



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 14 October 2014

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TUESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2014



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

For the sitting week, Madam Speaker acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land upon which this parliament is assembled.

ASSENT TO BILLS



Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable F. Simpson MP

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

George Street

BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of assent: 26 September 2014

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Agents Financial Administration Act 2014, the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, the Breakwater Island Casino Agreement Act 1984, the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, the Fair Trading Inspectors Act 2014, the Land Sales Act 1984, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Property Law Act 1974, the Property Occupations Act 2014 and the South Bank Corporation Act 1989 for particular purposes, to repeal the Land Sales Regulation 2000 and to make minor and consequential amendments of the Acts mentioned in schedule 1"

"A Bill for An Act to provide for the first step in creating a simplified common framework for managing resource authorities in order to optimise development and use of Queensland's mineral and energy resources and to manage overlapping coal and petroleum resource authorities for coal seam gas, and further to repeal the Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers' Superannuation Act 1989, and to amend this Act, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Land Court Act 2000, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the Property Law Act 1974, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Mineral Resources Regulation 2013 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to make consequential and other amendments of the Electrical Safety Act 2002, the Electricity Act 1994, the Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006, the Gas Supply Act 2003, the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 and the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 for the National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Act 2014, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to establish a national energy customer framework for the regulation of the retail supply of energy to customers, to make provision for the relationship between the distributors of energy and the consumers of energy, to amend this Act, the Electricity—National Scheme (Queensland) Act 1997 and the National Gas (Queensland) Act 2008 for particular purposes, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Building and Construction Industry Payments Act 2004 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Water Act 2000, the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes"

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely


Governor

26 September 2014

Tabled paper: Message, dated 26 September 2014, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills [\[6159\]](#).

PRIVILEGE

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

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 28 August 2014 I received a letter from the member for Stafford alleging that the member for Morayfield had deliberately misled the House in statements on 26 August 2014. The claim was that the member for Morayfield misrepresented the ALP policy regarding alcohol fuelled violence as closing hotels at 1 am as opposed to a lockout. I note that on 11 September 2014 the member for Morayfield provided an explanation to the House of his understanding of the term 'closed' as relating to potential external patrons being denied entry after 1 am.


In considering whether matters should be referred to the Ethics Committee under standing order 269(4), I am obliged to take into account the degree of importance of the matter raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter. I am satisfied that the member for Morayfield's explanation to the House of 1 September 2014 is adequate and, accordingly, I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee. I table the correspondence in this matter for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 28 August 2014, from the member for Stafford, Dr Anthony Lynham MP, to Madam Speaker relating to a matter of privilege [\[6160\]](#).


Tabled paper: Letter, dated 12 September 2014, from the member for Morayfield, Mr Darren Grimwade MP, to Madam Speaker relating to a matter of privilege [\[6161\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Absence of Member


 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have received a letter from the member for Mackay advising of his absence from the House from 14 October until the end of sitting on 30 October 2014. The member's notification complies with standing order 263A.

Palmer United Party, Resignation of Member

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have received correspondence from the member for Yeerongpilly dated 14 October 2014 formally notifying me of his resignation from the Palmer United Party. For the information of the House, I table the correspondence.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 14 October 2014, from the member for Yeerongpilly, Mr Carl Judge MP, to the Clerk and Office of the Speaker providing formal notification of his resignation from the Palmer United Party on 7 October 2014 [\[6162\]](#).

Ethics Committee, Recommencement of Inquiry

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 3 June 2014 I informed the House that the Ethics Committee had suspended its inquiry into the matter of privilege referred on 23 April 2014 relating to an alleged attempt to improperly influence the conduct of a member until such time as the Queensland Police Service advised of the outcome of its investigation of the same matter.

On 11 September 2014, the chair of the Ethics Committee wrote to me to advise that the Queensland Police Service is no longer conducting active investigations into the matter. Accordingly, the Ethics Committee has resolved to recommence its inquiry into the matter. I remind members that standing order 271 remains in force and that the matter must not be debated in the House until such time as the Ethics Committee has reported on the matter.

PETITIONS

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

Adult Entertainment Permits

Mr Watts, from 1,248 petitioners, requesting the House to repeal all laws and amend any regulations that prevent local governments from having the authority to approve or restrict the location of adult entertainment permits [\[6163\]](#).

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

Kurilpa Riverfront Renewal Draft Master Plan

Ms Trad, from 1,104 petitioners, requesting the House to extend the consultation period for the Kurilpa Riverfront Renewal Draft Master Plan to the end of June 2015 to allow equal consideration by the people of Brisbane and to publicly release all of the planning studies, information and documentation provided to developers [\[6164\]](#).

Moreton Bay Regional Council, Draft Planning Scheme

Mrs D'Ath, from 559 petitioners, requesting the House to require the Moreton Bay Regional Council to release the new draft planning scheme to the public and undertake wide ranging and proper consultation with all affected residents and the broader community and businesses for a minimum of six weeks [\[6165\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

12 September 2014—

- [5961](#) Queensland Treasury Holdings Pty Ltd—Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2014
- [5962](#) Brisbane Port Holdings Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2014
- [5963](#) DBCT Holdings Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2014
- [5964](#) Queensland Lottery Corporation Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2014
- [5965](#) State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 50—Subordinate legislation tabled between 21 May 2014 and 3 June 2014
- [5966](#) Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 45—Rail freight use by the agriculture and livestock industries, interim government response
- [5967](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 73—Oversight of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman
- [5968](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 74—Oversight of the Office of the Information Commissioner
- [5969](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 55—Inquiry into telehealth services in Queensland
- [5970](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 55—Inquiry into telehealth services in Queensland—submissions received in relation to the inquiry

16 September 2014—

- [5971](#) Premier's approval, dated 25 July 2014, in accordance with the Guidelines for the Financial Management of the Office of the Speaker, for overseas travel by the Speaker to the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea on 20-23 October 2014

17 September 2014—

- [5972](#) Response from the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience (Mr Crisafulli) to an ePetition (2282-14) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 21 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately dismiss the Tablelands Regional Council, appoint an interim administrator and advisory committee and make regulatory provisions for the administrator and advisory committee to serve until the next quadrennial elections in March 2016

18 September 2014—

- [5973](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Seeney) to an ePetition (2259-14) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 394 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure mining companies provide equal options for all workers, employing a mix of workers from the community, fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive out and to ensure all workers are allowed to live where they choose
- [5974](#) Report by the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Seeney), pursuant to section 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application at Masters Home Improvement Store, Kepnock
- [5975](#) Report by the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Seeney), pursuant to section 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application at Masters Home Improvement Store, Kepnock—Annexure A
- [5976](#) Report by the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Seeney), pursuant to section 432 of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, in relation to the Ministerial Call In of a development application at Masters Home Improvement Store, Kepnock—Annexures B—G

19 September 2014—

- [5977](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001

[5978](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Queensland University of Technology Statute No. 3 (Fees) 2003

22 September 2014—

[5979](#) Mental Health Review Tribunal—Annual Report 2013-14

23 September 2014—

[5980](#) Response from the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience (Mr Crisafulli) to an ePetition (2283-14) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 22 petitioners, requesting the House to amend sections 132 and 134 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 and remove the conflict with common law

24 September 2014—

[5981](#) The Public Trustee of Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[5982](#) WorkCover Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[5983](#) Prostitution Licensing Authority—Annual Report 2013-14

[5984](#) Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority—Annual Report 2013-14

[5985](#) Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority—Annual report 2013-14

[5986](#) Department of Natural Resources and Mines—Annual Report 2013-14

[5987](#) Surveyors Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[5988](#) Valuers Registration Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[5989](#) Board of Examiners—Annual Report 2013-14

[5990](#) Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee—Annual Report 2013-14

[5991](#) Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee—Annual Report 2013-14

[5992](#) Administration of the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988—Annual Report 2013-14

[5993](#) Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health—Annual Report 2013-14

[5994](#) Seqwater: Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority—Annual Report 2013-14

[5995](#) Mount Isa Water Board—Annual Report 2013-14

[5996](#) Gladstone Area Water Board—Annual Report 2013-14

[5997](#) Unitywater: Northern South East Queensland Distributor-Retailer Authority—Annual Report 2013-14

[5998](#) Sunwater—Annual Report 2013-14

[5999](#) Sunwater—Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-14

25 September 2014—

[6000](#) Response from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek) to a paper petition (2300-14) presented by Dr Lynham, from 449 petitioners, requesting the House to excise the public parkland portion of the Nyanda State High School site from the land for sale and transfer it to the Brisbane city council for permanent use as parkland

[6001](#) Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Springborg) to an ePetition (2258-14) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 150 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the parcel of land at Mill Road, Edmonton which has been strategically acquired for the provision of future hospital health and services for the greater Cairns area

[6002](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Emerson) to a paper petition (2296-14) presented by Ms Barton, from 149 petitioners, requesting the House to reinstate bus routes which travel from Labrador, Paradise Point and Runaway Bay directly into southern suburbs that the light rail will service and lengthen the operation hours of these bus routes

[6003](#) Queensland Parliamentary Service—Annual Report 2013-14

26 September 2014—

[6004](#) Legal Aid Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[6005](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Dr McVeigh) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Agricultural Standards Regulation 1997, Apiaries Regulation 1998, Diseases in Timber Regulation 1997, Exotic Diseases in Animals Regulation 1998, Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Regulation 2003, Plant Protection (Approved Sugarcane Varieties) Declaration 2003, Plant Protection Regulation 2002, Stock Regulation 1988, Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Regulation 1998, Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Regulation 1999, Veterinary Surgeons Regulation 2002 and Fisheries (Coral Reef Fin Fish) Management Plan 2003

[6006](#) Response from the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (Mr Dickson) to an ePetition (2279-14) sponsored by Mr Gibson, from 851 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately excise Corella SF 700 from the Curra State Forest and issue a lease to the local council for the land to be used for a sporting shooters range complex to address the current demand for a new range facilities in the region

[6007](#) Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island and Multicultural Affairs—Annual Report 2013-14

29 September 2014—

- [6008](#) Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6009](#) Legal Practitioners Admissions Board—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6010](#) Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6011](#) Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing—Financial Statements 2013-14
- [6012](#) Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Trust—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6013](#) Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6014](#) Stadiums Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6015](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines (Mr Cripps) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2001
- [6016](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines (Mr Cripps) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Explosives Regulation 2003
- [6017](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines (Mr Cripps) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Regulation 2003
- [6018](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines (Mr Cripps) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Mining and Quarrying Safety Health Regulation 2001
- [6019](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines (Mr Cripps) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Water Regulation 2002
- [6020](#) Ports North: Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6021](#) Ports North: Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited—Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-14
- [6022](#) Gladstone Ports Corporation—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6023](#) Gladstone Ports Corporation—Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-14
- [6024](#) Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6025](#) Board of the Queensland Museum—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6026](#) Library Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6027](#) Queensland State Archives—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6028](#) Screen Queensland—Financial Statements 2013-14
- [6029](#) Queensland Art Gallery—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6030](#) Queensland Performing Arts Centre—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6031](#) Department of Premier and Cabinet—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6032](#) Public Service Commission—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6033](#) Queensland Audit Office—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6034](#) North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6035](#) North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation—Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-14
- [6036](#) Port of Townsville Limited—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6037](#) Port of Townsville Limited—Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-14
- [6038](#) Gold Coast Waterways Authority—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6039](#) Queensland Rail—Annual and Financial Report 2013-14

30 September 2014—

- [6040](#) Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal: Building a new remuneration structure for Members of the Queensland Parliament—Part 3, Determination 5/2014, 30 September 2014
- [6041](#) Queensland Ombudsman—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6042](#) Crime and Misconduct Commission—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6043](#) Motor Accident Insurance Commission—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6044](#) QIC—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6045](#) QIC—Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-14
- [6046](#) QIC Limited—Annual Financial Statements and Directors' Report 2013-14
- [6047](#) QIC Private Capital Pty Ltd—Annual Financial Statements and Directors' Report 2013-14
- [6048](#) QIC Properties Pty Ltd—Annual Financial Statements and Directors' Report 2013-14
- [6049](#) Queensland Competition Authority—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6050](#) Queensland Treasury and Trade—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6051](#) Queensland Treasury Corporation—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6052](#) Trade and Investment Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6053](#) Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6054](#) Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Board—Annual Report 2013-14

- [6055](#) QRAA—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6056](#) Safe Food Production Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6057](#) Non-State Schools Accreditation Board—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6058](#) Queensland Studies Authority—Final Annual Report 2013-14
- [6059](#) Department of Education, Training and Employment—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6060](#) Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6061](#) Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6062](#) Tourism and Events Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6063](#) Department of Justice and Attorney-General—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6064](#) Department of Justice and Attorney-General—Financial Statements 2013-14
- [6065](#) Anzac Day Trust—Financial Statements 2013-14
- [6066](#) North West Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6067](#) Metro South Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6068](#) Department of Transport and Main Roads—Annual Report 2013-14 Volume 1
- [6069](#) Department of Transport and Main Roads—Annual Report 2013-14 Volume 2
- [6070](#) Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6071](#) Queensland Reconstruction Authority—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6072](#) Queensland Law Society—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6073](#) Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6074](#) Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6075](#) Department of Health—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6076](#) General Travel Allocation Expenditure by Members of the Legislative Assembly—1 January 2014-30 June 2014
- [6077](#) Information and Communication Allowance Expenditure by Members of the Legislative Assembly—1 January 2014-30 June 2014
- [6078](#) Electorate Allowance Expenditure by Members of the Legislative Assembly—1 January 2014-30 June 2014
- [6079](#) Travel Benefits Afforded to Former Members of the Legislative Assembly—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6080](#) Daily Travelling Allowance Claims by Members of the Legislative Assembly—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6081](#) Air Warrant and Alternative Travel by Members of the Legislative Assembly—1 January 2014-30 June 2014
- [6082](#) Queensland Ombudsman—Report, dated September 2014, titled 'The Strip Searching of Female Prisoners Report: An investigation into the strip search practices at Townsville Women's Correctional Centre'
- [6083](#) Queensland Fire and Emergency Services—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6084](#) Public Safety Business Agency—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6085](#) Queensland Police Service—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6086](#) Board of Architects of Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6087](#) Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6088](#) Department of Housing and Public Works—Annual Report 2013-14
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- [6093](#) Queensland Urban Utilities—Annual Report 2013-14
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- [6095](#) Department of Environment and Heritage Protection—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6096](#) Department of Environment and Heritage Protection—Financial Statements 2013-14
- [6097](#) The Board of Trustees of Newstead House—Financial Statements 2013-14
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- [6106](#) Stanwell Corporation Limited—Annual Report 2013-14
- [6107](#) Stanwell Corporation Limited—Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-14

[6108](#) SPARQ Solutions Pty Ltd—Annual Financial Statements 2013-14

[6109](#) Ergon Energy—Annual Financial Statements 2013-14

[6110](#) Ergon Energy—Subsidiary Financial Statements 2013-14

[6111](#) Office of the Information Commissioner—Annual Report 2013-14

[6112](#) Office of the Governor—Annual Report 2013-14

1 October 2014—

[6113](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 56—Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014

[6114](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 56—Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the inquiry

[6115](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Seeney) to three paper petitions (2297-14), (2307-14) and (2301-14) and one ePetition (2261-14) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(3) and 119(4), from 6,710, 173, 32 and 11,021 petitioners respectively requesting the House to save Queensland's motor sporting venues from severe restrictions or forced closure as a result of demands from the occupants of newer residential developments

[6116](#) Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning—Annual Report 2013-14

[6117](#) GasFields Commission Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[6118](#) South Bank Corporation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6119](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 75—Annual Report 2013-14

2 October 2014—

[6120](#) Letter, dated 22 September 2014, from the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to the Speaker, regarding a treaty tabled on 4 September 2014

[6121](#) Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia—Joint Standing Committee on Treaties—Report No. 142: Treaty tabled on 13 May 2014

[6122](#) Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 53—Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Amendment Bill 2014

3 October 2014—

[6123](#) Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14

[6124](#) West Moreton Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14

[6125](#) Bundaberg Health Services Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6126](#) Children's Health Foundation Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[6127](#) Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6128](#) Gold Coast Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6129](#) HIV Foundation Queensland—Annual Report 2013-14

[6130](#) Ipswich Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6131](#) Mackay Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6132](#) PA Research Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6133](#) Redcliffe Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6134](#) Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6135](#) Sunshine Coast Health Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6136](#) The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6137](#) Toowoomba Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

[6138](#) Townsville Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2013-14

7 October 2014—

[6139](#) Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14

[6140](#) Queensland Institute of Medical Research—Annual Report 2013-14

8 October 2014—

[6141](#) Letter, dated 25 September 2014, from the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to the Speaker, regarding treaties tabled on 17 June and 15 July 2014

[6142](#) Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia—Joint Standing Committee on Treaties—Report No. 143: Treaties tabled 17 June and 15 July 2014

[6143](#) Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 54—Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

9 October 2014—

[6144](#) Response from the Treasurer and Minister for Trade (Mr Nicholls) to a paper petition (2304-14) presented by 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

[6145](#) Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14

[6146](#) Letter, dated 1 October 2014, from the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to the Speaker, regarding a treaty tabled on 30 September 2014

[6147](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Emerson) to a paper petition (2306-14) presented by Mrs Maddern, from 574 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake upgrades to make the causeway on the Torbanlea/Pialba Road an all-weather road by raising the causeway on the eastern side of the Torbanlea School

[6148](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 49—Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014

[6149](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 50—Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2014

[6150](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 76—Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014

10 October 2014—

[6151](#) Metro North Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14

[6152](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 51—Queensland Plan Bill 2014

[6153](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 51—Queensland Plan Bill 2014—submissions received in relation to the enquiry

[6154](#) Queensland Mental Health Commission—Annual Report 2013-14

13 October 2014—

[6155](#) Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14

[6156](#) Townsville Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2013-14

[6157](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Emerson) to a paper petition (2309-14) and an ePetition (2275-14) sponsored by the Member for Murrumba, Mr Gulley from 2,130 and 163 petitioners respectively 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

[6158](#) Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 35—2014-15 Budget Estimates—Additional Information

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

[6166](#) Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2014, No. 205

[6167](#) Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2014, No. 205, explanatory notes

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

[6168](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2014, No. 206

[6169](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2014, No. 206, explanatory notes

Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014—

[6170](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 207

[6171](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 207, explanatory notes

Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004, Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

[6172](#) Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 208

[6173](#) Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 208, explanatory notes

State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014—

[6174](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 209

[6175](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 209, explanatory notes

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—

[6176](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 210

[6177](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 210, explanatory notes

Ambulance Service Act 1991, Food Act 2006, Health Act 1937, Pest Management Act 2001, Private Health Facilities Act 1999, Radiation Safety Act 1999—

[6178](#) Health Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 211

[6179](#) Health Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 211, explanatory notes

Industrial Relations Act 1999—

[6180](#) Industrial Relations Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2014, No. 212

[6181](#) Industrial Relations Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2014, No. 212, explanatory notes

Lotteries Act 1997—

[6182](#) Lotteries Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 213

[6183](#) Lotteries Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 213, explanatory notes

Land Sales Act 1984—

[6184](#) Land Sales Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 214

[6185](#) Land Sales Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 214, explanatory notes

Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012—

[6186](#) Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 215

[6187](#) Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 215, explanatory notes

Heavy Vehicle National Law as applied by the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 (Qld) and by the law of States and Territories—

[6188](#) Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Amendment Regulation, No. 216

[6189](#) Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Amendment Regulation, No. 216, explanatory notes

Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014—

[6190](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 217

[6191](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 217, explanatory notes

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

[6192](#) Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 218

[6193](#) Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment and Repeal Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 218, explanatory notes

Adult Proof of Age Card Act 2008, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

[6194](#) Transport Legislation and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 219

[6195](#) Transport Legislation and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 219, explanatory notes

G20 (Safety and Security) Act 2013—

[6196](#) G20 (Safety and Security) Regulation 2014, No. 220

[6197](#) G20 (Safety and Security) Regulation 2014, No. 220, explanatory notes

Food Production (Safety) Act 2000—

[6198](#) Food Production (Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 221

[6199](#) Food Production (Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 221, explanatory notes

Environmental Offsets Act 2014—

[6200](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 222

[6201](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 222, explanatory notes

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Recreation Areas Management Act 2006—

[6202](#) Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 223

[6203](#) Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 223, explanatory notes

Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Act 2014—

[6204](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 224

[6205](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 224, explanatory notes

Liquor Act 1992, Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009—

[6206](#) Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 225

[6207](#) Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 225, explanatory notes

Regional Planning Interests Act 2014—

[6208](#) Regional Planning Interests Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 226

[6209](#) Regional Planning Interests Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 226, explanatory notes

Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004—

[6210](#) Revenue Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 227

[6211](#) Revenue Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 227, explanatory notes

Education and Care Services Act 2013, Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996, Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005, Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014, Further Education and Training Act 2014—

[6212](#) Education Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 228

[6213](#) Education Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 228, explanatory notes

Casino Control Act 1982, Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, Keno Act 1996, Lotteries Act 1997, Wagering Act 1998—

[6214](#) Gaming Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 229

[6215](#) Gaming Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 229, explanatory notes

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

[6216](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2014, No. 230

[6217](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2014, No. 230, explanatory notes

Water Act 2000—

[6218](#) Water Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 231

[6219](#) Water Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 231, explanatory notes

Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

[6220](#) Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 232

[6221](#) Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, No. 232, explanatory notes

Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991—

[6222](#) Queensland Building and Construction Commission Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 233

[6223](#) Queensland Building and Construction Commission Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2014, No. 233, explanatory notes

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services (Mr Dempsey)—

[6224](#) Controlled Operations Committee—Annual Report 2013-14

[6225](#) Queensland Police Service—Surveillance Device Warrants—Annual Report 2013-14

MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Gympie (Mr Gibson)—

[6226](#) Non-conforming petition relating to the establishment of a new range complex in the Curra/Corella Forestry

[6227](#) Non-conforming petition requesting that the areas of Kia Ora, Downsfield, Anderleigh, Neerdie, Wilson's Pocket, Goomboorian, Canina, Beenham Valley, Neusavale, Coondoo and Wolvi be protected from mining

Member for Mackay (Mr Mulherin)—

[6228](#) Non-conforming petition relating to a request for more bus services in Andergrove, Mackay

Member for Inala (Ms Palaszczuk)—

[6229](#) Letter, dated 7 October 2014, from the Leader of the Opposition (Ms Palaszczuk) to the Integrity Commissioner (Mr Bingham) regarding meetings with registered lobbyists during the month of August 2014

[6230](#) Opposition Diary—Leader of the Opposition, 1 August 2014—31 August 2014

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following Report was tabled by the Clerk—

[6231](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill 2014

Amendment made to Bill*

Clause 598 (Insertion of new s 16A)—

Page 353, after line 16—

Insert—

Insert—

* The page and line number references relate to the Bill, after amendments made in consideration in detail unless stated otherwise.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Cost of Living



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.35 am): This government is committed to delivering policies and initiatives that reduce the cost of living for Queensland families. That is why the state budget did not increase or introduce any new taxes and will see state funding of concessions grow by almost 10 per cent in 2014-15.

Since coming to office, the government has been working hard to alleviate cost-of-living pressures on all Queenslanders, including freezing family car registration fees for more than 2.5 million family vehicles for three years; reinstating the stamp duty concession on the family home; halving the previous government's public transport fare increases due in 2013 and 2014; providing free travel on TransLink services after nine journeys; distributing Get in the Game vouchers of up to \$150 for kids' sport club memberships; providing an \$80 water rebate to South-East Queensland households in 2012-13; fully funding the \$54 million shortfall from the Australian government's cut to pensioner and senior concessions; abolishing Labor's waste tax; increasing the payroll tax threshold; and freezing household electricity bills in 2012-13 for tariff 11.

From 3 November, there will also be a state-wide five per cent reduction in public transport fares, making it more affordable for families to travel via train, bus, tram or ferry. We believe that this will be the first time in Queensland's history that transport fares have gone down after public consultation showed that Queenslanders wanted cheaper transport fares from their \$30 million in carbon tax savings. On Sunday, the Treasurer, Minister McArdle and I announced that the \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will be invested responsibly to remove the cost of rooftop solar power production from Queenslanders' power bills. This will save the typical household \$577 over the next five years. Households that also have tariff 33 for hot-water systems or pool filters could save a further \$165.

I want to stress—and this is very important—that under this plan there will be no change to solar customers who are the beneficiaries of the 44c solar feed-in tariff. I will say it again. Under this plan, the obligations of the government to pay the 44c feed-in tariff for solar panels for people who have that eligibility will be maintained. There is no change.

However, we are taking the obligation to pay the 44c out of the electricity industry businesses and bringing it back into government. It was always a government subsidy and the government is taking the obligation to pay the obligation that exists for the 44c directly to those customers.

This plan can only be implemented if the government receives a mandate at the next state election. Again, the government has listened to Queenslanders and their feedback helped us develop the Strong Choices plan. The plan will deal with Labor's \$80 billion debt, free up funds to relieve cost-of-living pressures, build important infrastructure and encourage new innovation and entrepreneurship. Unlike those opposite, with no real policies, no real plans and, certainly, no way to fund them, this government will improve cost-of-living issues for Queenslanders to ensure that this state is the best state in the Commonwealth to work, run a business and, most importantly, to bring up your family and have a great life.

Housing Affordability



Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.39 am): Everyone in our government understands the cost-of-living pressures on Queensland families and everyone in our government has been working for 2½ years to address those cost-of-living pressures. Housing affordability is a very important part of those cost-of-living pressures. Since our government was elected we have been methodically addressing housing affordability across Queensland. As the Premier indicated, we reduced the stamp duty on family homes by \$7,000 in a direct move to improve housing affordability. One of the key drivers of high prices is the cost of delivering residential developments to the market. Lower costs will lead to lower market prices. This has been the focus of my department's ongoing planning reform agenda for 2½ years.


Two of the outcomes of this reform are increased land availability and faster development approvals. Firstly, an abundant land supply is fundamental to lowering housing prices. We have addressed this through the new state planning policy that directs local governments to ensure their planning schemes include more than adequate land supply. This will ensure ample opportunities exist for the market to work and have a competitive development industry.

We are currently reviewing the South East Queensland Regional Plan and my department is actively assessing ways of dealing with urban growth without unduly constraining the market and adding to the cost of housing. A second key issue we are addressing is assessment time frames which increases the cost of development approvals. We are having a direct and immediate impact on reducing costs through the operation of our national award-winning State Assessment and Referral Agency, known as SARA. SARA has revolutionised the way development applications are addressed,

streamlining the decision-making process and reducing assessment time frames, which in turn is helping to get land to market quicker. Holding costs and hence development costs are reduced and these lower costs lead to greater housing affordability.

Our government is also working to ensure that the new environmental offsets framework will achieve its goals of better environmental management and increased development certainty. We are working with the Commonwealth government to expedite a one-stop shop approach to addressing matters of national and state environmental significance. We acknowledge and accept the environmental parameters under the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. We are committed to faster, more effective and affordable ways of achieving these important environmental requirements for development without unnecessarily adding to the cost of housing for Queenslanders. Our government is committed to making Queensland's planning system the best in Australia, which means more affordable and more accessible housing choices for all Queenslanders now and in the future.


Cost of Living

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): As I have travelled more than 20,000 kilometres around the state this year discussing the strong choices the government faces to bring our finances under control, the one issue that Queenslanders have raised with me wherever they live is the cost of living. I have listened to their concerns, as has the Premier and all my colleagues in this House. From our first days in office we have acted to keep downward pressure on cost of living and the Premier has outlined many of the steps we have taken. Last weekend I was able to join the Premier to release our Strong Choices Electricity Relief Plan. This plan will help to keep downward pressure on electricity prices for all Queenslanders. Under the plan the government will fund the cost of the Solar Bonus Scheme from the \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund. Importantly, all those Queenslanders who signed up in good faith to the Solar Bonus Scheme will receive all of their benefits right through to the end of their contracts. They will not be one cent worse off. Those Queenslanders without solar will also benefit by no longer being responsible for funding the Solar Bonus Scheme through their power bills.

In short, our plan is a win-win for Queenslanders. But it is important that we understand that we can only make these important funding changes if the government receives a mandate at the next election to proceed with our Strong Choices plan. The Premier and I released the final plan just over a week ago after extended consultation with and listening to Queenslanders. During that consultation Queenslanders made it very clear that they did want us to deal with the problems left by Labor's \$80 billion debt, but they did not want their cost of living driven up further by increases in government taxes and charges. Nor did they want the government to cut the vital front-line services it provides to communities the length and breadth of the state. They also did not want us to sell assets to rein in the debt. However, they were prepared for the government to enter into long-term leases in order to pay down the debt, build job-creating infrastructure and keep downward pressure on the cost of living.

Our Strong Choices plan will allow the government to reduce debt by up to \$25 billion and put \$8.6 billion into a series of funds to develop job-creating infrastructure, creating up to 25,000 jobs for Queenslanders. Importantly, because leasing is the smartest and strongest choice, our advisers estimate it will deliver a further \$3.4 billion, which will be directed to a cost-of-living fund to provide electricity price relief for Queenslanders. The Premier has outlined how we will use those funds to provide that electricity price relief. All Queenslanders can also go online at strongchoices.qld.gov.au, key in the details from their electricity bill and find out how much our plan would save their household. It is a strong plan that will deliver a brighter future for all Queenslanders.


Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief Plan

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (9.45 am): Electricity prices have more than doubled in the decade that followed the 2004 electricity supply crisis. This is because of the significant costs associated with the blank-cheque response to building the network, known as gold plating, and political interference in the market, with bias against coal, plus introduction of the carbon tax and other green schemes. These were locked into the cost of supply and have been the key factors in past and present electricity price rises. What has the Newman government done to provide immediate cost-of-living relief? First of all, we applied a freeze to tariff 11 in the 2012-13 year; we increased the concession for electricity for pensioners and seniors card holders up to \$320.97 per year; we committed over \$50 million per year to cover the shortfall in Commonwealth funding for concessions; we budgeted \$662 million in community service obligation

payments in 2014-15 to support customers in regional Queensland; and through the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme we provide up to \$720 a year to households that are facing a crisis and cannot pay their power bill. But without comprehensive reform electricity prices will continue to rise. In essence, doing nothing is not an option.

While the carbon tax has now been removed—no thanks to the Labor Party—the Newman government will continue to work hard to put downward pressure on electricity prices. We have a strong 30-year plan that will create a brighter future for families across the state. We know that a strong electricity sector underpins our promise to create jobs and grow an economy around the four pillars of agriculture, construction, resources and tourism. We removed prescriptive reliability standards for electricity distributors, which will save Queenslanders more than \$2 billion between 2015 and 2030. We are removing retail price regulation and introducing market monitoring in South-East Queensland from 1 July 2015 to drive better outcomes for customers in terms of choice, service and prices. And we are investigating ways to ensure regional Queenslanders see the benefits of competition while continuing to receive subsidised electricity. On 12 October the Newman government announced the Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief plan, which will provide direct savings to all Queenslanders. The average Queensland household will save \$577 on its power bills over the next five years under the plan, which will permanently remove the cost of the Solar Bonus Scheme from power prices through the \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund. These are just part of our reforms aimed at putting downward pressure on future power prices while delivering a strong, resilient, competitive and responsive power industry over the longer term.

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme


 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.48 am): Queenslanders believe in a fair go, but for Queensland families in particular decades of Labor mismanagement led to unfair increases in the daily cost of living. As Labor lunged between its desperate policies, it blew the budget and consumer costs skyrocketed. Nowhere is the contrast between the unfair consequences of Labor failures and the strong plans of the LNP can-do government more evident than in health—in particular, our Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. Regional and remote residents face significant extra costs when they travel for specialist health services. By 2012 these fellow Queenslanders were receiving just \$30 a night in travel support. Time after time Labor turned its back on pleas for help.

When the LNP took charge, we quickly delivered on our election commitment and doubled PTSS subsidies for commercial accommodation and mileage. There will be an extra \$106.3 million over four years and a total expenditure last financial year of \$75.3 million. The PTSS mileage subsidy increased from 15c to 30c per kilometre and the accommodation subsidy increased up to \$60 person per night for patients and approved escorts. At last, the PTSS covers the full cost of commercial travel booked by a hospital and health service on the most clinically appropriate and cost-effective modes of transport. From \$59 million in 2012-13, our PTSS expenditure rose to \$75.3 million in 2013-14, which is a 28 per cent increase. In that time, more than 125,000 Queenslanders experienced the difference of getting a fair go when they travelled to access specialist care. About 565,000 accommodation nights were funded and 96 per cent of the recipients were people who lived outside the south-east corner.

By delivering high-standard health services in rural and remote areas and reintroducing services lost under Labor, we actually reduce the need to travel in some cases and optimise our PTSS investment. From a regional point of view, Queensland is now a long way ahead of the Labor status quo, but today we are even further ahead of where we should be and would have been if Labor had remained in power. While the LNP was planning to double the PTSS, the desperate and incompetent Labor Party planned its virtual abolition. In the infamous report Labor commissioned from the Allen Consulting Group, the former government did not just propose a \$100 per night co-payment on every overnight stay in hospital; it planned severe reductions in the PTSS. Its option A was to redesign the PTSS 'as a last resort subsidy'. Under a re-elected Labor government, Queenslanders could have claimed the PTSS only after all other sources were exhausted. Labor symbolised an incompetent government so desperate to raise money it wanted to charge Queenslanders \$100 for an overnight stay. It also planned to short-change rural Queenslanders on every dollar they spent and every mile they drove to get to health services.

Queenslanders needed a government with a strong plan for a lower cost of living and better front-line services. The policies of the Newman LNP government have delivered on both of those key criteria.

Concessions

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (9.52 am): The Newman government understands that Queensland families are feeling cost-of-living pressures. Our government is making sure that our most vulnerable Queenslanders—our elderly residents, pensioners, those struggling to pay essential utility bills and those with medical necessities—are able to access some relief on their household costs. To provide this relief, every year my department administers around \$236 million in concessions. Those concessions include the electricity rebate scheme, which provides a rebate of up to \$321 per year to pensioners, veterans and seniors. This assists approximately 488,000 Queensland households. Pensioners, veterans and seniors can also benefit from our Reticulated Natural Gas Rebate scheme, which assists more than 32,000 households with a rebate of up to \$68 per year off the cost of their natural gas supply. We also provide the Home Energy Emergency Assistance scheme, which provides a one-off payment of up to \$720 per year for low-income earners who may need a helping hand to pay their electricity or gas bill when faced with unforeseen circumstances. That scheme is assisting around 10,700 Queenslanders who are at risk of their services being disconnected.


For pensioner households within the South-East Queensland water grid, the Pensioner Water Subsidy scheme is assisting more than 161,000 eligible pensioners with a rebate of up to \$120 per year. Concession card holders who are seriously ill may be able to access the Electricity Life Support Concession scheme, which provides a very welcome concession of \$163 dollars per quarter for an oxygen concentrator and \$109 per quarter for a kidney dialysis machine, benefiting around 3,500 Queenslanders with this financial assistance.

The Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession scheme is benefiting those Queenslanders with a chronic medical condition that is aggravated by temperature. It is a concession of \$321 per year and it is assisting more than 3,300 low-income individuals across the state. Finally, the Pensioner Rate Subsidy scheme is helping with the costs of rates and charges so that pensioners can continue to live in their own homes. It provides a concession of up to \$200 per annum to almost 272,000 households.

All of those concessions are so important to ease the burden of cost of living for very many Queenslanders and the Newman government remains committed to assisting those people wherever we can. In addition to those concessions, my department also assists seniors and carers through business discount schemes. The seniors business discount card provides discounts to cardholders at around 7,500 businesses and services across the state. As members will know, this week we are celebrating Carers Week and the Carers Business Discount Scheme provides eligible carers with discounts on a range of goods and services at around 4,400 Queensland businesses. Our government acknowledges the hard work and dedication of all of our carers and earlier this year we extended the Carers Business Discount Scheme to include foster-carers so that they too can access those savings and discounts to help lower their cost of living.

We are listening to the needs of those in the community. Earlier this year when the federal government terminated the national partnership agreement on concessions we acted quickly to cover the loss of Canberra's contribution, making sure that our most vulnerable Queenslanders will not be worse off and that those concessions could continue. Only the Newman government is committed to supporting Queenslanders with concessions to lower their cost of living.

Housing, Construction Costs

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.56 am): Earlier the Deputy Premier mentioned our endeavours to reduce the cost of building a house in this state. My department has also added to that. Under the former government, it was compulsory to install a rainwater tank and an energy-efficient hot-water system in all homes. It was also compulsory for anyone living in an area with reticulated gas whose old hot-water system broke down to replace it with a more expensive gas, solar or heat-pump model. It is completely unfair to force people to go for the more expensive model when their budget might not be able to accommodate it. We have scrapped those unfair requirements so that people are now free to choose for themselves whether or not they want to install at their homes a rainwater tank, or an energy-efficient hot-water system or a cheaper electric model. Those changes alone can cut more than \$5,000 to \$8,000 from the cost of a new home.

We have also expanded the amount of plumbing work that can be done without the need for local government permits or mandatory inspections. It will now be cheaper and faster for more routine work to be performed, so it is a win for everyone. Previously, plumbing work such as bathroom or kitchen renovations had to go through local government approval and inspection processes, which could cost up to \$1,600 and take up to 20 business days, that is, just for permits and inspections. One can imagine what effect that amount of red tape would have on the overall cost of the job. Under our changes, plumbers and drainers simply need to notify the Plumbing Industry Council within 10 business days of completing that type of work. It will cost \$25 for an electronic lodgement or \$35 for a manual lodgement.

We have made other improvements to make it easier to build over water infrastructure, again saving time and money. Many other changes are occurring in the QBCC that will make it less expensive for contractors to license and to register each year. Those changes are before the House at the moment and I look forward to outlining them in the upcoming week.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.58 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Education, Training and Employment is absent from the House this week as he is leading an education trade mission to Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia encouraging investment in Queensland schools, training institutions and universities. Minister Walker has been appointed acting minister for this portfolio for the duration of his absence.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Newman LNP Government, Economic Performance



Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (9.59 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House:

- notes that recently released data shows that the Newman government's four pillars—agriculture, tourism, resources and construction—are underperforming;
- notes that as at September 2014, there were 8,400 fewer full-time jobs in Queensland on a trend basis than when the Newman government was elected in March 2013; and
- acknowledges that the dysfunctional LNP government has failed Queensland with its poor economic policies and broken promises.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Lease of Public Assets



Ms PALASZCZUK (9.59 am): My question is to the Premier. Premier, I table an article from 2011 when the now Premier described the decision to lease the Abbot Point Coal Terminal by saying, 'I think it is a mistake selling off the silverware,' and ask: why is the Premier now telling Queenslanders that a lease is not a sale when he has previously described a lease as 'selling off the silverware'?

