensure effective

regulation. The bill will also amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 to broaden the categories that determine eligibility for an individual to be appointed as the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health under the act and under the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999.

These will focus on the mandatory qualifications required and expanding the range of potential eligible candidates. The bill will be supported with an amendment to the Water Regulation 2002, which will include processes to support the new streamlined Water Act framework. I intend to table the draft amendments to the Water Regulation 2002 that support these reforms in the House during the second reading debate on the bill.

The Newman government is committed to ensuring that accessibility, certainty and security for water users remains paramount in the proposed new framework for the responsible and productive use of water resources in Queensland. The bill delivers on this commitment and delivers a framework that strikes the appropriate balance between delivering economic, social and environmental outcomes.

I would like to acknowledge in the public gallery a number of officers from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines who have been instrumental in the development of this very important bill. I thank them publicly for their very hard work. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.20 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.20 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report to the House on the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 17 November 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

WATER LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3239, on motion of Mr McArdle—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.21 pm): I rise to speak to the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill and, in doing so, acknowledge that amendments that are made to manage flooding are critical in terms of the ability of the government and local government to be able to respond at a time when there are great pressures on the whole community. I note that some of the changes in this legislation are as a result of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry. Certainly, I believe that that inquiry identified some very important issues.

It is intended that this legislation will streamline the water emergency situation. I know in my electorate there were some circumstances. Admittedly, it was around the administration of the Gladstone Area Water Board. However, having said that, I saw firsthand the stress that people faced as much from the knowledge of what was happening as the uncertainty that the events brought with them. So the ability for all entities to be able to respond in a timely manner is certainly welcome.

I note that there is going to be an opportunity for changes to the administration of the Gladstone Area Water Board and the Mount Isa Area Water Board. The minister has defined it as efficiencies and reducing red tape. I do not believe that the Gladstone Area Water Board has any concerns about the legislation. I know that over the years from the council's point of view and, more importantly, from the community's point of view—and this is certainly not directed at this minister—there was some angst about dividends being returned to councils, given that in great measure it was water users who funded the water board. I certainly just lay that on the table as a matter of interest.

In relation to the notification of water restrictions, the use of electronic media is not only logical but appropriate. I know that during the floods in Gladstone the SMS alerts were used very effectively, as was Facebook. People in the Boyne Valley were completely cut off and until the power went down they were reliant on Facebook to get information. Once the electricity was gone, they were cut off. So in terms of the use of SMS alerts, I think it is wise to recognise the comfort with which younger people use those tools. I think that it is incumbent on the government to ensure that they also embrace it. But it is also important not to give up some of the older forms of communication, such as TV, newspapers and letterbox drops, because not everybody has the internet, or wants the internet, or is able to connect to the internet. So I commend the minister for these changes and look forward to further debate.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (4.25 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. As chair of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, at the outset I thank the committee secretariat for their work on this bill. I thank the minister and his departmental staff. I thank the other committee members for their work.

This was not a contentious bill for the committee to examine. We note that the bill amended three acts for a range of purposes and that the broad objectives of the bill were to improve the state's powers to respond to and manage water supply emergencies and flood events before the next wet season. I will touch on one of the elements that the committee looked at in particular in that area. Another objective was to improve the governance provisions for category 1 water authorities, such as the Gladstone Area Water Board—and we have heard from the member for Gladstone and I know that a fellow committee member, the member for Mount Isa, was also certainly interested in the amendments that related to the Mount Isa Water Board. Also, another objective was to bring the Queensland Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 into alignment with the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005.

I want to tease out one of the areas that the committee looked at that is always a concern. I think committees in any of their examinations should always look very closely when a check and balance is being removed or is being modified and they should be confident that the reason for the removal of this check and balance is warranted. Specifically, this bill removes the Governor in Council and gazettal notice requirements for giving effect to a water supply emergency declaration. Instead, the declaration will be made by the minister and a copy will be given to affected water service providers.

In its examination the committee questioned the departmental officers about the removal of this check and balance. Within our Westminster system we have that final check and balance of Governor in Council. The Governor has a role, and I believe a very important role, in ensuring that the final check and balance to any notification is warranted. The committee heard evidence and understood that, particularly in emergency situations in the lead-up to or during a disaster, the Governor in Council process can be time consuming. That is not a reflection upon the office of the Governor or upon the office of cabinet. But at that time decisions are being made very quickly and there may be a need to respond in a manner that is timely to the emergency that is being faced. It is recognised that there are emergency declarations in other areas that do not require Governor in Council approval, again because of the timeliness and the urgency that can often be associated with those emergency declarations. Overall, although there is a removal of the check and balance that is usual in our Westminster system, the committee felt that, with the emergency and urgency provisions that require these gazettal notices to occur, the removal of the Governor in Council check and balance was warranted.

That being said, I have nothing further to add. As I said, this bill is not controversial. I believe that the committee received only one submission in relation to it. I have to say that, from time to time, it is nice to examine a bill that does not aggravate anyone and where the examination process is conducted very smoothly. I thank the minister for that and the sharing of the love across this chamber. I commend the bill.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (4.30 pm): This bill is obviously the LNP's answer to one part of the findings of the Brisbane Flood Inquiry and the LNP's views of the perceived weakness of the inquiry and that which was discovered in the inquiry. Interestingly, this legislation is being put forward just in advance of the large class action being run here in Queensland involving those people who arguably have a case to make with the state government. It is no secret, firstly, that the state, which self-insures, and, secondly, that the major insurer affected by the flood, Suncorp, which had a \$1 billion-plus liability, are very interested in the outcome.

The legislation has multiple parts, including clarifying government powers during emergencies to manage water supplies, to improve governance of the state owned water authorities of Gladstone and Mount Isa and to implement changes to the Water Efficiency and Labelling Standards scheme. This latter scheme is the very sensible regulatory standards approach to the WELS scheme to cooperatively implement strategies for everything from shower heads to dishwashers to urinals using a star rating system. Interestingly, these systems are very popular with the public and save water too. It was rather well discussed by the member for Mulgrave.

It is no secret that many in the LNP were very dubious about what was going on well before, during and after the Brisbane flood. The concern pre flood was compromised by an unfortunate statement from the now Deputy Premier that the Wivenhoe Dam full-supply level was less than it could be because of the flood mitigation level set pre the Brisbane flood. There was, however, simultaneously a complete inability to understand the logic behind the Traveston Dam; then crazy schemes like the western corridor water pipeline and the Tugun desalination plant, with a lot of debate about everything in between. During the Brisbane flood there was similarly great concern about the management of the Wivenhoe Dam strategy with decreasing levels at what time and how much, to doubtful claims about how good it was to have the Tugun desalination plant by various ministers, in particular, I think, then minister Stephen Robertson, to provide treated water to Brisbane during the flood. After the flood it would be seen that the LNP obsession was how Labor could be blamed for the flood and, by default, how the LNP could receive some redress and electoral voting support out of that. The problem for the LNP is that at each point it made critical errors, both of judgement and integrity, that has meant it got nothing but criticism which is now compounded by a decision to, in fact, look towards selling off those water assets so it can compound the misery of all consumers by the subsequent price rises that will follow.