Tabled paper: Article from the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 9 June 2011, regarding the State government's decision to lease Abbot Point [6232].

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question because it gives me a great opportunity to talk once again about our strong plan to deal with \$80,000 million worth of accumulated Labor debt and an interest bill of around \$470,000 an hour that, frankly, presents great difficulties then in delivering the roads, the bridges, the hospitals and schools that this state needs.

We are proposing a plan that we are taking to the electorate. Unlike those opposite, we are taking a plan to the people in an upfront and open manner. This is in clear contrast to those opposite who, when they were in government, had one position prior to the election, which was, 'We are not going to get rid of any assets,' and then after the election—what did they do?—went ahead and did exactly the opposite. It was indeed a betrayal of the Queensland people.

In contrast we are saying, 'We will offer the assets for lease for 50 years with an option to renew for 49.' There is quite a difference between our proposals and the very extensive lease terms in some of the Labor Party deals. We are offering a number of assets for lease. We expect to conservatively raise \$37 billion.

What would that money be used for? It would bring debt down by \$25 billion. Instead of debt under Labor heading for \$100 billion, this government has already said that debt would be stabilised at \$80 billion but would be able to be brought down to \$55 billion. What would that do? It would save approximately \$150,000 an hour in interest on that Labor debt. I think that in itself is a very good reason to proceed.

But there is more that we will be trying to do. We are also going to invest \$8.6 billion in value-adding infrastructure, creating up to 25,000 new jobs—that is, the roads, the bridges, the hospitals, the schools; frankly, the things that Queenslanders say they need and the things they indeed deserve. But we will also be putting aside \$3.4 billion into the cost-of-living relief fund. We announced on the weekend how that money would be deployed. It would be deployed in an economically responsible way, a fiscally responsible way, to actually deal with a very big problem that resulted from the poor policies of the Labor government.

What I am saying is that the government will meet the obligation to pay the 44c feed-in tariff to those participants in the scheme. It will take that cost burden off all power consumers in Queensland. That is appropriate. We will see a \$577 cost reduction in power bills over a five-year period for average households.

I totally deplore and reject the comments of the Leader of the Opposition who essentially referred to the issue of cost pressures from electricity somehow being a distraction or diversion—absolutely not. This government will take action on cost of living and our Strong Choices program will deliver cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders.

Lease of Public Assets

Ms PALASZCZUK: My next question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's 2012 statement, 'The poles and wires transmission stuff, I believe, should be owned by the people because they are natural monopolies,' and I ask: will the Premier give a guarantee today to the people of Queensland that electricity prices will not rise under his plan?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. The first thing is that a lease is a lease and a sale is a sale. Let me explain the difference.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Members!

Mr NEWMAN: When one leases an asset it comes back to you. All Queenslanders know that. They are quite comfortable with that proposition.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition!

Mr NEWMAN: They are quite comfortable with that proposition. We know because we have been talking to them and listening to them. That is why we have said we will not be selling assets like the former government did. So we are leasing.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Manager of Opposition Business! I warn members on my left.

Mr NEWMAN: We are leasing; we are not selling. There is a huge difference—an economic difference and a legal difference. Anybody on the other side of the chamber with legal training would understand the difference, one would think.

There is some interesting research which is available out there. I will quote from a Deloitte's report that was tabled by New South Wales Labor back in 2008.

Ms Trad: Why don't you just requote yourself?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I now warn the member for South Brisbane under standing order 253A.

Mr NEWMAN: The former New South Wales Labor government in 2008 tabled a report by Deloitte which found electricity prices in Australia, New Zealand and Britain dropped following privatisation.

Mr Costa said the report, based on prices paid by households following power sell-offs, debunked the myth that energy bills went up following private investment in the energy sector.

We all remember the Mythbusters of the member for the Mulgrave. He had a bit to say about that as well.

There was also work done by Ernst & Young comparing power prices in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. It found that network prices between 1996-97 and 2012-13 in New South Wales went up 122 per cent and in Queensland 140 per cent. In Victoria and South Australia where they were in private hands they went down 18 per cent and 17 per cent.

This is what I say. I can guarantee this. The cost for Queenslanders will come down \$577 for the average household if this government is re-elected and implements the \$3.4 billion cost-of-living relief fund which comes with our Strong Choices plan. Power prices will be lower under an LNP government than if we see the Labor Party re-elected and continue with their poor and reckless financial management.

Electricity Prices

Mr KAYE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline how the government is addressing household electricity prices in my electorate of Greenslopes?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question. I know that the member for Greenslopes, as a hardworking local member, held an energy forum earlier this year which gave his constituents an opportunity to engage on this issue with the minister, put their concerns on the table and have a discussion about solutions. It is another clear demonstration that this government listens to Queenslanders. We said we would listen. We are listening. That is why we have changed proposals we handed down at the time of the budget. That is why we are going to implement unprecedented reforms aimed at putting downward pressure on electricity prices.

I should say that we have a track record already of reducing the cost-of-living pressures. Since coming to government we have reduced the building of unnecessary infrastructure, saving around \$2 billion. We have also introduced legislation to create more competition in the electricity market with strong customer protections to take effect from 1 July 2015. We have provided \$80 water rebates to households in South-East Queensland. We froze household electricity tariffs in 2012-13 for tariff 11, saving around \$120 for the average household.

As I have said, we have listened. We continue to listen. We understand that Queenslanders are doing it tough. That is why I again reject the Leader of the Opposition's reference to the announcement on the weekend of a clear, strong plan to take the pressure off a cost-of-living issue as a diversion or distraction. It is not.

Electricity prices are important to Queenslanders, and the comments from the Leader of the Opposition were insensitive and frankly showed a lack of understanding about this important issue. I say today that the Labor Party needs to hurry up and provide a plan. What is its plan for taking the pressure off the cost of living? We have heard no plans, no policies and certainly no mechanism for funding cost-of-living relief.

If we are elected, if we get our mandate again, we will provide \$3.4 billion for the Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund to ensure that all people who draw electricity from the distribution network no longer have to subsidise the cost of solar usage through their power bills. That obligation to pay the 44c will be paid for by the government, which is right and proper. Our plan will save on average \$577 over the next five years. I say as well though that people with tariff 33 will also save potentially another \$165 over the same time. People in Greenslopes can visit the Strong Choices website, use the calculator and work out their own specific savings.

(Time expired)

Lease of Public Assets

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. I refer the Treasurer to his statements in 2010 that 'a 99-year lease is as good as giving away the farm' and to say otherwise is 'a furphy' and 'an attempt to perpetuate a con on the people of Queensland', and I ask: is the Treasurer now attempting to perpetuate a con on the people of Queensland by saying that a record asset sell-off via a long-term lease is not a sale?

Mr NICHOLLS: What a surprising question! What a surprising question—a question that has already been asked at least four times by other people. I am very happy to refer the member for Mulgrave to the answers that I have given at at least four press conferences including also with Steve Austin on ABC talkback. I have done it at press interviews on ABC, on Channel 9, on Channel 7, on Channel 10. I have answered the member for Mulgrave's question on a number of occasions. But what we need to consider are some questions that the member for Mulgrave probably needs to answer. He needs to answer a couple of questions.

He was asked, I noticed, on three occasions by Steve Austin on ABC Radio last week what he thought would happen and what was going to happen in terms of whether he would be in favour of increasing taxes and how he would pay down the \$80 billion worth of debt. He said, 'No, I don't. I'm not going to answer that question, Steve. I'm not going to tell you how to do it.' He then was asked a second time—not just once but a second time—'How are you going to pay down that \$80 billion?' and he said, 'I'm not going to answer that question.' He was then asked a third time. Steve Austin asked, 'How are you going to pay down the \$80 billion worth of Labor debt?' I am glad to hear that the ABC finally understands it is \$80 billion worth of Labor debt—'How are you going to pay that down?' and he said, 'I won't be pushed into giving an answer.'

So what is he going to do? Is he going to adopt the policies of his economic mentor, Professor Quiggin? Professor Quiggin has said on many occasions, 'It doesn't matter who runs these businesses because the price is set by the Australian Energy Regulator.' He has said that. The shadow Treasurer's economic mentor, Professor Quiggin, has said, 'It doesn't matter who owns it; the price will be much the same.' That is what he said. But he has also said, 'The reality is, if we want these services and we are not prepared to get out of these businesses, to lease these businesses, then taxes have to go up.' And at budget time what did the member for Mulgrave say? He said, 'Steve, we're going to need to look at the revenue side.' There is a secret plan for taxes—the member for Mulgrave is sitting on it.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Can the Treasurer outline how regional and rural Queenslanders such as those in my electorate of Nanango will benefit from our government's commitment to the uniform tariff policy and our government's proposed Strong Choices \$3.4 billion electricity price relief initiative?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Nanango for that question. It is good to have a question to cover off on two issues that are of importance to rural and regional Queenslanders. During my extensive consultation across Queensland developing our Strong Choices plan, when we listened to Queenslanders, two key messages were constantly raised in rural and regional parts of the state: firstly, the importance of maintaining the uniform tariff policy—a policy that ensures Queenslanders pay the same for their power in rural and regional Queensland as those in the south-east do—and, secondly, the adverse impacts of Labor's locked-in electricity price rises, the price rises that were locked in back in 2010 when the then Labor government made its submissions to the Australian Energy Regulator and also to the then Labor federal government. As the member for Nanango would be well aware, these issues were raised during the Strong choices community forum we held at the Kingaroy town hall. I think we had probably one of the best attended meetings, with people from all over the community attending to hear what the government's plan was.

We heard earlier from the Premier how the government has been working hard to put downward pressure on electricity prices. While we have been working hard, we also know there is more work to do. But, unlike those opposite, we have a plan and we are actively out there talking to Queenslanders about our plan.

As part of our Strong Choices final plan, the government has identified \$3.4 billion to be put aside to provide cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders. That money will go directly into removing the cost of Labor's 44c feed-in tariff scheme from Queenslanders' power bills. If given a mandate to act on our Strong Choices lease plan, we will have the funds available to take six per cent off electricity prices in 2015-16. While the savings vary depending on how much power you can use, the average household in Nanango can expect to save \$577 on their power bills over the next five years. Importantly, under our plan there will be no change for existing solar customers. Put simply, instead of their feed-in payments coming from the price of electricity, it will come from the Strong Choices cost-of-living electricity relief fund.

The scheme takes the burden of paying for the 44c feed-in tariff from all consumers. It uses the potential proceeds from the lease of some government businesses in order to meet that obligation, and it provides a secure foundation for those people who currently receive the 44c feed-in tariff. Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief is the final component of the Strong Choices final plan, which is expected to yield \$37 billion through the lease of some government assets.

In answer to the second part of the member's question in relation to the uniform tariff policy, we remain absolutely committed to the uniform tariff policy, as I indicated. Make no mistake—this policy will remain in place. Unlike those opposite, we are talking to Queenslanders and delivering a strong plan for a bright future.

(Time expired)

Lease of Public Assets

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Deputy Premier. I refer to the Deputy Premier's comments when he described a 99-year lease as 'a sell-off', as 'a sale', as 'sneaky' and 'dishonest', and I table the documents for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Extract from *Record of Proceedings*, dated 23 March 2010, of a speech by Hon. Jeff Seeney on the Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill relating to asset sales [\[6233\]](#).

Now that the government has decided to divest itself of \$37 billion in assets, will the Deputy Premier explain to Queenslanders why he is now being sneaky, to use his own words, by saying that a long-term lease is not a sell-off or a sale?

Mr SEENEY: I certainly welcome the opportunity to outline the plan that this government has for Queenslanders. It is a plan that we will take to the next election, as we said we would. We said that we would seek a mandate for Queenslanders to address the horrific financial mess that was left by the previous Labor government, of which the member who asked the question was a part. We have developed that plan over the last 18 months probably—two years, Treasurer?—since the Commission of Audit report brought into clear focus the difficulties and the challenges for government in Queensland. We have developed that plan in a methodical, workmanlike, responsible way.

We are now looking forward to the opportunity of putting that plan to the people of Queensland. This parliament will play an important part in ensuring that the people of Queensland understand what that plan is and what their clear choices are at the next election. I welcome the opportunity to answer questions about it just as every member of this government does and will between now and the election, because it is important that the people of Queensland understand the stark difference in the choice they will have at the next election between a plan that will guarantee their futures and the alternative that we have not heard yet. I suspect it is something akin to what we saw from the previous Labor government whose asset sales program was not even known by the ministers. I remember sitting over there somewhere pretty close to hearing the transport minister say in this parliament in answer to a question, 'Queensland Rail is not for sale.' Then about two days later Queensland Rail was up for sale.

The member for Bundamba voted for it. I also remember in this parliament at about four o'clock one morning when we were trying to give members of the Labor government the opportunity to vote on each of the assets that was being proposed for sale, and the member for Bundamba voted for the sale of those assets. The plan that we will put to the people of Queensland does not involve asset sales. It involves a lease proposition that will allow the government to attach conditions to the lease. It will ensure that those assets come back to the people of Queensland, and I think that will be a proposition that the people of Queensland will clearly understand. It is no surprise that those opposite would try to make the point that they have today, but they are out of touch with the people of Queensland and the people of Queensland will understand the difference.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

Mr HATHAWAY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Over the last decade electricity prices have more than doubled. Can the minister advise the House why families and businesses in my electorate of Townsville will be better off as a result of the Newman LNP government's \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question. He is a member who has a very hardworking record in Townsville and who is respected by the members and constituents of Townsville. He is certainly doing a fine job in North Queensland. It is always worthwhile to remind ourselves from whence we came. We came into power back in April 2012. We had a debt of around \$80 billion. We are incurring interest payments of \$450,000 per hour as we sit here. Something like \$4 billion a year in interest payments are now being paid due to the debt that we were left. Colleagues, consider what we could have done with that money. Consider the roads we could have

built, the hospitals, the school maintenance, the rail tracks and the environmental outcomes we could have achieved if that debt had not been incurred by a Labor government that had lost its way and simply spent like a drunken sailor.

The outcome of that, however, is that power prices in North Queensland have indeed gone through the roof. It is no thanks to the Labor Party that the carbon tax is now being removed and Queenslanders this year are saving \$170 off their power bill. We have put in place and maintained the UTP and made certain that we have funded the obligation to \$662 million this year to ensure people in Townsville and right throughout regional Queensland pay no more for their power than we do here in the south-east corner. The Solar Bonus Scheme has been a bone of contention right across this state. It has been an issue that this government has had to deal with for the last 2½ years.

The Solar Bonus Scheme comprises about six per cent of the power bills of each and every person in this House and across the nation. However, the issue of how we deal with that is one that this government has taken fully on board and will deal with in the forthcoming years. We have put aside \$3.4 billion if we get a mandate from the people of this state at the next election campaign to ensure that those who get the 44c FIT do get it. Those who do not get it do not pay any more in their power bills for it. It means everybody is a winner. It means everybody draws down from those funds either in reduction of the power bill prices or in payment of the solar bonus FIT.

At the end of the day, Labor has lost touch with the families of Queensland. This government is committed to working with the families of Queensland because we understand the pain they are going through. We are working with them day in and day out. The initiatives by this government over the last 2½ years—

(Time expired)

Sale of Public Assets

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the *Australian Financial Review*, which has today reported in an article under the headline 'Queensland on asset sale binge' that the Newman government has already been on a 'privatisation bonanza', selling off assets worth over \$10 billion since it was elected despite telling Queenslanders it would seek a mandate before conducting any asset sales. Will the Premier today apologise to Queenslanders for his \$10 billion privatisation bonanza without the consent of Queenslanders, as he promised?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for South Brisbane for the question. I did see the article in question, and I point out that the major component of that supposed amount of \$10 billion is the sale by Queensland Investment Corporation of the motorways. Who put the motorways into the Queensland Investment Corporation so that could happen? That is right, the former member for Mount Coot-tha and former Treasurer, Andrew Fraser. He laid the golden pathway to the Queensland Motorways privatisation by stealth. That is what he did.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. I warn the Manager of Opposition Business under standing order 253A. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: There is a letter here dated 4 May 2011 to Mr Doug McTaggart, the chief executive of the QIC, which clearly set out the plan, firstly, to commercialise, re-engineer and do that in the first one to three years, and then in years 3 to 4 monetisation. What does that mean? Sell off; Labor's secret plan. On the issue of land sales, wouldn't it have been interesting for the member for South Brisbane a few years ago to jump up and down about something that is in her electorate? That is right, I am referring to the leasing of a piece of public parkland in the South Bank Parklands for 120 years to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. For how much? A 120-year lease for \$12 million. I did some maths. That works out on average to \$100,000 a year. It is two grand per week for a huge chunk of public open space. What is more, what did the Labor Party at the time say? Someone from their government, from their administration, said it was leased because it was underutilised. There is a large piece of botanic gardens parkland out there as well. If the Labor Party get back in, is that underutilised? Would that be flogged off?

The other point I make is: did the Labor Party tell Queenslanders what the deal was? No, Ms Bligh insisted the arrangement was based on market values but was 'commercial-in-confidence'—a big secret. The Labor Party proceeds from the sale of land and buildings in 2000-01 was \$144 million; in 2001-02, \$283 million; in 2002-03, \$194 million; in 2003-04, \$227 million; in 2004-05,

\$202 million; in 2005-06, \$153 million; in 2006-07, \$309 million; and in 2007-08, \$227 million. From 2000-01 to 2011-12, a period of 10 years, the former Labor government sold over \$2.6 billion in land and buildings. Hypocrisy, Madam Speaker.

(Time expired)

Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund

Mrs RICE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline how the \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will benefit a family household with solar panels in my electorate of Mount Coot-tha?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question because, unlike the honourable Leader of the Opposition, she thinks that high power prices are not a distraction or a diversion; they are an issue that is really affecting Queenslanders, and we must work hard to do something about it.

As a neighbouring member, I am very familiar with the tireless work of the member for Mount Coot-tha. One of the costly programs and poorly conceived programs that we inherited from those economic illiterates opposite was the Solar Bonus Scheme. As someone who has solar panels on my roof and has never had the benefit of the 44c feed-in tariff—I did it because I felt it was the right thing to do—I am certainly well aware of the benefits of solar power. However, I am not going to ignore the fact that other people's power bills are going up because of the poorly conceived scheme which saw the previous government paying 44c to people who were in the scheme and that being paid for by people who were simply connected to the electricity grid. If the former government wanted to subsidise solar power to get panels on roofs, that is an admirable objective, but it should have been thought through and done properly. The cost should not have been borne like it was some sort of ponzi scheme. For the benefit of the honourable member, in answer to the question, we are taking it out of the electricity network and making it an obligation of government to pay that 44c.

The state's independent economic regulator has shown that the cost of the Solar Bonus Scheme makes up six per cent of a typical household electricity bill and, sadly—and it is of great concern—that is expected to grow. Earlier this year the chairman of the Queensland Competition Authority said the modelling of the take-up and cost of the previous government's Solar Bonus Scheme was 'one of the worst forecasts you will find in recent history'. That is why on Sunday we announced that the \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will be invested responsibly to ensure Queenslanders no longer have to subsidise the cost of solar usage through their power bills.

With regard to the honourable member's constituents, under our plan there will be no change for those existing solar feed-in tariff customers. Instead of their payments coming from the price of electricity across all consumers, it will be met from the Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund. Importantly, I would encourage the honourable member's constituents to go to the Strong Choices website and find the interactive calculator and do the numbers.

Another number that I give people today is that a household of two adults, two kids and a pool will save around \$1,190 over five years under our Strong Choices cost-of-living relief plan. That is on top of the \$170 a year that a typical household will save because of the removal of Labor's carbon tax. This government is working hard to reduce the cost of living for Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Overseas Visitors, Law and Order

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. When overseas visitors commit offences in Queensland what strategies does the government have in place to bring these people to justice before they leave our country?

Mr NEWMAN: I am quite happy to answer the honourable member's question. We apply the law of course. I point out that early in our term there was an incident that was brought to my attention where an overseas national committed an offence here in Queensland, was apprehended and then was before the magistrate. A condition of their release on bail was that they surrendered their passport and, sadly, the individual then absconded. I simply say that since that time we have been working to try to bring that person back to justice. Even if something like that happens, we will still go after the individual concerned if it is believed to be in the public interest. I also say that, as I recall, we have since changed the law to ensure that if a magistrate gives such a direction to surrender a passport, the processes around the surrender of that passport are much, much tighter. If the honourable member has a specific question that he wants to put on the table, I would be happy to answer it.

Before I conclude, I should continue to urge the honourable member to stop showing such active support for members of criminal motorcycle gangs. I would say to the honourable member that it is time—

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive. They are untrue and I ask that they be withdrawn. There is no basis to them whatsoever.

Madam SPEAKER: Please take a seat. Premier, under the standing orders you have been asked to withdraw.

Mr NEWMAN: Madam Speaker, I withdraw, but I say it is time for the honourable member for Nicklin—

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. That was not an unconditional withdrawal. The Premier is provocative.

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat, member for Nicklin. Member for Nicklin, we will apply the standing orders, but I will hear the Premier.

Mr WELLINGTON: Madam Speaker, the Premier did not withdraw unconditionally. That was the point of order I raised.

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I will listen to the Premier's reply. I did not hear him make a subsequent condition upon it. If he does, I will then apply the standing order. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: We all know that the member for Nicklin has clearly, by his words and deeds, indicated that he has supported members of criminal motorcycle gangs.

Mr WELLINGTON: Madam Speaker, I find those comments offensive. They are untrue and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam SPEAKER: Premier, under the standing orders I ask that you withdraw.

Mr NEWMAN: I certainly withdraw, but again I urge—

Madam SPEAKER: Premier, I just give you some guidance in this matter. I do not know if you are going to make a condition upon your withdrawal, but using the word 'but' sometimes could be seen to lead into a conditional withdrawal. I give the Premier the call.

Mr NEWMAN: I have said I withdraw, but I again say that—

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. Madam Speaker, with respect, the Premier is not listening.

Madam SPEAKER: My guidance, Premier, would be if you add the term 'but' it could be seen to be a conditional withdrawal. I give the Premier the call and ask him to pay attention to the standing orders.

Mr NEWMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am simply saying today that all of us in this place have an obligation to work hard to protect our community. I would expect that the member for Nicklin will do that. I know that the candidate for the LNP, Mr Matt Trace, is out there every day of the week and people in the community say how bitterly disappointed they are that the member for Nicklin continues to not stand up for the community in that way. They see it time and time again by his utterances in the local media—

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. Madam Speaker, with respect, this has no relevance to the question whatsoever.

Madam SPEAKER: I do not hear you making a point of order under the standing orders. I give the Premier the call.

Mr NEWMAN: We have now moved into the realm of the honourable member not liking debate to occur in this place.

Mr Wellington interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Just pause the clock.

Mr Wellington interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Wellington interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nicklin, I will warn you if you continue to make interjections outside of the standing orders. I have the call.

An honourable member interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members. I will have order before I give the call. Thank you. Premier, I would ask you to address the question.

Mr NEWMAN: I took the question to be a very vague question about law and order and the way we protect Queenslanders. I am answering the question. I am disappointed that the member for Nicklin does not want to engage in full and open debate in this place and seeks some sort of spurious protection under the standing orders. I have answered the question. If he has a specific I will answer it.

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. Madam Speaker, with respect, those comments are offensive. They are untrue and I ask them to be withdrawn. I would have expected better from the Premier of this state. If you want to have a debate in this chamber—

Madam SPEAKER: Order, member for Nicklin.

Mr WELLINGTON:—I will take you on any day. Any day—you name the date, the place and the time.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nicklin, when you are shouting into the microphone I cannot even understand you.

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. I am saying that if the Premier wants a debate, I will take him on anywhere any place. You name the time and the place and I will be there.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Nicklin, you are outside of the standing orders and I would ask you to refrain from shouting into the microphone. It is difficult to understand you.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Would the member please take his seat? Premier, you were asked earlier to withdraw. I would ask that under the standing orders you withdraw.

Mr NEWMAN: I withdraw.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. Madam Speaker, I ask for your guidance insofar as the Premier's comments relating to 'spurious protection' may indeed be a reflection on the chair.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you for your concern, Leader of Opposition Business. I did not take it that way, but as I indicated some very loud comments were being made and I have found that sometimes it is better to just let the House settle. We have dealt with the matters that were being considered, so I now call the member for Logan.

Electricity Prices

Mr PUCCI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer outline how everyday Queenslanders such as those in my electorate of Logan can better understand the direct impact of the government's proposed Strong Choices \$3.4 billion electricity price relief initiative on their everyday electricity bills?

Mr NICHOLLS: What a pleasure it is to receive a sensible question from a sensible member. I do thank the member for the question, because it is a vitally important question and the kind of question that others in this House could well learn from and could be asking, because real Queenslanders want to know how this government's Strong Choices plan will impact them. I also know this is an issue which the member for Logan has been very actively pursuing. I understand that the member for Logan, together with the member for Algeester, jointly hosted a cost-of-living forum, and I know that the energy minister addressed the community about these real pressures on families' finances—another example of this LNP government listening to real Queenslanders.

We have been speaking here today about the government's Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief plan. It is a positive plan that will take six per cent off of retail electricity prices from 2015-16 if the government is given a mandate to act. The reality is that families, businesses and individuals will all be affected in different ways. The government is determined to give Queenslanders the information they need to know about how our Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief plan will impact them. That is why yesterday, together with Minister McArdle, we launched a simple online calculating tool for Queenslanders to fill in using their own information. Queenslanders can take their own power bills and use the information on them to fill in the calculator and determine their actual savings. While we know that the typical Queensland household will save \$577 on their power bills over the next five years, the online calculator will give a much more accurate figure for families based on their latest bill or an estimate of how much electricity their household uses.

For example, by clicking on the website we can tell that a frugal couple living in Logan using 3,070 kilowatts a year stands to save \$430 over five years. The website also tells us that a two-parent, two-child family in Logan that uses 6,133 kilowatts a year will save \$860 over the same five-year period. We also know that a larger family in Logan with two parents and four children and maybe a pool which uses just over 10,000 kilowatts every year will save up to \$1,500 over the next five years. These are real savings for Queenslanders, and this plan has the potential to deliver real hip-pocket relief. It is fully funded and costed as part of our detailed and methodical Strong Choices plan. Queenslanders can also have confidence in the numbers that are presented on the Strong Choices online calculator because they have been reviewed and verified by a former Queensland auditor-general, Mr Len Scanlan.

Not only is this government committed to paying down Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt; we are absolutely committed to doing what we can to put downward pressure on the cost of living for everyday Queenslanders, including all of those Queenslanders in the member's seat of Logan.

Unemployment

Mr JUDGE: My question without notice is for the Premier. Recent Roy Morgan research has reported that the real unemployment rate in Queensland has risen to 10 per cent and underemployment is 8.3 per cent. This means that total unemployment and underemployment is 18.3 per cent. Can the Premier explain why his government's so-called Strong Plan is failing so many Queenslanders?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. I would like to start by reminding the honourable member about his comments during the 2012 budget debate, where he strongly supported the very strong choices and hard decisions that the government made. He was an enthusiastic and committed supporter of the necessary decisions we made, and I am particularly referring to the need to get the government's expenses under control. I remind the member of his comments back in 2012 and I thank him for them. I also applaud the member's decision to vacate his position as the Queensland state leader of the Palmer United Party—a position which he occupied for a short period of time. I think it is a sensible move.

This government is unequivocally about jobs and job creation. Since we came to office we have seen the overall level of employment in Queensland grow by many tens of thousands of positions. We have seen the second highest number of jobs created in Australia created in the state of Queensland in the past 12 months: 31,600 jobs. Do we need to work harder? Yes, we do. Do we want to make more opportunities for Queenslanders to get great jobs? Yes, absolutely.

Let me talk now about the final version of the Strong Choices program which we announced last week. I particularly draw the honourable member's attention to the \$8.6 billion investment in infrastructure for roads and bridges, schools, hospitals and community facilities. We believe that this Strong Choices \$8.6 billion infrastructure fund will generate up to 25,000 new jobs. That is very exciting because it is job creation on projects which will lead to further competitiveness in the Queensland economy for the long-term, and I think that is particularly important to note.

Another aspect of the Strong Choices program is the \$3.4 billion to cut cost-of-living pressures. We know that by taking the cost burden down for all consumers—not just people in their homes, but also businesses—we will see greater discretionary spending occurring. I do not have the figures to hand, but I believe the Treasurer has some numbers that indicate the modelling says there will be a boost to the gross state product, so it will further boost economic growth in Queensland and create thousands of extra jobs. Our plans and policies are strong and carefully considered—

(Time expired)

Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund

Mr TROUT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. I refer the minister to the small business electricity bill for a local vet clinic which is located in Trinity Beach, Cairns. This clinic uses about 66,000 kilowatts per year. Can the minister advise the House how small businesses such as the local vet clinic in my electorate of Barron River will be better off as a result of the Newman LNP government's \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund?

Mr McARDLE: Madam Speaker, I certainly can help the member through ESP. I joined the member last weekend up in Cairns to announce that land will be made available at Redlynch for sporting facilities which will help not just schools in local areas, but community groups throughout the Cairns region as well. I congratulate the member, the council and Powerlink on the great work that they did in achieving the outcome.

Harking back to the past, if we go back to the time when Premier Peter Beattie ruled this House there were dividends being stripped out of both Ergon and Energex on an ongoing and heavy-handed basis. In essence, that started the downfall of the energy sector in this state and led to the blackouts and brownouts that we endured in the mid-2000s. That led to the Somerville report, and then prescriptive requirements were put in place that led to gold plating, which led to significant costs being incurred by Ergon, Energex and Powerlink amounting to many millions of dollars.

Madam Speaker, at the end of the day this government has put significant downward pressure on the cost of electricity. What we are doing today is looking at how we can help small businesses in the far north region. A business that uses 66,000 kilowatt hours under the regime put in place by this government over five years would save up to \$7,980 to direct into the cash flow for that business to grow and sustain it into the future. That is what this government is all about.

The typical household would save \$577 over a period of five years. Those on an off-peak tariff would save an additional \$165 over the five-year period. This government is seeking a mandate from the people of Queensland so that we can continue the great work we are doing and put aside a sum of \$3.4 billion so that we can ensure people in this state do not get a power bill that includes the Solar Bonus Scheme but ensures people who do receive the 44c FIT continue to receive that 44c FIT until 2028, provided they remain eligible to do so. Labor has simply lost touch with the families of this great state. The LNP is working with families to get a better deal for them, now and into the future.

Mining Industry

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. With over 300 vacant homes in Moranbah and Dysart, coupled with the lay-off of 700 BMA employees, mostly community based, will the minister negotiate a compromise agreement with mining companies for a gradual reduction of the 100 per cent FIFO workforce to generate confidence in the future of the region?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, everybody who represents regional Queensland, and Central Queensland in particular, is aware of the effects of the current downturn in the coal industry. It illustrates, if any illustration is required, the importance of the coal industry to a whole range of communities in Central Queensland—to not only the communities that are most closely co-located, like the ones the member mentioned, but also a range of regional communities such as Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone and the Whitsundays, where I was the other day. All of those communities are feeling the downturn that is currently affecting the Queensland coal industry because of the international coal price. It demonstrates that we as a government—this applies to whoever is the government of Queensland—need to be vigilant in supporting the coal industry, which is so incredibly important to the whole of Queensland.

The issue of fly-in fly-out workers is one that is subject to regular debate. In my experience, that debate intensifies every time there is a downturn in the industry. To suggest that somehow or other it is the major factor in addressing the effects of a downturn in the industry is indeed drawing a very long bow, because the downturn in the coal industry affects everyone involved in the industry. It involves everybody. It involves people who work in the industry, irrespective of where they choose to live and irrespective of where they choose to work.

The situation the member referred to in his question relates to two mines—two mines out of about 34, depending on how you count them—in Central Queensland that operate on a 100 per cent fly-in fly-out basis. Changing the workforce arrangement that was put in place when those mines were approved is hardly likely to have a major impact on the effects that are being felt by coalmining communities right across Central Queensland.

The important thing Queenslanders need to know is that this government strongly supports the coal industry. We have done an enormous amount of work to remove costs from the Queensland coal industry—costs due to overregulation—so that our coal industry can be competitive on the international market, so that we can cope with the highs and the lows of the international coal market, and we will continue to do that.

Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund

Mr BENNETT: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline how the Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will impact residents in rural Queensland, particularly in the electorate of Burnett?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question because rural Queenslanders are facing significant cost-of-living pressures from the former Labor government's poor policy and planning decisions, particularly in the area of electricity. The honourable member is a strong advocate for growers struggling in the face of drought conditions, and our thoughts are with farmers right across this state as we hope for rain.

This year the government provided around \$662 million to ensure all Queenslanders pay the same price for their electricity, regardless of where they live. With the Labor instigated carbon tax gone, one of the other big pressures on power bills is the Solar Bonus Scheme. The Queensland Council of Social Service, QCOSS, in a December 2012 submission said—

The costs to consumers arising from the distributor-funded 44-cent solar feed-in tariff have been significant. While some individuals have been able to enjoy significant benefits, the majority of consumers face higher electricity prices as a result of the policy. This is clearly not an equitable outcome ...

Given the significant detriment already created for consumers through higher electricity prices, we believe it is important that further detriment to consumers is avoided, particularly for those not currently able to install a solar photovoltaic (PV) system.

This is exactly what the government is saying about the pitfalls and the problems of the former government's 44c feed-in tariff scheme. It is also exactly what this government is dealing with in terms of our Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief plan. Under our strong plan there will be no change for existing solar customers. Instead of their feed-in payments coming from the price of electricity and being borne by all electricity consumers, it will come from the Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund. This fund and the plan it is backing will save a typical household \$577 over five years. Burnett constituents who have tariff 33 for hot-water systems or pool filters might save a further \$165.

When you add it all up, it is significant: freezing family car rego, restoring the stamp duty concession for the family home, cutting public transport fares, providing the Great Start Grant for new home buyers and keeping responsible financial management as a key order of the day for government. We are delivering real savings for Queenslanders. We will continue to work very hard for all Queenslanders on this very important issue.

Lease of Public Assets

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to the Treasurer's media statement of 19 April last year about the sale of seven office buildings and to page 23 of the Strong Choices document that refers to the lease of government buildings, and I ask: did the Treasurer sell these buildings and the land to the private sector? If so, why has he called it a lease in his taxpayer funded Strong Choices material?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Rockhampton for referring to my material. I think he is referring to the final plan that says 'no asset sales' on it—the plan put together after talking to more than 20,000 Queenslanders and travelling more than 19,000 kilometres throughout the state. I do not believe that that final plan refers to anything other than the material that is in it relating to our strong plan to lease assets for a 50-year period with a 49-year option, subject to compliance with strict conditions, in order to raise \$37 billion. That is: \$25 billion to pay down Labor's \$80 billion of debt to relieve us of the burden of paying \$4.1 billion of interest in total by bringing the interest payments down; \$8.6 billion to invest in job-creating infrastructure, creating up to 25,000 jobs; and \$3.4 billion in a cost-of-living fund which will enable us to provide Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief to Queenslanders.

What we are talking about in terms of the final plan—the strongest and the smartest choice on page 30 of that document—refers to each of the sectors, each of the businesses and each of the choices, and those choices are for leasing. I am grateful that we have a plan and that the member is looking at the plan. When it comes to land sales, it is interesting to note the hypocrisy of those opposite given the \$2.6 billion worth of land that it sold from 2001 through to 2011-12. Indeed, I also note the member for Mulgrave's own efforts as the minister to sell land owned by his then department in the last period of the failed former Labor government. In fact, there were a number of properties: Windmill and Hopkins Street in South Toowoomba, Graham Street at Blackstone, Laar Crescent at Boondall, Robinson Road at Eastern Heights—all properties sold by the former government on top of quite a large number of other assets that were sold. Let us look at the former government's record. What did the former government do? It is quite an extensive list. Let us look at the gas pipeline assets, the wind energy assets, the Brisbane Airport Corporation, the Mackay Airport, the Cairns Airport, Golden Casket, Powerdirect, Sun Gas, Sun Retail, Allgas—all assets sold by the hypocrites on the other side.

(Time expired)

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: I acknowledge the schools visiting today—the Calliope State School from the electorate of Gladstone and the Rochedale South State School from the electorate of Springwood.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Crime and Corruption Commission; Newman LNP Government, Performance



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.01 am): This government is still not listening. This government, led by Campbell Newman and the LNP, is not listening and it is not listening to Queenslanders. After the Stafford by-election on 19 July, the Premier promised that there would be bipartisan support for the newly appointed chair of the CCC. For 18 months Queenslanders have had an acting chair. They have had a hand-picked person running the anticorruption watchdog in this state. This government has learnt nothing from the appointment process of the Chief Justice to now the appointment process of the chair of the new anticorruption watchdog in this state. We found out about the proposal in the paper. Today we also heard the Premier confirm who the government's proposal is for the new chair of the CCC. This government, this Attorney-General and this Premier have learnt nothing from the botched selection process of the Chief Justice to now the botched process of the new chair of the CCC.

Bipartisanship—let us talk about the convention of the bipartisan nature of this appointment. It is where the Premier of the day talks to the Leader of the Opposition. That is bipartisanship. If we want to talk about how cabinet operates in a bipartisan manner, the cabinet would make a proposal and it would then consult with either the Leader of the Opposition or the committee confidentially and then it would go back to cabinet for endorsement and a public announcement. That is the way a transparent and accountable government operates. Those opposite have learnt nothing and now we are once again seeing a botched appointment process. The government had the opportunity to get this right. The government had the opportunity to sit down and sort this out in a dignified manner. But, no! We saw the chair of the committee come out and do two separate press conferences yesterday—what about the confidentiality of the committee?—and today the Premier has come out and confirmed who the government's proposed nominee is.

Mrs Scott: Disgraceful!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, member for Woodridge, it is a disgrace. It is a botched process. This government has learnt nothing.