Honourable members, this is quite a feat and it is all quite unnecessary. We have gone through a very dry period now for four years and a once-in-100-year drought in the state, but Mother Nature is sure to want to give us another lesson in failing to plan. The Wivenhoe Dam was not for water storage but for flood mitigation, yet the Deputy Premier allowed the greatest dam strategy problem, the Karreman Quarries, an open licence to continue dumping sediment into the major Wivenhoe water supply. Furthermore, he has not prevented the mining company, Coalbank, doing exploratory drilling activities in the catchment eight kilometres from the western edge of the dam. Finally, he and the water minister have done nothing to reduce Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba's reliance on Wivenhoe as their primary water source. In fact, he has compounded it. Critically, he has just delivered a major Wivenhoe supplied mains water supply to Charlton Wellcamp Industrial Estate and the new Wagner Wellcamp Airport which it has been championing. This is occurring in tandem with the massive expansion of coalmining by New Hope at Acland stage 3 where the capture of existing groundwater will make that Wivenhoe supplied water even more critical. Yet here is legislation proposing even greater controls for Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams because the minister has stated the outcome of the flood inquiry said that there were gaps in the management by Seqwater.

The move towards a water supply emergency declaration is a major part of this bill, together with the interesting restrictions on the use of subartesian water. The reasons provided for this are dubious at best and contemptible at worst when obviously the key problem currently for regional councils and landholders is the massive overconsumption of water by mining companies, especially coalmining companies, because the farmers cannot afford it.

I look at the legislation and I do not see any progression to dealing with the elephant in the room—in fact, they are dealing with the mouse. I see the minister seeking to do minor things around the edges. He is either ignorant of the greater problem or he is an apologist for what the LNP is really doing to enfranchise itself and some of its supporters. Wivenhoe is a flood mitigation dam and should not be part of the water storage solution for Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba into the long-term. It never should have been. Four million people depend on decisions we as a government make. There must be an immediate ban on all riverine quarrying in the Wivenhoe Dam catchment. Add coalmining to that, too, whether it is underground or open cut. The Borumba Dam and the Upper Wivenhoe Dam

need to be mobilised for water storage and for capture going back and forth. Wivenhoe Dam must become what it really is—a flood mitigation dam—or the dam wall height needs to be raised between 10 and 16 metres. There needs to be considerable downstream land resumptions to reflect sensible dam heights. To talk about flood declarations to allow increased flood storage capacities after cyclones is utter nonsense. It only makes a little more sense than the very intriguing statements made by the former member for Cairns that water is made in a tap. It may be that without any rural experience city people have little or no understanding of water, managing it and respecting it.

There are other issues in this legislation beyond some of the management issues and I spoke of them initially. I do not really have too many arguments with them for they make sense. The only thing that I would say that makes little sense is that there is a fatal flaw that occurred at Grantham—and I tabled all this information in the last sitting of parliament—where clearly a dam wall in the quarry upstream collapsed and 13 people lost their lives. If that collapse had occurred literally six hours later 300 people would have lost their lives. There are no proposals within this bill to deal with that problem. Critically, in the last flood inquiry only one day was devoted to that. The information given at the inquiry by the hydrologist was wrong on the basis of evidence. I have tabled all the documentation with regard to it. He considered, or was told or whatever, that the dam wall was an existing structure. The bund or dam wall was a man-made structure and when it burst it killed people.

This contrasts with what is being proposed today. We are talking about the management of dams. Dams have great roles in our communities. They are largely for water storage. Communities have to be supplied with an affordable product in a safe way. I worry about this LNP government when it has total control of the GOC equivalent of our two major industrial cities in Mount Isa and Gladstone. I realise that within the bill there is a right given to them to do whatever they like, but I heard what was stated by the member for Mount Isa when he said that the pricing of water had got to the point in relation to the chlorination plant whereby the money was not being returned to the city to actually pay for that and it was becoming an unaffordable measure for the city. I do think that the government has to approach that sensibly. Water is a critical element of life, particularly in Mount Isa, and I think that money should be being returned to it. It is a pity that this bill is not responding to what the member for Mount Isa was proposing. I do hope that the government behaves in a responsible manner in the regions. We can just watch and observe.

The great challenge for the minister and the LNP government is to face up to what they have to do, irrespective of what previous governments did or did not do. Lives, businesses and communities in South-East Queensland are dependent on those decisions. To pass on those is not just cowardice, it is not just ignorance, but it is the way to look at the government itself and to assess whether it is a good government or it is a poor government. If, as I see it, they are full of spin, full of ego, full of themselves, but ultimately nowhere to be found when confronting the real challenge of water—and remember the Latin word for water means life—then, in fact, it has failed: it has failed us and it has failed the people of Queensland. Rather than the myth that Labor proposed of Traveston, what water storage for South-East Queensland is the LNP going to provide that is sustainable to relieve the pressure on Wivenhoe to allow it to be the flood saviour that a government 30 years ago promised?

This legislation is all mouse and no elephant. The fulcrum is that the elephant that needs to be addressed is close, so that elephant should be addressed. It is the issue of what we are going to do for water storage for Brisbane and how we are going to correctly address Wivenhoe as our flood-mitigation strategy.

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (4.39 pm): I rise in support of the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. I will make a short contribution and direct my comments to the amendments contained within this bill that have come out of dealing with the recent water supply emergencies and flood events that are intended to improve the government's ability to respond to and manage such occurrences. Currently, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply is required to have a water supply emergency declaration approved and gazetted by the Governor in Council, which is time consuming and impractical during emergency situations. Furthermore, service provider water restrictions do not apply until the day after the notice of the restrictions is given to affected customers, limiting the effectiveness of short-term responses or immediate emergencies. By removing these approval and gazettal notice requirements in emergency situations, the minister will be better equipped to manage water supply situations should they occur during the next wet season.

Following the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, recommendations have also allowed the minister to declare a temporary full supply level for dams when managing the impacts of flood events. This has proven to be an effective mechanism in South-East Queensland and was exercised multiple times during the 2012-13 wet season. However, what those experiences have demonstrated is a further limitation in the gazettal process. This bill now provides that the declaration will have effect

on notice being given to the dam owner, removing any potential delay in taking action. Furthermore, the bill will clarify those procedures around Seqwater, adopting a different operating procedure during flood events when reasonable but unsuccessful efforts are made to contact the chief executive. Effectively, these provisions will ensure that the appropriate procedures are authorised efficiently to ensure both the safety of the dam and downstream communities.

In light of the raft of changes to the reporting and declaration process, I commend the Minister for Energy and Water Supply on ensuring that a public record of all decisions made during emergency situations is continued. I approve of the state government's commitment to transparency by maintaining provisions that require the minister to provide a copy of the declaration to affected service providers as soon as practical and continue publication of the declaration in the gazette. This is also true for the way in which service providers must give notice of their emergency water restrictions in an appropriate way for the circumstances, such as by radio, television or another form of electronic media.