I am also pleased to advise the House, the Premier and probably more importantly the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier that Kate Jones has been endorsed as the Labor candidate for the seat of Ashgrove at the next election. Kate is out there today campaigning. She told me last night that she would be out there doorknocking today listening to the people of Ashgrove. That is what the people of this state of Queensland want. They want their members to be out there listening. This government has failed them. It has failed them and it is still not listening. Whilst talking about Ashgrove, I have also been quite alarmed over the last week or two to once again see the deep divisions embedded in the LNP. For the last two weeks those in the LNP have been tearing themselves apart over the seat of Moggill. I dare ask: is it because they have all given up on Campbell Newman, the Premier, in Ashgrove? There was a very interesting and good interview conducted by Matt Wordsworth on the *7.30 Report*. I am quite sure all honourable members watched that interview with great interest, and I want to quote from that interview. The member for Moggill was being interviewed and he said—

They've now given up on Campbell Newman and the battle is on to see who replaces him after probably after the next election.

Matt Wordsworth says—

Hang on; you think that they don't believe Campbell Newman can win Ashgrove?

Dr Bruce Flegg, the member for Moggill, who is not the candidate at the next election, says—

I am certain that the LNP do not believe Campbell Newman can win Ashgrove.

What we have seen is instability in the LNP over the last two weeks. If you cannot govern yourselves, how can you govern Queensland? If we talk about governing Queensland, let us talk about asset sales. What we heard today in question time were statements that have been put clearly out of the mouths of the Treasurer and the Premier that confirm that a lease is an asset sale, pure and simple. What did the Premier say? In the past the Premier has said that a lease is like selling the silverware. What did the Treasurer say? The Treasurer said that a lease is like selling the farm. So we have the Premier saying that he wants to sell the silverware and we have the Treasurer saying that he is selling the farm, and then we also heard the quotes out of the mouth of the Deputy Premier. What was it, member for Bundamba? It was—

Mrs Miller: Dishonest and sneaky.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Dishonest and sneaky; sneaky and dishonest and a con. If this government was listening to Queenslanders and if this government had a shred of integrity—we know it has no shred of integrity when it comes to accountability and transparency—it would know that Queenslanders do not want their assets sold, pure and simple. How do we know that? We know it because after the last election we were reduced to seven members and now because we have been listening to the community we have been able to gain two extra members—the member for Redcliffe and the member for Stafford. If you sell the assets, electricity prices will rise. That has been the evidence in other states. If you sell assets, jobs will go. Queenslanders are suffering. Queenslanders want safe and secure jobs. What have we seen under this government? Let us go back to the past. Let us go back to two years ago when we saw the sacking of Public Service workers. Also, we have seen the massive cuts to service delivery right across this state—cuts in health, cuts in education. Queenslanders deserve the best from their government and what they are getting from this government is second rate.

What we saw last week was the secret fundraiser from the LNP. They want to talk about openness and transparency. It was a \$5,000-a-plate fundraiser—\$5,000. But it was all secret. The media questioned the Deputy Premier. They asked him very clearly, ‘Deputy Premier, are you going to the fundraiser tonight?’ ‘Yes, I am.’ ‘Where is it?’ ‘I don’t know.’ ‘Deputy Premier, where is that coalmine in Central Queensland?’ ‘I don’t know.’ ‘Deputy Premier, have you checked those documents yet?’ ‘Oh, I don’t know what’s in those documents.’ What an embarrassment! But what is even more embarrassing—in fact, Queenslanders will be very upset to know this—is that no-one knows who attended that fundraiser and not one of those donations will be declared to the Electoral Commission. It is a half-a-million-dollar slush fund raised in one night. This is a cashed-up LNP machine. They are cashing up a massive war chest in the lead-up to the next state election. We have put in place our accountability and transparency policy. We will definitely ensure that donations over \$1,000 are sent to the Electoral Commission and this government will not.

In summary, Labor will continue to listen. Labor will not sell your assets. The LNP will sell your assets.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They may laugh, but I say to them to go out to their electorates and start listening. I do not think they should be laughing. They should take those smiles off their faces, because this is a very serious matter. It is a very serious matter for all Queenslanders. It is about time that this government stopped being arrogant, stopped being out of touch and started listening.

(Time expired)

Child Safety



Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (11.11 am): The Newman government committed to Queenslanders to undertake an inquiry into the child protection system and we have delivered on that commitment. We are moving ahead on our landmark reforms. This government is investing substantial resources to ensure that Queensland is the safest place to raise a family.

An early part of our reform work was the passing by parliament of the Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill 2014 in May this year. This act clarified and consolidated the requirements for reporting concerns about children to Child Safety. Our amendments have made it clear that anyone who has a reasonable concern that a child is in need of protection can make a report to Child Safety.

For the first time in Queensland, legislative mandatory reporting requirements for teachers in schools, doctors and registered nurses, police with child protection responsibilities and child advocate staff in the Office of the Public Guardian have been consolidated into one place, the Child Protection

Act 1999. We have heeded the recommendations of our inquiry and when it said that the act should clarify when a report should be made to Child Safety to ensure that the right children are reported at the right time, that is exactly what we have done. These changes make the mandatory reporting regime the most comprehensive in Queensland's history and we are proud to be the government that has delivered this.

In addition, the Newman government will consider the role of Queensland's early childhood education and care services in reporting concerns about children who come into their contact. We committed to do this as part of the broader review of the Child Protection Act. Today, I can confirm that the matter of whether mandatory reporting requirements should be extended to the early childhood education and care sector will be independently reviewed by the Queensland Law Reform Commission. This review will be led by Justice David Jackson, an eminent Supreme Court justice and head of the Queensland Law Reform Commission. In a similar way that we engaged Commissioner Carmody to review the entire child protection system and provide the government with his recommendations, this important issue will also be suitably and impartially reviewed.

Reform of the child protection system is an ongoing process. Recently, we announced a range of new services to be rolled out progressively throughout the state. Some of those services are groundbreaking for Queensland—the likes of which have never been introduced before. It means that, for people interested in working in social services, the combination of new service types to be introduced will see well over 100 new jobs created in this sector. These innovative changes are because the commission of inquiry found that many families unnecessarily come to the attention of the tertiary child protection system. Commissioner Carmody recommended that multiple pathways be implemented so that not all concerns reported have to go through the door of Child Safety. From January next year, we will roll out the new community based intake and referral services as well as new intensive family support services across the state.

The Newman government is also delivering improved outcomes for young people transitioning from out-of-home care to better equip them for independence and to support them after they leave care to lead fulfilling lives as adults. We committed to do this during the 2012 election campaign and we are on track to deliver by early 2015 support for young people who leave care until they are the age of 21.

We are also allocating additional funding for new and enhanced domestic and family violence services in Queensland. Our investment in new services across the state recognises that a high proportion of families at risk of entering the tertiary child protection system are impacted by domestic and family violence. Currently, my department is calling for tenders for those services. Those tenders will close on 3 November.

The culmination of all of those activities taking place will ensure that Queensland has a child protection system that works as well as it can and should. We are pleased to be the government that is delivering on this. We will continue to support and strengthen families so that Queensland is the safest place in Australia to raise a child.

Earlier this year, parliament passed the Communities Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. Previously, my department administered funding under three separate acts of parliament. Instead of three cumbersome funding acts, we now have one. In response to a recommendation from the Health and Community Services Committee, I committed to make a statement to parliament about the funding administered by my department, which I have declared under the act. In accordance with the requirements of the act, I made my first funding declaration on 25 June 2014 and it took effect on 1 July. My second funding declaration was made on 29 September 2014. Both declarations are published on my department's website and list all the current funding for Disability Services, Child Safety Services and other community services in my portfolio.

(Time expired)

Mental Health; National Week of Deaf People



Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (11.16 am): Today, I wish to speak about two topics that are important for all of us, both as MPs and members of our communities. Firstly, as many would know, last week was Mental Health Week. I want to start by congratulating the ABC on their Mental As initiative. To hear people honestly sharing and talking about mental health on the TV and radio was so refreshing, especially for a person like me who has recently experienced a nervous breakdown. Despite the fact that one in five Australians will experience a mental illness in the next 12 months,

when you are the one who is experiencing it it can be an incredibly isolating feeling. So to hear stories on the television and radio and to know that you are not alone is perhaps one of the most powerful things that can assist in seeking help and getting the support that individuals need to recover. The Mental As initiative did exactly that. Speaking openly and freely about mental health issues is an important way to address the stigma associated with a mental illness.


Many members in this House will remember my budget in reply speech that I gave on my return from sick leave. It was a difficult speech to make. My anxiety levels soared. Therefore, members can imagine my horror to see the headline in my local paper that weekend which read, 'Damaged', with a photo of me. That front page caused me to feel stress and anxiety all over again as well as face the stigma that is associated with having a mental illness. Mental illnesses should be reported in the same way as a physical illness. We would not describe someone with high blood pressure or cancer as being damaged and nor should we for people experiencing anxiety, depression or any other mental health condition. In regional centres such as Gympie as well as in cities across Australia, the local media influences the way we think, shaping our beliefs and our reactions to issues. The Mental As initiative by the ABC helped to inform and improve attitudes towards people who live with a mental illness by sharing positive stories, explaining how people manage their symptoms and live with hope. It is a message that we should share with all.

I want to refer to an outstanding article by a Fairfax journalist, Matthew Knott, titled 'The black dog roaming Parliament House'. It was published in last weekend's *Sydney Morning Herald*. It is, in my opinion, a must read for everyone involved in politics and for their family and friends. I was not surprised by the report that about 20 per cent of those working in Parliament House in Canberra are on antidepressants, with many more taking sleeping medication. However, I was encouraged by the revelation that the federal parliament has an official Parliament House chaplain known as 'the padre'. I believe our parliament could benefit from such a position, someone that MPs, staffers and family members could speak to confidentially. I also believe we must address what is rotten in our culture of politics. Our society does not accept bullying in the workplace and nor should we within our political discourse. At the end of the day, as MPs we are no different to anyone else; cut us and we bleed, abuse us and it hurts—even if we choose not to show it. At this point I want to again highlight the value of what I like to call the ordinary angels in our lives. I know in my case it was people in the community, friends and strangers, who, in reaching out during difficult times, showed me that I was not on my own.

I would now like to remind everyone that next week is National Week of Deaf People. I extend to you an invitation to come along and sign for a free coffee. When I say 'sign', I mean sign in Auslan, the sign language of the Australian deaf community. I want to thank the Shingle Inn in Brisbane Square for teaming up with Deaf Services Queensland in providing free coffee to customers when they use Auslan to communicate their order with volunteer staff from the deaf community. The free coffee is on next week, 22 October, from 8 am to 1 pm in Brisbane Square. The basic signs are 'flat white' or 'cappuccino' (*signed using Auslan*). Of course, if you want a half-strength, decaf, soy caramel macchiato you will need to see me afterwards for a few private tuitions.

Both Mental Health Week and the National Week of Deaf People are important in our community as they cause us to stop, reflect and reach out to people around us and make sure that they feel that they are not alone in our community, that they are valued and an essential part of what makes our communities the wonderful places that they are.

Sale of Public Assets

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.21 am): The Newman government has no regard for honesty or truth and is treating Queenslanders and its own MPs with contempt. Last week the Premier and Treasurer got the green light from their party room for the largest privatisation in Queensland's history—\$37 billion worth—while on George Street the bankers and lawyers continued preparing these assets for sale without any election mandate. The opposition estimates more than \$300 million of taxpayers' money will be spent to sell these assets. We again challenge the government to dispute this figure, because it will not release it publicly. It is a total disgrace and a disgusting misuse of taxpayers' money for this government to pay spin doctors to tell Queenslanders that a lease is not a sale.

For the benefit of those opposite, selling assets via a long-term lease to receive an upfront payment is a sale—or a transaction as the Treasurer now calls it. The Treasurer said back in 2010 'a 99-year lease is as good as giving away the farm', and 'saying "the state of Queensland will still own the underlying asset" is really a furphy.' He said that claiming that 99-year leases did not really involve

selling assets was 'another attempt to perpetuate a con on the people of Queensland'. Treasurer, after 2½ years of the Newman government, we agree with you. He knows that he is being untruthful and he knows that he is trying to con Queenslanders—just like with the latest vote-buying exercise on power prices. There is not one mention of the government's failure to deliver a saving of \$120 a year promised before the last election, and now those opposite want voters to trust them again? Conservatively, \$2 billion a year in revenue will be lost forever with the LNP's record privatisation program. Over 30 years it means taxpayers will lose \$60 billion—a figure that dwarfs the one-off \$3.4 billion fund in the latest vote-buying exercise by the government. I am not sure whether or not he needs the crayons, but for the Treasurer's benefit, a 50-year lease plus a 49-year lease—with a right of renewal for the lessee—is effectively a 99-year lease.

It is not just the Treasurer who says that a lease is a sale. In relation to the lease of the Abbot Point Coal terminal, the Premier said in 2011, 'I think it is a mistake selling off the silverware.' When asked the difference between a long-term lease and an asset sale, Chair of the ACCC Rod Sims said they are one and the same. There is some irony in the Treasurer calling his dossier for the biggest privatisation in Queensland's history his final plan. Back in 2010 the Treasurer said 'Flogging off the family silver without addressing the underlying problem of a structural deficit is not a plan', and that the LNP's plan would need to 'identify the importance of growth in the Queensland economy if we are to fix the state's finances.' Before the election the government said it had a plan that did not involve asset sales. All we saw was a to-do list that mentioned a plan. Despite the Treasurer saying that a lease was as good as giving away the farm and that asset sales were not a plan, now a record sale of assets via a long-term lease is his final and only plan. This financial year the assets proposed for sale are expected to return \$2 billion. The Treasurer's dossier says that lost revenue will be partly offset by interest savings of \$1.3 billion a year. However, much of these interest costs are paid for by our income-producing assets prior to delivering a return to the taxpayer. If we look only at general government interest costs and exclude these income-earning assets, the annual interest saving is far lower at around \$670 million. So we are looking at a net loss for the taxpayer well in excess of a billion dollars a year, even after factoring in lower interest costs.

One-off sale proceeds are not going to continually cover the cost of subsidising electricity prices in regional Queensland. In New South Wales the National Party opposed a private monopoly over the electricity network because it knew it would be a disaster in the regions. Here in Queensland regional LNP members could not wait to sell out their own constituencies. Last week the Treasurer refused to rule out that future tax increases to plug the structural hole his asset sales will tear through the budget bottom line. In the same interview he refused to rule out increases to power bills from privatisation. Those in this chamber and certainly all Queenslanders must make no mistake about it, the LNP's record privatisation program is a tax on future generations through lower revenue and higher prices. This plan is about buying a second term in office; it is not a strong plan for Queensland's future. In fact, the structural damage that it will do to the budget bottom line means that it is, in fact, fiscal sabotage, all in the name of a time-limited, vote-buying exercise. The Treasurer might still be confused about what a 99-year lease is, but the people of Queensland know very clearly that it means full-scale privatisation. The LNP really must think about delivering on the promises it has already made before making new ones. That is the most common comment I have heard from people with regard to this \$3.4 billion fund. People see through it and they see through this government.

Coomera Electorate, Cane Lands Development



Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (11.27 am): I rise to discuss a matter of serious public interest in the northern Gold Coast area—the cane lands, in fact—in the seat of Coomera. Since 2009 I have been calling for a future plan for the local area; a plan to allow the area to transition from agriculture to other purposes. There have been some issues around the South East Queensland Regional Plan, which is being reviewed in 2015 and should open the door for a better plan to be put in place. Over the years since 2009 I have discussed this many, many times with many people. There have been many reports over that time. In fact, there have been 17 reports since 1979; 13 of those reports have been done since 1999. So there have been 13 reports in 15 years on the northern Gold Coast and the cane lands area, all to no avail. I table that list of reports for members. They may want to call them up on the internet and read some of them.

Tabled paper: List of land-use studies conducted in Rocky Point Canelands [\[6234\]](#).

In short, the goal of developing a plan for the cane lands, as elusive as it has been in the past, appeared to be getting closer in recent times through discussions that I have been having with locals, some councillors and with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Indeed,

we were all very enthused by the apparent agreement by all parties. Who do I mean when I say all parties? I mean virtually all of the parties who are a part of the cane lands community and who are now coming together and saying that they realise that there is a need for a future plan for that area. We seemed to have the Gold Coast City Council on board as well.

The investigation that we are calling for should not have any limitations put upon it. It is important that there should be no limitations, as has happened in the past, which would mean that we look only at this or that aspect of the cane lands. It is a hugely complex area and a hugely complex decision needs to be made. Once those limitations are removed from the study, we can look at a plan for the next five, 10, 15 to 20 years so that we will know where the cane lands are going. As I said earlier, much discussion has been had and reports have been produced. Therefore, yesterday I was surprised to read a 2½-page letter from Dale Dickson, the CEO of the Gold Coast City Council, to the people of the cane lands, in which he states—

Consideration of potential and continuing future agricultural uses of land as part of a Resource and Agricultural Land Study which will investigate these types of land uses throughout the City and which is due to commence in late 2014-15.

The Northern Gold Coast Agricultural Futures Study is currently being undertaken by the Economic Development and Major Projects directorate on the 11,000ha northern canelands area. This study will include input from a specialist agricultural economist to further study the viability of a range of agricultural and other products that could be grown in the area ...

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 3 October 2014, from Mr Dale Dixon, Chief Executive Officer, Council of the City of Gold Coast, to Ms Julie Harris, Director, SEQ Planning Pty Ltd, regarding Northern Gold Coast Canelands [\[6235\]](#).

I could go on, but I do not have enough time to read all that that man wrote. The CEO of the Gold Coast is telling people that no longer are we going to be looking at a broad plan; that we are not interested in looking at a broad plan and an investigation into the future potential of the area. He wants to look at agricultural uses. He wants to go back through the whole process that has resulted in 17 reports over the past 20-odd years and 13 reports over 15 years, and end up where? Absolutely nowhere, as far as the cane lands are concerned!

I call on the Gold Coast City Council to refer back to this report of 2010, which has 44 maps in it. One of those maps has a suitable crop for the area. What is it? It is bamboo. According to this plan, the only other agricultural crop that can be grown in that area is bamboo. I table that report as well.

Tabled paper: Department of Environment and Resource Management report titled, 'Landscape and suitability study of the Woongoolba-Rocky Point Area South East Queensland' [\[6236\]](#).

(Time expired)

Organised Crime



Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (11.32 am): In June 2012, I first stated my strong convictions about the issue of organised crime and motorcycle gangs. It is now important to reflect on just what has been achieved by the LNP. We have heard the Premier and others claiming successes in a fashion reminiscent of George W Bush's infamous 'Mission Accomplished' speech and we all know how that has worked out. The undeniable fact is that this government has failed miserably to lay a glove on organised crime in this state.

Last week, the Premier refused outright to give this parliament an answer regarding street drug prices, despite the fact that Bill Mellor asked exactly the same question of his strategic monitoring team secretariat, and I assume he has the answer. Such was revealed by Bond University's RTI request. In answer to that question, the Premier said—

I do not understand the connection that the Honourable Member is seeking to draw between any RTI request from Bond University and street prices for drugs.

Further, I find it somewhat irresponsible that the Honourable Member would be seeking to publish street prices for drugs on the Gold Coast.

This removes any doubt: the Premier is completely out of his depth on this issue and has been since the days when he was equating bikie colours to football jerseys. For the information of members, the Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research Education Centre regularly publishes data on street drug prices, as does the Australian Crime Commission. The Premier's answer is all about hiding. This government is consumed by spin and refuses to be honest with the parliament and the people of Queensland. The Premier simply refuses to go on the record with the facts.

In his answer, the Premier also said—

The Government will not advertise or promote the sale of illicit drugs in the way requested by the Honourable Member.

I say this to the Premier: tell that to the Australian Crime Commission. What an insult to this parliament and what an insult to the intelligence of Queenslanders. So much for openness and transparency! As revealed in Bond University's RTI, Bill Mellor asked exactly the same question for the same reasons, although he was probably not given the same response. Like everyone else in this state, Bill Mellor has identified that drug prices are a key measure of success in terms of the interdiction of organised crime. It is a simple function of supply and demand. Bill Mellor actually asked—

Further pursue research opportunities and investigate the changing price of illicit drugs on the Gold Coast ...

The Premier's answer clones the same weak avoidance strategy used by the Attorney-General during estimates when I asked how many bodies in pink jumpsuits were in solitary confinement. Apparently he did not know the answer, but really he did not want to go on the record and say 'one' or 'zero'. 'Virtually nobody' is the truth of it. The truth embarrasses the government. By the way, how many people have been convicted under the LNP VLAD laws? Absolutely nobody!

The Premier's own strategic monitoring team has reported that drug offences are up by 17.19 per cent. Leaving aside the rubbery nature of that number, the reason that the number of drug crimes has exploded is because our communities are awash with product. How about this for a prospect: more drugs means more detections. Recent media reports quoting senior police officers point directly to the expansion of the drug trade in recent years. Last week we saw media reports of drug dealers filling the voids in Surfers Paradise. Isn't that great news leading into schoolies week? A recent ABC RTI shows that the only written direction from the police minister to the Police Commissioner has been about media strategy. For goodness sake! Of all the things that the police minister should be directing, that shows exactly where the priorities of this government lie: spin, spin and more spin.

Let me wrap this up so that people understand it. The key performance metric of on-street drug prices shows that there has been no supply problem whatsoever.

Government members interjected.

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

Mr BYRNE: Despite the government's rhetoric—and I hear them in the background—there has been no effective interdiction of organised crime drug networks. The net result is zero effect. How many bikies were wearing pink jumpsuits before the meaningless backdown? Virtually none! Net result: zero effect. How many people have been convicted under the new specific elements of the government's VLAD legislation? None! Net result: zero effect. As far as I am concerned, three strikes and you are out and that is what all Queenslanders reckon, too.

This summary points directly to the incompetence of the government. We have senior ministers who could not even explain ISO9000 at estimates. We have an Auditor-General saying that 73 per cent of the last state budget lacked meaningful performance metrics. Queenslanders see through this charade and recognise these amateurs for what they are—

Government members interjected.

Mr BYRNE: Just listen to them—arrogant, dismissive, petulant and, worst of all, grossly incompetent.

Yellow Ribbon Day



Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (11.36 am): How does one follow that? I rise to congratulate all members for wearing yellow ribbons today. This is a day to reflect on the work of our rural fire service, as well as the work that all volunteers do within our community. It is reasonable to reflect on who our volunteers are. Who are the people who put up their hands, year in and year out, who give up their jobs, who come out of retirement when things get tough, who do the training that they need to do, week in and week out? I am talking not just about the rural fire service, but about all volunteers who work right across our community. Throughout the community of Queensland, we have 80,000 volunteers. Those volunteers come from all walks of life: barristers, airline pilots, labourers, unemployed people, policemen—you name it. From right across the community, we are helped by people with expertise that would otherwise never be seen in public service. Those people put their work ethic forward and volunteer to make our community safer.

It is good to reflect on what actually motivates a volunteer to put his or her hand up. In most cases, initially it is about companionship. It is about working for the community and making sure that the community is safe. However, most of all, when you talk to the volunteers you find that they do not

necessarily want the government to understand but they do want other people to understand why they do it. They want to be listened to and to have people support them. If you see a volunteer, no matter from what walk of life or what strand they come from—whether it is VMR, the Coastguard, surf-lifesavers, SES, rural firefighters and so on—just shake their hand and tell them what a good job they are doing for their community.

The government has been proactive in setting up emergency service cadet units throughout Queensland. Just last week I was in Palm Island where we set up a cadet group. The young guys and girls there were very enthusiastic to put on the uniform and show their local mates what it was like to wear a uniform. I congratulate those from the Police Service and the emergency service volunteers from the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, VMR and SES who turned up to support the cadets on Palm Island.

We have a major unit at St Laurence's College in Brisbane. As soon as they were aware that the Palm Island group had started they offered to do an exchange trip for the young ones from Palm Island and bring them down to St Laurence's College. That is a great step forward. I congratulate Jennie Schoof, the PCYC cadets coordinator. She is doing a wonderful job in setting up those cadet groups throughout Queensland.

We recently had an awards day for the 15 top cadets from throughout Queensland. They came from all over Queensland. They spent time at Whyte Island where they constructed and lit a building. They went out to the Police Academy and did part of the cadet course with the police recruits. The VMR and the Volunteer Coast Guard took them out to sea and got them to swim over to a lifeboat and get in. They set off flares and did a lot of different things. The culmination of the event was a wilderness rescue. Volunteers from the SES and the Rural Fire Service took them into the bush and did a helicopter rescue of a person who had been injured in the bush.

They came to parliament and received their awards. They were really enthusiastic. All 15 are looking forward to careers in the Police Service or the fire service. I congratulate all cadet services throughout Queensland. I believe we are regularly encouraging young people to get involved and be part of their community. In some instances young people are bored and looking for something to do. We all know what happens when kids are in that situation. It is a great program. I thank all members for supporting the program.

(Time expired)

Biodiesel



Mr HOPPER (Condamine—KAP) (11.42 am): Good speech, Ted. I think we all agree with what you just said.

I rise to speak today on the biofuel industry, but particularly biodiesel. Our federal and state governments should develop appropriate policies and be prepared to invest in and assure diversity of supply and demand even when it does not make near commercial sense to do so. I will explain why.

This parliament has an opportunity to be a leader in moving our state away from the perilous position we are in, but more importantly in giving our citizens, our electors, our families and our future families the certainty that the lifeblood of their wellbeing, prosperity and quality of life will be as much in their hands as in the hands of foreign fuel companies. Queensland has the agricultural capacity to provide the fuel needed by Queenslanders, and even all Australians, to allow them to live their lives free from the whims of foreign fuel cartels, shipping accidents or geopolitics. The future of this state is biofuels and the time to start is now and not when the first foreign crisis occurs.

We see the wars breaking out now. Our nation is at the war as we speak. All our fuel is imported.

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

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

Mr HART: There is a bill before the House on this very issue.

Mr HOPPER: No, it is not. That is an ethanol bill and this relates to biodiesel. It has nothing to do with ethanol.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, at this stage—and I am listening very carefully; I take the point of order—I simply guide you to be aware that there is a bill before the House and take care that you do not discuss the content of that bill.

Mr HOPPER: I understand totally. That bill before the House is actually my bill. I am speaking about diesel fuel in Queensland which has nothing to do with the other bill before the House. I am also speaking about biodiesel, not ethanol.

The future for Queensland and a lot of our agricultural industry is in pongamia trees. I did a tour to Weipa with the Deputy Premier. A mining company up there wanted to plant 10,000 hectares of pongamia trees because the trees grow nuts, the nuts are then crushed and the liquid can be used as diesel. This has such potential for our agricultural producers. We have a company called Energreen, that I have met with, that can provide a guaranteed purchase agreement for this fuel. They can provide a financial provider. All we need is the growers. They can provide the research to validate the economics of this for growers and the community.


We have a lot of country in my electorate that is marginal country. We have a lot of country that could grow pongamia trees. We need to look at this situation in Queensland. There is a mining company in Western Queensland that has planted a lot of these trees. They are using coal seam gas water to irrigate the trees. It takes four years for these trees to start producing and then the nuts can be harvested every year. The nuts are harvested and made into diesel which can be used immediately.

Queensland clearly has to look at opening the gates to allow this to happen and we need to promote it. That is what I am trying to do in this House today. I congratulate companies like Energreen that are trying to do this. It has enormous potential. If farmers can hold for four years the crop will start to produce. They will be financial after four years when the first harvest takes place. It is then harvested every 12 months.

Crops such as pongamia can produce biodiesel four years after planting. We have the capacity to meet all of Queensland's current diesel requirements from as little as three million hectares of plantations. If we put three million hectares, which is not much of Queensland, under pongamia trees that would provide all of Queensland's diesel requirements. Would it not be great to produce our own fuel in this state and not have to import it from overseas?

All of our refineries have been shut down. Every bit of fuel we are using is imported from overseas. The point I am making is: why can we not look after Queensland first? Queensland has approximately 95 million hectares of pastoral leases alone. Just a portion could be utilised to give this state fuel security and price stability.

Trade Unions

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (11.48 am): I rise today as a man who is extremely proud of his working-class roots, with an employment history that spans everything from peanut chipping in Kingaroy, to horse training, being a barman and providing security in some of Queensland toughest pubs, flipping burgers at McDonald's—or the golden arches as it was called—

Mr Krause: I think you ate a few, too.

Mr DAVIES: I did eat a few of them. I was also a builder's and brickie's labourer and was even a card-carrying member of the now defunct BLF, a ceramic tiler, a motorcycle salesman and went on to work in both the not-for-profit sector and the financial sector.

Given this diverse work history, I rise to speak about a once proud movement that stood for the betterment of the worker and ultimately our society but now, more often than not, stands for nothing except its own self-interest and promotion. It exists only to continue existing. I am, of course, referring to the trade union movement.

From the outset, I would like to make a clear distinction between the members of the union and the fat cats or the big shots of the union movement. The hardworking majority of the union members are just that—hardworking. They have formed the backbone of many of the industries that this government is seeking to support and grow with strong policies, and they are responsible for many of the great things this state has built. It is such a shame and a tragedy that their efforts are often betrayed by the management of trade unions that seek their own safety, conditions, political careers and pay over those of their members.

Recently we have seen scaremongering and misinformation being disseminated by the Electrical Trades Union that would have people think they are somehow better off without the government's \$3.4 billion cost-of-living fund. This fund will mean six per cent off retail prices in 2015-16, and over a five-year period a typical household will save \$577. I have done the numbers for myself and I am looking at saving around \$1,300.

But what do we see from the ETU? Hysterical bleating that sounds more like apocalyptic warnings than responsible discussion about the pros and cons of asset leasing. That is right—leasing. It was enjoyable watching the ETU quickly flit about desperately trying to rebrand their ‘not4sale’ campaign, but the slogan ‘not for responsible policy tackling ALP debt’ did not have quite the same punch to it. But the ETU has form here. I seek to table a publication sent out by the Victorian branch, the ETU autumn edition, which invokes Godwin’s law ‘of inappropriate, inordinate, or hyperbolic comparisons of other situations—or one’s opponent—with Nazis, often referred to as “playing the Hitler card”’.

Tabled paper: Magazine called ‘the etu Victoria’, Autumn 2014 (Electrical Trades Union) [6237].

In this offensive tome, the Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, is displayed as a Hitleresque SS officer complete with Nazi tattoo and Chaplin moustache and, if that was not grubby enough, the same publication has accused Senator Eric Abetz, a thoroughly decent man, of Nazi links because of his German heritage and his Christian faith was shamelessly ridiculed.

We should not be surprised. Many unions are silent on all ALP policies, despite how they might affect their members—be it the AWU’s tacit approval of the ALP’s manufacturing sector destroying carbon tax or the squeaks of outrage by the Nurses Union during the Health payroll debacle. There was hardly a peep from those representing their members who were told that food stamps should be enough to keep them while their pay cheques came in the mail, if they came at all.

This sabotage though has a long and well-documented history. Hal Colebatch’s *Australia’s Secret War* goes some way to documenting this sordid history. His focus is on the waterside workers during World War II. These workers basically sabotaged the war effort, destroying engines in planes going over to fight the Japanese at the time. It was an absolute disgrace. In fact, there was a 36-hour strike when POWs who had spent years and years in camps were trying to get back home and they were held up on the wharves by these guys.

In conclusion, the ultimate issue for the union movement in Australia is the fact that the unions are joined at the hip to the ALP. For many in the union movement being in a union is simply a stepping stone to catching a bigger fish—often a cushy government job. As such, there is an unhealthy, co-dependent relationship where the union just rubber stamps ALP policy and the ALP is happy to suck at the teat of the union movement. The union movement needs to decouple itself from the ALP.

Junkuri Laka, Avoid Program



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.53 am): I rise to talk about the Junkuri Laka association on Mornington Island and it relates to the township of Gununa. It is pleasing to see the minister here in the House because I look forward to discussing this same issue with his staff and working with them on this issue this week. The Avoid program, which is promoted by this justice group, is a program that targets crime and addiction rehabilitation on Mornington Island, and it has shown very positive results over time in crime management and prevention through culturally specific programs. However, there are funding shortfalls at the moment that need to be addressed. It is a response to a lack of initiatives to provide employment opportunities for residents on the island and difficulties they have in dealing with alcohol management—problems that have been there for a long time and many of them are very difficult to solve.

The rise of home-brew on the island is particularly relevant to Mornington Island. It is something we have all had to deal with. Alcohol restrictions came in in 2003 and bans came in in 2009 which had a lot of positive effects. But one of the inadvertent negative effects was that people developed the ability to make home-brew and home-brew has become highly prevalent on the island now. You can have the situation now where someone who most of us would consider a law-abiding citizen wants to have a drink at home while watching the footy and they have home-brew are liable to be charged. Dealing with this problem is not easy and it has given rise to a lot of court cases, and it is an expensive process to have people incarcerated for what I think most of us would call minor offences.

The Avoid program aims to provide a locally derived solution and also to address a rise in these occurrences in a lot of these communities. In trying to get the staff to roll out this program, they have developed a culture where FIFO staffers come in. With the best intentions they do a good job as far as their charter is concerned, but the locals just see someone who is not there permanently and who flies out over the weekend so they do not get that continuity and they are not a local. So that is another issue that needs to be dealt with.

The Avoid program deals with this in the following ways. The first initiative is the returning prisoners through care project. This addresses things like communicating with detainees and their families before they get out. A lot of them cannot read or interpret the terms and conditions of their bail before they get out. A common occurrence is that they have a party when they come home from being incarcerated and that will often be against the terms of their parole. So they offend against their parole straight up. So simple education and communication at that early stage can help these people from being continually sent to prison.

The second part of the program is probably the biggest, and that is the Bentinck Island rehabilitation and parole project, which is a diversionary project for offenders—the large proportion of whom would have committed what we would consider to be minor offences—who would typically be incarcerated for three to four months. They would go across to Bentinck Island, which is another island near Mornington Island, where they have 15 existing small housing units that are partly maintained but need to be upgraded, and that is probably where the largest capital expenditure would be required. You would be looking at \$500,000 all up for the capital expenditure on the Avoid program. Most of that is existing infrastructure. If people go there instead of being sent to prison it would save the state a hell of a lot of money, which I think is probably the most pertinent issue to raise here.

The third initiative is drop-in centres. It goes back to the old way that people were dealt with. They are akin to camp sites or outstations that are far from walking distance from town. Mornington Island people are dropped out there until they dry out and settle down. That keeps them away from harm and keeps them from offending.

The fourth initiative is community service work. They are trying to initiate some programs through the Junkuri Laka program so that these people can get into positive work programs.

This very important initiative is key to moving forward. Junkuri Laka needs that help, and I look forward to working with the minister to make this happen so that we can turn around this occurrence of people going to prison and they can become proactive members of their community.

Petrie State School, Great Results Guarantee



Mr RUTHENBERG (Kallangur—LNP) (11.58 am): I represent the good people who live in the electorate of Kallangur. Kallangur is a name that is a derivative of an Aboriginal word that means a 'most satisfactory place'. Indeed this is true when it comes to education.

I applaud the outstanding efforts by the teachers at Petrie State School, specifically the prep teachers and teacher aides. Some months ago I visited Petrie State School and Mrs Henschke was very generous and spent time with me to explain her teaching program. We looked very specifically at the way the Great Results Guarantee funding was being spent. While I am only speaking here about the Petrie State School experience, this response was similar across all the state schools I have visited.

The prep program at Petrie State School focuses on creating a safe, warm and comfortable environment for all students to learn in. At Petrie, prep teachers support children's learning by making connections between school and the children's experiences at home, kindergarten or child care. This is particularly important during term 1.

On entry to prep, Petrie State School used the Education Queensland early start assessment tools to measure each child's literacy skills. The data was used to make decisions about areas to focus on and develop intervention strategies for children at risk in the area of literacy. The Great Results Guarantee enabled teacher aides and experienced senior teachers to be employed to immediately work with children and target areas noted as potential issues.

Parents work as partners with the teachers at Petrie. Parents are always welcome to discuss their child's progress at any time and are provided with ideas to reinforce classroom learning, for example, learning goals. Learning goals were introduced to prep parents and children in term 1. The learning goals were individualised and identified what children needed to do in order to improve their literacy skills. A data wall was established in each classroom, and this proved to be a powerful tool to motivate the children, parents and celebrate learning. The goals were realistic and set around teaching children phonemic awareness—that is, the ability to notice, think about and work with the individual sounds in words and also to recognise sight words. Sight words are called the 100 magic words. In English there are 100 frequently occurring words that appear so often they make up almost half of all the words we read. If children can recognise these words by sight, then reading can be

made easier. Learning sight words helps children become fluent and confident readers. Achieving manageable goals has increased children's confidence and reading ability. The Petrie State School—do you want to pronounce that for me?

Mr Shuttleworth: Phonological.

Mr RUTHENBERG: The phonological awareness program was developed in response to the need for consistency across the early years of learning. Teachers focused specifically on a range of strategies and differentiate according to individual learning needs. The data collected to date shows that this program has had an effect size of 0.7. This is an amazing result considering any effect size above 0.4 is significant. Some individual results include nine children whose effect size was above 1.2. I table for the benefit of the House some of the outstanding performances by three of the students. Obviously names are not included.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Petrie State School, Performance of Children before and after GRG funding'—table of results [6238].

The Great Results Guarantee has given teachers the flexibility to constantly improve the performance of prep students this year. Teachers introduce literacy skills and strategies and then measure and assess the progress students make. Checklists, interviews and running records are used as assessment tools. The data obtained is used to target intervention strategies to ensure that students who need help are supported. The intervention strategies are flexible, child centred and change according to the needs of students. The data shows significant improvement this year. The extra funding has given Petrie State School the power to identify the students' needs, monitor their progress and design careful, individualised intervention to target and improve student skills and literacy outcomes. I congratulate the principal, Mr Bray, for his excellent leadership and vision for his school. I also sincerely thank the teachers and teacher aides for their commitment and passion.

Speaking personally, I know just how important it is to have those reading skills established by grade 4. I know just how important this extra funding has been for these kids. I can tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, right across all the state schools in my electorate that we have seen similar sorts of outcomes as a consequence of the extra funding. I plead that we maintain this funding long into the future for the benefit of our great state.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.

EXHIBITED ANIMALS BILL

Introduction



Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (12.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for exhibiting and dealing with exhibited animals and to make consequential amendments of the Biosecurity Act 2014, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the regulations mentioned in schedule 3. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Exhibited Animals Bill 2014 [6239].