Having been a police officer right in the thick of the 2011 Brisbane floods, I can speak firsthand of the concerns, both actual and theoretical, that inundated emergency service providers at the time. The need to not only reduce red tape but also remove redundant and obstructing provisions is paramount to ensuring best practices during water emergencies. I commend the commitment of Minister McArdle to further improving the state government's response to real flood events in time for the next wet season. I support the bill.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (4.42 pm): I rise to make a very short contribution to the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. This bill is designed to improve the state's powers to respond to and manage water supply in the event of an emergency. Our wet season is fast approaching. While I certainly hope western regions receive ample rain to help their situation in the drought, in the south-east we need to prepare, just in case. The best way to prepare is through better legislation.

Many of us will never forget the devastating floods that struck South-East Queensland in 2011 and again in 2013. I say to all of those volunteers who gave up their time to help those in need, you are the embodiment of a true Queenslander. The State Emergency Service, the Rural Fire Service, the ordinary mums and dads—to name a mere few—were shining examples of our community spirit and personified the mud army. Certainly, from the Albert electorate a lot of volunteers travelled north to help their families and brethren in the Brisbane region and in the Lockyer Valley. It is from history that we should learn so that we can more prudently manage in the future.

I wish to speak about two aspects of the bill. Firstly, the bill amends the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to allow a service provider the ability to commence emergency water restrictions on the day that they are announced. This amendment removes potential delays in implementing necessary measures to manage a situation. However, the bill requires the service providers to give notice of restrictions to customers by, for example, radio, television broadcast and other electronic media. This ensures clear communications to actual consumers. An example of an emergency occurred during the 2013 floods when high levels of turbidity in the Brisbane River caused the shutdown of the Mount Crosby Water Treatment Plant, which left parts of Brisbane in a precarious situation with a reliable water supply in limited reserves. I recall the need to impose restrictions. Even though the need was immediate and desperate, notification time frames caused a delay in getting the message out.

The second part of the bill that I would like to briefly talk about is the temporary full-supply level declarations and authorised alternative operating procedures, which are designed to better manage the impact of potential floods in South-East Queensland. The amendment will allow quicker decision making to temporarily reduce dam levels in Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams to respond to existing or potential flood events. That streamlines the system for faster response times to help mitigate future flood events. This is a very well thought out bill and I commend the minister for putting it together. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (4.46 pm): I rise in support of the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. This is very important legislation for my electorate. The North Pine Dam on the North Pine River is the border between my electorate and the electorate of Pine Rivers, which is represented by my good friend Seath Holswich. In 2011, a significant flood event did not go unnoticed in my electorate. The dam is unique in Australia in that long before it was built thousands of houses were built downstream of where it is now located. In fact, there are houses metres away from the dam wall. The dam was built in 1976 and from that time until 2011 there had never been an incident of land slumping downstream of the dam wall.

We have eyewitness accounts of the event in 2011 that recount a wall of water crossing the top of the dam wall. In fact, I spoke with a fellow who was fishing on the dam, which you can do at the Dayboro end of the dam. Thankfully, his boat was pointing toward the top end of the dam. He turned around with enough time to see a wall of water about half a metre high, maybe a little higher, coming towards him. By the time it hit the dam wall, eyewitnesses say that it was over a metre high. It went over the top of the wall and kept going across the top of the wall for hours. Much was destroyed. As in other parts of Brisbane and Ipswich, houses were flooded. In fact, severe destruction occurred.

We lost the up-river part of the AJ Wyllie Bridge, which was out of commission for nearly two years, causing significant social disruption. Many small businesses went belly up as a result. Unfortunately, the then Labor government took well over a year before starting to rebuild the bridge. Thankfully, we pulled that project in on time and under budget.

The pony club at Young's Crossing suffered significant loss. In fact, one of the containers that they used for storage hit the AJ Wyllie Bridge, causing destruction. The train bridge was seriously damaged. Thankfully, we are building a new one now. In 2013 we suffered another flood event. It was not to that same degree, but it was equally destructive. Thankfully, we had rebuilt the bridge and it was built strong enough to withstand that event.

Following the 2011 flood event I worked with the residents quite substantially. On my request the minister came out and we walked around the area and towards the base of the wall. We drove around to some of the houses on the riverbank that had been flooded in the 2011 event. The residents were very concerned because at that time North Pine Dam was required to be maintained at full level, and full level was 600 millimetres off the top of the wall. When we had severe storms the water would lap across the top of the wall and run down the front of the wall.

Members can imagine that people who have a house downstream of the wall and a year or so ago suffered a substantial flood event would be nervous when there is all that water behind the wall. Thankfully, the minister came out and acted almost immediately. For the 2012-13 summer and the 2013-14 summer the minister ordered a temporary full level of 90 per cent. That has provided some substantial comfort to the residents in the area downstream of the dam. For the foreseeable future the full level is 90 per cent.

This allows for some flood mitigation. Members need to understand that the catchment area for the North Pine Dam is probably around 350-odd square kilometres. We can have the situation where there is a rain event but it is not raining at the dam wall and we have to respond to it. While 10 per cent is only a small amount it makes a humongous difference to the time frame in which operators can respond to an event. It also gives great comfort to residents that there is a bit of a buffer that enables the operators to think a little bit more clearly about what they are going to do. I thank the minister for his prompt response in dealing with that particular issue.

I would also like to speak about how that dam is operated. Up until 2011—so from 1976 when the dam was built up until 2011—we had never seen land slumping downstream of the dam wall. Unfortunately, after 2011 the way the dam was operated and the way the gates were operated was slightly changed. Young's Crossing needed to remain open during peak hour. To give effect to that, the gates would be opened and shut very quickly. When I say shut very quickly, it would take an hour and a half to shut the gates.

Unfortunately, the rate that the water then falls away does not mimic a natural event. What we have is saturated land being held together by the weight of water on one side. When that water falls away quickly we do not have the land draining at a natural rate. Consequently we have a very heavy bank which is full of water and has no support and it slumps.

The department has done a review and is not completely confident that that is the case. We have some pretty good information from the Snowy Mountains power scheme that they also incurred a similar phenomena and when they closed the gates more slowly the slumping stopped. The slumping issue is not just about residents losing land. It is actually about the river starting to fill with debris and dirt from the river banks. It is a significant concern for the entire community not just the people who live on the river.

Again the North Pine Residents Association wrote to the minister and the minister has responded saying that those concerns are being taken into account and are being considered. I understand that the operating manual is being reviewed right now. Towards the end of the year that operating manual will be approved. Our concerns with regard to how the dam wall is being operated have been considered.

I am aware that the minister has, through the department, spoken with the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the council has agreed that the gates could stay open for up to 48 hours which means that Young's Crossing could remain closed for that period of time. That would be significantly helpful because we could allow a large volume of water to be released, especially on outgoing tides. The gates could be closed over a longer period of time to mimic a natural event more closely. That would substantially help the land slumping issue we think.

I say thank you to the minister for responding very promptly to those two issues. He has been out to meet with us. We are confident that if we can modify the way the dam wall is operated we will go back to where we were which was no slumping at all. We look forward to the release of the new operating manual. On behalf of my community, I thank the minister for his support on those two issues.