Tabled paper: Exhibited Animals Bill 2014, explanatory notes [6240].

It is with pleasure that I introduce the Exhibited Animals Bill 2014, which will enable animal exhibition in Queensland while minimising risks to animal welfare, biosecurity and safety. It will reduce red tape, create new opportunities for industry and meet community expectations for risk management. This bill has the support of industry. I have met with the Zoo and Aquarium Association of Queensland President, Al Mucci, from Dreamworld, and Executive Officer Kelsey Engle from Australia Zoo who have endorsed the government's reforms. These reforms were developed with thorough consultative meetings and arrangements between my department and industry. As honourable members know, reducing unnecessary regulatory burden is the key to unlocking the full potential of the Queensland economy and is vital to the shared vision of the Queensland Plan. This is why the LNP government is delivering on reform of the legislation that currently regulates this industry.

Queensland's current legislation is disjointed, fragmented and inefficient. There are currently six licensing schemes and provisions spread across four acts: the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001. Some exhibitors need multiple licences, each with their own fees and processes, because they are regulated under more than one act. Some animals cannot be exhibited at all in Queensland, even if the associated risks can be managed.

The current legislation is difficult to navigate and impedes innovation and adaptation by businesses in this evolving industry. There are also safety and animal welfare risks posed by exhibiting animals that are not appropriately regulated. The Exhibited Animals Bill 2014 will consolidate the regulatory and licensing schemes for the exhibition of native and exotic animals into a single fit-for-purpose legislative framework. It requires all exhibitors to take an active role in identifying and managing the animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks associated with exhibiting animals.

The bill will require all those involved in exhibition and dealing with an exhibited animal to prevent or minimise these risks. The bill will also simplify how the government authorises the exhibition of animals that generally cannot be kept in Queensland without a licence. Only those exhibitors who need a licence under current legislation will need a licence under this new legislation. However, those exhibitors who currently require more than one licence will be able to operate under a single licence. To further reduce red tape, licences can be granted for up to three years, compared with the current two years in some cases.

Exhibitors will be able to propose the activities they wish to conduct under their licence and explain, in the form of a management plan, how they will prevent or minimise the associated risks. This will give them the opportunity to use their expert knowledge to manage risks in their unique circumstances. This compares with the current legislation, where exhibition is limited by species and by activity.

Licensing decisions under the bill will be risk based—a licence could be granted to keep almost any animal for any type of exhibition if the risks were prevented or minimised. Consequently, it will allow a greater range of species to be exhibited in Queensland. Under the current legislation, some animals cannot be exhibited in Queensland at all, even, as I have said previously, if all the risks could be managed. The flexibility of this risk based approach will be complemented by monitoring of licensed exhibitors.

The frequency of assessment visits will depend on the compliance record of the exhibitor. Assessments will be charged to the exhibitor to create an incentive for industry members to proactively minimise animal welfare, biosecurity and safety risks. The accreditation of private sector assessors will provide more flexibility for exhibitors. Exhibitors will be able to go to the market for accredited assessors to prepare a report that will be used in deciding licence renewal applications. This will encourage industry self-regulation.

Minimum exhibition requirements will ensure that animals kept under an exhibition licence are actually exhibited. This is important because the species to which they apply cannot be kept for private recreation in Queensland. High pest potential animals listed as prohibited matter under the Biosecurity Act 2014 will need to be based in a fixed exhibit open to the public. Most other species will need to be exhibited on at least 12 occasions each year.

Replacing the fragmented current legislation with a single industry-specific act has been publicly canvassed for many years. It took the LNP government to get the ball rolling by releasing a detailed proposal in a regulatory impact statement for public comment late last year. The LNP government has continued to involve industry during drafting of the bill. In particular, industry nominees took part in a detailed workshop to discuss a working draft of the bill in July this year.

I would like to thank those who have provided comment and feedback through these consultation processes. Your involvement has ensured that we have delivered a framework for the exhibition of animals in Queensland that cuts red tape and creates opportunity, while minimising the risks to animal welfare, biosecurity and safety.

The bill sends a clear message that the LNP government recognises the importance of the exhibited animals industry and will work with exhibitors throughout Queensland to foster world-class wildlife experiences for tourists and the industry's contribution to our own way of life in Queensland. This bill will deliver benefits, therefore, to industry and also to the wider community. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)
(12.10 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

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

RECREATION AREAS MANAGEMENT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (12.11 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Forestry Act 1959 and the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Community Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Recreation Areas Management and Another Act Amendment Bill 2014 [\[6241\]](#).

Tabled paper: Recreation Areas Management and Another Act Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[6242\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Recreation Areas Management and Another Act Amendment Bill 2014. This bill will amend the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 and the Forestry Act 1959 to support this government's commitment to cut red tape and streamline the permit system for tourism and recreation in Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service managed areas. The amendments through this bill will address two key initiatives. The first initiative will streamline the processes and requirements applying to operators seeking approvals to conduct commercial activities that cross marine parks and recreation areas. Recent amendments to subordinate legislation under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 allow commercial activity permits for protected areas, such as national parks, to be combined in a single document with a state and/or Commonwealth marine park permission.

This bill will provide consistency across the suite of legislation that applies to areas managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service by allowing commercial activity permits for recreation areas, such as the Green Island Recreation Area, to be combined in a single document with a state and/or Commonwealth marine park permission. To prevent disjointed management of the different approvals, a number of complementary amendments will be made to the Recreation Areas Management Act to allow the benefits that apply to the related marine park permission to also apply to the commercial activity permits. These amendments include: removing the three-year maximum term so that it can have the same term as the related marine park permission; allowing it to be transferred with the marine park permission if a business is sold; and aligning the time frames from lodging an application to receiving a final decision with those that apply to the related marine park permission. Applicants will benefit from being able to lodge a single application form, pay a single application fee and have a single point of contact for their application. They will be able to receive a single permit document with consistent access provisions across tenures and common terms and conditions.

The second initiative under this bill will cut red tape and reduce unnecessary regulation for low-impact, non-commercial activities being conducted on recreation areas, state forests and timber reserves managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The group activity permit classification has historically been used to manage a wide range of low- and high-impact, non-commercial organised group activities and community events on Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service managed areas. Low-impact activities include such things as weddings, public meetings, religious activities and club based cycling, bushwalking and birdwatching activities. Higher impact activities include organised events such as vehicle rallies, competitive sporting events, concerts and Australian Defence Force training exercises. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has taken administrative actions to reduce the number of permits granted for these low-risk activities while continuing to regulate the higher risk activities that are likely to have an impact on the area, or affect the use of the area by other persons.

These administrative actions include the implementation of policy to provide more clarification to applicants around the circumstances when a permit is and is not required; and introducing an on-line notification process to allow organisers to provide details of upcoming events and to allow the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to determine whether a permit is required. These actions have resulted in the reduction of the number of permits granted from 442 during the 2011-12 financial year to 67 permits during the 2013-14 financial year. This bill supports these actions by removing the group activity permit classification and replacing it with an alternative mechanism to manage

'organised events' under the Recreation Areas Management Act and the Forestry Act. The change in terminology from 'group activity' to 'organised event' better reflects the nature of the higher impact, non-commercial events that will continue to be regulated.

Although the amendments are intended to provide, as far as practicable, consistency across the suite of legislation that applies to areas managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the meaning of an organised event will differ slightly under the Forestry Act. This is intended to allow, in state forest and timber reserves, a permit to be required in circumstances where a person involved in an organised event is likely to be exposed to unreasonable risks from another activity conducted in the area. This is a sensible and key distinction between the Forestry Act and the Recreation Areas Management Act amendments. This recognises that the nature of some activities undertaken on state forests and timber reserves, such as timber harvesting or quarrying, are quite different and pose different risks to those in recreation areas. A permit allows the organised event to be located and managed in a way that would minimise risks to participants.

The Recreation Areas Management and Another Act Amendment Bill 2014 builds on previous reforms undertaken by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to cut red tape and supports this government's commitment to improving access to our national parks and other public lands. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SL DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (12.17 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 Health and Community Services Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Community Services Committee.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 5 August (see p. 2367).

Second Reading

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (12.17 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Health and Community Services Committee for its consideration of the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014. I note that the committee tabled its report on 1 October 2014 and recommended that the bill be passed. The committee has made seven other recommendations and I intend to deal with them in turn. Before that, I would like to make some general comments about the content and the intent of the bill.

The bill seeks to amend the provisions of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act so that the FRC can continue to operate beyond 1 January 2015. The Family Responsibilities Commission is an independent statutory authority established under the act. The underlying drivers for this bill are to support cohesive and stable Indigenous communities and to provide greater certainty in how we do it. The welfare reform program was introduced to address high levels of entrenched welfare dependency, economic exclusion and social dysfunction. It aims to restore local authority, social norms and move people from unemployment into jobs and from social housing into homeownership. The work of the FRC also reflects this government's focus on education as a cornerstone of economic strength and future prosperity.

I want to make it very clear that a primary outcome of the FRC is to improve school attendance in Indigenous communities. The FRC has been a key aspect of Queensland's Indigenous welfare reform program in the communities of Hope Vale, Aurukun, Coen and Mossman Gorge, where it has operated since 2008.

Since August 2014 the FRC has had the legislative authority to operate in Doomadgee. Extensive consultation showed community willingness for the commission to be introduced into Doomadgee. We are currently negotiating with the federal government and making preparations for that to happen.

The commission works in partnership with families and communities to re-establish acceptable social norms, local Indigenous authority, individual responsibility and accountability. The Family Responsibilities Commission is constituted by a commissioner, deputy commissioner and 29 local commissioners. Under current provisions, notifications are sent to the FRC by Queensland government agencies when a community resident who is a recipient of social welfare payments is found to be: the parent of a child who is not enrolled at school or who has unexplained absences in school attendance; subject to a child protection notification; convicted in a Magistrates Court; or in breach of a housing tenancy agreement.

The FRC Act enables the FRC to hold conferences with community residents who are in receipt of welfare payments and who are the subject of an agency notice to address the matter. Where a person does not comply with a direction or an order to attend support services, the FRC can order that 60, 75 or 90 per cent of a person's welfare payments be managed via a BasicsCard which restricts the purchase of excluded items such as alcohol, tobacco and gambling products with or without the person's agreement. A community resident is also able to enter into a voluntary agreement with the FRC to be referred to services or have their welfare payments income managed as part of a family responsibilities agreement.

Extensive consultations were conducted with community members and other key stakeholders of Doomadgee and the four initial welfare reform areas of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge before this bill was introduced into the parliament. During the consultations members indicated that their communities had become quieter and that things were better. There was widespread support for extending welfare reform and the FRC as an ongoing initiative. Support came from all quarters including the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council, which has previously opposed Cape York welfare reform and the FRC. The Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council is now seeing the benefits of Cape York welfare reform and the FRC, particularly with the establishment of the Hope Vale banana farm. These positive reports are supported by the separate and independent findings of the *Cape York welfare reform evaluation* report released in March 2013.

Community members advised the evaluators that income management helped people to manage their money and meet the needs of their families as well as reduce the money spent on alcohol and drugs. The act enables the FRC to make case plans and order that community residents who have been subject to a notification attend support services. The local commissioners, as respected members and elders of their communities, have assisted community members to take responsibility for their families and children, restored local Indigenous authority and tackled antisocial behaviour. They do this primarily through counselling and the referral of FRC clients to support services.

The Family Responsibilities Commission Act is currently due to expire on 1 January 2015. The bill will remove the existing sunset clause in addition to other amendments. The existence of the sunset clause necessitated legislation being brought to this place each year at unnecessary cost and causing unnecessary disruption to the work of the commission. Removing the sunset clause will give greater certainty and consistency to the commission's operations.

The other significant component of this legislation is to extend the range of triggers for community members to come into contact with the FRC. The bill adds further justice triggers for the commission to receive notifications from the District, Supreme and Children's courts. When the FRC first commenced, decisions could only be made at a conference constituted by the FRC commissioner and two local commissioners. Over time the FRC local commissioners have built on their skills and experience in conferencing and decision making. In 2013 the act was changed to enable three FRC local commissioners to convene a conference with a community member in the absence of the commissioner where income management is unlikely to be ordered. The three FRC local commissioners are able to enter into a Family Responsibilities Agreement or direct a person to attend community support services through a case plan. In 2011-12, local commissioners independently conducted 67 conferences in the absence of the commissioner.

The FRC commissioner, David Glasgow, has indicated that some local commissioners have developed significantly and now have the capacity to convene a conference in his absence and recommend income management. This bill will enable the commissioner to appoint three FRC local

commissioners to convene a conference in his absence and recommend that the client's welfare payments are income managed. That is well and truly restoring local authority. The commissioner will review the recommendation and approve the conditional income management order. I have also included an amendment to ensure that reasons for the local commissioners' recommendation for a conditional income management order are recorded. This will ensure that the commissioner has access to all information before finally approving the local commissioners' recommendation. The bill will strengthen the leadership role played by the local commissioners within their communities and represents a further step towards restoring local authority.

I am now pleased to address questions raised by the committee in their report. Recommendation 2 states—

... that the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs clarify, during the second reading debate, whether the policy intent is that only those communities which request to be included in welfare reform will be prescribed as a *welfare reform community area*.

This recommendation queries the policy intent behind the extension of the welfare reform initiative and the FRC to other discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I can assure the House that there are no new powers introduced by this bill. The FRC Act has always empowered the government to expand welfare reform, and thus the FRC, to communities in need. Moving the descriptions of particular welfare reform community areas from the FRC Act to the FRC Regulation, which this bill will allow, does not affect this power.

One of the submissions received by the committee raised specific concerns that this bill would allow the FRC to be extended without an independent evaluation and the informed consent of the elected council. The bill proposes an additional safeguard in that the minister 'must have regard to the main objects of the act' before recommending to the Governor that an area be prescribed in the regulation as a welfare reform area. The main object of the FRC Act is to 'support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform community areas'.

The first principle for administering the FRC Act is that 'the act is to be administered under the principle that the wellbeing and best interests of a child are paramount'. The government retains the ability to introduce the FRC to a community where social responsibility, and most particularly the wellbeing of children, is at issue. In practice, the government can declare a welfare reform area following a request from a community or following an identification of social dysfunction in the form of responsibilities, particularly to the community's children, not being met and/or harm being experienced; however, I can assure you that social dysfunction would need to be of a critical magnitude for the government to act without widespread community agreement and comprehensive consultation. In other words, if a community does not want the FRC all it has to do is make sure that kids go to school, ensure violence and neglect against women and children are minimised and ensure low levels of crime and abuse in the community. I can assure members that the FRC will not be considered for a community unless crime, violence and neglect statistics show that it is needed. Where the FRC already exists in a community, the simple way to see it removed is for community members to work towards seeing all of the indicators improved so that it is no longer necessary.

Recommendation 3 states—

... that the Minister ... ensure that information about the indicators and assessment methods to be used when considering whether to prescribe a community as a *welfare reform community area* is made available to community leaders and the public.

The government does not accept that this action is necessary. This information is already made available to all discrete Indigenous communities on an ongoing basis. Relevant statistics are compiled and provided to Indigenous communities on a quarterly and annual basis. These statistics are also made available to members of the public who request them. Additional specific information regarding the indicators crucial for assessing whether to prescribe a community for welfare reform would be made available to individual communities by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs when undertaking community consultations.

Recommendation 4 states—

... that the ... Bill ... be amended to require that consultation, aimed at obtaining informed consent from community leaders, be undertaken with any proposed *welfare reform community area* prior to a decision being taken to prescribe the community as a *welfare reform community area*.

Again, the government does not accept the recommendation because it is simply not necessary. Community consultation is central to any issues facing Indigenous communities, and the government is committed to working with local communities to improve outcomes. While informed consent for the introduction of welfare reform is not a requirement of the Racial Discrimination Act 1973 or the FRC Act, community consent would always be actively pursued.

The provisions of the FRC Act allow the government to intervene by declaring a welfare reform community area with the objectives of: supporting the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour; supporting the restoration of local authority; helping people to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community; and helping people to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of individuals and families within the community. While the results of the community consultation would inform a decision made by government, there is no intention to prevent the declaration of a community welfare reform area if this declaration would otherwise be consistent with the objects of the FRC Act.

The Family Responsibilities Commission serves to protect vulnerable members of the community, and the government does not relinquish its right to act to protect women, children and other vulnerable community members where it is shown to be necessary. The government has a responsibility to act in the best interests of all community members, and this government does not intend to shirk that responsibility.

Recommendation 5 states—

... that the Minister ... require the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs to:

- develop and publish guidelines for consultation with proposed new *welfare reform community areas*
- publish the outcomes of consultation with proposed new *welfare reform community areas*.

The first part of the recommendation is not accepted. The department follows consultation protocols for each community, but a cover-all guideline to address consultation procedures for all communities is not feasible. The second part of the recommendation asks that the outcomes of consultation with proposed new welfare reform community areas be published. I strongly believe that the publication of consultation outcomes needs to be considered in terms of the potential impact on community members. With this consideration in mind, the publication of consultation outcomes could be considered on a case-by-case basis. It is important that community views be respected and not become a matter for public debate.

Recommendation 6 states—

... that the Minister ... ensure that information about the indicators and assessment methods to be used when considering whether a *welfare reform community area* is ready to leave welfare reform is made available to community leaders and the public.

Recommendation 6 is not accepted by the government as it is not necessary. Information about indicators and assessment methods is already being made to all discrete Indigenous communities on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 7 states—

... that the Minister ... provide the Legislative Assembly, during the second-reading debate, with details about the:

- arrangements that will be put in place to ensure a smooth transition for communities out of welfare reform
- measures that will be put in place to ensure that a former *welfare reform community area* continues to improve.

An important element of this bill is that it recognises the need to have a mechanism to scale back FRC activities or remove it completely from communities where it operates. For existing welfare reform communities, an effective transition will need to occur to ensure that achievements in community functioning and re-establishing social norms are not lost. The type of data that will be examined to determine how best to transition a community would include information about school attendance, child safety notifications, breaches of tenancy agreements, positive trends across most or all harm indicators, and the resolution of land tenure issues to provide for homeownership, delivery of services and economic development. This data would be used as a basis for discussions with the community to determine an appropriate transition strategy.

For such communities which transition out of welfare reform, government will need to make decisions about the future of funded services under the program which have become central to community life. These include FRC conferences, the wide range of supports for school attendance, and parenting programs. Such service funding may be diverted to economic development and infrastructure funding in recognition that a community has reached a point of social stability where the benefits of such funding will be maximised. Where existing welfare reform services have taken the place of core services usually provided by other government agencies, government will also need to auspice the shifting of this service delivery responsibility onto relevant agencies.

Decisions about the future of welfare reform services and the selection of new welfare reform communities will also continue to take into account the level of investment in current communities. If, after a suitable period, a particular community shows improvement in harm statistics at a rate that can be sustained then the government will consider removing the FRC from that community.

Recommendation 8 states—

... that the Minister ... and the Department ... continue to work with local communities and stakeholders to monitor the effectiveness of the Family Responsibilities Commission to ensure that the current model of welfare reform meets the needs of those communities.

I thank the committee for the recommendation but do not accept that it is necessary. Amendments proposed in the bill include a reduction in the number of formal board meetings to enable more community-specific meetings to be held. These meetings will be in addition to the monitoring and engagement which occurs with the communities on an ongoing basis.

The government is committed to alleviating the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders across so many aspects of life. We are committed to achieving this in conjunction with Indigenous people and their elected representatives at all levels of government through responsible programs, services and actions. The challenge now is to maintain the momentum of change in the welfare reform communities and spread the benefits to other communities where a desire is expressed and a need is identified.

I am looking forward to seeing how enabling welfare reform to continue into the future will help us make real progress and identify how we can best help Indigenous communities help themselves. Let us not underestimate the size of the challenge but celebrate the successes so far and look forward to a brighter future. I table the government's response to the committee's report.


Tabled paper: Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 56—Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014, government response [\[6243\]](#).

The FRC has been instrumental in progress made in the welfare reform communities and restoring local authority. This bill builds on that success.

In conclusion, I would like to note the great work done by Commissioner David Glasgow and Registrar Rob White—for the leadership and guidance they have provided to the FRC. I would also like to commend especially the local commissioners, who have been at the forefront of the commission's success. The independent evaluation of Cape York Welfare Reform found that the local commissioners have been instrumental in tackling antisocial behaviour and rebuilding Indigenous authority. As noted in the evaluation, their role in listening, guiding and supporting community members before ordering income management appears to have had a positive impact on changing behaviours and restoring social norms. Community members also advised the evaluators that income management helped people to manage their money and meet the needs of their family as well as reduced the money spent on alcohol and drugs.

As I noted previously, one of the aims of welfare reform is restoring local authority, and a key part of this was the appointment of local commissioners. I thank them for all of the work they have done in helping to rebuild their communities, and I look forward to the ongoing contribution they will make.

I look forward to the day the FRC is no longer needed in any Indigenous community. Mark my words: that day will come and it will come because of the excellent leadership by mayors and councillors in all of the communities, the FRC commissioners, the community justice groups and the other community leaders. They will make sure that day comes. The state government can help, but it must be in partnership with each individual community, and that is our promise. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.40 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014 on behalf of the Labor opposition. At the outset I want to put on the record that the Labor opposition will not be opposing this bill. However, I will use my time today to voice some concerns that have been raised about the bill via the parliamentary committee process. The bill was introduced by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs on 5 August 2014 and was referred to the Health and Community Services Committee for scrutiny. As honourable members would be aware, this is not the first time in this term of parliament we are debating a bill regarding the Family Responsibilities Commission—the first being in November 2012 and the second in October 2013 to extend the commission by one year each time. The bill before us today is probably the most important bill relating to the journey of the Family Responsibilities Commission this term. This is because the bill removes the sunset clause of the commission, thus removing the requirement to come back into this chamber each year to pass legislation to enable the Family Responsibilities Commission to continue its vital work.

While I appreciate the government and minister putting their faith in the Family Responsibilities Commission to continue its operations, it should be noted that those opposite have not always spoken positively about the Family Responsibilities Commission, so we will do a very quick recap. During the 2011 budget estimates process, the then shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, the member for Moggill, stated—

I think that people should be aware that this program applies only in four communities. I think that people sometimes get the idea falsely that this is a more extensive program than it actually is. I think it is a very valid function of the opposition to question both value for money and the effectiveness of actually making the lives of people in the subject communities better.

So in 2011 the then opposition and now government had a view that the commission was an expensive exercise and reserved the right to question whether it was getting outcomes. That is an opposition's prerogative and I understand that. Then we fast-forward to Wednesday, 27 March 2013 when the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs issued a press release titled 'Cape York Welfare Reform trial'. Despite the media release stating that the government welcomed the Cape York Welfare Reform trial evaluation report, the minister stated in his release that the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, of which the Family Responsibilities Commission is a part, would cease operations on 31 December 2013 due to no further funding. The very next day—the day after the minister issued his press release to cease the funding—the Premier announced that CBRC had miraculously found \$5.65 million to continue funding for the Cape York Welfare Reform trial. The decision to end this trial was obviously another one of the Premier's broken light bulb moments, and of course the minister was sent out to give the bad news. The Premier was incapable of announcing that news himself, but I think that the Premier put his finger up and looked into the political prevailing winds and said, 'Oh well, it's blowing the right way. We're going to save the Family Responsibilities Commission.' I say thank goodness, and I do not hold any gripe against the minister. I think he was given marching orders, and that was exactly what was done. Thankfully, the commission has continued. After that period of uncertainty, it is pleasing that the minister has introduced this legislation into the House that will provide some certainty that the FRC continues past this year by removing the sunset clause. By implication, the government has given its full support to the commission into the foreseeable future.

As many members of this House would be aware, the Family Responsibilities Commission was established under the former Labor government in 2008. At the time it was said that the legislation that established the FRC would be the driving force in changing local social norms and behaviours and that it would directly link improved care for children to welfare and other government payments. Since that time the FRC has gone from strength to strength, making positive achievements in the communities that it has operated within—Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

As many members would be aware, legislation was passed in this House about a year ago—the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2013—to extend the commission's expiration date to 1 January 2015. As this legislation currently stands, the FRC will have to commence winding down operations shortly to abide by the 1 January 2015 expiration date. While in previous years legislation has been introduced to extend the expiration date for a prescribed period, the bill before us today removes the sunset clause of the commission, meaning that the FRC does not have to close down and cease operations by 1 January 2015 but will be able to continue into the foreseeable future. The Labor opposition welcomes this amendment as it was something that was being looked into before the change of government as we appreciate the work that is being achieved by the FRC. There is need for greater certainty to ensure that the FRC can continue its vital work into the future.

The bill before us today also removes the description of 'welfare reform community areas' from the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 and places it into the Family Responsibilities Commission Regulation 2008. This means that the addition or subtraction of a community that will be subject to the jurisdiction of the Family Responsibilities Commission will not have to come before this House in a piece of legislation but can be achieved via regulation which is gazetted in the *Government Gazette*. On its face, this may limit the level of scrutiny that will occur when adding or subtracting communities from the commission's jurisdiction. However, as the Health and Community Services Committee indicated, the provision has always been there to add areas under regulation.

One only has to look at page 108 of the act in the schedule to the act to see that 'welfare reform community area' is defined as Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge and another area prescribed under regulation. The only difference under this bill is that the subtraction of the community areas of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge will no longer occur via an act of parliament. Rather, it can occur by ministerial decree via a regulation after the minister has taken into

consideration the main objects of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act which, although a disallowance motion can be moved against the regulation, on the whole may reduce the level of scrutiny.

It is somewhat disappointing that there has not been prior thought given in relation to how the minister of the day will assess whether a community should enter or exit the jurisdiction of the Family Responsibilities Commission. I listened to the minister today to understand that and I will read his speech carefully later, but it is something that he may wish to address when he sums up the debate.

During the Health and Community Services Committee's deliberations of the bill, the committee asked the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, DATSIMA, what guidelines and/or criteria have been put in place to determine whether a community should be prescribed as a welfare reform community area. Unfortunately, the department advised that there were no guidelines. This is disappointing because, with no publically available guidelines, how will communities be able to assess whether they should enter the commission's jurisdiction or assess whether they have achieved an acceptable level of targets to set the wheels in motion to exit the commission's jurisdiction? In the interests of transparency, one would have thought that this information may have been worked through, consulted upon and drafted prior to the introduction of this bill to allow members of this House, stakeholders and indeed the wider community to have a say on how best to shape our communities into the future.

While I understand and agree with the Health and Community Services Committee that the objects of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act and indicators like school attendance levels provide a strong basis for key indicators, these indicators need to be developed and set in stone so that communities have a strong benchmark to ascertain how they are tracking and how they can improve and so that there is a transparent approach which will be able to stand up to public scrutiny.

With the removal of the FRC sunset clause, it is imperative that communities have a clear and achievable path to navigate out of the jurisdiction of the FRC should they wish to do so. This is not only in the interests of transparency but also to ensure that the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975 is not breached. As the Health and Community Services Committee stated—

... the International Convention which forms the Schedule to the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* ... states that special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups 'shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved'.

Therefore, there needs to be adequate, publically available criteria, indicators and measures in place to ensure that community members, community leaders and the government of the day can assess the overall success of actions taken in the community to chart a course out of the jurisdiction of the FRC. I agree with the minister's comments that we wish for a day when we do not see the FRC in communities because communities have been, in the words of the original authors, 'normalised'. I do not like using that word because I think the word 'normal' will mean many things to many people, but we want to see communities where young people attend school, where they are safe in their homes, where there is no alcohol fuelled violence and of course where people are in gainful employment and they own their own homes.

That is something that neither the opposition nor the LNP government would argue against in this House. As I said in the introduction of this section of my speech, I ask the minister to ensure that there are adequate guidelines, that they are developed in consultation with the community, in consultation with key stakeholders and then publicly released to ensure that everyone is on the same page as we move forward into the next chapter of the Family Responsibilities Commission.

Although I understand that there had been wide-ranging and extensive consultation undertaken in Doomadgee prior to the community being prescribed under the regulation as a welfare reform community area, there is no guarantee or legislative requirement that the same extensive community consultation will occur prior to other communities being added to the jurisdiction of the FRC.

Although I believe that the current minister and, indeed, future ministers who are responsible for this area will do their best to consult widely and extensively, the Labor opposition supports the Health and Community Services Committee recommendation that there needs to be a 'requirement that consultation, aimed at obtaining informed consent from community leaders, be undertaken' prior to any community being prescribed as a welfare reform community area. Consultation and consent are imperative, as was echoed by Commissioner Glasgow during a Health and Community Services Committee public hearing on this bill on 28 November 2013, at which he stated—

... a lesson we have learnt about the future is that we need community support or at least understanding before we should go into new communities.

I could not agree more.

I note that the Cape Indigenous Mayors Alliance wrote to the Health and Community Services committee and indicated that they 'do not want to see the FRC extended to any other Cape York communities' and 'do not want to see the FRC extended in the existing communities without a full independent assessment and the informed consent of the elected councils'. That further supports the argument that there need to be adequate safeguards in place to ensure that the minister of the day actively consults with the community and that there is a transparent and public approach with clear criteria in place to determine whether a community enters into the jurisdiction of the Family Responsibilities Commission or not, rather than a decision being made on the whim of a minister or the government of the day.

Although I acknowledge the views of the mayors who form part of the Cape Indigenous Mayors Alliance, I know that there are some mayors who believe that the Family Responsibilities Commission is doing positive work. Recently, the Labor opposition met with the Mayor of Aurukun, Councillor Dereck Walpo, who supported the continuation of the Family Responsibilities Commission as he and his community could see the benefits that the commission is achieving. I thank Councillor Walpo for taking the time to meet recently with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I also acknowledge the minister's remarks in correspondence to the Health and Community Services Committee on 17 September 2014, in which he stated—

... Family Responsibilities Commission ... operations have never been and never will be extended to any community without significant consultation occurring with community members, local government, stakeholders and service providers ...

I trust that we will be able to hold the minister to his word on that. For the Family Responsibilities Commission to achieve its best, the community in which it operates in needs to accept the commission, which can occur only via a bottom-up approach with the community being engaged in the decision to implement the commission in its community right from the beginning. As I said in this House in 2011—

... strong and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are absolutely vital. We share a common goal: to build stronger and more resilient communities that will stand up to the scrutiny of future generations ...

I still stand by those words. This bill will also insert new triggers for the Family Responsibilities Commission to be made aware of activities within the community and prompt the commission to act when appropriate. The commission already receives agency notices, for example, when a child does not turn up to school or a breach occurs in a tenancy agreement. However, this legislation further defines more triggers. In particular, this bill provides that the Family Responsibilities Commission will be notified if a community member is convicted in any court—previously it was just the Magistrates Court—and will also require the commission to be informed if a child is convicted in a court of law. I note that the minister has advised that the new triggers have been canvassed widely in Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman George as well as the newly added community of Doomadgee and that no major issues arose from that consultation. The opposition believes that adding new triggers is an appropriate measure to ensure that the best possible information is available to the Family Responsibilities Commission to better enable the commission to make informed decisions when assisting members in the community.

The bill also removes the requirement for the commission's board to meet once every three months and replaces it with the board required to meet only every six months. Although I note that in the explanatory notes to the bill this amendment will enable 'more locally focused meetings to be scheduled to ensure greater local involvement in decision making' and that the department's advice is that the reduction in board meetings will allow for a greater investment in community focused activities and in-community work, the reduction in the required number of meetings raises a potential governance issue. With this proposed change, coupled with the amendments that were undertaken in the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012, which reduced the requirement for a quorum of three commissioners to two commissioners as there was difficulty convening a valid meeting under the old arrangements, there is a potential for governance issues to arise. Although I am not suggesting that any impropriety will occur, the reduction in the number of board meetings that are required to occur in a calendar year, coupled with previous changes to reduce the quorum required, may lead to potential issues. I ask the minister to outline what measures and steps will be put in place to ensure that there are adequate checks and balances when decisions are made.

It would be remiss of me to conclude my contribution to the debate without mentioning the hard work being undertaken by the Family Responsibilities Commission. As I have stated previously, the Family Responsibilities Commission was established under the former Labor government. As a

former minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and now as shadow minister, I have had a keen interest and I have been involved with the Family Responsibilities Commission during its time. Over the years I have seen the hard work that has been done by the Family Responsibilities Commission to transform the conditions in the communities in which it operates. Although these achievements have not occurred overnight, and in some cases it is like taking three steps forward and two steps back, I believe that the Family Responsibilities Commission has a strong place within our communities to effect positive change in a collective and communal manner. We only have to look at the recent statements made by Commissioner David Glasgow at the recent budget estimates hearings to see that the Family Responsibilities Commission is making progress. Commissioner Glasgow said that in Aurukun—

... state attendance figures for the primary school there were under 40 per cent. Now it regularly hits in the 80s ... In ... Coen we regularly are at 94 per cent ... In Hope Vale, if it were not for Friday we would be in the 90s ...

Although these figures are promising, there is still much work that is required to ensure that there is not only positive change but also long-lasting change in these communities. I would also like to take this opportunity to place on record my appreciation and that of the Labor Party to Commissioner David Glasgow for his tireless work, stewardship and leadership of the Family Responsibilities Commission since his appointment on 25 April 2008. I have met and worked directly with Commissioner Glasgow many times over the years and he is a man who has a strong passion for Indigenous justice and advancing the opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I am pleased that he is still at the helm as the Family Responsibilities Commission enters into its next phase.

However, just like any organisation, the successes of the organisation are not the sole achievement of the person at the top. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in the Family Responsibilities Commission over the years, in particular Deputy Commissioner Rod Curtin and all of the local commissioners, who are really the eyes and ears of the commission, operating at the coal face, on the front line, working with local community residents and services. In addition I would like to thank all of the support staff involved in the Family Responsibilities Commission over the years. I wish everyone involved in the commission all the very best as the commission embarks, as I said, on the next phase of its life.


Before I conclude, I would also like to thank the members and staff of the Health and Community Services Committee for their deliberations on this bill. I know that this is not the first time that the committee has had to scrutinise legislation regarding the Family Responsibilities Commission in this session of the Queensland parliament and I appreciate its work in ensuring that the legislation is the best that it can be and that positive outcomes can occur for all of the communities involved with the Family Responsibilities Commission. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the minister for the bipartisan manner in which he has dealt with this issue by providing a personal briefing to the opposition about this legislation prior to its introduction in this House.

I have always held the view that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should not be used as a political football and that as much as possible all sides of politics should work together to ensure that the desired outcome of improving the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and empowering them is achieved. I note that a recent communique from the Council of Australian Governments dated 10 October 2014 stated—

COAG agreed jurisdictions need to work together to ensure Indigenous people have access to the same opportunities as non-Indigenous people ...

The Queensland opposition welcomes this agreement and supports it wholeheartedly. We believe that, in order to close the gap and increase the opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples, a multifactor, multipronged, bottom-up approach is required through a variety of options and programs driven from the bottom up that takes the community along the transformation journey. This issue is not simple and successive governments have been working and delivering on measures to support Indigenous Queenslanders reach the same level of opportunity as non-Indigenous Queenslanders. The bill before us today goes some way to achieving this for the participating communities. But more needs to be done and the Labor opposition is willing to work with those opposite at any opportunity to ensure that that is achieved. With those remarks, I conclude and commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 pm to 2.30 pm.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (2.30 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014. Madam Deputy Speaker, please indulge me: through you I would like to welcome into the gallery today the school leaders from Dakabin State High School and their principal, Mr Schuh.

Mr Dillaway: My old school as well.

Mr RUTHENBERG: Dakabin High? Fantastic. As I start to speak about the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill, I would like to first thank the secretariat: the acting director Karl Holden; the director Sue Cawcutt, who is on leave at the moment but contributed to this; Kath Dalladay; and Stephanie Cash, who organises a heap of stuff for us behind the scenes. I thank them for their work. I would also like to thank the members of the committee. There was fairly solid and robust conversation from time to time, but we have ended up in a place where we have bipartisan support of the recommendations on the bill. I would also like to thank the Family Responsibilities Commission: the commissioner, David Glasgow, and the local commissioners in each of the four communities and acknowledge the challenging work that they do. Welfare reform is not an easy task. The committee was in Cairns and Aurukun late last year. We held hearings in Cairns and had a look at and watched what the commissioners did. I acknowledge that what they do is difficult, tough work. Welfare reform is difficult, tough work. I want to refer for the benefit of the House and members to the committee's report to parliament No. 49 of May 2014, page 18. We finish our report by saying the following—

Broadly, the FRC and other components of the CYWR Trial were intended to restore social norms and local authority, to change dysfunctional behaviours in response to chronic welfare dependency, social dysfunction and economic exclusion.

To restore social norms, responsible behaviour and local authority, the committee considers that a holistic approach and long term government support is necessary; significant social change is not achieved from short term initiatives. This is complex and challenging welfare reform, which requires more than the conferencing and income management provided by the FRC. Change must be fostered across years and across generations. Communities must be engaged, policy makers must be prepared to listen and to try diverse and innovative approaches that will be accepted by the communities in which they are to be implemented.

I think that those words are even more true at this point in time. Welfare reform is an incredibly difficult subject to deal with, but it does not mean that we should sit on our hands, ignore it or stick our heads in the sand. This bill does take up our comments about a long-term commitment and for that I think the government should be commended. I thank the minister for his response to our recommendations. I listened carefully to the minister's response and have since had the opportunity to read it. Our recommendations 2 to 8 for all intents and purposes seem to be already taken up by the department insofar as its current practices are concerned.

I want to talk very briefly about recommendation 4. The minister has given an undertaking that, prior to the introduction of any welfare reform program via the FRC, community consent would be sought via community consultation. While I certainly would like to see something slightly stronger in that response, I acknowledge the minister's undertaking that the department will work with local communities on an ongoing basis prior to the consideration of implementing a Family Responsibilities Commission in a community. I also note the minister's comments that if the community meets the basic underlying conditions for introducing welfare reform it will never have to introduce welfare reform in the first place. The government will not even consider it. If the kids are going to school, if rent is being paid, if those types of conditions are being met it goes a long way to ensuring that a community never has to fall into welfare reform in the structured manner that the FRC would bring. In many respects those decisions are in the hands of those communities as opposed to the hands of the government. I acknowledge and understand the minister's response in that regard.

The FRC's aim is to re-establish acceptable social norms, local Indigenous authority, individual responsibility and accountability. Again I restate that we are not able to look at any particular models anywhere around the world. This is innovative reform. There are no real examples to draw on except the example of the last four or so years of the FRC at work. Again I reiterate that we need to be brave. We need to regularly review and adjust methods according to our learnings. We have been at this for a little bit now. I think that with the introduction of this bill we now need to also start looking at the model of the FRC we use at this time. I bring to the attention of the House our report on this bill, report No. 56, page 16. I reflect on comments from Ms Zoe Ellerman of the Cape York Institute in her remarks to us at our hearing in Cairns last year where she said—

Just because the FRC looks the way it did when the trial was originally designed, this does not actually need to be the model of the FRC that continues on forevermore or that expands to other places, for example. We need to continue to evolve the model and to strengthen it, and we would urge governments to be more responsive to these kinds of changes.

I would say to the minister that that is probably where we need to be going. Now that we have the structures in place, we need to be looking at how we make this more efficient and more effective. I think the opposition acknowledged and identified that this is something all sides of politics are in favour of. This is an incredibly difficult subject. We are dealing with people's lives. We are dealing with circumstances in some of these communities where we see instances of child abuse and women being abused at much higher levels than what we see in other communities around Queensland and if nothing else we need to do what we can to protect those kids. I support the premise and the function of the FRC. I thank the minister for his response and urge that we be very cognisant of some of the comments and the issues that came through during the review, which I am aware the minister and the department are, and that we work in a collaborative manner with the leaders in those communities going forward. I see no reason why we are not doing that already. With those few words, I thank the minister and the department and I commend the bill to the House.



Mr SHUTTLEWORTH (Ferny Grove—LNP) (2.48 pm): Like my previous submissions on the FRC, this contribution will be brief. However, there are a number of reasons why, more so than in years past, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on this particular bill, the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014. I say that because I am certain that through the passage of this bill many individuals, organisations and providers will have a level of assurance and certainty about the future of their community, their business or their family. For the first time since the inception of the Family Responsibilities Commission, surety is provided that the program will continue beyond the end of a calendar year and well into the future.


This bill's passage means that for many within a community who have become reliant on the measures incorporated within this legislation their future is assured. There is certainty that an intervention that has delivered social improvement or allowed effective financial management of a family's income or maybe has increased the attendance of a child at school will continue well beyond 31 December this year. In fact, it will continue for as long as interventions are required. In essence, this amendment bill is a continuation of the trial that commenced in 2008 as part of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial that operated in the Indigenous communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge with the primary intent to re-establish social norms within those communities. Within this bill there is an undertaking to further expand the welfare reform community to now include the local government area of Doomadgee. The bill allows for other areas also to be considered into the future.

What is certain is that the primary motivation of this bill is the betterment of those communities. Regardless of the measure used, a commitment to maintaining a collaborative and consistent improvement approach within those communities must be foremost in the minds of the stakeholders, that is, the Family Responsibilities Commission, the commissioner, the 29 local commissioners and all of the communities involved. To ensure there is a continual improvement focus, there must be a well balanced use of intervention measures. Continual intervention is not likely to yield continuous improvement if the individuals concerned feel there is no likely end to the intervention. Similarly, if improvements are made the reward must be increased through the level of self-direction. Following discussions we have had with stakeholders over the past couple of years, it seems clear to me that there is an acceptance within those communities that something has to change and that, right now, the interventions are making that difference and that there is an ongoing commitment towards this improvement.

When last I visited the local commissioners in Aurukun, they outlined how, in conjunction with the efforts of other community elders, they were very much focused on school attendance rates. They understand that education is a key to a brighter and more certain future for the current generation of youth and they seem committed to ensuring that the youth and young people are afforded the very best foundation in life. Providing those communities and others over time with the tool chest to assist in driving forward outcomes will empower the communities to actively undertake measures that will, in time, ensure that the gap is narrowed.

In closing my very brief submission, I highlight that, like any program of review or improvement, the importance of continual assessment within the program is critical to its success. From the outset this program was designed to address the degree of divergence between acceptable social norms and those in existence. It is incumbent upon all of us who can influence improvement to continually seek that improvement and to encourage everyone to periodically review and assess the program's effectiveness, currency and appropriateness so that over time tangible outcomes and improvements will be evident to all stakeholders.

I thank the secretariat for its usual exemplary efforts in preparing report No. 56. In particular, I thank our research director, Sue Cawcutt, who is currently travelling around Europe, and our very able acting research director, Karl Holden. I thank my fellow committee members and, importantly, I thank the minister and his department for the preparation of the bill. I support its passage through the House.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (2.43 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2014. As the minister has previously stated, the bill proposes to continue the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 and the commission itself beyond the current expiry date of 1 January 2015 to support the continuation of welfare reform into the future. Other procedural and administrative changes to the operations of the FRC will align with the removal of the sunset clause and improve effectiveness. I propose to cover two areas in my speech: the role of the commission and how the FRC plays a key role in engaging young people in socially responsible behaviour, including school attendance and youth justice.

In terms of the role of the commission, the Family Responsibilities Commission is an independent statutory authority established under the act with a commissioner, deputy commissioner and currently 29 local commissioners to represent the communities in which the FRC operates. To support welfare reform, the FRC works with community members in receipt of welfare payments to reduce levels of dysfunction by focusing on an individual's responsibility to engage in socially responsible behaviours. The FRC receives notifications from state government agencies regarding community members who are recipients of a social welfare payment when a child has unexplained absences from or is not enrolled in school, a child safety report is made, a person is convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court or a tenancy agreement is breached. Once referred, the commission works with clients through a combination of case conferencing and referrals to services, either by voluntary agreement or through an order of the commission.

Turning my attention to school attendance, the independent *Cape York welfare reform evaluation* report, released in March 2013, found that there had been statistically significant improvements in school attendance in Aurukun and Mossman Gorge, with Coen and Hope Vale maintaining their relatively high attendance rates. Those increases in school attendance were not part of the broader trend in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In 2008 the welfare reform communities' attendance rates were four percentage points lower than in comparable communities, but by 2011 they were six percentage points higher than in other comparable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It is worth looking at some of the statistics from individual communities to see the value of the government effort under welfare reform. Hope Vale student attendance at Cooktown secondary school increased from 35.5 per cent in 2008 to 68 per cent in 2013. At the beginning of the 2014 school year, the percentage of compulsory high school aged young people from Aurukun enrolling in boarding school was approximately 47 per cent. That is much higher than the retention rate for children who were progressing from primary school to secondary school prior to the commencement of the welfare reform. The FRC's success is improving the primary school attendance rate in Aurukun from 47 per cent in 2008 to 71 per cent in 2012, which was a key finding of the *Cape York welfare reform evaluation* report. Unfortunately, due to changes in the counting rules for the recording of school attendance by the Department of Education, Training and Employment, it is not possible to compare the 2012 results with more recent years. However, it is of concern that in 2013 primary school attendance in Aurukun was 63 per cent.

The school attendance rate in Doomadgee is one of the key reasons for the government's decision to introduce the Family Responsibilities Commission to that community this year. School attendance data confirmed that Doomadgee State School, the only school in Doomadgee, had an overall attendance rate of 49 per cent in 2013 and that that attendance rate was one of the worst attendance rates state-wide in 2013. The Australian government has included Doomadgee State School in the first tranche of the Remote School Attendance Strategy, which enables the employment of school attendance officers to assist in lifting school attendance. The introduction of the FRC to the community will continue the government's efforts in this regard.

While attendance is subject to fluctuations that are often due to events occurring within the community, more work needs to be done to achieve at least 80 per cent attendance across all communities. There is a demonstrated link between the disengagement of young people from education and employment and the increased risk of entering the criminal justice system. Issues

identified as contributing to the overrepresentation of young Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people subject to youth justice orders includes lower educational and training achievements and a lack of employment opportunities.

Queensland government agencies are working with the communities and the FRC to identify effective ways for FRC conferencing to support families in welfare reform communities where children are not engaged in high school or who have entered the youth justice system. This bill proposes a youth justice trigger be added to the FRC notifications compelling the parent or carer of a young person, convicted by a court, to attend FRC conferencing so the family can be referred to support services. This intervention aims to reduce the trajectory of young Indigenous people subject to youth justice orders into the adult criminal system.

I am very proud to support such a worthy bill. Congratulations to the minister for bringing this to the House. I support this bill.



Hon. GW ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (2.50 pm), in reply: At the outset, I thank all members who have participated in today's debate. I thank them for their considered contributions. I would also like to thank non-government members—particularly the member for Mulgrave—for the level of bipartisan support that they have provided to this very important initiative.

Underlying the Family Responsibilities Commission model is the belief that communities can take responsibility for addressing social dysfunction, and are best placed to do so. They are not only best placed to do so; it is absolutely vital that they do so. Complementing the commission's direct operation are referral services and economic development, education, employment and housing initiatives to build individual and family capabilities and promote self-reliance and responsibility.

The main objectives of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act are, firstly, to support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform areas; and, secondly, help people in welfare reform community areas to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and the individuals and families of the community. It is simply not possible for the state government, in the best possible way and with all the understanding that we can muster, to pass laws or see legislation progress through this parliament here and expect it to push down into the community. The only way that we are going to resolve the issues that present themselves not only in the welfare reform communities but also in the Indigenous communities throughout the state in the long term is to provide as best we can, in partnership with the councils, the commissioners, the community justice groups and all of the other groups and individuals that make up those communities, the tools to see the restoration of those social norms from within the community and not the state.

The proposed amendments to the legislation that we are looking at today are, importantly, the removal of the sunset clause within the act which is currently due to expire on 1 January 2015. This more than anything else is crucial. Not only does it save an enormous amount of time and money but also provides long-term certainty. It provides long-term certainty for the communities that are part of the Family Responsibilities Commission. It provides long-term responsibility to Commissioner Glasgow and the commissioners the ability to continue to conference and to help people in their own communities. Adding further justice triggers to notifications to the commission from District, Supreme and Children's courts is another amendment in the bill. The final amendment relates to moving the description of welfare reform communities from the act to the Family Responsibilities Commission regulation.

The success of the Family Responsibilities Commission model was highlighted in the Forrest report into Indigenous employment which was released recently. Mr Forrest, in his report, praised the FRC for the work it had done, particularly in helping to restore local leadership and authority in the communities in which it operates. He said lessons learnt from and innovation shown by the commission should be adopted for a national model to restore function and social cohesion in communities where it had broken down.

I will now turn my focus to comment a little closer to home and talk about some of the contributions by the members in today's debate. I firstly mention the member for Mulgrave. I am obviously very pleased that the opposition supports the bill. From my many conversations with the member for Mulgrave, I am pleased that he shares my desire that one day the FRC will be unnecessary because we will have restored stability and cohesion in the communities where it is lacking. I think it is fair to say that since Europeans came to this country we have spent a couple of hundred years not necessarily doing the right thing.

Sometimes when governments come in they expect to solve problems that have developed over many generations in a parliamentary term. That is not going to happen. One of the reasons I am pleased we have amended the Family Responsibilities Commission legislation and removed the sunset clause is that it provides certainty that we can continue to work with the communities to ensure that we get long-term benefits.

The member for Mulgrave also raised the need for documented guidelines for what will determine an FRC community. It is not possible to stipulate a one-size-fits-all approach. We have five communities that are currently part of the FRC operation. Places like Doomadgee are remote communities and others are very close to major towns and communities in the cape and Far North Queensland. It is very hard to stipulate a one-size-fits-all approach. A problem that might exist in one community will not exist in another. There will be variations along the way.

One of the things that I have learnt in my time as minister is that to try to draw up a list of rules and regulations and stick rigidly to them is not something that is possible in these circumstances. We have to be able to judge each community for what it is. We have to be able to engage with the community leaders. We have to try to establish the trust of those community leaders so that they are prepared to work with me or my assistant minister, David Kempton, to ensure we move in the right direction. It will not be quick and cannot be quick. As I said in my speech earlier, I am sure that in the long term we will get there.

There are a range of measures monitored across all the communities and different communities rate differently. There is no such thing as a single, discrete Indigenous community profile. One assurance I can give is that no community which maintains low harm and crime rates and has high school attendance need worry that the FRC will be introduced into its community. I also welcome the opposition's support for the extra triggers included in the bill. The member for Mulgrave called for the inclusion of appropriate checks and balances to ensure transparency in the process. I do not disagree with him.

I will move quickly to the contributions by members of the committee and others in this place. What has been shown and understood by committee members, particularly after travelling to Aurukun and seeing the FRC at work and the community, is that you can never get it if you do not go. To be there, to see it, to experience it—and I am not talking here about the FRC but the communities and how they work—is something that every member of this House should do. If every member of this House did that much greater understanding about Indigenous affairs generally would come about. So I do want to thank the members for Kallangur and Ferny Grove for their contributions today and my good mate Tarnya Smith for also getting up today and obviously making a very impassioned contribution to the debate.

I think what we will do over a period of time is to work with the communities concerned. We need to work with those communities that are part of the FRC and in different ways we need to work with the communities who are outside of the FRC. I do really want to stipulate to the mayors, to the councillors and to the community leaders in the communities who are not currently part of the FRC and assure them that if we can work together and we can see those social norms heading in the right direction, if we can get our kids to school—this is not about protecting the mums and dads who really do not give a you know what about whether their kids go to school or not; this is all about making sure that the children in these communities get an opportunity to have a life far better than the mums and dads that have gone before them—this is central to not only making sure those communities progress but also giving those young kids an opportunity to have an education and a future, which is not something that has happened in many places before.

The work of the FRC complements other work being done by government to address historic disadvantage in Indigenous communities. We have made significant improvements with land tenure and town planning to underpin long-term economic development. I will continue to work with Minister Cripps and his department to support the implementation of proposals under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land freeholding legislation, which was passed by the House in August. The feeling I get as I move around the communities—I will be in Doomadgee next Wednesday, and I will be looking forward to speaking with the mayor and the councillors there—is a belief that better living conditions and a more normalised lifestyle are within reach.

I meet young community leaders and community elders who have had enough of the bad old days of dysfunction, neglect and abuse and are prepared to work with governments and non-government service providers to put those days and that reputation behind them. By restoring social norms in welfare reform communities, we are reducing dependency on welfare income and supporting real improvements in school attendance and retention and employment opportunities.

In closing, I thank the member for Kallangur, who is the chairman of the committee, and the rest of his committee for the work that they did in preparing the report. I also thank the secretariat staff. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 12, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. GW ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (3.03 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. GW ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (3.03 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.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 9 September (see p. 2974).

Second Reading



Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (3.04 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its examination of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014. I also thank the people and organisations who made submissions to assist the committee in its inquiry. I note that the committee tabled its report on 9 October 2014 and recommended that the bill be passed.

This bill improves the world-class disaster management system currently in place in our great state. The bill achieves this by streamlining disaster management governance at a state level. The current high-level disaster management governance arrangements include two bodies; namely, the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee, the DMCC, and the State Disaster Management Group, the SDMG. This bill will improve these arrangements by replacing the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee and the State Disaster Management Group with a newly created Queensland Disaster Management Committee, which is now the QDMC.

The Queensland Disaster Management Committee will streamline disaster management and provide better strategic direction during the four phases of disaster management; namely, response, preparation, planning and recovery. The establishment of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee will result in faster decision making based on up-to-date information as the Premier, relevant ministers and their respective directors-general, along with invited external members, will form the one committee. The relevant expertise and knowledge will be available in the one room and allow direct lines of communication to the state disaster coordinator and, when relevant, the state recovery coordinator.

This bill allows the membership, meeting requirements and appointments of chairpersons to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee to be prescribed by regulation. This will allow amendments to be more easily made if there are any machinery-of-government changes or to meet changing community expectations. Similarly, for consistency, the bill relocates provisions relating to the membership, meeting requirements and appointment of chairpersons of local and district disaster management groups to the newly created regulation.

I must reinforce that this bill does not change the manner in which our local and district disaster management groups undertake their vital roles in disaster management. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work performed by the members of the local and district disaster management groups and the vital role they play in responding to disasters right throughout Queensland.

We also rely heavily upon the good work performed by agencies such as the Australian Red Cross and Surf Life Saving Queensland, to name but two. I could continue to name the organisations, businesses and individuals who contribute to assisting Queensland through disasters but there are too many to list in this House here today. The work they all provide is invaluable. Many of these people are volunteers and readily give of their time, labour and resources to assist their fellow Queenslanders in times of need. I would like to thank all of these people and organisations for their valuable contributions in making this great state an even safer state.

This bill will ensure that the essential work performed by these groups and individuals is guided by efficient strategic decision making, allowing them to get on with what they do best in times of disaster—helping the people of Queensland. I would also like to acknowledge the extraordinary work that our emergency services personnel perform in these times of crisis. They do a remarkable job in the most difficult of circumstances. This government also recognises that they do not do it alone. They are supported by other government employees and the community who work together for the benefit of all.


This bill is of importance to all Queenslanders, particularly as we approach the beginning of the 2014-15 disaster season. We all hope that Queensland is spared from any disasters. However, it is better to hope and act rather than to hope and be complacent. This bill puts into action real improvements to our disaster management governance arrangements to ensure we are well placed to respond to future disasters.

An interdepartmental implementation working group was formed at the beginning of September to ensure a seamless transition to the new Queensland Disaster Management Committee. The membership of this working group reflects the agencies represented on the Queensland Disaster Management Committee. The working group will oversee and monitor implementation of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee to ensure we are in a state of complete readiness for the upcoming disaster season.

I would like to foreshadow that I intend to introduce an amendment to the bill during the consideration in detail stage. The amendment relates to the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008 and has been circulated in my name. The purpose of the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act is to allow an offender prohibition order to be made to prohibit a 'relevant sexual offender' from engaging in conduct that would endanger the life or sexual safety of a child. A 'relevant sexual offender' under this act is defined to include a person who is a reportable offender under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004.

On 22 September 2014 an amendment was made to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act to state that a person ceases to be a reportable offender when all reporting obligations for that person have ended. Prior to that amendment, any person who had ever been required to report under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act was considered to be a reportable offender even if their reporting obligations had ended. The amendment to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act has impacted on the application of the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act, as a person who is no longer considered to be a reportable offender cannot be the subject of an offender prohibition order under the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act.

An amendment to the definition of 'relevant sexual offender' under the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act is necessary to ensure those persons no longer subject to reporting conditions under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act and who subsequently engage in concerning behaviour are captured for the purposes of issuing an offender prohibition order. The rationale for these amendments is explained in detail within the explanatory notes that have been distributed through the House.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.12 pm): From the outset let me begin by stating the opposition will not be opposing this bill. Before I deal with the substance of the bill, it is important to recognise all of the emergency workers and volunteers who place themselves at risk when dealing with disaster incidents throughout Queensland. We would be lost in this state without them. I know they do not seek out praise, and I thank them on behalf of the opposition and my community in Rockhampton. As we approach another unpredictable Queensland fire and cyclone season, my wish is that all those workers and volunteers who place themselves at risk fighting bushfires or rescuing people in dangerous floodwaters return home safely to their family and friends during these times of heightened risk.

The opposition recognises that the government is setting out to achieve efficiencies in the counterdisaster space. The government has made no secret of this, and I believe that some room exists in this area to achieve these efficiencies. That said, I firmly believe that one opportunity to find these efficiencies is to de-emphasise the role of politicians from the counterdisaster space and to emphasise the role of the professionals. The Queensland police and disaster management specialists should be brought to the forefront during a disaster and politicians should have a more limited enabling role. During disaster incidents, clear and uncontested command and control is essential.

A Labor government will within 12 months deliver a much improved and informed counterdisaster system for Queensland. It will continue the reforms that give more responsibility to the Queensland Police Service and further encourage the Queensland Police Service as the lead agency in disaster management. I am convinced that senior command positions within the Queensland Police Service are best placed to lead the counterdisaster structures at all levels and throughout all jurisdictions across Queensland as we work to further professionalise counterdisaster management in Queensland. I firmly believe a politician's role in disaster management should be limited to informing and supporting their local communities and the state, leaving the lead agencies to get on with the task of delivering these essential services or repairing essential services for all Queenslanders.

Requests to government should be made from a lead agency, and the government's role should be as an enabler that unlocks the resources that the agency requires to achieve its objectives. When disaster strikes, it is not a time to go around scoring political points, and nor do I seek to do so now. This was up until the minister used this disaster management bill to fix up a major mistake that the LNP made in relation to lowering the standards and restrictions on child sex offenders in Queensland. The opposition warned the government at the time that lowering the time which child sex offenders were required to report to police would have dangerous consequences for children in Queensland. We said that Queensland children will be put at unnecessary risk, and it has been proved by these amendments. What other deficiencies are yet to be uncovered in the LNP's watered-down child sex offender measures that ripped up Labor's strong sex offender legislation and replaced it with a regime that saw some sex offenders having their reporting arrangements reduced from 15 years down to five and from life reporting down to 10 years? The minister and this government attacked me for raising those very concerns and now the LNP is using this Trojan Horse bill through this parliament as a fix-up job due to their incompetence.

I will deal with the disaster management issues in this bill first so as to separate the issues in this bill. I acknowledge that any issues I raise in this bill are a matter for the government. However, I would like the minister to address in his speech in reply why the ADF and the Red Cross have had their roles in the disaster management framework downgraded when they are clearly such important and vital partners. The flood inquiry recognised how essential the Red Cross and the Australian Defence Force are in relation to the disaster management response in Queensland, and the opposition recognises the contribution these organisations make, especially the Red Cross in its centenary year. The primary reason the opposition will be supporting this legislation is that the government has conducted consultation with every government department, and the Public Safety Business Agency reports that all the government departments were supportive of this bill. We can only take this at face value. We have no reason to believe that any department has raised major issues with the bill or has provided full and frank counteradvice in the development of this legislation.

I mentioned we have a concern that the consultation phase did not extend to the Red Cross and the Australian Defence Force, and a recommendation from the flood inquiry has been quite clearly reversed. The recommendation from the flood inquiry stated that the State Disaster Management Group should include representatives of the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Red Cross in its planning and preparation for the next wet season. This was supported by the LNP as late as June 2012. I ask that the minister explain why these vital organisations have been excluded except by invitation under this new structure. I would also like the minister to detail in his

reply whether the documents relating to this new committee will be considered in any way cabinet-in-confidence and therefore less scrutiny of those decisions will be possible because of the cabinet processes.

This bill requires a permanent state disaster coordinator to be appointed at all times to lead the disaster coordination effort across the state. Emergency situations require command and control architecture that ensures a single person is ultimately responsible. I support any idea that puts that level of responsibility in the hands of one person and that positions like this become permanent.

I turn to the amendments moved to fix up this mismanagement of the LNP's watering down of Labor's strong child protection legislation. During the debate on 4 June 2014, I said, '... under these amendments, persons convicted of one offence of rape of a child, or incest or one of those other offences just mentioned, will have their reporting period reduced from 15 years to five years.' I said that the bill should be sent back to the committee for further consideration. I also said—

We cannot support a bill that reduces the reporting obligation of a child rapist from 15 years to five years or a child murderer who, after release from prison, murders another child and has their reporting period reduced from life to 10 years. The Newman government may be prepared to do that, but the opposition is not prepared to support that.

I also quoted the Attorney-General, who had said in March, 'Our children are Queensland's future and these reforms lay the foundation to make this state the safest place to raise a child and to protect our most vulnerable.' During the debate I said in response to those comments—

The reforms in this bill make an uncomfortable comparison with those statements, and the Attorney-General and the police minister should tell the truth and admit what this bill does: it waters down the monitoring of paedophiles and no amount of spin or other language can change that. It condones the use of social media by convicted sex offenders by asking them for their passwords and account details for accounts that they should not be accessing on sites that they should be precluded from in the first place. The mixed messages sent by these amendments create an atmosphere where the safety of children appears not to be the priority of the government at all and any words to that effect are dubious in effect.

Ultimately, in the choice between conspiracy and stuff-up with parts of this bill I believe that stuff-up probably reflects what presents within parts of the bill. Frankly, it should be fixed without further debate in this House and I encourage the minister to consider that prospect.


That is what I said at the time. How wise were those words? I said that the LNP's child sex offender legislation was a stuff-up, and here we are today fixing up that legislation. At the time the minister said—

... the assertions put forward by the member for Rockhampton in relation to time frames are inconsistent with the scientific evidence and research completed by many eminent people who investigate and look at the research in these particular areas. It is also conclusive that if we are able to crack down on child sex offenders in the first five years of reporting we can certainly prevent them from reoffending.

Here we are some four months later, and what has happened? The minister is circulating amendments to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act to remove a provision that was inserted by the amendments passed earlier this year. In the 2014 amendment bill it was decided that a specific provision would be inserted that clearly stated that a person ceases to be a reportable offender when all reporting periods under this act for a person end. The Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act provides that a prohibition order can only be made against a reportable offender. A prohibition order restricts the places a sex offender may go and prevents them from doing specific things. An example might be an order that prevents a paedophile from frequenting South Bank or going within a specific distance of schools and parks frequented by children. These orders allow police to arrest and charge offenders for offences before they can get access to young children. These orders are enforced by GPS systems that monitor these offenders and prevent them from offending.

We all know what else those earlier amendments did. They dramatically reduced the period of time offenders were required to report. As I warned during the debate, child rapists could have their reporting period reduced from 15 to five years. All offenders have had their reporting periods reduced substantially. So the risk to children has been heightened by those earlier amendments. The minister refused to heed my warnings at the time and blindly proceeded with the amendments in the form initially intended. This meant that, in conjunction with the other amendments, those same convicted child rapists would cease to be subjected to a prohibition order after five years. Before that amendment, they could have been subjected to prohibition orders for the whole 15 years that they were a reportable offender. I would like to ask the minister to explain whether these amendments are in relation to any specific matter. Is there an offender who has been behaving suspiciously in respect of whom the police wish to make an application for a prohibition order but have found that they could not because they came outside the definition because of the amendments made earlier this year?

I was intending to address the fact that these amendments are being slid through in a bill that, frankly, has nothing to do with child protection. However, on reflection, the change to the length of the reporting periods was a mistake and the situation it created could well be described as a disaster for the management of child offenders in this state. So I guess the amendments to the Disaster Management Amendment Bill are an appropriate Trojan Horse for this.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014. I congratulate the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services on the introduction of this bill, and I acknowledge the work of my colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee in the examination and reporting process.

Community safety is a priority for the Newman government and it is timely that we debate this bill in the wake of the Get Ready Queensland Week 2014. We need no convincing that Queensland is a great place to live and the Newman government continues to deliver on making it the safest place to live, work and raise a family. However, when it comes to extreme weather events in Queensland it is not a matter of if but when. Storm season is a reality in our climate and over the past few years we have seen the significant damage that can potentially result as tragic events such as the 2011 events, ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald and Cyclone Ita displayed all too well. We have the opportunity to learn from these events and improve our ability to respond swiftly and effectively to emergency situations.

The primary objective of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014 is to simplify the state's strategic level disaster management structure to allow for faster and better informed decision making during a disaster event. We need to ensure we have a strong governance of disaster management for emergency events so we can lead the way for Queenslanders through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and efficiently and effectively deal with the disaster. This bill amends the Disaster Management Act 2003 to simplify the structure of the disaster management group at a state level. Currently, the Disaster Management Act establishes the State Disaster Management Group, and disaster management committees have also been formed such as the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee, which was established to provide high level governance of Queensland's disaster management arrangements.

The current framework of governance will be simplified through the introduction of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee. The bill formally allows direct ministerial participation in the strategic management of disaster events. The QDMC will be chaired by the Premier, and the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience will be nominated as the deputy chairperson. The bill allows for the membership, meeting requirements and appointment of chairpersons of district and local disaster management groups to be prescribed by regulation. This ensures consistency relating to administration of disaster management groups and enables ready amendment if change to the administration of these groups is needed. Flexibility is necessary when dealing with unforeseen weather needs to allow for quick, adaptive responses, and the bill takes this into consideration through these provisions.

The structure of the QDMC is unique to Queensland and mirrors the arrangements of local government, where the local disaster committee is chaired by a councillor and supported by the council CEO and council staff. The changes contained within the bill come after a number of disaster management reviews in recent years. Of particular interest was the Police and Community Safety Review conducted in 2013 which identified deficiencies within the current system. The review emphasised the need for a governance structure that encompassed strategic priorities, policy directives, standards and procedures, and due attention to the lack of suitable monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Additionally, the Police and Community Safety Review reported that the absence of a State Disaster Coordinator hindered the overall response to Cyclone Oswald last year.

In response to this observation the bill requires that a person be appointed to this position to ensure that at all times a suitably qualified and experienced person is available and ready to lead the coordination of a disaster response anywhere across Queensland. This reflects the importance of being prepared. This year a multi-agency review advisory group was established to examine and respond to the previous reviews of disaster management. They particularly focused on the relationship of the SDMG, the DMCC and the Chief Executive Officer Leadership Team Subcommittee, Community Recovery and Resilience, in order to enhance existing governance arrangements.

As the member for Bulimba my electorate borders the Brisbane River and lies between Norman Creek and Bulimba Creek, so my community is very familiar with the effects of extreme weather events on our lifestyle. I have spoken in this House before about the wonderful work undertaken by

the Eastern State Emergency Service Group not only during the devastating floods of 2011, but also over the Australia Day weekend in 2013. They were of assistance both locally and in the clean-up after ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald impacted Bundaberg and its surrounds.

I commend the Newman government on recognising that disaster preparation and prevention is the shared responsibility of government, emergency services and the wider community. Get Ready Queensland is a fantastic initiative that encourages Queensland to prepare for the storm season in order to minimise damage. This week I will again deliver an information booklet to all primary school children in my electorate on the impacts of severe weather on our community. It contains tips to help them and their households prepare and plan for an emergency event.

Improvements made to the governance of disaster management will help us become the most resilient state in Australia and will prepare Queensland for whatever Mother Nature may have in store or throw at us. I once again congratulate the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services on the introduction of this bill and I commend it to the House.



Miss BARTON (Broadwater—LNP) (3.31 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to make a contribution to the debate on the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014. At the outset I acknowledge the great work of the member for Ipswich, the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, fellow government members on the committee and the members for Redcliffe and Nicklin.

One of the great things that we have seen over recent years is the determination of government to be incredibly prepared when it comes to dealing with natural disasters. As we know all too well, Queensland is a state where you can have flooding rains, crippling drought, bushfires and other natural disasters and emergencies all at the same time, as I am sure you would know all too well coming from a coastal regional electorate yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker.

As my esteemed colleague the member for Bulimba said, one of the key elements of this amendment bill is about the government ensuring that decision making is faster and better so that at a time of great trouble for many Queenslanders we can offer them the kind of immediate support that they want and deserve. I think it is appropriate to acknowledge the great work of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and particularly, while he is in the House, the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. I am sure most would agree that it was heartening to see the minister get out there in response to the 2013 natural disasters and be particularly determined to work with those communities to get them back on track.

When we consider that we are approaching storm season, I think the timing for the debate of this bill could not be better. The minister for local government is speaking with communities right across Queensland not only about how to get ready not only for storm season, but generally how to better prepare for disasters. I would like to acknowledge the Gold Coast City Council, because in the past few days they have gone through a trial run to determine how to be best placed to respond to another natural disaster.


The membership of the Disaster Management Committee is comprised of the Premier as chair, the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience as deputy chair, the minister for police, the minister for housing, the Treasurer, the minister for communities and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, which shows that this government is committed to making sure that we respond to natural disasters in a timely and effective way to ensure that people have access to housing or emergency accommodation and making sure that roads are opened as quickly as possible. After the 2013 natural disasters in particular we saw the immediate response of the Department of Communities to ensure that those communities received the appropriate support.

I would also like to quickly acknowledge the great work of the Runaway Bay State Emergency Service volunteers, because I am sure all members of this House would agree that we would not be able to do what we do in response to natural disasters if it were not for the volunteers who give up so much of their time and who are prepared to put their lives on hold to help fellow Queenslanders desperately in need. Whilst the Gold Coast was very lucky after the 2013 floods, there was some minor flooding and damage and it was wonderful to see how the SES worked with Gold Coasters to make sure they were looked after. The Queensland Police Service and the hardworking men and women of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services do a fantastic job day in and day out to make sure our communities are protected. Right across Queensland you can see the great work that is done when we rally together to help communities who are affected by horrible natural disasters.

When you think about this government's commitment to working with communities after natural disasters, you only need to look at the future's fund that would be set up. If the government is given a mandate next year to lease assets, the futures fund will be set up so that immediate funds are available to help communities desperately in need. It shows how committed this government is to making sure that we can help those Queenslanders who are really in need in times of trouble.

I might quickly touch on the amendments that have been flagged by the Minister for Police. Time and time again we have seen legislation introduced and passed through this House by both the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services which continues to show this government's commitment to making sure that this great state is the safest place to live, work and raise a family. I welcome the minister's amendments that will be moved in consideration in detail which will amend the definition of 'relevant sexual offender'.

I would again acknowledge and thank my committee colleagues for their great work, and I also acknowledge the work of the secretariat. As I am sure many members of this House would acknowledge, the past 2½ years of this 54th Parliament have been incredibly busy for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. In recent times, as we continue to conduct inquiries into bills that are presented to our committee and our inquiry into crime right across Queensland, it has been a particularly busy time for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee secretariat so I would again like to acknowledge their great work. I thank the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and I look forward to supporting this bill in its passage through the House.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (3.39 pm): I rise to make a contribution in steadfast support of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill and I commend the minister for the bill. As the deputy chair of the Disaster Management Committee I can say that the changes are common sense, they are as a result of a government that is listening and they are the result of a government that has taken huge steps forward in the way that we recover and deal with disaster events.

I will speak on some matters related to disaster recovery, all of which, I believe, are in support of this bill. First, this is a very opportune time for the minister to be bringing this legislation to the House as it is Get Ready Week. I say to all 89 members of this House that they have a role to play in engaging their communities and making sure they are passionate about spreading the message of getting ready. I think it is very well understood that in recent years we have taken huge steps forward when it comes to preparing our communities for disaster. We have done more mitigation work in the past couple of years than we saw in the better part of the last decade. We are recovering better than we ever have before. I believe that government, emergency services and the authorities in general are playing their part.

This year, Get Ready is about the individual. It is about saying to mums and dads and families across this state that they also have a role to play, that it is not always somebody else's responsibility. Sometimes the individual has a role to play as well. The little things can make a world of difference. It is about people getting their houses in order. It is about making sure the yard is free of debris. It is about people making sure they have a proper plan in place. It should not be a case of 'when something goes wrong we'll see how we might be able to get out of there in a hurry'. People should have a plan that says, 'This is what we are going to do if we are faced with a certain disaster,' and they should make sure their loved ones know that plan. It is also about having adequate food and water supply. I challenge people across the state to think about what that adequate supply of food and water might be. People should think, 'If we were forced to survive three days without food, water and electricity, what would our family need?' People should not rely on somebody else coming there to fill that void; they should try to be as self-sufficient as possible.

The other big push this year is to convince people to get all of their documents in hand. After the tragedies of Tropical Cyclone Oswald in 2013 and Tropical Cyclone Ita in 2014, there was a need for people to get their hands on information quickly. The last thing you want to do after your home has been flooded is to go looking for proof of identification, insurance documents and all of those things that we would otherwise find it easy to get hold of. I ask everyone across the state to take the opportunity, with a clear mind, to get their affairs in order. It is too late to begin planning when the water is actually lapping at the door or a fire is starting to touch the eaves. It is then too late to make a plan. The time for planning is now.

I will also speak briefly about the actual recovery component in support of what I think are common-sense changes in the Disaster Management Amendment Bill. I think everyone in this House needs to be very passionate about disaster recovery. The arrangement that has existed between the


three levels of government and the cooperation that exists have always served our state well. I refer to the local know-how of local government and the ability of the state government to cut through bureaucracy and provide a quarter of the funding and the federal government to provide three-quarters of the funding.

Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham, as someone from regional Queensland you would be very well aware of the draft recommendations of the Productivity Commission on natural disaster funding. I say to members of the House very clearly that these are draft recommendations. They do not represent the view of government or the elected officials on either side of the House. These are draft recommendations. But some of those recommendations should be kicked so far into touch that we never hear about them again. Some of them would be disastrous for regional Queensland. I will be making a submission. I have urged councils to make a submission and to clearly put the point that we believe in the ideas of mitigation and betterment. We love it; it is in our DNA. But it cannot be used as an excuse for one level of government to get out of funding their fair share. If you look at capacity to pay, I believe that the current funding model is very close to being spot on—that is, 75 per cent from the federal government, 25 per cent from the state government and local government to pick up all of those things on the ground as they come through.

Part of the Productivity Commission's draft report states that they would like to see more money spent on mitigation. I give that a tick. The amount that has been floated is \$200 million spread on a per capita basis across the states. First of all, the pool of money is far too small. Two hundred million dollars is absolutely inadequate. Secondly, to do it on a population basis is absurd because Queensland is the most disaster impacted state, so funding mitigation on a per capita basis is crazy. That would see us secure about \$40 million for mitigation. To give members an indication, in the last financial year we spent in the order of \$3½ billion recovering from disaster events. Forty million dollars will not prevent us needing to spend \$3½ billion. If we are serious about mitigation then we should go in boots and all and spend more. That does not allow one level of government in the meantime to walk away from Queensland communities in their hour of need.

I go back to where I started. Wholeheartedly, this is not policy. This is not me pointing the finger at politicians on either side of the federal House; this is me saying that this draft report presents an opportunity for elected officials to show leadership and to stick up for Queensland. That is what this House and this government have a record of doing in the past couple of years. We have been prepared to stand up for Queensland, regardless of the political messaging of the day. That is our role and it will continue to be. This is a huge issue.

I conclude by again thanking the minister. There are some very good, common-sense proposals in the bill—to ensure the disaster management committee runs very smoothly and, above all, to continue to tell Queensland communities that when they are in their hour of need, when they are doing it toughest, government will continue to be at its best to help them through.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (3.47 pm): This legislation is being considered at a time when a major issue that occurred in the most recent flood disaster is being actively debated at the Senate inquiry into the Queensland government. It would have been better for this legislation to be held over until those serious matters were discussed in that inquiry. What are they, you may ask? Those matters will primarily be the Grantham disaster, what really occurred in that flood and the subsequent disaster response. These are very serious matters—they involve the cabinet, the police and the bodies that assisted that response—that not only leave questions but also probably require further forensic investigation. The other matter is the spectacular flood that occurred in Toowoomba at the same time, with the tragic loss of life. Too many questions from that also remain unanswered.