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (4.55 pm): I rise to support the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. This bill has a number of drivers, with the significant ones being: to make critical amendments to improve the state's powers to respond to and manage water supply emergencies and flood events before the start of the next wet season; to improve the governance framework for category 1 water authorities—namely, the Gladstone Area Water Board and the Mount Isa Water Board, which are state owned statutory authorities that supply bulk water services; and to implement changes to the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme in response to recommendations of the independent review of the scheme in 2010.

The objectives of this legislation are clear. They are to amend the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 so that: the process of declaring a water supply emergency is streamlined; the governance framework of category 1 water authorities is improved; redundant provisions referencing the Queensland Water Commission are omitted; the Noosa Shire Council is included in the definition of the SEQ region; the water service providers may enable emergency restrictions to commence on the day that they are announced; a declaration of a temporary full-supply level for flood mitigation dams will have effect upon the owners upon the serving of the notice; and the procedures for the authorisation of alternative operating procedures during flood events are clarified.

The reason for these policy objectives is the determination of the LNP government to effect sound, practical and sensible government for Queensland. With regard to the water supply emergency declarations and emergency water restrictions, the minister can direct water service providers to impose water restrictions in emergency situations, but the current arrangements are cumbersome and time consuming, requiring Governor in Council approval and gazettal to effect an emergency situation. This bill will remove the Governor in Council approval and gazettal notice requirements for an emergency situation.

With regard to temporary full-supply level declarations and authorised alternative arrangements, this bill will mitigate the impacts of a potential flood or drought. The minister responsible may, by gazette notice, declare a temporary full-supply level for dams which operate under an approved flood mitigation manual. This bill will ensure that if Seqwater has attempted to contact the chief executive officer and has not received a response within a reasonable period, it can adopt the appropriate operating procedure to manage the situation at the dam during a flood event.

The Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme, WELS, is a cooperative national scheme that was established in 2005 by the Commonwealth act and complementary state and territory legislation. Some changes to the governance, compliance and administration of the scheme have occurred in 2012 and 2013. Queensland is one of the registrants to this scheme and although the Commonwealth act covers all registrants, the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005, Queensland WELS, needs to mirror recent changes to cover any unincorporated businesses or sole traders who may be importing or manufacturing WELS products in Queensland. The most sensible way to address the issues outlined above is to amend the primary legislation.

Consultation has occurred with Seqwater service providers, Seqwater and Queensland Urban Utilities, plus the Queensland Local Government Association in relation to the changes to water supply emergency declarations and emergency water restrictions. The Queensland WELS Act is part of a national cooperative scheme comprising the Commonwealth act and complementary state and territory legislation. The amendments to the Queensland WELS Act to align it with the Commonwealth act are consistent with the majority of other jurisdictions, including New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia. I support the bill before the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to start by thanking my committee colleagues for their hard work during the investigation process and for the recommendations that we made. I fully support the bill and the process we have followed to be here today. There are three main objectives to the bill. The first objective is to amend the Water Act 2000 to do the following: to streamline the process for declaring a water supply emergency; to improve the governance framework for category 1 water authorities; to omit redundant provisions referencing the Queensland Water Commission; and to include the Noosa Shire Council in the definition of the South-East Queensland region. The second objective is to amend the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to do the following: to enable service provider water restrictions in emergency situations to commence on the day they are announced; to enable declaration of a temporary full supply level for flood mitigation dams to have effect on notice being given to the dam owner; and to clarify procedures for authorisation of alternative operating procedures when flood events occurs. The third objective is to amend the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 to bring it into alignment with the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005.

As I mentioned, I fully support this bill in its entirety. One of the features of this bill is that it will streamline the procedure for changing the water supply conditions in an emergency situation. We have heard quite a bit here today about this—and we may hear some more yet—so I will limit my contribution to the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005, or the Queensland WELS Act.

This bill upholds the Queensland government's commitment to maintain legislation that forms part of a national scheme for water efficiency labelling and standards. The Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme, or WELS scheme, is a national cooperative scheme that was established in 2005 by the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 and complementary state and territory legislation. It is supported by an intergovernmental agreement between the Commonwealth and all states and territories which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the parties. The Commonwealth is the regulator and administers the scheme on behalf of the parties to the IGA. The states and territories have little or no operational role, but significant scheme changes cannot happen without the agreement of a majority of states and territories.

The WELS scheme, through its water efficiency labelling, encourages water savings by providing information to consumers on the water efficiency of certain products at the point of sale. WELS products—such as showers, taps, toilets, urinals, washing machines and dishwashers—are star rated according to their water efficiency, similar to the energy efficiency ratings for electrical products. The higher the number of stars, the more water efficient the appliance is. Consumers are accustomed to seeing the star ratings for both energy and water when purchasing products, and there is evidence that both registration and sales of four-star rated or better products have increased since the WELS scheme began. The 2004 regulation impact statement for the WELS scheme projected that a reduction in demand for water over the period 2006 to 2021 would total about 610,000 megalitres. That is 244,000 Olympic sized swimming pools, which is a lot of water.

Since then, a 2008 study by the Institute for Sustainable Futures estimated that WELS products would reduce Australia-wide water consumption by 800,000 megalitres, or 800 gegalitres, over the same period. By 2021 it is now estimated that using water-efficient products will help to reduce domestic water use by more than 100,000 megalitres each year, will save more than 800,000 megalitres, which is more water than in Sydney Harbour, and will reduce total greenhouse gas input by 400,000 tonnes each year, which is equivalent to taking 90,000 cars off the road. We can all see what these changes mean and what a great outcome this is for the state and the Commonwealth. With those few comments, I think the minister can see that I support the bill.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (5.05 pm): I rise in support of the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill. I want to offer a few comments this afternoon particularly in relation to North Pine Dam and those aspects of the legislation that impact on North Pine Dam. North Pine Dam falls entirely within my electorate of Pine Rivers. As the member for Kallangur said in his contribution this afternoon, the North Pine River downstream from the dam is the border between our two electorates. North Pine Dam is a beautiful body of water, but when it is at its devastating worst it is certainly a body of water to be feared. It creates a lot of impacts downstream when we have flood events, as we have had in the last few years. The floods of January 2011 were particularly devastating for the electorates of both Kallangur and Pine Rivers, and we needed to do something after that event to ensure that those impacts were not felt in that way again.

As the member for Kallangur mentioned in his contribution, the biggest visible effect of that flood event was the ultimate destruction and demolition of the AJ Wyllie Bridge on Gympie Road, Lawnton. We lost two lanes on Gympie Road for a period of two years. Around 30,000 cars per day

travel on that road, so losing two lanes was not only an inconvenience to motorists but it ended up sending a number of businesses in our area to the wall. They were not getting the customer flows through anymore and ultimately some of them had to either pack up completely or move out of the area. So that certainly had devastating effects on businesses in our area. When those flood events are not managed well, they also have an effect on Young's Crossing. Any closure of Young's Crossing affects residents from my electorate as well as the Kallangur electorate. We saw during 2011 and again in 2013 that the way the releases were operated meant that that road was open and shut at regular intervals, and that was not managed particularly well on occasions.

There is also an impact to residents who live downstream from the dam wall. The member for Kallangur has had a lot more issues with residents in his electorate than I have had in mine in terms of the way their backyards have just disappeared because of the effects of the water. I think we are in a fairly unique situation with North Pine Dam because thousands of residents live immediately downstream from that dam and anything that happens with water spilling out of that dam has a great impact on residents in Petrie and Whiteside in Kallangur and in Joyner and Lawnton on my side of the river as well. So there needed to be a better way. Something needed to be done to ensure that the devastating consequences of those floods were not repeated in the future.

I certainly thank the minister for this legislation and for the provisions that it puts in place to ensure that the impact of any future event is minimised as much as possible. The change to the temporary full-supply level that has been made is certainly fantastic and proactive. I know that having that put in place and implemented will be of great benefit when flood events and rainfall events do occur. Whilst the change to the temporary full supply level is a great proactive measure, I can say that the emergency releases provisions will allow for a timely reactive approach as well to ensure that any impact downstream is minimised.

On behalf of the electorate of Pine Rivers and particularly those who have been impacted significantly by the floods that we have had in the last few years, I want to say thank you to the minister for the way he has responded and for the legislation that has been brought forward. This will be of huge benefit to residents and business owners in the Pine Rivers electorate. We are learning lessons and we are implementing changes that will benefit the whole of the Pine Rivers and Kallangur electorates. For that I am truly thankful. I am pleased to support the bill.

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.09 pm), in reply: I start by acknowledging and thanking all members who joined in the debate today. I again thank the committee and the chair, Mr David Gibson, for the great work they did. I note again that the bill was recommended to be passed by the committee. In fact, the bill amends three acts for a number of purposes.

It amends the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to improve the state's power to respond to, and manage, flood events before the start of the wet season. That wet season is almost upon us and in that regard the passing of this bill is quite essential. We all know that Queensland most recently did experience drought, but we have seen that that can change quite quickly from drought to flood. We need to be prepared for the forthcoming wet season. The changes in this bill are practical solutions to problems that we will encounter in the future, yet at the same time there is no loss of accountability or transparency in dealing with emergencies. Emergency responses will be dealt with effectively and by the most expedient means of decision making in the circumstances.

The bill removes the Governor in Council and gazetted requirements for giving effect to a water supply emergency declaration; provides for water restrictions to commence on the same day they are announced in urgent or emergency situations; and provides for a declaration of a temporary full-supply level for flood mitigation dams in South-East Queensland, that is Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams, to have effect when notice is given to the dam owner rather than a publication in the gazette. Members will note other important elements of the bill include improving the governance provisions for category 1 area water authorities—Gladstone Area Water Board and Mount Isa Water Board. I confirm for the member for Gladstone that the intent of the bill in no way impacts upon price and other issues in the Gladstone area. Secondly, it brings the Queensland Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 into alignment with the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005.

I now turn to some commentary made by members in the House. I do acknowledge the member for Mulgrave's announcement that the opposition will be supporting the bill. I made the comment at the close of his contribution, 'Where was he last night?' I note that the member remarked

how the process was heavily scrutinised and well thought out, a testament to the committee system. I will, however, take the chance to address the concerns raised by the member regarding changes in the provisions of category 1 water authorities, specifically in relation to the removal of section 580(1)(b)(i). That section requires both Mount Isa and Gladstone to give notice to me as the minister of any proposal to sell or buy properties of more than \$1 million. The reason for the removal of the provision to give me notice of the sale or purchase of properties of more than \$1 million is that it is simply unnecessary in the circumstances.

As the responsible minister, I ought to receive regular briefings on the operations, and this includes such activities as buying or selling significant properties. Every year each board must submit a performance plan to its governing minister for approval which details how it will perform its functions and meet its obligations to its owner, the Queensland government. The performance plan includes the authorities' proposed capital works program and their required borrowings to support the works program. The authorities' borrowings are approved by Queensland Treasury under the state borrowing program. Both authorities are required to regularly review and report on a range of obligations, both as a water authority and as a government business entity. The documents produced include annual reports, quarterly reports, financial statements and corporate and performance plans.

Overall, I appreciate the opposition's support in relation to this omnibus bill. I particularly want to reference the support for the changes to the WELS legal requirements and agree that this makes practical sense. In relation to these, the Commonwealth legislation will apply as law of the state. However, the state still retains the ability to modify legislation if the Commonwealth law is not in the state's interest. It is with great interest and enthusiasm that I note and accept the comments made by the honourable member that we are indeed governing in the best interests of Queensland. Again, I—

Mr Pitt: Don't verbal me, Minister.

Mr McARDLE: The member should not get carried away; this is a love bill. We are, indeed, governing in the best interests of Queensland. Again, I note and thank the opposition for their support for these practical changes.

The member for Gladstone noted the critical necessity of adequate and efficient flood provisions. I agree. It is essential that we get these right and that we respond in a swift and timely manner. The member noted the area water board of Gladstone did not have any concerns. I note and agree with the member about the importance of the use of multimedia to better inform the community of water emergencies or restrictions. Again, I agree that the use of SMS and Facebook has been shown to be successful.

The member for Gympie made a very good contribution to the debate and I appreciate the fact that the committee gave strong and detailed consideration of all the elements involved with this bill.

I now turn to the member for Gaven and the contribution he made. It is no wonder Clive Palmer did not want him any longer. I understand the member's comments regarding the potential sale of the purified recycled water scheme and the desalination plant. As members of parliament would already well know, this is currently being considered through a parliamentary inquiry and I await the result of that investigation. This bill has nothing to do with the current class action. To suggest otherwise is complete and utter nonsense and a conspiracy of epic proportions.

The member somehow is trying to perpetuate the myth that Wivenhoe Dam was built solely for flood mitigation and should not be used for water supply. In fact, Wivenhoe was designed, constructed and always intended to be a dual purpose water supply and flood mitigation dam. Wivenhoe Dam's water supply is a critical element of water security in South-East Queensland and, in my opinion, is the most critical element for water supply in South-East Queensland. The government has almost completed a full investigation into the optimisation of Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine Dams. Listen to this: it has just completed three months of community consultation into these processes. The government will make a decision on this after the full consideration of the consultations and studies.

I will not waste any more time in relation to many of the other elements raised by the member that are clearly not relevant to the debate at hand except to make the comment that I cannot see any correlation, if I recall correctly, of CSG or LNG in relation to this bill before the House under any circumstances.

The member for Greenslopes made a fulsome and welcome contribution to the debate, particularly in relation to ensuring that the public record regarding any action of an urgent nature is dealt with properly and recorded accordingly. I appreciate the member's support for this bill.

The contribution to the debate of the member for Albert, again, was greatly received. I agree that the bill makes practical sense and helps speed up the response of the government in getting information out to the community.