This legislation also introduces an amendment to the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008. The reasons and definitions are clearly stated in the amendment. The amendment does seem to be a watering down of the original legislation. I will leave the more detailed reasons for that to the member for Yeerongpilly, who will speak after me. It is interesting that we are amending the government's own legislative changes so soon. There does appear to be a disconnect between those things stated by the government in relation to crimes against children and the legislative steps they are implementing. It is no wonder there are just under 5,000 sex offenders currently registered in Queensland, and the number is rising by 500 per year.

In addressing the specifics of the major changes of this legislation, which mainly relates to disaster legislation, I, too, have some concerns over and above those raised by the shadow minister. He seemed to be concerned about the downgrading of the roles of the military and the Red Cross.

To address the specifics of the major changes in this legislation, which mainly relates to disaster legislation, I also have some concerns over and above those things raised by the shadow minister in that he seemed to be concerned about the downgrading of the roles of the military and the Red Cross. It is the structure that concerns me. This legislation at one level creates a new cabinet committee, the newly created QDMC, Queensland Disaster Management Committee. This is replacing the DMCC and the SDMG and formally allows ministerial participation in the strategic management of disaster events. The reasons being given are effectively about red-tape reduction and flattening of the hierarchical structure, allowing for direct communication between the QDMC and the State Disaster Coordinator and the State Recovery Coordinator, the statement officially being—

This would result in faster and better-informed decision-making during a disaster event.

My concern is that the evidence that is gradually being received with regard to what happened in Grantham is that the disaster recovery should have had its primary focus on the welfare of those who suffered terrible loss and those who continue to suffer, and that was not the case in Grantham. What has been discovered so far is that the cause of the loss of life is from a flood wave that resulted from the collapse of a dam wall and bund of the wall adjoining Lockyer Creek in a now defunct quarry. I have tabled all of the relevant evidence and I again table the critical photo which was taken by Liam Kidston from the *Courier-Mail* which shows this wall being subsequently demolished in the days after the flood. I table that again for members in the parliament.

Tabled paper: Photograph depicting Lockyer Valley after flood event [\[6244\]](#).

Critically, in the immediate aftermath of the flood, the area was totally secured off by the QPS. The military and other private operators were not allowed involvement. The Premier of the time and some cabinet ministers had an extremely disproportionate input into what would happen. Victims' families were held under virtual house arrest in motels. The remnants of the offending bund wall, a photograph of which I have just tabled, that still remained were subsequently destroyed. Yet here today is a piece of legislation that entrenches the probability of this occurring in exactly the same fashion again. It may in fact compound the problem and could guarantee where blame may disproportionately fall on a government. If that is the case, then this legislation has very real capacity to sanitise it at best and criminally hide it at worst. Before people react and dispute this, firstly they might say, 'We're not sure what happened in Grantham.' We are not sure what happened in Grantham because only one day of the flood inquiry was given over to Grantham and people such as Marty Warburton, who has been on the radio in the last couple of days, who took video evidence was not allowed to present that evidence at the inquiry whilst there were others who presented a more sanitised view of what occurred.


I put it to members that politicians are not those whom we need to be involved in the critical first steps of a disaster because their interests are not aligned with those of the victims. Politicians' interests are initially self-interests and secondly sectional interests. Their currency is the currency of blame—avoiding it for themselves and trying to push it on their adversaries. In a disaster we need managers who take responsibility for their decisions and who are not initially concerned with blame, or who should be apportioned it, and who have a complete focus on victims first, property second and then acquitting the process. The minister and a variety of speakers have correctly said that the core steps of what is needed in a disaster are response, recovery and reconstruction with an element of prevention and an element of review at some stage to follow, but overwhelmingly what we do not need to do is make victims' lives any worse than they are.

The QDMC is comprised of the Premier as the chair, the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience as the deputy chair and a core group of ministers supported by their DGs, and there is a huge list outlining this in the explanatory notes. This approach is consistent with this government's approach to nearly everything where it places politics ahead of best practice and outcomes. With regard to current best practice globally, the most definitive recent book on this subject by Damon P Coppola in 2010 titled *Introduction to International Disaster Management* states—

... the emergency management structure should have its own department, ministry or agency reporting directly to the most senior executive in the country.

This would imply that the emergency services department would play a pre-eminent role in the process, with the Premier directly involved and others underneath that other structure. The proposal in the legislation will merely entrench the known existing weaknesses with no commensurate gain for the benefit of the abolition of the second delegated layer of management. Moreover, what came out of what happened during Grantham in some ways is that the worst that can occur is to let politicians get

involved at that top level and then doing nothing in the disaster because of their involvement. This legislation has the potential to near guarantee a result that occurred in Grantham not just sometimes but every time. This is in no-one's interests, especially for those victims who have no capacity to do anything other for themselves. It certainly will distil those messages leaking out to the public that merely reinforces the view that disasters represent an electoral opportunity for incumbent governments with secondary regard for victims of those disasters. The public is already convinced of the mercenary nature of its political representatives and reinforcing that view in legislation is all the evidence it needs to prove its assumptions.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.56 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill. At its core, the objective of the bill is to create a new cabinet committee called the QDMC to replace the previous two committees, the DMCC and the State Disaster Management Group. The previous member who spoke in this debate said that the highest level of management has to be able to take control of a disaster. With the Premier chairing the Queensland Disaster Management Committee and with the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience as the deputy chair and their executives and various other ministers on that committee, all of those people in the room can take responsibility for making a decision and the capacity to implement that decision. I come from a community that had a most unusual set of circumstances happen in 2011 when there was a tragic loss of life. I was laying quadriplegic in hospital when I heard the news that Toowoomba had been flooded. It seemed strange and bizarre to me that Toowoomba could flood. I literally said to the nurse, 'They must have meant Townsville,' because how could Toowoomba flood given it is on top of a mountain? The reality was that it flooded because there were some severe restrictions through the centre of our town.

I note that state disaster management really revolves around prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and I want to touch on a couple of elements of that. Toowoomba had been expanding for a number of years and the creek lines in Toowoomba had had more and more houses draining into them which meant that, when the weather event that we experienced happened, that caused a great deal of water to run into the creeks—that is, East Creek and West Creek and then later into Gowrie Creek—and the creeks were unable to deal with it. In terms of preparedness, we found that in Toowoomba there was a lack of ability to be able to hold back the water. There was also a lack of ability for the water to be able to pass unhindered through the creek lines. What have we done about that since coming to government? Talking specifically about prevention and preparedness, what has been our response in relation to the disaster that was experienced in Toowoomba? I am pleased to say that, with the help of the local government minister, we have been able to spend a lot of money on our creek lines, in particular the West Creek line, and millions of dollars have been spent jointly between ourselves and the local council.

Anybody who goes to the PCYC in my area can stand there and look at how much clearer the creek line will be in the future. Also, with the help of the Deputy Premier, we are spending \$45 million to build a road and also the bridge at one of the severe bottlenecks at Russell Street, which will be widened to more than double its original width and double its depth. That road will have four times its original capacity. This work is all about prevention. We will now know that, after a few more months work on the creek line, we will be able to prevent the type of disaster that hit the CBD of Toowoomba. In terms of the other creek line that goes into the electorate of my colleague the Minister for Agriculture, the member for Toowoomba South, the local council there has created an environment in which it can hold back the water there so that the flow of the creek will slow as it comes down towards the CBD, which will allow for better management of that water. These projects have been supported by the state government as they create an environment in which our community can be much better prepared should there be floodwater coming from the suburbs to the south of Toowoomba.


In addition, a great deal of time, energy and effort has been spent on the existing Toowoomba range crossing. In 2011 and again in 2013 that crossing was almost closed to heavy goods traffic simply because weather events had hit both lanes so hard. Those lanes were built right on the edge of the escarpment. They had not been upgraded for some time and they could not take the quantity of water that had poured down upon them. They were closed for a period of time. The closure of the Toowoomba range crossing and the various other range crossings owing to the weather event in 2011 meant, effectively, that the delivery of fuel, food, general produce, industry, exports—pretty much everything moving east-west from the Darling Downs and western Queensland—were put at threat. That threatens our whole economy. It certainly threatens my town of Toowoomba and its capacity to be able to feed itself, fuel itself and maintain itself. Certainly, we came very close to losing connectivity between Toowoomba and the western downs and Brisbane and the port.

I think that a sensible government would not only look to fix the infrastructure, which is exactly what we have been doing, but also look at the management of that infrastructure that led to it being put into the situation that it was in and the disaster that unfolded. I think the structure that we have in this bill will make for a more streamlined system in terms of disaster management. Certainly, in terms of disaster preparedness, the work that this government has done on building infrastructure and preparing itself for a similar event in the future means that the people of Toowoomba will have a much greater level of resilience and a much greater level of reliability and connectivity of their road network to be able to get around town and connect to the capital and to the port.

The Minister for Local Government touched on the report of the Productivity Commission in which the suggestion was made that mitigation costs should be borne 75 per cent by the state and only 25 per cent by the federal government. I would be happy to support that proposal as long as the state's capacity to tax increases along a similar line and that the federal government stops taking Queenslanders' money, which does not allow us to be resilient to a natural disaster that is completely out of our control. From my point of view I think it is very important that people understand that the cost of repairing damage from a disaster and building in mitigation works after a disaster has been funded 50-50 between the state and federal governments. I think that we should certainly be looking to get back as much of our tax that is paid to the federal government so that we can prepare ourselves and defend ourselves in times of natural disasters.

I congratulate the people involved in the work that has gone into East Creek and West Creek at Toowoomba and the work that is going on at the moment on the Russell Street bridge. All of this work will reduce the impact of a flood event on my community in the future. However, particularly and most importantly, the construction of the second range crossing will add both a resilience and a capacity to be able to survive such a disaster, keep commerce flowing and keep the necessities of life flowing to the communities to the west and to the east.

From my point of view, I think this is a good bill. I think that the minister is to be commended for introducing it. It simplifies the emergency management structure. It means that the people who have both the capacity and the authority to make decisions will be sitting in the room so that we will be able to deal with natural disasters in a more effective and efficient way. Ultimately, that is what is in the LNP's DNA: efficiency, effectiveness and getting bang for your buck rather than a bunch of people having a talkfest with a multitude of committees.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.06 pm): I rise to speak to this bill and acknowledge its importance to this state. The proposal is to restructure the State Disaster Management Group into the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, with the Premier as the chair. There have been points of view expressed in this chamber for and against that proposal. The important issue is that there is a single responsible body with people who are not only prepared to make decisions but authorised to make decisions. It is fine in the planning stages to have a number of decision-making streams but the reality is that, when the stuff hits the fan, you need really streamlined decision making with a clear, mapped strategy as to where the responsibility escalates from local government to state government to federal government as the resources in each sphere of government reaches its limit. That has been shown to be the most successful way, irrespective of the disaster, but particularly in times of a flood disaster.

I would like to take a moment to place on record my appreciation and certainly that of my community for all of those who have worked in previous disasters and certainly during the last lot of flooding. At that time areas of my electorate were flooded that had never flooded before in terms of remembered history and written history. Groups such as the Red Cross, the CWA, the Lions Club and the SES all swung into action and worked amazingly well together. But overarching that there has to be that coordinated disaster management group which knows the local environment, knows the local challenges and which can pull the resources together and get things done.

In one of the latest disasters—and this happened state-wide—all of Telstra went out for about 24 hours or more.


An honourable member interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Yes, everywhere. All of the emergency services used Telstra. There was no backup. The emergency services in my area were being told to change to a different carrier, but it would take 24 hours to unlock the new phone system. We needed that communication straightaway. So there has to be an overarching authority in the state that has the grunt to be able to make those decisions, to make them emphatically and to get on with the job.

I would like to commend the minister who has carriage of this bill for his understanding and involvement in his local community as well as the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. Both of those ministers have shown a great deal of commitment to situations when they are at their most difficult.

I note the comments of the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience and the member for Toowoomba North in particular about the draft productivity report. I think history is littered with attempts by different spheres of government to pass the buck in terms of responsibility. State government are past masters at it. They do it to local government all the time. But in this area it is completely unacceptable that the federal government would try to push responsibility for a significant financial investment in the state's infrastructure onto state government when we have such limited revenue-raising opportunities. Not only that, the current funding model has worked well and successfully. I think everybody in the state, everybody in the nation, acknowledges the wisdom of betterment in a lot of the decision making where it is an option and where it is practically possible to be able to maybe invest a little bit more now to ensure that recurrent investment in the same problem does not have to occur.


I will not take any more time other than to say that this sort of management is a bit like workers' compensation: it is at a time when people are at their most vulnerable. Management of emergency situations has to be done sensitively but it also has to be done decisively. I certainly hope that the new Queensland Disaster Management Committee is effective, otherwise this parliament will be back debating new structures at a time when it would be least appropriate. I wish the new committee well. More importantly, I thank all of those community organisations that wrap around the community when there is a problem and wish them strength and resilience and, on behalf of our community, say that they, as much as the more formal structures in relation to this legislation, are important. They are important in ensuring that our community can feel confident in rebuilding after the many emergencies and disasters that the state of Queensland faces.

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (4.12 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak in support of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014. This bill is just another way that this government is cutting red tape and allowing emergency services to deliver faster and better informed services during a disaster event. Like so many members of this House, and particularly like my colleague the member for Toowoomba North, who spoke briefly to this bill, I speak with some experience from my own local area of Toowoomba where we had flooding events in 2011.

The bill establishes state, district and local disaster management groups. Through that experience, which I know I share with many members right across the state, one can see how this bill will facilitate those faster and better informed responses during a disaster event. The state disaster management group and the disaster management cabinet committee will be replaced by the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, the QDMC. I want to focus on the governance arrangements under the QDMC during my brief contribution to this bill, because the formation of the QDMC will certainly improve governance of disaster management at the state level. It simplifies the state's strategic-level disaster management structure by, as the minister has said, reducing the layers of governance and allows a direct line of communication between the QDMC and the state disaster coordinator and, of course, the state recovery coordinator. That assistance in terms of faster and better informed decision making, as I said, is so very significant. The member for Toowoomba North, my colleague, reflected on the events that I have just mentioned in our city. To be in our city on that day, in then a role with local government myself, and to see the need for on-the-spot decision making, to see the excellent services delivered by those in our emergency services and, of course, those at a local government level as well, just emphasises the point that reducing red tape and improving that responsiveness is so very important, particularly in that case, as has been the case elsewhere in the state, where sadly we saw loss of life as well as significant damage.

The fact that the establishment of the QDMC allows direct ministerial participation in the strategic management of a response to and a recovery from a disaster event also assists that direct communication and responsiveness to which I refer. The committee will make strategic decisions about prevention, preparation, response and recovery for disaster events and, as the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience reflected upon a little earlier, will therefore help build Queensland's resilience to natural disasters. To see the efforts under his department and Minister Dempsey's department over the last couple of years has, indeed, been very impressive. The committee's purpose, of course, is to provide clear and unambiguous senior strategic leadership in relation to disaster management and resilience in Queensland. Its structure is unique to Queensland


and mirrors local government arrangements where the local disaster committee is chaired by a councillor of a local government supported by the council CEO and, of course, council staff. This structure to simplify disaster management at a state level and also to capitalise on the benefits of direct ministerial participation in again responding to or recovering from a disaster event is, I think, a key feature of this bill. I proudly support this bill.

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (4.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014. The key features of this bill are prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. My electorate of Yeerongpilly was seriously impacted by the 2011 floods and the subsequent storm events that occurred. During my career in policing I have worked in communities in Central and North Queensland and have witnessed flooding and extensive impacts from natural disasters. In Halifax, for example, there was a series of floods between 1998 and 2000. Emergency services work collectively to protect and serve the community during these types of events. During the floods at Ingham and at Halifax the local fishers, for example, used their vessels to support the police and the ambulance services in delivering services to those communities. This was the case in Macrossan Street in Halifax, as the member for Hinchinbrook would know, with the Lancini family. The community pulls together. I have no problem in supporting this bill in its ability to respond and to work effectively through issues being simplified and clarified.

My issue in relation to prevention is that the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience has done little to ensure that my electorate of Yeerongpilly is fully equipped with backflow valves to prevent stormwater drain flooding in the electorate. I find that incredibly disappointing and neglectful. I encourage the minister to concentrate on working with the Brisbane City Council to ensure that backflow valves are installed throughout the Yeerongpilly electorate so that the community is well and truly protected in terms of prevention and recovery in relation to future storms and flooding which will inevitably occur.

It is notable that the bill includes an amendment to address an oversight that deals with child protection and child sexual safety in Queensland. That is arguably a consequence of the legislation being rushed by the Newman government. It is certainly not a consequence of the department, which I am personally aware is staffed by highly professional people who are more than capable of preparing quality legislation to support the government of the day.

I commend the department and I commend the staff involved in the correction of the errors of the Newman government in terms of child safety and the sexual safety of children in Queensland. I support the bill. I support the amendments. I encourage the ministers for local government and housing to pay better attention to the electorate of Yeerongpilly and to support the Brisbane City Council in ensuring that backflow valves are delivered into that community into the future.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (4.19 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014. I note that the purpose of the bill is to improve the governance of disaster management at a state level. As the representative of the community of Gympie, which over the years has faced so many floods and relied upon the efficient management and proper governance of disaster management across the three levels of government, I commend the minister and his department for the work that they are doing in this area. Gympie has a very strong local disaster management group. That group is a well-oiled machine when it comes to dealing with flooding events. Unfortunately, it has had to deal with far too many flooding events within the past few years. Of course, that means that the group operates under processes that are well refined. The group understands timing issues, the importance of communicating and the importance of having good governance processes in place.

The Disaster Management Act 2003 provides a three-tier model for managing disasters with state, district and, as I have mentioned, local disaster management groups. The State Disaster Management Group is responsible for high-level disaster management functions within the state of Queensland. In October 2012, the government established the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee to provide a high level of governance and direction across disaster management activities. Earlier this year, a review of disaster management governance was conducted by an advisory group chaired by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. That review focused on the interplay between the State Disaster Management Group, the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee and the Chief Executive Officer Leadership Team Subcommittee, Community Recovery and Resilience.

It is not surprising that the advisory group recommended a new cabinet committee be formed to replace both the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee and the State Disaster Management Group. The merging of those two groups will form a new cabinet committee called the Queensland

Disaster Management Committee. The committee will be chaired by the Premier and, as we have heard, the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience is nominated as the deputy chairperson. The Queensland Disaster Management Committee will comprise a core group of ministers who will be supported by their directors-general. The bill allows for ministers, chief executive officers of departments and external parties to be invited to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee as required at the discretion of the chairperson, that is, the Premier. I believe that is very important, because ours is a diverse state and we face a wide variety of disaster threats and, tragically, disaster events themselves. The diversity within the Queensland Disaster Management Committee will ensure that, whether it is managing a flood in the Gympie area, responding to a tropical cyclone in Far North Queensland or dealing with other disaster events that may besiege our great state from time to time, the committee has the flexibility to respond.

The bill removes ancillary provisions from the Disaster Management Act and inserts them into a newly created regulation. I note that the bill does not affect the current composition or operations of district and local disaster management groups. In areas such as my electorate of Gympie, local disaster management groups are well prepared. They have been able to refine their processes and, thankfully, they will be able to continue to do the great work that they do.

As one would expect, the formation of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee will simplify Queensland's disaster management structure by reducing one layer of governance and allowing a direct line of communication between the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, the State Disaster Coordinator and the State Recovery Coordinator. That line of communication is a very important element, because during critical times when decisions need to be made, time is of the essence and these amendments will enable that to occur. Again, I commend the minister, the department and those individuals involved in this work. When you are sitting outside a disaster event, it is too easy to look at what else should be done or what further regulations and complications could be put into the processes, rather than looking at streamlining things and empowering those people who are in a position of responsibility to make decisions knowing that they are doing so within a legal framework that enables them to respond quickly. This bill enables that to occur.

The bill ensures that a state disaster coordinator must be appointed at all times instead of a discretionary appointment. That is a very solid position to be in. As I have mentioned, one of the great elements of this state is its diversity, but that means that we face risks from a wide variety of areas. Having a state disaster coordinator at all times means that we are prepared and able to respond to whatever occurs.


I note the explanatory notes state that consultation was extensive and, as one would expect, predominantly with those departments—indeed, I would hazard a guess, all departments—that are involved or may be involved with various responses to disaster management activities. That is important because the responses to the challenges that we face within this state are not limited to one department or one element of government. Only by having a whole-of-government approach under a structure of which the Premier is chairperson can we ensure that we have something that is robust and strong enough for all of us to have confidence in it.

One thing that I believe we cannot legislate for but must always be cognisant of is the great community spirit that rises after disaster events, from the volunteers within my community of Gympie who come out to help businesses sweep and mop up after flood events and the massive mud army in Brisbane that literally rose to support others to the volunteers in structured organisations such as the SES, the volunteer fire brigades, the coastguard and Volunteer Marine Rescue who rise to the occasion when the call is put out. We must always recognise that our recovery from disaster events will be on the back and, indeed, the sweat of those volunteers as they do the hard work that needs to be done. However, as is the case with any volunteers, they need to be given direction and focus in terms of where the work will occur, which is where this bill comes into play. This bill will ensure that not only during the disaster events but also in the recovery from any disaster events the proper structures are in place to assist all workers, whether they be paid or volunteer and whether they be born and bred Queenslanders or those who have only just joined this great state. In a time of need, we know that they are prepared to roll up their sleeves and do whatever is needed, either during the disaster event or throughout the recovery period.

This bill makes it clear that again the Newman government is delivering a very strong plan for a bright future when it comes to dealing with disaster management. The Disaster Management Amendment Bill will reduce disaster management red tape, which I would say is perhaps the worst kind of red tape if it prevents people from responding faster and inhibits better informed services for Queenslanders during a disaster event. This government is committed to keeping Queenslanders,

their families and their livelihoods safe, particularly in times of disaster. This government has delivered more funding for fire and emergency services. It has established an inspector general to oversee the emergency management departments and it is providing new equipment for first responders.

Indeed, we can say that the Newman government is building on a strong tradition of disaster management within the state of Queensland. This bill removes the unnecessary red tape and streamlines the processes so that we can be confident going into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.29 pm): I rise to speak to the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014. The policy objective of the Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014 is to create a new cabinet committee called the QDMC to replace the DMCC and the SDMG and formally allow direct ministerial participation in the strategic management of disaster events.

The explanatory notes state that the formation of the QDMC will simplify Queensland's disaster management structure by reducing one layer of governance and allowing a direct line of communication between the QDMC and the State Disaster Coordinator and the State Recovery Coordinator. This would result in faster and better informed decision making during a disaster event. The background is that the DMA establishes a management structure of three tiers to respond to and prepare for disasters at a local, district and state level through the creation of disaster management groups for these respective areas.

Those living in North Queensland have been faced with many disasters. We have cyclones buzzing around year in and year out, especially during the cyclone season or the monsoonal wet season. We have had Cyclone Larry and Cyclone Yasi and last year Cyclone Oswald. I feel that there has been good disaster management over the years. I feel that during Cyclone Larry Peter Beattie did a great job. Likewise, during Cyclone Yasi and the floods in Brisbane Anna Bligh did a great job. I feel that Campbell Newman did a great job as well with regard to disaster management during the floods in Brisbane. There is one thing that we have to be careful about. During Cyclone Oswald we had politicians parachuting in everywhere promising things and saying that they were there to help.

This new legislation outlines the ministers who will be on the committee. Obviously, the Premier, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Trade and others are on that committee. We have to be careful that politicians are not seen to be doing the job of our emergency services personnel or SES volunteers. Sometimes politicians get in the way. We see politicians become weather forecasters and tell people what time the tide is going to come in. They can go overboard to the point that it becomes a joke. That is what happened last year with Cyclone Oswald. Politicians were parachuting in.

What we see is the operation of our emergency services, which are very important to us, become a part of political promotion for political parties. I will not say one side or the other, but that has been the case. We want to see red tape cut, but we also want to ensure that politicians do not stand in the way of the good people who are doing the hard work and become the mouthpiece. I feel that that is very important.

In the last 10 years we have had politicians parachute in. While we have been cut off—10 days during Larry and Yasi—a lot of vehicles used the inland highway. There have been a lot of times when that has been cut off. That is why I have pushed for areas around Basalt Creek, Clarke Creek, Hann Creek, Fletcher Creek, Stockyard Creek and Snake Creek to be upgraded so we can have an inland highway. We have politicians who keep bringing up the inland highway. That is what the Minister for Local Government said. We are not seeing this inland highway. Next year we do not want to see politicians step in the way and take on all the roles and all the glory and then promise the inland highway and us not see it.


In the background section of the report it states—

At the State level, the DMA establishes the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) which is tasked with a range of high-level disaster management functions within the State across the four phases of disaster management, namely: Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

I think prevention, preparedness, response and recovery is very important. I saw the devastation and destruction of Cyclone Yasi and to some extent the devastation and destruction of Cyclone Larry. I know the member for Hinchinbrook saw a far greater impact in his area. I saw mass devastation stretching from Charters Towers to the Atherton Tablelands. Obviously the minister's area copped the full brunt of it in Tully, Cardwell and Mission Beach.

We have to acknowledge the work of the Ergon workers. That is why we cannot sell our profitable assets. We need those people in times of disaster. The objectives of this bill are to ensure that we have people on call and ready to repair and save our infrastructure as quickly as they can. We need the Ergon depots. I believe Ergon workers were praised for their dedication and for working hard around the clock. We need to ensure that we have ownership of those assets and not anyone else.

In speaking to the Disaster Management Amendment Bill, I congratulate the volunteers. We want good governance and not government for glory when it comes to disasters. We do not want to glorify disasters. We want to be there to ensure that the job is done. I want to bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (4.36 pm): I suspect it has been said before, but it is something that needs to be said. That is that today is the day we recognise the contribution of rural fire brigades and all wear yellow ribbons. That is something which I think solidifies in the minds of Queenslanders the work of our volunteers and the state in which we live. It is an idyllic place to live. We are able to recreate and raise a family. We have a temperate climate. But we need to keep in mind that Queensland extends into the tropical zone. That creates a diversity of geology and geography and weather. We suffer the extremes. We go from flood to drought to cyclones. I remember in the 1970s that we had a tornado that went through Moorooka. One hundred or so metres of house roofs were taken off at that time.

As Queenslanders we know that we are at the mercy of the elements. It is this backdrop that makes this bill so appropriate and an evolution in terms of how we handle disasters and how we manage our resources to be able to deal with those disasters and with the people of Queensland who invariably seek the assistance of the government and volunteers to have their situation righted as soon as possible. We talk about resilience. Resilience will happen in time as the resources develop. At this point in time the disasters we suffer take us into realms unknown, particularly given what we have experienced over the last 10 years or so.

I remember doing some research in respect of another speech—it just seems so appropriate to announce it today—about John Oxley and Captain Logan. I think it was in 1923 or 1924 when each individual went up the Brisbane River and—

Mr Walker: 1820s.

Mr BERRY: Minister, thank you very much for the correction—of course it was 1823 or 1824. That was the time John Cunningham was going through Ipswich. It was an important exploratory time in Queensland. But the interesting point about both of those explorers was that as they were travelling along the Bremer what they noticed was the amount of natural debris in the branches of the gum trees that were aligning the river. There is diversity in the two accounts as to what that meant. But effectively what they were saying was that the debris was as high as 100 feet up in the branches of the trees. I make the concession that now we have dams and weirs and other structures that do alter that a little bit on the history.

The interesting point about that is that we have had floods but the part that really concerns us all—and one which certainly resonates with me—is have we really had the flood of floods, maybe the one in every 300 years flood? Our history does not relate back that far and that is the concern to us all. It is necessary for a bill like this to go through at this appropriate time to ensure, as the member for Gympie has said—and I think it is a resonant point with me—that we have direct command, that we cut red tape and that decisions are made because plainly our disasters are regular, and with their intensity having a great variance we have to be able to respond at the earliest possible time and in the most immediate way with all of the resources that we have at our command.

I just digress for one moment about our history. In Ipswich we have a place called River Heart—it is adjacent to the Bremer River—and there is a plate there on which it shows all of the floods we have had from the 1890s. It is interesting to note the substantial number of floods that we have had. They are so regular but, of course, the intensity has varied so greatly, some of which have caused us great concern. I remember the 1893 flood in the area I came from at Sherwood.

Mr Krause: 1893? You remember, do you?

Mr BERRY: As a young boy, I remember a flood in the 1950s—I say to the member for Beaudesert.

Mr Krause: You were there for 1893!

Mr BERRY: I do thank the member for Beaudesert for his contribution to time. But it is one of those things that we need to think about, because the concern always is that history properly records but sometimes our memory only goes as far back as our childhood days. We need to concern ourselves about this state and how it is the subject of all sorts of disasters, as I have indicated previously. So the real element of this Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014 is to make sure that we do have direct control of how we deal with these disasters.

It is the case that the previous model was a model that worked at the time. Clearly, having had disasters since then we have worked out that perhaps there can be more direct command. I will just briefly touch on the Wivenhoe Dam difficulties when in fact the decision-making process seemed to be somewhat errant. That is only a personal opinion of mine and, of course, there are other factors with that particular flood in 2011. The point is though that we need to have direct control and we need for there to be decision makers who gather in all of the available evidence and resources to be able to make quick decisions. It is not just about being able to make those decisions but about the resources matching up with the disaster, because there are so many facets to disasters in this state. It is not improbable to suggest that in one part of the state we could have a flood and in another part of the state we could have a drought. It is just the way our climate seems to work and the way the weather really rules our lives, whether you are on the land or whether you are in South-East Queensland or whether you are in part of the outback or other regions. The reality of life is that we as Queenslanders are subject to these great variations and we need to be able to act appropriately.

Previously, the state government had a model. It was only after some consultation with various groups that a State Disaster Management Group was able to come up with a means by which we should be able to more adequately deal with the disasters we have in this state. I believe that the model that has been chosen, which we will call the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, which is chaired by the Premier and deputy chaired by the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience, is a good starting place and maybe through evolution it will develop as we go. But it does consist of a core group of ministers and their directors-general. It can, by invitation, include additional ministers and their CEOs, and how appropriate is that because effectively you need to be able to bring to the table that expertise and those people who are able to assist.

I note in one of the submissions from the Red Cross that they thought a heavy blow was dealt to them on the basis that they were not included in the original group. I can only say to the Red Cross that they are such a valued organisation. They are called to almost every disaster around the world that I can possibly think of. You see them on the front line, and I certainly acknowledge their being at the coalface when it comes to all sorts of disasters and not only in Queensland. I say this: disasters vary so much in this state that we need to consider the decision makers at the table. The Red Cross of course can be there by invitation or they can be there as an observer and their input would certainly be valued if they were called upon. I feel quite sure that they would give, as they have in the past, without reservation the resources that they have available to assist Queenslanders.

There was some talk about the fundamental legislative principles. I only touch on that because effectively the ad hoc make-up of the committee can be done by way of a regulation of parliament. I only have this to say: this shows the immediacy, the reason the decisions need to be made quickly. It is so nice to be able to reconvene parliament to have a bill proceed through the parliament, but clearly that would be inappropriate. It would take away the strength of what this disaster management bill is about. It is about immediacy, cutting red tape and making sure that decisions are made so that resources go to the places where they are most required.

That is the thing about disasters. They really do bring to the fore all of the resources of government, volunteers and non-government organisations. In the experience we have had in the past it has always been the case that each of those groups have contributed to the combination. I remember the 2011 floods. I was fortified by the amount of money that people donated, and that just emphasises the spirit by which people are prepared to help. It is about having a decision-making body that is able to act quickly or able to ensure that volunteers are used in the most effective way. It is not that long ago that we remember the film on the news about the mud army and how they at short notice rallied to the cause. By watching the film, we can see that people from all backgrounds with all of their implements were ready to come to the aid of their fellow citizens and assist. It is fortifying to know that we have those people who are able to step up to the mark.

What those people and what all Queenslanders want of this government or, for that matter, any government is responsible decision making and quick action. This bill, in my view, ticks all the boxes in that regard. I commend the minister for bringing this bill to this parliament. It is a good piece of legislation and one on which I can say on behalf of my committee members that we were so pleased

to be able to report. There was not much we could say in terms of it lacking any particular resource. It is a fulfilment of a group who have worked out what is plainly needed in this state. I feel more confident now that we will be able to handle disasters with a lot more vigour and immediacy and with the right information. I thank the minister.



Mr HOPPER (Condamine—KAP) (4.50 pm): In my short contribution I would like to raise a couple of points. Every member in this House has probably seen the devastation over the past few years due to the floods and cyclones. We must get wiser as a government, and there is no doubt that is what this legislation is all about. We will certainly be supporting this legislation.

We saw the town of Dalby and Oakey horrendously affected by flood. We all know what happened in the Lockyer Valley. Who would have thought that the city of Toowoomba, on top of a mountain range, would have a fierce flood roar straight through the middle of it? That was history in the making. Let us hope that will never be repeated. Since those floods we have seen early warning systems put in place in the catchment areas of Upper Oakey Creek, Myall Creek and surrounding Toowoomba as well. There is an old saying: an ill wind blows no evil. The people who were responsible for the management structure that has been put in place need to be commended. With regard to the committee that has been put in place, I believe that the Premier as chair has the opportunity to nominate members to that committee. During a flood like that I would say that those people have a lot of local knowledge. I speak of people such as the Western Downs Mayor, Ray Brown, and Paul Antonio, the Mayor of Toowoomba, who has lived there all his life. Ray Brown has lived at Westmar and now lives at Dalby. Those sorts of people have lived there all their lives. They know that area and they know the people who live on the creeks. In a time of devastation due to a serious flood I think it would be good if those people could be put on the committee. There is also Steve Jones in the Lockyer Valley and there are others. I heard the member for Gympie mention that nurses could be called in, too.

I think this is really good legislation. I wanted to mention that those men and the work they did in the floods were simply outstanding. The work that Ian Rickuss, the member for Lockyer, and his wife did in that situation should not be forgotten by this chamber. He and his wife are to be commended. I want to congratulate the government on this bill. It is good legislation and we will be supporting it.



Mr CHOAT (Ipswich West—LNP) (4.52 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, no doubt you and fellow members of this parliament would know that I often refer to my electorate as 'ground zero' when it comes to disasters in South-East Queensland because, unfortunately, over the past decade or so that has been our experience. The Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014 really means a lot to us. I say 'ground zero' because in a lot of ways the electorate actually begins at the spillway of Wivenhoe. Sadly, to some people in my electorate Wivenhoe Dam is a giant waiting to gobble them up. I know that seems a little bit flippant but, sadly, there are people who have those feelings. There are also still children who worry whenever it rains, particularly during storms.

In saying that, however, we are a resilient community. I guess we know better than most how to recover, how to pick ourselves up and how to put the pieces back together. The other thing, too, is that through things like this bill, but more importantly through the actions of the Newman government, there is a renewed sense of confidence in the community. The best way to explain that is that recently, as most people would know, we had two very similar events—that of 2011 and then, unfortunately, a follow-up in 2013. In 2011 people's worst nightmares were realised. Sadly, today I am still working with some members of my community who are not a lot better off than they were in the months following 2011. It is really sad, but it is a reality that there are still some people who are spiritually, physically or fiscally broken and we cannot forget them.

We have had a number of serious events that even predated 2011. In 1996 and also notably in 2008, the communities around Minden and Coolana in particular suffered terribly with up to a metre of water going through there on that November night in 2008. I guess most of them thought it was a freak event. But it seemed only two years later they were confronted with similar levels of water through their properties. No doubt compounding that was the news that our brothers and sisters in North Queensland were suffering the results of cyclones, and we saw that in 2013 in the community of Bundaberg. I am really pleased to see that, through legislation like this, government can be prepared and government can plan to deal with the emergency itself. What that actually does is allow the community to focus on what to do in the aftermath. The rest is taken care of, and that is so very important. Sadly, in the Lockyer Valley and the Brisbane Valley we lost lives in 2011. There is one noted case that still hurts quite a lot, particularly in the community of Minden where a young boy was lost.

It is not all bad news though because, as I said, we are a resilient mob. My people pick themselves up, clean the mud off, get rid of the broken stuff, fix things and then go back to striving to be a great community. Just last weekend I was joined by Mayor Paul Pisasale at the official reopening of Colleges Crossing. For someone like me who has raised his family in Karalee, Colleges Crossing is the place we go to have our kids' parties, a community barbecue for a football club break-up and things like that. Effectively, we have not been able to use that facility for three years. At the opening I was relaying that my two older children always had their parties and events at Colleges Crossing because the parklands were absolutely fantastic. They are again, but my daughter who is three has never had that opportunity. Last Saturday was the first real opportunity that Eloise has had to play in that park. I am very grateful to the Minister for Local Government for the attention that he gave us in terms of repairing Colleges Crossing for the second time in a year. That is effectively what it was; it was only reopened at the end of 2012 and then in months it was gone again. In some ways it was a little more than what the community could bear because it was a great loss.

It was an area where everyone went in the old days. We have had to do without that. I am really pleased to see it back up again. Yes, there have been some people who say, 'Look, you fixed a park, but what about the bridge at Colleges Crossing?' I accept those perspectives, but the places where the community can come together and enjoy themselves particularly along the river are very, very important. So it is money well spent. Living on the Brisbane River, we accept that, inevitably, there are going to be floods. There is no possible way that we could ever 100 per cent guarantee there will never be another flood. However, certainly there are things that government can do to mitigate some of that and perhaps eliminate the worry that a lot of people have.

Colleges Crossing is a significant corridor. It would be wrong of me not to talk about Colleges Crossing bridge because it has been an issue for the community for many, many years and I believe that it should be upgraded. We are not looking for a Golden Gate result; we just need a bridge that is about five metres higher. That would assist us when we have draw downs to prepare for and it would provide a bit of resilience to the community and a bit of leeway for managing floodwaters. We are reasonable people. We know that in a major event a bridge five metres higher is going to be inundated, but that is going to be less likely.