I also wish to thank the member for Kallangur for his contributions and observations that he added to the debate. As the member has highlighted, the main lesson learnt is that in recent years in Queensland we have had floods and we have had droughts. These reforms ensure that we can respond promptly and can act quickly, especially in relation to the North Pine Dam. I thank the member for his contribution and support of the North Pine Dam optimisation study. This government's current proposal is to lower North Pine Dam to 90 per cent of its ordinary full water supply level. The government has undertaken three months consultation on this and has received community support for the lowering of the level to that percentage point. Again, I thank the member.

I thank the member for Pumicestone for her strong and relevant contribution to the debate. As always, she is fulsome in her words and also considered in the measure of those words.

The member for Burleigh also made a good contribution and, again, I thank him for his contribution to the debate.

I want to thank all members who made a contribution to the debate on the bill before the House. I want to put on record my recognition and thanks to the staff of my department for the great work they have done in preparing this bill. As all ministers know, bills only occur, work and get passed through the House because of the great work of our staff behind the scenes. I pass on my sincere thanks to them.

I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to the staff in my ministerial office. They had a significant input into the bill and guiding me in relation to the contents of the bill, and I thank them sincerely for the effort. Madam Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the House in 2014.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 43, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. MF McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.20 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. MF McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.20 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) (5.21 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 14 October 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (5.21 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Cairns Motorcycle Club

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.21 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of the Cairns Motorcycle Club or the Cairns motocross club, as it is also known. It is located at Thompson Road in Edmonton in my electorate of Mulgrave. After recent communications with the club's president, Rob Salafia, we are very aware of the club's very urgent need for assistance. This club has been operating since 1991. It is a not-for-profit club which is run completely by volunteers for the benefit of the community. The club hosts various races throughout the year at the Thompson Road track with the profits raised used to improve the track and facilities, including updating the equipment and promoting motorcycle sports education, training and participation initiatives. To address some of the other issues facing this club in terms of dust prevention, the club currently purchases water for its track from the local speedway with which they have a relationship.

The interesting thing is that this club is between a rock and a hard place. It is a great track that needs several hundred thousand dollars spent on it to bring power and water up to scratch or it will be faced with having to move to a nearby council block, which may cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. I have spoken with local council representatives. This land is currently on state government land. We are very keen to see the land transferred over to the council in trust. That will mean that the local club will be able to then apply for funding directly from the council, which at the moment it is precluded from doing because the council will not provide funding for a block that is on a state owned piece of land. That is something I will be writing to the minister about.

There had been some correspondence on this particular club's issues, and I was disturbed to hear that a representative from the government has been quoted in the paper talking about the government's proposed asset sales going ahead and that being one of the key planks to whether this club could receive funding. I find it extraordinary that already the government is essentially holding an asset sales loaded gun to the head of Queenslanders on a range of large scale projects. But to suggest that grants for sport and recreation are going to be massively impeded as a result of whether the asset sales question is answered in the affirmative by Queenslanders voting for this government at the next election is astonishing.

I have to say that this government is finding every reason to blame the previous government for a range of things, but to suggest that the finances of the state are going to impact on a particular local motocross club's ability to get grants I find astonishing. I would like to see the minister give consideration to a request from the council to transfer this land over to them in trust. Then we could all hope to get on with the job and support this great local club.

Queensland Rugby League

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (5.24 pm): It is with much pleasure that I rise this evening to speak about the Newman government's Get in the Game initiative. I think that the Get in the Game initiative is one of the most important pieces of policy we have seen implemented by this government, and it recognises the importance of sport to our young people right across the state.

I also want to congratulate the government on the \$50,000 they injected into Queensland Rugby League to give the Intrust Super Cup games to country Queensland recently. We had five of those games: one up in Mareeba, one at Moranbah, one at Longreach, one at Emerald and one at Kingaroy. These games are an outstanding success. They have taken quality players from the Intrust Super Cup to country areas so that country people can see firsthand just how well Queensland Rugby League is going. Last evening some of our colleagues and I were fortunate to be guests at the annual Queensland Rugby League's gala night dinner and presentation of awards at City Hall. It was an inspiration to see the quality of young men and women playing our game. It is the greatest game of all. It is not only about rugby league, but it is about coming together as communities at social outings. I have been involved with rugby league all of my life, and I think it is one of the greatest linchpins for communities to get behind and united in what they do.

I want to congratulate Queensland Rugby League chair Peter Betros, CEO Rob Moore and all of the member clubs. They are too numerous to name in the few minutes that have I left. But I have to say that the other side of the equation in rugby league—the people who make it work and make it

happen—are the women behind the scenes. I put on record here this evening the great work that the girls do behind the scenes. They do make it happen. They are the ones that take the kids there, and they are the ones who do all the supporting.

I congratulate Dave Smith, the CEO of the National Rugby League, and Petero Civoniceva for coming to Longreach recently for the Intrust Super Cup game where the Redcliffe Dolphins defeated the Burleigh Bears. What a great game that was and what a great spectacle. It was a first-class game of football, as were the other four games that were played in rural Queensland that same day. The only game that was televised was the one at Kingaroy. I join with my colleague the member for Mulgrave in saying that we have to see more of these games televised in Queensland so that we can encourage more people to see how good our game is in this state.

Beaudesert Electorate, Sporting Clubs; Electricity Prices

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (5.27 pm): The communities of the Beaudesert electorate have a proud sporting history, especially in rugby league. This year has again proven to be a very successful one for the top teams in the electorate, the Fassifern Bombers and the Beaudesert Kingfishers. The Bombers finished third in the Ipswich Rugby League, going down narrowly in their semifinal after a gallant fight and with some key players injured. A couple of weeks ago I was at the North Ipswich Reserve when the Bombers came from two tries down against the Goodna Eagles to progress through the elimination final. It was a mighty, gutsy come-from-behind win. Well done to all the Bombers players, coaches and managers on a great job; it was a fine effort.

The Beaudesert Kingfishers made it to the grand final against their nemesis of recent times, Mudgeeraba, but after two premierships in a row, it was unfortunately not to be a 'three-peat' for the Kingfishers. Making three consecutive grand finals is a superb effort, and Beaudesert salutes you. I look forward to supporting both clubs, seniors and juniors, in 2015.

Last week Minister McArdle visited Boonah to attend a forum concerning electricity prices for irrigators and other residents. The impacts of rising electricity costs on our farmers cannot be underestimated; in particular the network demand charges that large users are billed. I table a copy of a newspaper article from the *Beaudesert Times* this week concerning this forum.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Beaudesert Times*, dated 10 September 2014, titled 'Electricity woes hurting irrigators' [\[5959\]](#).

These network charges are imposed when more than 100 megawatts of electricity is used in a year. As I understand it, this situation is not the same across all Australian states. In my view, Queensland should raise this threshold for primary producers, who are particularly exposed to the impact of demand charges, to provide relief for our farmers from the cost of electricity. This message came very clearly to Minister McArdle at this forum, and I thank the minister for agreeing to undertake some work experience on farms in the Fassifern and Beaudesert regions in the near future and to get up close and personal with families and farms affected by this issue.

Times are tough for farmers in my electorate and across Queensland, but after the floods of 2013 there is water in the ground and to support agriculture we need to do all we can to deliver on electricity prices so that the water can be pumped on to crops to deliver revenue from those crops that our community desperately needs.

Last weekend was the Beaudesert Show. I would like to congratulate all involved with the Beaudesert Show. It was a fantastic event. They have a very committed committee there. On the Friday 780 primary school students from around the region visited the show to see all of the exhibits from both the agricultural sector and the different areas on display at the show. I think they do a wonderful job. They had 17,000 or 18,000 people come through the gates. I congratulate everyone involved with the show and the community for getting behind it.

One of our local dairy farmers has just been awarded the prize for Australian farmer of the year. Greg Dennis, whose family runs Scenic Rim 4 Real Milk in my electorate, won that prize just recently. I congratulate Greg and the Dennis family on that achievement.

No Curfew

 **Dr LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (5.30 pm): I was lucky enough recently to attend a school fete. It was a wonderful event. Obviously, hard work by the P&C and the whole school. There was beautiful weather and beautiful company. But who did I see manning a stall at the fete? I saw a representative of the No Curfew group, resplendent in their No Curfew regalia. What is this group? Is it an LNP front, closely associated with the member for Brisbane Central? We know that it is a group promoting

nightclubs, letting violence remain on our streets and putting profits before our kids' safety. Here they were advertising at a primary school fete to primary school students. Really? Is this the new target market? Have they no decency?

New South Wales nightclubs have never been safer and never more profitable to the nightclubs with good business models in Kings Cross and in Newcastle. It is better for the police, better for the paramedics, better for the hospitals and, most importantly, better for our children. The New South Wales Police Association, and indeed our police union, have called for a roll-out of the Labor Party's platform on alcohol fuelled violence.

That this group, who are obviously LNP supporters and a nightclub front group, was at a primary school fete is totally reprehensible. During the by-election campaign I was fronted with this No Curfew group. The good people of Stafford, with a 19.1 per cent swing, sent them packing. The good people of Brisbane Central will also send them packing with their puppet master the member for Brisbane Central.

Gladstone Maritime History Society

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (5.32 pm): Our communities are enriched by individuals and organisations who collect, collate and preserve our history. One such very important group in my electorate is the Gladstone Maritime History Society Inc. Recently they held their annual general meeting, which I had the privilege to attend. The Gladstone Maritime History Society has collected quite a significant and impressive range of items of maritime importance from around Gladstone particularly—the bust of the *Jenny Lyn* and also articles off quite a number of vessels, some of which have come to grief in the reefs off Gladstone.

One of the major proposals is to have the HMAS *Gladstone* lifted out of the water and put up on dry dock to become part of the museum. HMAS *Gladstone* was bequeathed to the Gladstone Maritime History Society several years ago and has been standing off in the harbour waiting for the East Shores area to be developed. When it is, the *Gladstone* will then be lifted on to dry dock. As is the case when vessels are moored for long periods of time, there is some additional maintenance work that will have to be done. I am pleased to say that there are quite a number of organisations, particularly small businesses in Gladstone, that have offered their time, their expertise and in-kind support in order to move the restoration of HMAS *Gladstone* forward as the time comes closer to when it will actually be lifted on to the dry dock in the East Shores area.

I congratulate president Lindsay Wassell, secretary Noel Bowley, Treasury Shirley Huth, operations coordinator Ian Griffith, projects and maintenance coordinator Bruno Romagnolo and HMAS *Gladstone* coordinator Errol Page. These people are very similar to the committee from last year. I commend them for the wonderful work they do. They really are passionate about maintaining the history that is ours.

I have heard members in the chamber talking about the game between the Broncos and the Cowboys. I have supported the Broncos for a lot of years and I really, really, really cannot support the Cowboys. So in the game as it unfolds I hope it is a draw.

North Queensland Cowboys

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (5.35 pm): I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of a long-time friend of mine, Roger Piva, and his son, Oliver Piva. Other friends visiting me tonight are Ross Rankin and his wife, Jackie. They are old mates of mine—going back a long time to the days on the rugby union field in the Burdekin, playing for the famous Burdekin Cane Toads.

Mr Johnson: What were you? Reserve orange boy?

Mr COX: I take that interjection. Ross Rankin worked in Bowen for a lot of years and then back in the Burdekin, which is where we got to know him. Of course, the honourable member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, is also a good and long-time friend of Roger Piva. Roger and his family have a history of cane farming in the Burdekin. I know that he currently sits on the local Canegrowers board.

When I was younger I used to play rugby union on a Saturday but of course played rugby league on a Sunday for the famous Home Hill Devils, up to the point when I was selected to play rep football for union. Union in those days was an amateur sport and we were no longer allowed to play and collect fees playing for rugby league.

I note also that the Burdekin and North Queensland have been a strong breeding ground for famous rugby league players, probably on a world scale, such as Arch Foley, whom the Foley Shield was named after. Comments made at the time of the naming of the team of the century were that the

Foley Shield was and is a unique vehicle which drives North Queensland rugby league, with the competition between the north's regional centres helping to develop players of supreme skill and confidence.

I am also very confident that this weekend, when the famous North Queensland Cowboys take on the Brisbane Broncos—I would say they have become our equal and are no longer our big brother—will be magnificent at the 1300SMILES Stadium in Townsville, which I am hoping to attend with my family and the many screaming fans. I note the allegiance of the whip, who is a good friend of mine. We both support another team of the blue and white, but I know that this weekend he will be fully behind the famous Cowboys. I know that there are probably more members in this House who will support the Broncos, but I look forward to returning to this House in four weeks time with the biggest smile on my face—as will you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a good thing for North Queensland in general, because the team has always been a regional team; it has never been a city team. I look forward to Sunday morning when I get texts of congratulations from all those in the south.

Intolerance

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (5.38 pm): This evening I rise to speak about a matter which is the cause of great concern in my community of Ipswich West. On 22 May in this place I read a quote which included these words—

... in my heart the terrible feeling persists that I could have, I might have, saved them.

These words were of the late Olga Lengyel, a writer, historian and survivor of the holocaust. Mrs Lengyel lost her dear family to the atrocities of Nazi Germany.

I speak of this again tonight as there are words which I feel must be placed on the public record. For some time now we have been hearing about some of the most unspeakable things happening not decades ago but today. On 11 September 2001 unimaginable terror was unleashed on thousands of innocent people in the United States. It changed our world forever. We must never forget the carnage and evil of that day. Today utterly heinous acts of torture, murder and indeed genocide are being waged against Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria by the so-called Islamic State. Little children are being callously butchered and buried alive. The images I have seen horrify me—the bodies of babies like broken dolls, a naked young woman held by militants over a basin while blood pours from her cut throat, her life draining away. These matters must be discussed openly. They must not be sanitised as they are works of evil which must be known and rejected by all people. We must rage against intolerance and its inciting of hatred. It should be reserved only for those who seek to vilify and persecute and the unjust.