I want to talk a little bit about the Mid Brisbane River. The Mid Brisbane River is a stretch from the Mount Crosby Weir through to the spillway at Wivenhoe. Many of the people who live along that river are represented by an organisation called the Mid Brisbane River Irrigators. They do so much to protect the riverbank and the river itself, which is a water resource which ultimately benefits the people of Brisbane and beyond who rely on the quality of water that we pump through the pumping station at the Mount Crosby Weir. A lot of people may not realise that there is no magic pipe that runs from Wivenhoe to the Mount Crosby pumping station, it is the river that carries that water down, so it is a very important resource. I am very proud to say that my people and those of the member for Nanango, Deb Frecklington, and the member for Moggill, Bruce Flegg, do look after the river; however, they are the first people who are impacted in either a draw down or a flood event. They lose infrastructure and some of them lose acres of ground and, of course, that can be very expensive if not impossible to replace. At least they now have a sense that the government is working to make sure that there is a plan to manage the floods that may come down through the Wivenhoe system and the Lockyer Creek. On top of that, knowing that there is a planned, funded and properly organised emergency management response, they can at least have some faith that they are going to be looked after in that sense.


I want to acknowledge emergency services personnel, particularly the police and the members of the Fire and Rescue Service who do their jobs every day, but more importantly—and I am wearing my yellow ribbon today—people like our Rural Fire Service brigades. I have a number of those brigades in my electorate, I work very well with them and they do a wonderful job. Sadly, I have to say that some of them were a little overlooked in 2011 in terms of the outputs they were responsible for and the work that they did. That is not taking anything away from the SES groups out there because they are fantastic and we know we can rely on them, but today I think we should pay tribute to rural fire brigades because they certainly make a great impact. They are very, very organised in what they do, and they give without any sense of getting something in return because they just want to support their communities.

I do want to pick up on a comment that was made by the member for Dalrymple about politicians appearing on TV in disaster areas during emergency times. I do want to say that it is important for elected representatives, particularly people like our Premiers current and past, to be there to show people in those communities that they are not on their own. In my view, and I know in

the view of my people, it is important for them to know that the Premier of the day and the minister of the day understand exactly what they are confronted with and what they are going through, because quite honestly I believe that those people can then come back to others who may not be in an area that has been impacted by the disaster and make good representations to get the support for recovery that is required. So I do disagree with the member for Dalrymple in that sense. People want to know that their leaders are there for them and that they are looking out for them, and there is no time of greater need than when people are feeling in peril. The member for Dalrymple mentioned our three latest Premiers including our current Premier, Campbell Newman, in terms of the support that they gave—and they did excellent jobs—but we also have a minister here who has provided for dealing with the problems as they arise, and that is of particular importance to my people.

As I mentioned earlier, there are people who are still hurting and I have discussions with them on a regular basis. We might have had five millilitres of rain and they tell me about their children, some of whom are 12 and some of whom are indeed 17, who panic because they are worried, agitated and stressed about the prospect of having to relive some of this stuff. The measures that we are putting in place can at least go some way to letting those people know that every possible effort is going to be made to look after them if the worst happens. I know that in other areas of management the government is certainly going to do whatever it can to ensure that in some way these things do not happen.

A lot of recovery work has happened, and I mentioned Colleges Crossing before, but I am pleased to see that the alternate route has been sealed and realigned. The flooding at Thagoona will also be addressed in terms of the reconstruction of the rail bridge there. This is a great bill which will make a huge difference to future disaster issues, and I certainly commend the minister and his department for the work that they have done.

 **Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (5.05 pm), in reply: I will start by thanking all of the members here for their contribution to the debate on this bill and also for their comments in relation to a very important bill that affects all Queenslanders, let alone the nation of Australia. I would now like to address some of the issues that have been raised by the good member for Rockhampton.

The member for Rockhampton has asked why the ADF and the Australian Red Cross are not specifically mentioned in this bill. The State Disaster Management Group currently consists of 25 members and includes representatives from the ADF and the Red Cross. In contrast, the bill limits the standing membership of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee to eight members. This will promote rapid decision making in relation to disaster management. Additionally, the bill gives the chairperson the flexibility to invite other members either to act as members or to provide assistance to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee. This allows the membership of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee to be tailored to meet the circumstances of any particular event. Not every disaster event will require the ADF; calling upon their assistance in a time of need is more efficient and appropriate. In relation to external organisations, the government recognises the invaluable assistance that these groups provide during times of disaster. This bill will not affect the input of these groups at an operational level such as with the State Disaster Coordination Group. These groups may be asked by the chair to join the Queensland Disaster Management Committee if required.

The member for Rockhampton has also raised issues in relation to cabinet-in-confidence, and I can assure the member that handbooks, guidelines and the State Disaster Management Plan will be public. Additionally, operational decisions by their nature will also be public to allow those decisions to be used in disaster management arrangements.

In regard to the member for Rockhampton's question on the amendment to be made within the bill, I can assure him that the amendment to the Child Protection (Offenders Prohibition Orders) Act 2008 has not come about from any incident that places the safety of children at risk. The amendment is merely a clarifying provision to ensure that any person who has ever been required to report under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 will continue to be captured under the Child Protection (Offenders Prohibition Orders) Act 2008 regardless of their reporting requirements.

I will conclude by emphasising this very important point: this bill is not about fixing something that has been broken. The disaster management system in this state is of world-class standard. This bill instead allows our state to continue to lead the way in disaster management practices and processes. The bill ensures that Queensland has a strategic governance framework that maximises its disaster management capabilities and reinforces the strategic focus on all phases of disaster

management from planning and preparedness right through to recovery and building community resilience. It will allow for faster strategic decision making and a seamless transition between disaster phases.

As the members of this House are well aware, disaster management is not just about the operational response to a disaster event. The planning, preparation and recovery phases of disaster management are just as important, if not more important. As we have seen from the floods and cyclones that our state has weathered over recent years, the recovery phase of a disaster extends well beyond the disaster event itself. The recovery phase is also often the cause of more concern and anxiety to our citizens and communities than the disaster event itself. Therefore, it is important that we continue to focus on all aspects of disaster management. Although our great state has seen its fair share of natural disasters, we as a state, as a community and as individuals continue to learn from each one. In doing so, we are better prepared, can better respond and will more quickly recover from future disaster events.

Our citizens and our communities are more resilient and better prepared than ever before. Our emergency services workers, our government departments, our local councils, our non-government organisations, our community and our hardworking volunteers are also better prepared than ever before. Likewise, our disaster management arrangements must adapt and develop in response to lessons learned from past events. This bill achieves this by adjusting our disaster management strategic governance arrangements to ensure that our disaster management systems remain efficient and effective. This amendment will be in place and training will be undertaken prior to the pending storm season to ensure that our state is best placed to respond to any future disaster events.

In closing, I thank everybody involved in the preparation of this bill from a number of different government departments for their fine work. Their professionalism and dedication can be seen in the preparation of this particular bill and what has been presented to parliament. As we know, this is the people's house. It represents the people of Queensland. I acknowledge their effort in the preparation of this bill. I thank them on behalf of all members of this House and the people of Queensland for their dedication and professionalism in this regard.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1—



Mr DEMPSEY (5.12 pm): I move the following amendment—

1

Clause 1 (Short title)

Page 6, line 4, after '*Management*'—

insert—

and Another Act

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. Jack Dempsey's amendments [\[6245\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

Mr DEMPSEY (5.12 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr DEMPSEY: I move the following amendment—

2

After clause 23

Page 17, after line 18—

insert—

Part 4 Amendment of the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008

24 Act amended

This part amends the *Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008*.

25 Amendment of schedule (Dictionary)

Schedule, definition *relevant sexual offender*—

insert—

- (c) a person who would be a reportable offender if all the reporting periods under the Offender Reporting Act for the person had not ended, as mentioned in section 8(d) of that Act.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (5.14 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. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (5.14 pm): I move the following amendment—

3 Long title

Long title, after 'An Act to amend'—

insert—

the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008 and

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 22 May (see p. 1825).

Second Reading

Hon. TL MANDER (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (5.15 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for its prompt consideration of the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. In particular, I thank the committee and the chairman, the member for Warrego, for their deliberation and report on the bill which was tabled on 18 August 2014. I would also like to thank those individuals and stakeholders who made submissions on the bill to the committee. Submissions were received from various stakeholders including Master Builders, the Housing Industry Association, Engineers Australia, the Australian Institute of Building and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia. The committee's report makes only one recommendation: that the bill be passed.

This bill is about effective regulation and support of our state's building and construction industry. This bill serves two purposes: to amend the Professional Engineers Act 2002; and to implement the second stage of the amendments to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991. First, the bill strengthens the ability of the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland to properly regulate the industry so that Queenslanders can have the peace of mind of knowing that they are dealing with a qualified, professional and reputable engineer. Secondly, the bill will give effect to the second stage of the implementation of the government's 10-point action plan to overhaul the building industry regulator.

I will speak to the engineers component in the first instance. In late 2012 the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland began a review of the Queensland Professional Engineers Act 2002 to check that the act remains fully up to date and reflects contemporary best practices in the regulation of engineering services. The review resulted in a number of proposed changes and amendments to the act, and this bill is designed to give effect to those changes. Those changes include clarifying critical definitions in the act. This will help those working with the act to better understand what some key definitions mean. This will help people work with the act and understand how it is to be applied more accurately.

Secondly, it will introduce a new category of non-practising professional engineer. This will capture those who have retired as well as those on maternity leave or career breaks. Those who become registered as non-practising engineers will pay a reduced registration fee and maintain their registration but will not be able to provide professional engineering services. It will also extend the time for which proceedings under the act can commence, from six months to one year in some circumstances. The current time limit of six months has proved difficult to meet, particularly when the board needs to investigate a situation and then potentially prosecute someone. It will also expand options for the board in deciding about unregistered engineers. Options such as caution or reprimand may be more appropriate and may negate the need for lengthy and expensive prosecution processes.

I now move to the part of the bill that covers the second tranche of amendments to the QBCC. Under this bill, an amendment to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, otherwise known as the QBCC Act, will allow the QBCC to review its own decisions about insurance, homeowner complaints and licensing rather than having them challenged in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This will potentially save consumers and licensees time and money. The review will be undertaken for free by an officer within the QBCC who was not involved in the original decision and who is of equal or higher level than the original decision maker. Licensees and homeowners will still have the right to appeal any QBCC decision, including internal reviews, to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The bill also amends the Building Act 1975 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 to allow for the transfer of functions from the Pool Safety Council and the Plumbing Industry Council to the QBCC. For many years the Plumbing Industry Council has been responsible for licensing plumbers and drainers and regulating their conduct. Since 2010, the Pool Safety Council has done the same for pool safety inspectors. This means that many plumbers and drainers currently have to pay for two licences from different regulators—the Plumbing Industry Council for their occupational licence and the QBCC for their contractor licence. Having the QBCC as the single regulator will provide a number of benefits to local businesses and the industry, including cutting red tape and administrative costs for licensees and providing cost savings to local businesses and the industry. For example, plumbers will save time, money and hassle as they will only need to hold and pay for one licence, saving \$123.10 per year. It will also provide an effective one-stop shop for pool safety inspectors, plumbers and drainers for their licensing needs and it will also bring about a consistent and experienced arbiter of issues relating to the conduct of construction industry licences.

Finally, the bill also amends the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act to more clearly identify that a licensee ought not to be categorised as a permanently excluded individual merely as a result of a relevant bankruptcy event and a relevant company act arising out of the same incident. This amendment stems from a recommendation in the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's report tabled on 30 November 2012 that the QBCC Act be amended to provide that where an individual's relevant bankruptcy event and a relevant company event stem from the same financial incident they may be deemed one event for the purpose of penalties. This recommendation came about as a result of criticism from witnesses who submitted that bankruptcy and company insolvency events arising from the same circumstances should be treated as a single event because to do otherwise is unfair. The government supported this recommendation by the parliamentary committee and, as a result, this bill addresses the issue.

While the Plumbing Industry Council and Pool Safety Council will cease operating, licences from these councils will remain valid until they expire. Any endorsements, conditions or restrictions on the licence will also continue to apply. Although the QBCC will be assuming the operational functions of the former councils, legislation and policy matters will remain the responsibility of the Department of Housing and Public Works. It is proposed that the Pool Safety Council will be transitioned to a consultative group to provide advice to the department and myself on issues relating to pool safety.

I want to foreshadow some further minor amendments that I intend to move during the consideration in detail stage of the bill. Firstly, it is intended to insert a new section in both the Building Act 1975 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 to allow the QBCC to retain the revenue it will raise from the transfer of enforcement aspects for pool safety and plumbing laws. Currently, the act states that the revenue must go to the Consolidated Fund. This will be similar to provisions which already exist in the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act for offences against that act. This is important to ensure that funds go to the QBCC so that it is not out of pocket as a result of its enforcement activities.

Secondly, some minor amendments are proposed which relate to the transfer of licensing functions from the Department of Housing and Public Works to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. These include amending the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act so that the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Commissioner can allocate demerit points to a pool safety inspector. There will also be an amendment to the Building Act to transfer the ability to prosecute pool safety offences from the chief executive to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Commissioner. These amendments to the bill ensure that the policy intent for the new roles and functions of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Commissioner are delivered. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.25 pm): I rise to speak on the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Labor will be broadly supporting the legislation, but we will oppose certain aspects of the bill. The Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 implements two separate sets of amendments. Firstly, it makes amendments to the Professional Engineers Act 2002, the PE Act; and, secondly, it implements the second stage of the amendment in relation to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, the commission. The PE Act changes have arisen as a result of a Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland review in late 2012 to promote compliance with the PE Act and to ensure that the PE Act was relevant and up to date. After consultation with its members conducted by KPMG, the changes recommended by the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland have been included in this bill. Engineers play a vital role in a range of industries and it is critical that the profession is well regulated. Currently in Queensland the professional engineers Queensland board administers the PE Act and registers professional engineers under a co-regulatory scheme. On 27 November 2012 the PEQ board had 8,854 professional engineers on its register, with numbers increasing by an average of 115 a month. The amendments that the bill makes to the Professional Engineers Act 2002 are largely uncontentious and appear to enjoy the strong support of the industry.

The bill will, firstly, require that a person carrying out professional engineering services from outside Queensland for projects based in Queensland must be a registered professional engineer or working under the direct supervision of a registered professional engineer; introduce a new category of non-practising engineer to cater for retired engineers or engineers who are on parental leave or having other career breaks; introduce a provision where all penalties and fees recovered under the act are paid to the board and become part of the board's funds; extend the time for which proceedings under the act can commence from six months to one year, in some circumstances; and include provisions so the board has the power to reject complaints if it reasonably considers that a complaint is unfounded or lacking in substance, and this is in addition to the current reasons the board can reject a complaint, which include frivolous, vexatious or trivial complaints.

Debate, on motion of Mr Byrne, adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (5.29 pm): I advise the House of determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 136, that the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report on the Exhibited Animals Bill by 2 February 2015 and the Health and Community Services Committee report on the Recreation Areas Management and Another Act Amendment Bill by 20 November 2014.

MOTION

Newman LNP Government, Economic Performance



Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House:

- notes that recently released data shows that the Newman government's four pillars—agriculture, tourism, resources and construction—are underperforming;
- notes that as at September 2014, there were 8,400 fewer full-time jobs in Queensland on a trend basis than when the Newman government was elected in March 2013; and
- acknowledges that the dysfunctional LNP government has failed Queensland with its poor economic policies and broken promises.

Before the last election the Treasurer and the LNP were talking down the Queensland economy. The LNP arrogantly set about trying to trash confidence in the economy, with the Treasurer describing our economy growing at four per cent and state final demand tracking at 7.5 per cent over the year to March quarter 2012 as a basket case. Despite growth slowing to three per cent and state final demand contracting by 0.4 per cent over the year to June quarter this year, members have never heard me call the Queensland economy a basket case. This negative result in state final demand is significant. Although the Treasurer has selectively dismissed state final demand figures, he used to consider them a significant measure and referenced state final demand results last year to claim that the Queensland economy was a powerhouse.

Under Labor, over the year to March quarter 2012, state final demand was tracking at 7.5 per cent, private investment was growing by 23.2 per cent, business investment was growing by 31.7 per cent and household spending was growing by 4.7 per cent. Over the year to June 2014, we have state final demand contracting by 0.4 per cent, weaker household spending at 1.9 per cent, business investment falling by 12.4 per cent, private investment falling by 7.5 per cent and machinery and equipment investment plummeting by 19.4 per cent. These are not indications of an economy that is back on track, as the Premier and this LNP government deceptively claim. This certainly is not the year that it all comes together, as the Premier said in February. The Premier has now changed his tone on the economy to 'watch this space'.

According to the Treasurer's own budget papers, gross state product is expected to be three per cent this financial year, down from four per cent under Labor. This headline growth result is propped up by a three percentage point contribution to gross state product from net overseas exports. Headline growth is being propped up by overseas exports, including the commencement of the LNG export industry, facilitated by previous Labor governments. The budget papers project that spending in the domestic economy, or state final demand, will contract again by 1¼ per cent over this financial year. This contraction follows the contraction in state final demand of 0.4 per cent over the year to June 2014. Business investment, which has already fallen by 12.4 per cent, is forecast in the budget to fall again this financial year by a staggering 20 per cent.

The Westpac Coast to Coast report for September stated in response to recent ABS data that growth was on the slide in Queensland, that consumer confidence is weak and that business investment is now in decline. Westpac stated—

... growth will increasingly need to come from other sources: Key here is activity in the services sector (tourism and education) and household demand.

However, retail trade—a key measure of household demand—fell in August by 0.1 per cent trend. Queensland was the only mainland state to record a trend contraction in retail trade. In seasonally adjusted terms the contraction in retail trade was even worse, leading the country with a 0.6 per cent fall. These are not results to be proud of. No wonder the Premier has resorted to counting cranes in the search for positive news.

The Premier certainly could not find much in the way of good economic news from the ABS, in his budget papers or any reputable source. Queensland's economy is weaker under the LNP than it was under Labor and unemployment is higher than it was under Labor. The trend unemployment rate has increased from 5.5 per cent at the election to 6.4 per cent in September. This is the second highest unemployment rate in mainland Australia behind Victoria. It is the highest unemployment rate on a trend basis in Queensland in more than 11 years—higher than the unemployment rate ever reached during the global financial crisis under Labor.

When it comes to its four pillars, this government has failed to deliver. Between the May quarter 2012 and the August quarter 2014, the four pillars have lost 5,620 jobs. During this period the pillar of agriculture, defined by the ABS as agriculture, forestry and fishing, had a net loss of 30,680 jobs. On a net basis, the mining sector lost another 2,040 jobs. Although there was some growth in construction and accommodation and food services, they did not offset those job losses across the four pillars. According to the Treasurer's own Queensland Treasury Corporation investor booklet, the LNP's four pillars make up just 22 per cent of employment and 27 per cent of the economy. After more than 2½ years, this Newman government is yet to come up with a plan for the other 73 per cent of the economy: the key sectors such as manufacturing, international education, financial services, medical science and biotechnology. Of course, we are still waiting on an infrastructure plan from the Deputy Premier.

The fact that there are fewer full-time jobs in Queensland with over 170,000 additional people living here is a shocking indictment on the Newman government's economic and financial mismanagement. We should be calling it economic and fiscal mismanagement. On a trend basis, in September 2014 in Queensland there are 8,400 fewer full-time jobs than there were in March 2012. On the currently troubled seasonally adjusted series—people would be aware of the ABS problems—there are 24,000 fewer full-time jobs. Whichever way we look at it, this government has failed to deliver any net growth in full-time jobs—not a single additional full-time job. Not one!

In opposition, the Treasurer used to harp on about any job that was not full time or was classified as part time—it could be for just one hour a week—was not a breadwinner job. Now, the Treasurer cherry picks time periods for growth in part-time jobs to claim that he is delivering. How times change. Since the election, 26,600 Queenslanders have been added to the unemployment queue. That is not even counting the additional 34,800 Queenslanders who, under this government, have given up looking for work and who are no longer counted in the unemployment statistics. Those people are no longer counted because they have left the search for work. They have given up, because this government gives them no reason to hope. In September, the trend participation rate, or the percentage of people looking for work, has fallen from 66.8 per cent at the election to 65.9 per cent. That is masking just how weak employment conditions are in the state of Queensland. If those people were still counted as unemployed, or if the same percentage of Queenslanders who were looking for work were counted as they were under Labor, the unemployment rate would now be significantly higher at 7.6 per cent trend. So that is 26,600 Queenslanders added to the unemployment queue and 34,800 Queenslanders who have left the search for work. That is over 61,000 Queenslanders out of work under the Newman government. That follows the Treasurer's claims last year that he expected that 'the worst is now behind us' when it came to the labour market.

Back then the Treasurer was dismissing concerns from the opposition about the axing of employment support programs at the worst possible time for Queenslanders. Those axings are having real impacts on people. Employment programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work were more than paying for themselves through increased economic activity. It should not be forgotten that in the 2012-13 financial year Queensland recorded its worst result for jobs growth in more than two decades. This is set out in black and white on the Queensland Government Statistician's website. The last time jobs growth was as weak as that was in 1990-91 when the national economy was last in recession.

I get the sense that members in this chamber are not very interested in hearing the facts, but they should listen because this is what the people in their communities are saying to us. The opposition is listening. Clearly, government members are not, including in this chamber.

This jobs growth was worse than the jobs growth recorded at the height of the global financial crisis. The Newman LNP government has directly contributed to this result through its mass sacking of government workers, including front-line nurses. As Deloitte Access Economics stated at the start of this year—


Queensland is still weighed down by a coal crisis and by State Government cutbacks.

Deloitte said that. But it was not only Deloitte that stated that the Newman government's cuts weakened our economy. This assessment was backed up by the Commonwealth Bank and Commsec as well. The LNP's mass sackings were completely unnecessary—other than to pay for the LNP's \$4 billion in unfunded election promises.

Under the Newman government, combined fiscal deficits are \$884 million larger in 2011-12 to 2014-15 than they were projected to be under Labor. The LNP has not delivered lower debt from smaller deficits, as it tries to spin to Queenslanders. It has increased debt and delivered larger deficits on its own preferred measure. In April last year the Treasurer insisted that the transition from the resources construction to production boom would all level itself out. The Treasurer said—

... any concern about a slowdown in investment in the mining sector was largely unwarranted.

Since then we have seen hundreds more jobs lost in the mining sector, with more than 8,000 mining jobs axed over the last few years. If it were not for the construction phase of the LNG industry, the net loss in mining jobs would be far worse. Now, the Treasurer says that we have to engage in a record privatisation program to supposedly create jobs. Before the election the LNP claimed to have a plan to lower unemployment to four per cent without asset sales. Now, after increasing unemployment from 5.5 per cent to 6.4 per cent, the LNP says that asset sales are its only plan for jobs. When it comes to asset sales, we all know of the statements that have been made by the Treasurer and the Premier. They are being completely duplicitous. We need a real economic strategy to support growth in new industries to manage our domestic economy out of this malaise. Making up claims that the largest program of asset privatisation in Queensland's history will create jobs is not an answer either. Labor has a plan for jobs. The LNP does not.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (5.40 pm): I rise to second the motion put by the Manager of Opposition Business. In doing so let me start with the last point first and that is that this House acknowledges that the dysfunctional LNP government has failed Queenslanders with its poor economic policies and broken promises because, of course, it would only be a dysfunctional and duplicitous political party that would promise that public servants had nothing to fear and then sack them by the thousands. It would only be a dysfunctional and dumb political party that would limit its economic growth and jobs generation strategy to only four sectors that account for only 22 per cent of employment and 27 per cent of the economy. And it would be a party of the same ilk that purposely excludes key jobs and wealth creating sectors like manufacturing, biomedical engineering, science and research, waste management and, of course, renewable energy. For the other 73 per cent of the Queensland economy and for 100 per cent of the future economy, the Newman LNP government has exactly zero level of interest.

It was the great American President Franklin D Roosevelt who said—

Not only our future economic soundness but the very soundness of our democratic institutions depends on the determination of our government to give employment to idle men.

The gender references may have been updated and how we refer to unemployed people may have also changed, but the underlying philosophy of this statement has not and in their actions those opposite have revealed that they have no determination to give people jobs in this state.

Let me take this opportunity to focus on one of the so-called pillars, tourism, and one of the discarded sectors, renewable energy. In relation to tourism, the LNP opposition came to government with grandiose promises about increasing overnight visitor expenditure to \$30 billion by 2020. But the latest data shows that the state tourism sector is going backwards. The Tourism and Events Queensland annual report for 2013-14, which was tabled in parliament only two weeks ago, reveals the very true poor health the sector is in. The report highlights the disastrous tenure of the member for Currumbin as minister. Visitor expenditure is well below target. The total overnight visitor expenditure has declined, yet the national average and total expenditure in New South Wales and Victoria are growing. Market share of total overnight visitor expenditure is down yet it is up in New South Wales and Victoria. Queensland's market share of total overnight visitations has dropped from 25.3 per cent in 2012 to 23.6 per cent in 2014. Queensland's share of international visitors to Australia has plummeted from almost 36 per cent in 2012 to 34.1 per cent in 2014. The growth trend in tourism, just like the growth trend in employment, is going in the wrong direction and that is south, following the tourists our state economy desperately needs but this government is happy to wave goodbye to.

In relation to renewable energy, during the 2010 federal election it was said by many that if you want to know what sort of a government Abbott would lead look at Queensland under Newman. Well, never a truer word could have been said, particularly in relation to renewable energy. Under Labor Queensland was the solar capital. The initiatives pursued by Labor, including the very successful feed-in tariff initiative, resulted in Queensland producing the largest amount of solar energy in Australia at one-third of the total domestic solar power generation throughout the nation. That is something that we on the Labor side of the House should all be incredibly proud of. There is much to substantiate that the more solar energy users there are in the system the less expensive

infrastructure upgrades into the future will become. Labor committed to the national Renewable Energy Target which is now never, ever mentioned by those opposite. The LNP acted fast to cancel major solar energy projects throughout the state and also to get rid of the Climate Smart Home Service initiative. Now the government, this pugilistic government, continues to pick up its boxing gloves and fight and this time it is with the solar energy users of Queensland. While other nations are embracing renewables, emissions trading schemes and programs to reduce carbon emissions, Newman, Abbott and the rest of the LNP ostriches stick their heads in the sand denying the science and, true to form, Tony Abbott is following suit.

Franklin D Roosevelt also said—

A conservative is a man with two perfectly good legs who, however, has never learned how to walk forward.

Looking at those opposite I know that the gender reference is correct and, looking at those opposite and those governing from Canberra, we know that never a truer word has been spoken.



Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (5.44 pm): I move—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted—

- notes that the LNP government's four-pillar economic strategy is driving growth with Queensland forecast to once again become the fastest growing Australian state in 2015-16;
- notes that since the election of the LNP government more than 61,000 jobs have been created in Queensland; and
- notes that only the LNP has a strong plan to deliver a brighter future for Queensland by paying down Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt, investing \$8.6 billion in new job-creating infrastructure and providing \$3.4 billion to drive downward pressure on the cost of living.

Clearly there is some necessity to go back and have a look at the history of those opposite when they were in government. We have to go back and reflect on the past because those opposite have a tendency to rewrite the past. I heard the member for South Brisbane strenuously trying to defend her mentor, her predecessor, her friend, the former member for South Brisbane, the now head of an organisation in New South Wales; trying to defend the indefensible, one of the most expensive failures in public policy—and there were many under the former government. Let us not forget the \$1.2 billion on the Health payroll system; let us not forget the \$9 billion that was spent on a water grid that does not get turned on; let us not forget about a fake Tahitian prince who walked out the door with \$16 million; let us not forget about dams being built without pipes; pipes without dams; and trains without seats. There were many public policy failings of those opposite in their inglorious period in government. Let us not forget the 10 years of deficits that they left Queensland and accumulating \$27 billion worth of debt over that time. When it comes to fiscal ineptitude, those opposite were the world champions par excellence. I think, in fact, with the G20 coming here we should put them up as examples of how not to run an economy. This is the opportunity to demonstrate exactly how not to run state finances.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr NICHOLLS: This is like listening to the squawking of parrots: no original thought; all they can do is keep repeating the same thing that has been drummed into them by the comrades at Trades Hall. All it is is the same old parrot speaking away there, repeating the mantra that they were told by their mates in the ETU and the union movement who control what they do.

Opposition members interjected.


Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Order, members. There are too many interjections. I give the Treasurer the call.

Mr NICHOLLS: He is like a Norwegian Blue: he keeps falling off the perch all the time. What did we inherit from those opposite in the last term of the previous Labor government? Economic growth averaging at 2.2 per cent. What did we deliver in the first full year of this government? Economic growth at 3.6 per cent. We are forecast to have economic growth at three per cent, equal highest in the nation, followed by six per cent, the highest in the nation. Economic growth under the LNP government for the four years to 2016-17 is expected to average four per cent—almost double that of the Labor government in its last term.

However, we have been hard on the last government. Perhaps we should not be too hard on it in terms of what we are looking at today and comparing it with those opposite, because at least the last government had some sort of plan. It was not a very good plan and it did not work very well, but

at least it had something. Its plan increased average annual expenditure by almost nine per cent a year over the decade. It had a plan to lock in debt of \$85 billion with no return to surplus in sight. It had a plan to say one thing before an election and then do another thing after an election. As bad as it was, its plan was a plan. What do we have from those opposite after 2½ years? It is the most well-resourced and laziest opposition in the country and we are still waiting for the semblance of a plan other than their secret plan, which the shadow Treasurer let slip out of the bag on ABC when he said that he plans to look at the revenue side. When they talk revenue, they mean more taxes. This government will continue to deliver. It has delivered. We have a plan to grow, a plan to pay down debt and a plan to provide cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders.


(Time expired)

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (5.50 pm): Indeed it is a pleasure to follow the honourable Treasurer and Minister for Trade on this important motion. If we want to see the definition of 'under performance', we do not have to look much further than right across the chamber and we do not have to look much further back than 2012 when tourism was languishing and small businesses, many of them tourism operators, were suffocated under 92,000 pages of red tape and regulation. The Labor government operated in silos, but for good reason: it did not believe in consultation, it did not believe in partnerships and it did not like small businesses. The goose that had laid the golden eggs for so many years started laying silver, then it started laying bronze and then it was laying bricks, but, worst of all, in the Labor government nobody noticed and nobody cared.

The Newman government created a whole-of-government approach to tourism. We started by giving tourism a dedicated stand-alone portfolio. Then we created our DestinationQ initiative and a tourism cabinet committee made up of a number of ministers who have made tourism a top priority when they are considering legislation and policy for the future. We actually signed some partnerships with industry. Heaven forbid: we signed partnerships to work closely with industry! We formed post-forum working groups so that we could sign off on every action that we signed in the partnership. We delivered. In January 2013 we delivered a Drive Tourism Strategy. In March 2014, together with Minister Dickson we delivered an ecotourism plan. In March 2014 we brought out our camping options toolkit. This month, October 2014 in Mackay we released our best practice for roadside rest areas. The Deputy Premier declared tourism a state interest under his planning instruments. We launched our 20-year Destination Success plan, with an annual reporting mechanism called the State of the Industry Report. Over all of those years, what did we see from Labor? Neglect, more neglect and more neglect! Our 20-year destination management plans, which have been created by all 13 RTOs across Queensland, have either been completed or are nearly so. They identify the iconic experiences that you will find when you visit the vast regions of Queensland, so that we can plan for the future needs of those regions.

Here we are in 2014 and still Labor is not interested. Still it has no plans or policy. After 104 question times there has been only one question on tourism from Labor. On April 2013, the member for Bundamba asked the Deputy Speaker to rule on relevance when, in his MPI, the poor member for Logan decided to actually talk up Queensland destinations. That pretty well sums up Labor's interest in tourism in Queensland.

Only the LNP has a strong plan for a bright future. Let us look at some of the data that has come out. I am really proud to say that, since the Newman government came to power in 2012, the economic contribution of tourism in this state has gone up by \$3.5 billion, which has seen the creation of 27,000 new jobs and a total visitor increase of 1.2 per cent, a total overnight visitor expenditure increase of 1.6 per cent and, in the past three years, Chinese visitation to Queensland has grown by 56.2 per cent compared to an average of 51.4 per cent in other states over the same period. China remains our largest international market by visitor expenditure at \$583 million, which is an increase of seven per cent on the previous year. Of all of our Chinese visitors to Australia, 43 per cent visited Queensland, that is, some 300,000 people. We have had record-breaking numbers through our airports. We have sensational marketing campaigns going on in this state. It is about time that those opposite stood up for tourism and our small businesses, and put some policy together to indicate it.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.55 pm): I am very proud of my community, because when they see a dud government they know they will throw it out at the next election. In fact, my office is next door to the Goodna TAB where people from all walks of life go to have a punt on the dogs or the horses.

Mrs Scott: Dogger and Bazza.

Mrs MILLER: Yes. The other day, Dogger and Bazza were at the Goodna TAB. Normally they are at the Royal Mail Hotel, where they are ensconced as official envoys of the Queen. In relation to the asset sales of this government, Dogger and Bazza said to me that even Tim Shaw, the Demtel man, had more credibility than Premier Campbell Newman. I said to Bazza and Dogger, 'Well geez, you've sussed them out and you know what's going on'. The most important thing about that is that the people in my electorate certainly are aware that what the government is talking about in terms of selling assets is definitely a dud deal. Basically, Bazza and Dogger said to me, 'Now Jo-Ann, is it like going to Harvey Norman? It is like an interest-free type of deal? What's the story?' I said to them, 'Well, basically, it could be, because apparently what they want to do is sell the assets, but maybe they won't get the money for five years'. Bazza and Dogger said, 'Gee whiz, Jo-Ann, we'd be better off going to Cash Converters, because at least they'd get their money on time'.

We have a situation where this LNP government wants to sell the assets to its mates down the big end of town. It wants to flog them off at whatever price it can get, but it also wants to put in some sort of sweetener for people such as pensioners in relation to electricity rebates. Last night, I was watching a show on TV in which pensioners were absolutely scowling at the Premier's views on this electricity sweetener. In fact, I thought to myself, 'Gee, what's going on here?' And then I worked it out, following advice from Bazza and Dogger. Bazza and Dogger had said to me that the \$100 really equates to a \$2 two-litre milk carton, but only if you shop at Coles or Woolies once a week for a year. That is exactly what it means. What a joke this government is talking about in relation to asset sales.

Assets sales are really a recipe for increased job cuts and we know that this government has a PhD in sacking people, because it has sacked up to 20,000 public servants. I cannot wait for next year because those public servants are saying to me that you sacked them and they are going to sack you back. Whoopee!


Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I remind you to address your comments through the chair.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Speaker. What they are saying is that the LNP government, through their directors-general, sacked them from their roles as public servants and they cannot wait to get into the ballot box and put the LNP last. That is what they are waiting for. The baseball bats are out for the LNP.

They also know that asset sales are a recipe for service cuts. They have seen it right across Queensland—services being wiped out everywhere. They also know that it is actually a recipe for cost-of-living rises as well. When we have a look at what is happening right across Queensland we see that the situation is that this economy is stagnant.

In the few minutes left to me I will comment on community cabinets. When we were in government anyone could go to our community cabinets. People did not have to walk through detection devices. They did not have to be ticked off a roll. Anyone could turn up. Small businesses are closing all around Queensland. Do not tell me that you are the government for small business because they are closing down everywhere. Talk about holidays: no-one can afford to go on holidays because they do not have a job. They cannot even afford to go to camping grounds because they do not have a job.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (6.00 pm): I note with dismay the breathtaking ignorance of those opposite in their comments in relation to agriculture as outlined in the motion proposed this evening—ignorance of the challenges of natural disasters and drought affecting agriculture at the moment, but most particularly the opportunities and achievements of agriculture in this great state despite those challenges. They are ignorant of the achievements of the organic chicken business operated by Katrina Hobbs and others in the electorate of Southern Downs, for example. They are ignorant of the promise the live cattle trade being regenerated presents for North-West Queensland and the Gulf Country. They are ignorant of the ongoing innovations in cotton industry research and marketing—export marketing, in particular—on the Darling Downs; beetroot production and marketing in the Lockyer Valley; citrus exports out of the North Burnett, particularly increasing greatly into Asia; value added horticulture in Bundaberg by the likes of David De Paoli and others; export market promotion in seafood out of Hervey Bay by the likes of Nick Schultz and others; and ongoing research and innovation in our timber industry.

In their term in office those opposite did their absolute best to demonise farmers—to tie them up in red and green tape and in so doing destroy their farm businesses. Labor did not even see fit to have a dedicated department of agriculture. Contrast that to the LNP, which immediately re-established such a department. We refocused management and staff on front-line services. Those opposite left Queensland with a financial basket case—loaded with debt and a bloated public sector in Brisbane's CBD.

When I became minister, the reformed department had no fewer than 42 spin doctors. We needed more front-line staff—more wild dog officers, agronomists, stock inspectors, weed officers—not people who are pumping out propaganda for Labor's antifarming government. I make no excuse for that move. That is exactly what we need to do to assist our plan to double agricultural production by 2040. That is right; we have a plan. Labor left Queensland with a financial basket case, with extraordinary interest bills. Fortunately the LNP government, through our Treasurer and Premier, have presented a plan to overcome that long-term encumbrance.

This motion moved by the member for Mulgrave is entirely politically driven and takes absolutely no account of the shameful way that Labor ran the state's economy and treated regional Queensland. Labor could not give two hoots about agriculture. They ripped the heart out of the bush, taking away front-line jobs and services. Labor has no plans, no team, no position, no intestinal fortitude, no plan for economic growth and no backbone.

The LNP has made agriculture one of its four pillars. We are seeing it turning around. Why? Because of vegetation management changes to allow farmers to manage their holdings, freeholding opportunities for farmers, a comprehensive land audit which underpins our significant increase in strategic cropping land across the state and relevant protections. We have stopped the financial crisis at agricultural colleges and with agricultural education in general and given control back to regional communities. We have invested in R&D for grain, sugar, beef and horticulture when Labor was deliberately running it down.

We have done that because, unlike those opposite, the real jobs in agriculture are in the regions not in offices in downtown Brisbane. The LNP has a very strong plan for a bright future for agriculture, unlike those opposite who are stuck in the past, held to ransom by the unions and greens and focused on recycling candidates back into Queensland, including those responsible for the mess that we are dealing with.