This week we have seen allegations of Queensland individuals supporting terrorist activities. We also saw an emblem associated with the Islamic State publicly auctioned in a place of worship interstate. It is not about which organisation is involved; it must simply be publicly condemned. Sadly, all we ever hear are denial and excuses instead of genuine resolve and reassurance. Is it any wonder that we saw people protesting this week? Intolerance is the scourge of man and, as it has been said many times, it takes only for good men to do nothing or remain silent for evil to prevail. I call on all religious and political leaders to take tougher decisive action to bring perpetrators of such hatred to account, and it must start in their chambers, churches and mosques. When we speak of the Holocaust we say never again. The realisation of its desolation was supposed to be a turning point for humanity, but I fear its sentiment is hollow. I am forever changed through my reading of Olga Lengyel's book *Five Chimneys*. The victims of those pages and of these latest atrocities cry out to us. We owe it to them to act and not be silent.

State Penalties Enforcement Registry; Nicklin Electorate, Events

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (5.41 pm): I share with members the following real-life case in support of my recent call for the state government to amend the state penalties enforcement regulatory debt collection process to make sure that once someone is registered with SPER and before SPER commences enforcement action against that person SPER is required to send a copy of the enforcement order by registered mail to the person concerned. Earlier this year one of my constituents was stopped by the police in a random roadside vehicle check and, after the driver produced her open-class C driver's licence, police communications advised the local police officer that the person's driver's licence had been suspended by SPER. I am informed that my constituent has lived at the same address for the last three years and did not receive any notice from SPER that her driver's licence was to be suspended.

When she appeared in court, the police prosecutor told her, 'You have to see your local member of parliament to fix these problems, but no-one ever does.' When her matter came before the magistrate, guess what the magistrate said? The legislation required him to suspend her licence for one to six months and he did not have the power to consider her request for a special driver's licence because the legislation did not allow him to do that. My constituent is the carer of her husband, who is due for his third open heart surgery. My constituent's hours of work are early in the morning when there is no public transport on the Sunshine Coast available to her and she is not able to apply to the magistrate for a special purpose driver's licence. SPER should be required to serve notifications by registered mail to inform people of what is proposed by it and not be allowed to continue as it does at the moment in tying up unnecessary court time. This is not the first time this issue has been raised in parliament. It is time this Newman Liberal National Party government took responsibility for the failure of the SPER system.

Recently I joined Madam Speaker and member for Maroochydore and many current and former students and staff at the Yandina State School's 125th birthday celebrations. We all had a wonderful day and I acknowledge school principal, Rob Jennings, and celebration coordinating committee members Wendy Mason and retired former school principal Wayne Torrens for all of the work they did in preparing, leading and coordinating our celebrations. Well done to all of the students and volunteers who worked so hard during the day so that our community could have such an enjoyable birthday celebration. Also recently I chaired the Nambour and District Care 30th annual general meeting. Congratulations to President Roger Roberts and his fellow committee members for the great work they do. I table a copy of President Roger Robert's report to the 30th Nambour and District Care annual general meeting.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 2 September 2014, titled 'Nambour & District Care Inc President's report for the Management Committee' [5960].

Redlands Electorate, Schools; Knight, Mr J

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (5.44 pm): Tonight I rise to say thank you and to acknowledge the investment in schools across my electorate of Redlands, creating a much better and safer learning environment. Schools in my electorate have received maintenance budgets in each of the three years of this LNP government, and I acknowledge the minister in the House tonight. In 2012-13 these schools shared in \$752,910, in 2013-14 they shared in \$372,000 and in 2014-15 they shared in \$591,000—over \$1.7 million going into schools so that they can be painted, gutters repaired as well as footpaths, broken windows and landscaping. I thank Minister Langbroek, the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Then there is the Great Results funding—a further \$892,000 shared across those schools. But it does not end there.

In terms of the Smart School Subsidy Scheme, \$104,000 will be shared between Russell Island and Macleay Island state schools for playground upgrades, school walkways and covered walkways. Kimberley College will receive \$1.9 million to construct six general learning areas, Sheldon College \$175,000 and Victoria Point State High School \$2.1 million. In talking with the teachers, parents and principals, they are very pleased with this generosity of our government but also comment that it has been the first proper investment in maintenance over many years.

I also thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Minister Emerson, for \$37,000 to construct a bus set-down area, footpath and crossing at Mount Cotton State School as well as a new bus stop at Victoria Point State High School on Cleveland-Redland Bay Road, making it a much safer stop. With a DDA compliance stop there now, it is what they call a no-step stop, which is a bonus because there is a retirement village next door. Other initiatives have included flashing lights at Victoria Point State School, Faith Lutheran, St Rita's, Victoria Point State High School, Redland Bay State School and Mount Cotton State School, with those two ministers ensuring that we have the safest learning environment possible.

In the time I have left I want to recognise one of my principals, Mr David Anderson, who is retiring after six years at Russell Island. You will be sadly missed. Congratulations on six years of outstanding service. You have done great work with the children on Russell Island. You are well liked by all in the community—the parents, the teachers, the students et cetera—and I wish you all of the best for a long and happy retirement.

I want to close with a condolence or a eulogy to Jules Knight—an entertainer, a businessman, a community advocate, a son, a brother, an uncle, a father, a grandfather and a husband. He worked with the likes of Beppo. He was instrumental in establishing Silver Service cabs here in Queensland.

He did two Royal Command performances and was a ventriloquist, magician and illusionist. He worked with and was a great friend to the legend Houdini. He was one of life's great characters, a gentle soul and a generous man. Farewell, old friend.

Hervey Bay Hockey Association

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (5.47 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak about the synthetic turf sod turning at Hervey Bay on Monday morning. It was a great pleasure to be there with my federal colleague, Mr Keith Pitt, and the former federal member, Mr Paul Neville, who had worked hard to get the \$350,000 grant for the hockey club to construct this synthetic turf. I have to acknowledge the fact that the Hervey Bay hockey club raised \$300,000. That is a great effort. It was also a great pleasure to represent Minister Steve Dickson, the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. The contribution from the state government was \$100,000.

The RSL club of Hervey Bay made a contribution of \$10,000 towards it. So it was a real community effort. It was also an effort across the three tiers of government. Local government put in all the headworks charges and things like that to make it all possible. I would like to congratulate Alan Douma and Cathy Milijasevic. They have worked so hard over many years to be able to achieve this. The whole report that they did was about an inch thick. I congratulate them on that. It has been going on for a number of years now.

I would also like to mention Ken Taylor, a former president of the Hervey Bay hockey club for many years, and the effort that he has put into the hockey grounds at Hervey Bay. This new turf will enable them to be able to hold state championships for all classes of the hockey throughout Queensland. A good way to be able to raise money is through holding national titles in Hervey Bay. It was also great to see Joan McFie there. When the grounds were just scrub, the McFie family cleared it all. Marsh McFie did an awful lot of work there to bring the grounds up to the condition in which they are today.

It was a great morning. A breakfast was held and then we went and turned the sod. Now, it can all start. I would like to congratulate the hockey club for a wonderful effort that they have made over many years.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.50 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, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Holswich, Johnson, Judge, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Lynham, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, Menkens, Millard, Miller, 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