Let us be honest, Labor had years in government to tackle debt and build infrastructure. It failed. It has not learnt from its mistakes. It has no policies and therefore no way to fund plans for the future. The only thing we can trust the Labor opposition to do is to deliver more debt, more deficits, higher taxes and, of course, more waste. I am therefore very strongly supportive of the amended motion moved by our Treasurer.



Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (6.05 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow Treasurer. I will limit my contribution to the loss of jobs and the dysfunctional management of the state's economy since the LNP came to power.

In terms of the mantra we keep hearing from the government about a bright future, the evidence that I will lay out and has already been laid out is that it is the economic equivalent of flying into the sun. That is the bright future that those opposite have tracked for 2½ years. That is what is evident in the latest statistics.

The latest unemployment statistics highlight the LNP's dismal economic performance. There is no other word for it—it is dismal. I remember the LNP campaigning at the last election around a four per cent unemployment rate over six years. Somewhere along the line that became a stretch target, which is an admission of failure again and evidence of a party prepared to say anything for the most base politically opportunist motives.

The fact is that this government has been toxic for jobs in Queensland. The single biggest issue for my constituents in Rockhampton is jobs and for those with work, job security. 'The flattest trading conditions in three decades' is not an exceptional comment that I receive from small business operators every week in my electorate. This makes a nonsense of this government pretending to represent small business interests. I invite the small business minister to come to Rockhampton and we can have a forum for small business leaders about what is going on in the local regional economy.

Here are some facts. Unemployment is higher today than the state experienced at the height of the GFC. That is a real achievement. Remember the GFC? A 6.4 per cent trend rate today is a disgrace. Queensland has been haemorrhaging full-time jobs and thousands of households have been seeing their standard of living collapse. How does the LNP respond? They give everybody in this House a pay rise. That is how they respond to that.

Since the election of 2012 the LNP has seen another 26,600 people join the unemployment queues in various guises. That is over 10,000 more people than in the entire Royal Australian Navy or the RAAF. Nearly 35,000 people have given up looking for work since the LNP arrived. That figure is derived from the present participation rate.

The people of Rockhampton overwhelming feel worse off today than when this government came to power. While all this slow motion carnage is occurring we see LNP backbenchers proving their economic stupidity. We have had LNP backbenchers in my region decrying the current downturn in mining investment and jobs. Remember this is after this government introduced a \$1.64 billion increase in coal royalties in their first budget. Our friends in the Resources Council labelled Queensland the highest taxing coal jurisdiction in the world in the aftermath of that. How does that all work out for the coal industry that they supposedly represent?

This vacuous twaddle being peddled by LNP federal and state backbenchers is revealed for what it is—disingenuous in the extreme. The community even sees state LNP backbenchers far from decrying the supposed debt crisis federally and asking the federal government to start printing money en masse to lower the Australian dollar. The long established role of the Reserve Bank in setting monetary policy is to be pushed aside, apparently. It is truly astounding that the LNP is now espousing a return to a command and control economy. It is Mugabonomics in practice. It is buffoonery.

This would likely guarantee the inflation rate to escape the Reserve Bank's comfort zone, but that is what LNP backbenchers are out telling our regional communities. Remember that this commentary comes after domestic spending in Queensland has contracted 0.4 per cent in the year ending June 2014. Compare that with 7.5 per cent growth to March 2012 during the last year of Labor. So I will not wear these nefarious comparisons about what Labor was doing. The statistics demonstrate absolutely where this government's credibility is in terms of economics. You can keep repeating the mantras but the facts prove the exact opposite.

After three budgets there are fewer full-time jobs in Queensland than when this mob started. When Labor left office we had the lowest net debt excluding government owned businesses in the nation and negative debt of \$3.2 billion, with financial assets exceeding liabilities. You cannot say that today. This government cannot say that today because the record demonstrates what an economic road crash this government is.



Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (6.10 pm): I rise tonight to oppose the motion moved by the member for Mulgrave and to support the amendment to the motion moved by the Treasurer. Is the member for Mulgrave serious? Is he serious—walking into this parliament this morning and giving notice of a motion suggesting that the economic policies and fiscal policies of this LNP government can be challenged by the record of the previous state Labor government? Is he serious? It is an absolutely ridiculous proposition. I am delighted to follow in this debate the member for Rockhampton who when he closed his remarks spoke about some irrefutable facts. Let me put on the record some irrefutable facts for the member for Rockhampton's benefit.

An indisputable fact is that the former state Labor government left this state of Queensland with \$80 billion of debt, an unprecedented level of debt accruing to the state of Queensland which needs to be serviced by the taxes, fees and charges being paid by the taxpayers of Queensland. An indisputable fact is that the previous state Labor government lost Queensland's AAA credit rating—an indisputable fact—which means extra interest paid on the unprecedented levels of debt.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Members, there are too many interjections and your interjections are not being taken. I call the minister.

Mr CRIPPS: That means the interest payments on the unprecedented level of debt cost those taxpayers of Queensland more to service. As we have mentioned the interest payments, what are they on this unprecedented level of debt? \$450,000 an hour on Labor's unprecedented level of debt; \$4 billion a year on Labor's unprecedented level of debt. They are indisputable facts that the member for Rockhampton failed to mention and that he cannot refute.

Tonight I want to speak briefly about some of the things that we have done. We have brought a discipline to the fiscal management of the state of Queensland's finances. We have pulled up the debt and we are now in a position with a coherent economic strategy to address it. The Treasurer, the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Agriculture have mentioned these strategies. We have them for the four pillars that we have focused on—agriculture, tourism, construction and the resources sector. We are presently in the process of finalising the 30-year plan for the resources sector in Queensland. The former Labor government squandered the boom that we had in the resources sector in Queensland. They had the much often referred to rivers of gold coming in from royalties in the resources sector.

Opposition members interjected.


Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. I warn members on my left and some already have more specific warnings under the standing orders, and I remind them of that. I call the minister.

Mr CRIPPS: We had this debate during the previous sitting of parliament when legislation went through the House. The member for Bundamba said that the regulatory arrangements in place under the previous government facilitated that boom, and that was nonsense of course. The record high coal prices that were experienced during the decade that the previous Labor government was in power and the relatively low Australian dollar facilitated that boom. Yet they still left us without infrastructure to service the industry and they left us with a legacy of unprecedented levels of debt.

In the agriculture sector referred to by the Minister for Agriculture, I reiterate that we are liberating the natural resources available to agriculture in Queensland to give them security of tenure on rural land in particular and on our island tourism leases. We are liberating the opportunities to manage our vegetation properly to give expanded opportunities for agriculture to grow in Queensland. I cannot refer at length to the changes to the Water Act because they are currently before the House, but they will also provide more opportunities in the future. So we are planning in the long term for the Queensland economy to take advantage of the red-tape and green-tape reduction that we are doing right now.

In closing, the member for Mulgrave had 10 minutes to speak on the motion he moved. He provided no alternative plan that the Labor Party would pursue in addressing the legacy that his party left behind. Of course he maintains his commitment to his 'put the kettle on' economic strategy—the wait and see, do nothing economic strategy that he has committed himself to for a long time. They have talked about pursuing the revenue side of the economy. That is code for new taxes.

(Time expired)

 **Mrs D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (6.15 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow Treasurer. I thought I would be rising to respond to the debate on the other side but quite honestly there is very little to respond to. But what little they have said I will comment on. Of course they have sought to play the blame game again. They cannot help themselves, but I do remind them of the Premier's comment back on 28 March 2012 when he stated, 'If they don't sort out problems within two years, at that stage it's not the Labor Party's fault; it's their fault'—their fault. So at what point 2½ years into their first term are they going to start taking responsibility for their own decisions?

They say they are going to build the economy on these four pillars. Quite honestly I think their four pillars have turned into four pillows. They have gone to sleep. They have gone to sleep because if this is the LNP government focusing on jobs I would hate to see what happened if they took their eye off the ball, honestly.


Let's look at the figures. In the LNP's can-do action economic blueprint for Queensland back in 2012 they gave Labor a fail—a fail. On what? Queensland's unemployment figure of 5.4 per cent under Labor. We got a fail. So I ask the Premier, I ask the LNP government, what are they going to give themselves come the election? What are their billboards going to say about their 6.4 per cent trend unemployment? If 6.4 per cent unemployment is not bad enough—and it is not a joking matter, certainly not for my region—then when we look at the figures for regions like Moreton Bay North the current figures show our unemployment sitting at 8.5 per cent. What about Cairns at 7.4 per cent; the Sunshine Coast, 7.4 per cent; Ipswich, 8.9 per cent; Logan-Beaudesert, 9.3 per cent; Wide Bay, 9.6 per cent; Townsville, 10 per cent? Where were those members standing up for their communities on jobs?

Let's look at the Brotherhood of St Laurence's report *Australian Youth Unemployment 2014: Snapshot*. Unfortunately we are now listed in the 10 worst youth unemployment hot spots in Australia. Three of those 10 are in Queensland. Moreton Bay North, including Caboolture and Redcliffe, sits at 18.1 per cent youth unemployment.

If that is not bad enough, let's look at the trend for long-term unemployment. Let's really start looking at these figures because the number of people in Queensland who have been unemployed for between 52 weeks and 104 weeks is now 18,900. That has gone up by 5,000 people in the last 12 months. The number of people who have been unemployed for 104 weeks and over is now 14,200. This has gone up by almost 2,000. So almost 7,000 people have become long-term unemployed—a year to more than two years unemployment—under the watch of Campbell Newman and this LNP government.

Remember this, the contract with Queenslanders? It listed their commitment to front-line services. We know of the thousands of jobs that they cut out of the Public Service, but they did not cut all jobs. It is true that between March 2012 and June 2014 the quarterly workforce profile shows that there has been a reduction in the Public Service under the Newman government of 5.4 per cent. I know that they pat themselves on the back; they are very proud of the reduction in the Public Service under their watch. There has been an increase in the Public Service—an increase of 51 per cent in people earning \$100,000 or more. So when their contract to Queenslanders talks about front-line services, where have the jobs increased in the Public Service? At the top end!

This government cannot be trusted. They cannot be trusted on asset sales. Their own words are a furphy, an attempt to perpetrate a con on the people of Queensland: a sell-off, sale—sneaky, dishonest. It defines this government and every word that they have said.

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (6.21 pm): The LNP government's four pillar economic strategy is driving growth here in Queensland. Under this government Queensland is set to once again reclaim its title as Australia's fastest growing state. Where economic growth averaged just 2.2 per cent over the last term of the Labor government, growth over the four years to 2016-17 is expected to average four per cent.

We have heard already about some of the great things happening in the tourism, agriculture and resource sectors and how this growth is helping Queensland's economy. I would like to focus on the growth we are seeing in Queensland's property and construction industry. Prior to my election I worked in our family owned real estate business so I have intimate knowledge of the red tape introduced by the former Labor government and the impact that this had on people trying to sell their homes. The former government made it more expensive for Queenslanders buying their homes, they made it harder for Queenslanders trying to sell their homes and they made it more expensive for Queenslanders building their homes.

Contrast that with the policies introduced by this LNP government. This government has supported the housing industry with initiatives including the reintroduction of the transfer duty concession for Queenslanders buying a family home, saving up to \$7,125, and the introduction of the \$15,000 Great Start Grant for first home buyers. We have also streamlined property contracts and abolished the sustainability declaration. This is in stark contrast to Labor, who slugged Queenslanders trying to buy their family home with up to \$7,125 in extra costs by removing the transfer duty concession.

More than 8,000 Queensland families have now been helped into a new home with our government's \$15,000 Great Start Grant for first home buyers including over 80 grants in my electorate of Pumicestone. Figures released only this week show that Queensland's housing industry continues to show positive signs, with housing finance approvals for owner occupied dwellings rising in August for the 20th consecutive month. Queensland has had the biggest increase in approvals across the year of any of the mainland states, with approvals rising 0.3 per cent in trend terms in August to be up five per cent over the year. It is a particularly good result for Queensland because nationally there was a 0.2 per cent decline in approvals in August and a rise of just 1.2 per cent over the year in trend terms.

The figures come on top of building approval figures last week showing a 2.6 per cent rise in August to be up 13.2 per cent over the year in Queensland. Trend building approvals are now 41.9 per cent higher than when this LNP government came into office. The turnaround in the property industry is just one part of the story in Queensland, but it is an important part because it illustrates that this government's efforts to turn the Queensland economy around are working.

Unlike the opposition, we on this side of the House have a plan. The members opposite have consistently refused to outline their plans to pay down the debt that they racked up or their plans for growing our Queensland economy. Indeed, the shadow Treasurer refused to answer that very question three separate times on ABC Radio last week. Contrast that with the open and consultative

approach taken by our government. It is clear that those opposite are still in denial. Not only are they in denial over the problems they created in the past, but it also appears they are in denial over the challenges our state faces in the year ahead.

The state's population is forecast to grow by one million in the next decade and a further 1.5 million in the decade after that. To maintain our standard of living, government needs a plan and the means to build the hospitals, schools, highways, roads and rail that our growing state will need. To do this we need to bring the state's debt back down to a sustainable level. Indeed, Treasury's medium-term modelling shows that without clear and decisive action the budget would return to a fiscal deficit in 2018-19 with state debt growing to \$121 billion in 2022-23.

These are serious challenges and it is clear they require a mature and considered plan. It is equally clear that only the LNP has a plan to reduce Labor debt and invest in the economic infrastructure that will secure Queensland's growth into the future. The opposition sit over there this evening making jokes about 'four pillows' and also about a '\$3.4 billion slush fund'. That \$3.4 billion fund is designed to deliver cost-of-living relief to our communities and that is very much needed all across Queensland. I do not think it is something that the opposition should be joking about here this evening. By reducing our debt we can free up funds to build job-creating infrastructure that our growing state needs and build a brighter future for all Queenslanders. We have a plan; Labor does not.

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

AYES, 63:

LNP, 63—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Emerson, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Symes, Trout, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

NOES, 14:

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

KAP, 2—Hopper, Knuth.

INDEPENDENTS, 4—Cunningham, Douglas, Judge, Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 63:

LNP, 63—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Emerson, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Holswich, Johnson, Kaye, Kempton, King, Krause, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Symes, Trout, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

NOES, 14:

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

KAP, 2—Hopper, Knuth.

INDEPENDENTS, 4—Cunningham, Douglas, Judge, Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

- notes that the LNP government's four-pillar economic strategy is driving growth with Queensland forecast to once again become the fastest growing Australian state in 2015-16;
- notes that since the election of the LNP government more than 61,000 jobs have been created in Queensland; and
- notes that only the LNP has a strong plan to deliver a brighter future for Queensland by paying down Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt, investing \$8.6 billion in new job-creating infrastructure and providing \$3.4 billion to drive downward pressure on the cost of living.


Sitting suspended from 6.35 pm to 7.35 pm.

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3356, on motion of Mr Mander—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.35 pm), continuing: Prior to the break I was speaking about what the bill was going to deliver, and I will continue. The bill will also expand options for the board in making decisions about unregistered engineers such as to caution, reprimand or enter into undertakings so that lengthy and expensive prosecution processes may be avoided in some circumstances. It will permit the delegation of decisions to a board member, a committee of members, the registrar or an appropriately qualified employee of the board to alleviate difficulties experienced in processing the increased numbers of registrants and clarify critical definitions to provide greater clarity and guidance to stakeholders.

As I said, these changes are largely uncontentious and are supported by industry, as evidenced by the submissions made by Engineers Australia, the Australian Institute of Building and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia. It should be noted that Engineers Australia also recommended the following changes to the act which were not adopted: registration becoming mandatory for all members of an engineering team; graduate engineers to become registered; placing a legal responsibility on all organisations, including statutory authorities and the Public Service and their executive officers, to ensure their engineers are registered or appropriately supervised; and introducing two- or three-year registration renewal options to further reduce red tape. These appear to be sensible reforms that I would encourage the government to consider further.

In respect to the suggested longer duration of registration, the department has dismissed this idea in an answer to a question on notice, stating in part:

In relation to introducing two to three year registration renewal options, anecdotal evidence shows that many engineers tend to move employers every 18-24 months. The larger employers may object to paying renewal fees for their RPEQs for a two to three year period when they may be faced with the prospect of trying to recoup fees for engineers no longer in their employment.


Moving on to some of the more contentious amendments that this bill will make, I want to talk about the changes to the regulatory framework surrounding the broader construction industry. The bill proposed to amend the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act, the Building Act 1975 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 to transfer functions for licensing, compliance and disciplinary action relating to pool safety inspectors and plumbers and drainers to the QBCC and disband the Pool Safety Council and the Plumbing Industry Council, whose functions will be undertaken by the QBCC.

Labor does not support the abolition of the Plumbing Industry Council and the transfer of its functions to the QBCC. The abolition of the Plumbing Industry Council means that there is no dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body in Queensland. Labor recognises that plumbing is an important occupation that also encompasses the trade streams of fire protection, air conditioning and water reticulation, which require years of training to obtain the necessary qualifications. When people need plumbing work done, they want it done well by a fully trained and qualified plumber. We have a well regulated water industry in Australia and one that is built, serviced and maintained by highly qualified and skilled workers operating within a legislative and regulatory framework that requires high standards.

It is these high standards that ensure the delivery of safe and usable water to homes across this state. We need to maintain those high standards in Queensland, and Labor has a plan to ensure that we do not compromise the integrity of our water infrastructure or the plumbing industry and the services it provides. Labor will restore high standards to Queensland's plumbing industry by requiring the installation of water meters to be performed by fully qualified and licensed plumbers. Labor will also re-establish a dedicated plumbing industry regulatory body within the QBCC. This body would be answerable to the QBCC commissioner.

The bill will also amend the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 to enable dissatisfied persons to apply for an internal review of QBCC decisions that have the potential to go to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This applies to decisions about insurance, homeowner complaints and licensing. The bill will also more clearly identify that a licensee ought not to be categorised as a 'permanently excluded individual' as a result of a relevant bankruptcy event or

a relevant company event arising out of the same incident. Currently a licensee who has more than one relevant bankruptcy event or relevant company event is permanently excluded from holding a licence. These changes will treat bankruptcy and company insolvency events arising from one set of circumstances as a single event. These particular changes are supported by industry, including the Master Builders Association and the Housing Industry Association.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (7.41 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. On behalf of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, which I chair, I thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions on this bill and others who informed the committee's deliberations, the committee secretariat, officials from the Department of Housing and Public Works and the Technical Scrutiny of Legislation Secretariat. This bill is a reasonably extensive bill. The committee supports the general objectives of the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and, importantly, recommends that the bill be passed.

Tonight I will highlight a few aspects of this bill. Clauses 21 and 23 propose to insert new sections into the Professional Engineers Act to reinstate the provisions that all penalties and fees recovered by the PEQ board under the legislation are to be paid to the board to contribute to the funding of the operational costs of the PEQ board's functions. The committee comment in relation to that states—

The Committee notes that amendments to the Professional Engineers Act 2002 proposed in the ... Bill are intended to clarify and improve the Act to maintain its currency and relevance to the engineering industry—

it will be great if we can modernise the legislation as we go through—

and that the proposed amendments are welcomed by industry.

That is also an important factor. It continues—

The Committee is satisfied with the Department of Housing and Public Works' advice in relation to the effectiveness of the current registration frame work and agrees that no further amendments are necessary.

Two other clauses that are important in this bill are clauses 25 and 58. They propose amendments to the QBCC Act, the Building Act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act to transfer certain functions, including licensing, compliance and disciplinary action relating to plumbers, drainers and pool safety inspectors, and associated assets, from the department to the QBCC. The bill also provides for the disbandment of the PIC, whose functions will be transferred to the QBCC. The committee comment states—

The Committee is satisfied that the proposed amendments (which clearly identify that a licensee ought not to be categorised as a 'permanently excluded individual' as a result of a 'relevant bankruptcy event' and a 'relevant company event' arising out of the same incident) are consistent with the recommendation made in the Committee's 2012 Report on the operation and performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority.

The Committee is also satisfied that the introduction of internal review processes for Queensland Building and Construction Commission decisions, and the transfer of licensing, compliance and disciplinary functions to the Commission, will contribute toward the ongoing streamlining of the regulatory environment for the building and construction sectors and notes that these amendments are generally supported by industry.

The Committee notes that any costs that may be incurred by the Commission in implementing these legislative amendments will be met through the existing resources of the Commission.

So there should not be a cost to the taxpayer from that.

The committee also sought clarification from the department on whether the particulars to be published in relation to a nonengineer, as outlined by new section 75B, are appropriate, particularly if the matter is overturned on appeal. It was unclear from the explanatory notes whether the information would be placed on the website should an appeal be filed and ongoing. The department responded—

The Board will not publish results until the appeal period has expired and, if an appeal is lodged, then the Board would await the outcome of the appeal before publishing any information on its website.


The committee also sought further information from the department as to what particulars about an individual it anticipated may be prescribed by regulation under section 75B(d). The department responded—

At this stage, it is not proposed to prescribe any further particulars about an individual by regulation.

The committee comment states—

On balance, the Committee is satisfied with the Department of Housing and Public Works' advice about the publication of a guilty finding against a person other than a practising professional engineer found guilty of an offence, whether or not a conviction is recorded.

Overall, this bill will improve the structure of our industry. It will take us forward into the next generation. I believe that this legislation is a great step. A lot of work has been done and a lot of consultation has been carried out. I support the bill.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (7.46 pm): I rise to speak to the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Last week it was the privilege of the community of Gladstone to host the Board of Professional Engineers at a dinner. That provided an opportunity for many of the engineers who work in Gladstone—there are a lot—to meet with the board and talk about, obviously, matters of common interest. It also provided an opportunity for people such as Mayor Gail Sellers and me to welcome the board to Gladstone so that they could view firsthand the amount of work that is being done, much of which involves the skills of engineers.


Certainly, part of the discussion was the regulation and the licensing of engineers—the need for anyone who holds out to be a member of that profession to be appropriately qualified to ensure the quality of the work they perform is second to none. The sorts of industries that are built in my electorate are large scale industries—multistorey, high-pressure vessels, high-pressure pipe racks—so it is really important that all of the work that goes into building and maintaining those systems is done to a very exacting standard. As I said on the night, we welcome the engineers to our region because, as part of that safe work program that has been talked about often in this place, the quality of the engineering in high-risk industry—indeed any industry—and in most of our buildings is the foundation of the people we love coming home safely from work.

That sounds over the top, but in my electorate it is not. The safety of men and women who work in some of these high-risk industries is directly proportioned to the quality of the construction work and maintenance work, much of which falls in design to engineers. I have listened to a number of the contributions in relation to this legislation. In particular, I was interested to hear the comments relating to the publication of a conviction of a person who holds themselves out to be an engineer. There are some FLP issues in relation to that matter, but it must be clear that if a person holds themselves out to be qualified as an engineer and is not properly qualified they are putting people at risk and it is important where there is a community benefit for those people to be identified so that others seeking their services understand that they are not qualified engineers.

There is one thing that I would seek clarification from the minister on. The bill makes a number of amendments to the Professional Engineers Act. One of those is an additional provision so that the board has the power to reject a complaint if it reasonably considers that the complaint is—

... unfounded or lacking in substance. This is in addition to the current reasons for the Board to reject a complaint which include frivolous, vexatious or trivial complaints.

There is a slight difference in that definition in terms of a frivolous, vexatious or trivial complaint as opposed to one that is unfounded or lacking in substance. I would welcome the minister giving examples of that new category—that is, unfounded or lacking in substance—for no other reason than to give clarity to people who might look to this debate to understand more specifically what those changes will mean in practice. As other speakers have said and as I have already said, the engineering profession in Queensland and indeed in Australia and across the world is an important one. It is foundational to the way that buildings are constructed today. It is foundational to the way most businesses operate and it is absolutely essential that engineers doing work in their relevant areas are people of quality and people who are qualified. On that basis, I support the bill.

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumbidgee—LNP) (7.52 pm): I rise to represent the good people of Murrumbidgee and to express my support for the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Before I commence I want to say that when I see the words 'engineer' and 'professional' in the same sentence my mind goes back to my university days. Certainly my memory of my university days and engineering students involves alcohol and poor behaviour, but I move on. I do respect engineers and I have seen them grow up as they mature and age. I also want to acknowledge the professional tension between the accounting profession, of which I was previously a member, and the engineering profession.

Mr Deputy Speaker Ruthenberg, while I have you trapped in the chair I want to comment about your prior life. I note that in your prior career you acknowledged that you called yourself an engineer and travelled the globe. If I may relay the story of your first experience in engineering in Lae, Papua New Guinea and how you bounded up to my father-in-law when you met him five, six or seven years ago and said, 'Mr Hooper, do you remember me?' My father-in-law looked at you and, I am sure, very politely said, 'Who are you?' You then repeated how you did work experience for him at his engineering workshops in Lae, Papua New Guinea. What a small world we live in! Mr Deputy

Speaker went to school with my wife. For the record, she has no memory of you in Papua New Guinea. That is also a good thing, but it is a small world. On an old track, Murrumba is a good place and Kallangur is a somewhat lesser good place. I now turn to the actual topic of the conversation tonight. I am sure you will get your own back when you get the opportunity.


Since the Newman government was elected, we have worked tirelessly to reduce red tape and cultivate the building industry as it is an integral pillar of the Queensland economy. This bill promotes clarity of the law and ensures that the regulations governing the building industry remain up to date. I start with amendments to the Professional Engineers Act 2002. Chapter 2 of this bill amends the Professional Engineers Act 2002 to attend to some of the administrative difficulties regarding the registration of professional and non-professional engineers so as to improve the systems of fairness and efficiency. However, I want to draw particular attention to a number of key changes. Clause 4 of this bill inserts proposed section 6A which allows for the extraterritorial application of the Professional Engineers Act and clarifies that engineers who are working on a Queensland project but operating outside of the state must still register under the act or be directly supervised by a registered professional engineer. A number of other clauses under chapter 2 grant the board greater flexibility in applying its powers. Clause 12 inserts proposed new sections 75(2) and (3) expanding the powers of the Board of Professional Engineers to include reprimand or caution in order to avoid lengthy proceedings where they are not necessary. The bill also allows the delegation of power and allows the board to reject immaterial complaints. Importantly, clause 20 amends section 139(2)(b) to allow the act to commence one year after the complaint rather than six months. This will greatly improve the quality of investigations. Finally, clauses 21 to 23—and I note the member for Warrego's comments on these clauses as well—allow the board of engineers to require the penalties for offences to be paid to the board to offset the procedural costs of the board.

Chapter 3 of the bill addresses amendments to a number of other acts and implements the second stage of the Queensland government's 10-point action plan to bolster the building and construction industry. I note at this point that Murrumba is a very fast-growing part of Queensland. In fact, in terms of the electoral roll, it is currently the third largest electorate in Queensland. Construction is very strong in my electorate, particularly in North Lakes, Mango Hill and Griffin, and therefore my remaining comments are certainly very pertinent to my electorate. With regard to the Queensland government's 10-point action plan to bolster the building and construction industry, the first stage of this plan created the QBCC, and I want to acknowledge the great work that the minister has done on that and for his briefings of ministers and backbenchers about the creation of the QBCC. The QBCC, or the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, has had hugely positive benefits and effects on the Queensland construction industry. This part of the bill seeks to amend a number of pieces of legislation in order to improve its applicability and accuracy. With regard to the Building Act 1975, part 1 of chapter 3 brings the powers of the Pool Safety Council within the powers of the QBCC. Furthermore, this amendment provides a means of internal review for the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. This allows a person who is dissatisfied with a decision about matters such as licensing, homeowner complaints or insurance claims to elect to have the decision independently reviewed within the QBCC. I thank the minister for that reform.

Part 2 of chapter 3 amends the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. In the past, the plumbing and drainage industry operated under different regulations, in particular, the Plumbing Industry Council. This amendment seeks to move the functions of this council to the QBCC. This amendment will improve the efficiency of the processes and reduce the administration costs of these processes.

Again, I remind the Deputy Speaker of the importance of these changes to the Murrumba electorate and Queensland as a whole. As a representative of a neighbouring electorate to my electorate in a growth corridor of northern Brisbane, you would also understand that this bill considers issues that face both of our electorates. At this point, although we were humorous earlier, I would like to thank you for the closeness with which we work together. Our electorates benefit by having two MPs who work together closely on common issues for the common good of those two electorates. I would formally like to thank you for not only that cooperation but also the way both of our offices work closely together. The Murrumba electorate is a good place. Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Just before I call the next member, I will bring to the attention of the House that the suburb of Murrumba Downs is in the Kallangur electorate. Therefore, the name Murrumba originates from the electorate of Kallangur.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (8.01 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for that very erudite explanation. This is a two-part legislative instrument. One part deals with the Professional Engineers Act and the other part deals with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission—the QBCC—that morphed from the former QBSA at the second implementation stage. Stage 1 was the establishment of the QBCC and the appointment of a commissioner. It was no secret that the QBSA had a history of everything—from being a secret men’s business club for some to having an erratic history of procedural fairness to both builders and consumers alike. It needed a massive kick and this is the second change out of the 10-point plan from the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee reports. It is what this important building regulatory system needed.

I support these two pieces of sublegislation within this bill and for differing reasons. The professional engineers legislation has been the result of stakeholder negotiation. The changes to that part of this legislation reflect everything from the changing nature of the work of engineers, the gender-mix changes, the ageing population, a stronger emphasis on self-regulation and, very appropriately, decisions about complaints to professional issues decided by engineers, not clerks.

This final step is rather curious, because it is not mirrored within the changes inflicted on medical professions within the Health Ombudsman legislation and the lack of a reference panel of experts who made such decisions and, of course, the idiocy of placing a non-medical person in charge of the medical board. If the same logic applied to professional engineers, then it could well be that the chair of the Board of Professional Engineers might be a boilermaker or maybe a carpenter. Only a government such as the LNP could have such confused logic that it would implement a strategy such as that. The Premier, being an engineer, might not agree to having such a person in charge of his association.

My daughter is a professor of mechanical engineering. Engineering is a very worthy profession. It is via engineers that we make the things that make our world a better place. It is arguable that not enough people are studying science, maths and advanced building. With such a heavy financial emphasis on those areas of study that avoid the complexities and pursuit of exact answers, we will reap what we sow.

The changes to the QBCC enable internal review of QCAT claims to more clearly identify categories of people involved in bankruptcies, either personally or as a result of companies’ misdeeds. It will also amend the Plumbing and Drainage Act to facilitate the oversight and compliance functions of pool safety inspectors and plumbers and drainers to the QBCC, disbanding the Pool Safety Council and the Plumbing Industry Council. A new pool safety fund is established to replace the previous fund. That is important, particularly for the Gold Coast, because there are so many pools on residential and commercial premises.

The plumbing act is causing some problem in my electorate and the compliance even more so. Recently, a local plumber came to see me about a fine for allegedly failing to cover a sufficient length of external hot-water pipe and for failing to revise the drainage waste to an existing drain after changing a hot-water system, because the previous system had failed. He came back to rectify the job after a complaint was submitted to the board three years after he did the job. He was fined \$600 for what was allegedly not done and that is not reflective of a first-time extremely minor claim. It is arguable that no fine was probably indicative. For a board to be charging such excessive fees to local tradesmen, particularly at this time when it is very difficult in business, is unforgivable. To date, the department has not responded to my request for consideration on this matter. I would be most happy to enlighten the minister or any of his delegates of the details if he wishes.

The pool safety amendment is a needed one. Essentially, one can never be made pool safe enough. It has been stated that one in two homes on the Gold Coast has a pool and that the Gold Coast has the highest percentage of pool placement with dwellings in the nation. That said, there are still those who refuse to have pool fencing that reaches the current standards and too few know how to correctly look after a pool, which is probably the second most important part after trying to fence it. The cost of water and electricity combined have made many frugal about running filtration systems, maintaining proper pool hygiene and safe chemical management. Fortunately, the evidence is that most pools are unused and are largely ornamental. That probably saves us a lot of problems, particularly for hospitals and doctors who have to manage the secondary consequences of it. It may be that ultimately many will be filled in, removed or become in-ground water storage when water becomes so expensive that people cannot afford to buy it anymore. However, it probably has come time for residents to provide some evidence that pools are being maintained, as the evidence is increasing that lack of pool maintenance contributes to our overall health load.

Currently, here in Australia, among many looking to the future, there is great concern that we in Australia have been lagging behind the rest of the world in initiating new technologies and building upon them. This may be because we are not only not encouraging excellence in science and facilitating that with adequate funds but also not using engineers to make these greater things occur. This is the opposite of what is occurring in the US, particularly in the major university towns of Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Those engineers and mathematicians there are creating new businesses. We face great economic risks if there is too much emphasis on mining without the development of processing technologies and buildings for people and business who cannot afford those premises because there is no business to sustain them. Trained engineers have the capacity to change all of that. We need to harness their skill and knowledge. Bills such as this bill that reflect standards for engineers are important, but we need to understand the consequences of not using those engineers to their full capacity.



Mr GRANT (Springwood—LNP) (8.07 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This bill was reviewed by the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee and in that regard I thank the chairman, the members and the secretariat for the work that they have all contributed.

I always like to bring a practical view wherever it is possible. In this bill, which amends a number of acts, we touch on disciplines, being plumbers and drainers, engineers, and other trades and inspectors with respect to construction work, especially in the housing arena and other building. I want to say that, although we have to strike a balance to let industry move freely and reduce red tape, at the same time we must seek to provide increased and better protection for consumers. Currently, my experience is that there are many difficulties with the regulatory regime picking up flaws in the construction industry, which sees the poor old consumer exposed, under stress, pressure and expense just to try to bring to light the failures of some professionals and some tradesmen.

I will speak to just a few of the key changes in this bill with reference to the explanatory notes. The bill makes the following amendments to the Professional Engineers Act: firstly, it provides a statement in the act to the effect that a person carrying out professional engineering services outside of Queensland for projects based in Queensland must be a registered professional engineer or working under the direct supervision of a registered professional engineer; secondly, it introduces a new category of non-practising engineer to cater for retired engineers and for engineers on maternity leave or other career breaks; thirdly, it extends the time for which proceedings under the act can commence from six months to one year in certain circumstances; and, fourthly, it includes additional provisions in the act so that the board has the power to reject a complaint if it reasonably considers the complaint is unfounded or lacking in substance.

I hasten to draw attention to the opposite situation, where there has been a poor performance of an engineer. The board needs to be encouraged to use its powers to take appropriate disciplinary action. It seems that the poor consumer has a pretty difficult time bringing to light shortcomings in the performances of what I would think would be a minor percentage of registered professional engineers.

I have personally experienced some of the following observations in my electorate in recent years: I have seen a situation where a registered professional engineer has issued a certificate of adequacy before the work is even completed. The work was not completed and the engineer issued a certificate. I have seen another situation where an engineer has issued a certificate of compliance when the work clearly was defective and did not comply. It was a significant challenge for the consumer to establish the fact that the work was defective and resulted in the professional engineer having to admit so and put it in writing to say that the work has to be rectified. Obviously registered professional engineers do not like to do that because it is putting on paper a record of their own personal failure. I have seen a situation where construction works—in this particular case a slab—had formwork and reinforcement in place on the day that the registered professional engineer inspected and certified, only to see that that reinforcement formwork was pulled apart and days later concrete was poured with new steel in place and the registered professional engineer had turned a blind eye and did not bother following through with the appropriate alteration and changes to the applicable documentation.


Clearly this type of thing leaves consumers in a vulnerable position. The processes consumers have to pursue to prove misconduct are very expensive and onerous. I urge the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland to be attentive and to use the powers it is given to apply pressure to

improve the performance of engineers who choose to cut corners and put financial burdens upon consumers. Often these engineers, and might I add subcontractors, get away with this type of behaviour without detection and become more and more brazen.

The bill also amends the Building Act 1975. Clause 32 transfers responsibility for providing access to the pool safety inspectors register from the chief executive to the QBCC commissioner. It does so by replacing current section 246CC with a new section that requires the QBCC commissioner to make the register available for inspection by anyone while QBCC's head office is open for business.

The bill also amends the Plumbing and Drainage Act. New division 1 deals with the QBCC's new functions for plumbing and drainage. It introduces new sections 5 and 6. New section 5 sets out the functions for plumbing and drainage that the QBCC board is required to perform. These functions include conferring on national policy development and implementation for the trade, reporting to the minister on issues relating to plumbing and drainage and performing other functions relating to plumbing and drainage given to the board under the PDA. I believe that the QBCC will bring significant improvements to the regulation of plumbing and draining. The regime under which we have operated has seen plumbers and drainers complete works so defective that pass local government inspections where consumers lose out completely because local governments issue a certificate of compliance and they have no idea of the state of the plumbing and drainage below the ground. I look forward to this responsibility being passed over to the QBCC. It is with these words that I thank the committee for the work that it has done and support the passage of this bill through parliament.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Before I call the member for Thuringowa I would like to recognise in the gallery the Queensland Trade Commissioner to South America, Mr Alex Pessagno, who is visiting Queensland to discuss trade issues with Trade and Investment Queensland.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (8.15 pm): I am sure he will be enlightened by my speech. I rise to speak on the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I am delighted to do so as one who, to the surprise of many who know me, could not get past the second layer of a house of cards when trying to build it. I rise in support of this bill, in particular the proposed amendments to the Professional Engineers Act 2002. My speech will be short and emphasise the seriousness of such a bill and its importance in a state such as Queensland with the growth that we will see in the future. The future of Queensland rests with our children who are in or entering the education system, such as my young son Dugald and my daughter, Georgia, but more so my eldest son, Harry, who is expecting to enter into the study of engineering once he completes year 12 next year. With the study he is doing I am sure that he will get the necessary mark.

The registration system in Queensland provides the means to confirm a professional engineer's competence and also provides government, industry and individual consumers with confidence that an appropriately qualified engineer will perform the required services. I believe there is no more important duty that a government should perform than to ensure that a consumer feels safe in the knowledge that the people they are employing to carry out professional duties are qualified. In particular, most consumers do not have sufficient knowledge about the skills of different engineers due to the technical nature of professional engineering services. Additionally, as we have heard from other members, potential problems may not emerge until well after a service has been provided, such as in the case of building a house where footings have been laid.

People who take on this profession study for many years to make sure that mistakes are not made. We need to ensure that consumers feel comfortable, especially when it comes to their house. This bill deals with large industry, but there is no bigger investment that any of us will make than in our house. Registration assists consumers in distinguishing those persons who have achieved and maintained competency in providing professional engineering services. Again, that is a surety for consumers—the mums and dads and individuals—when building their house.


I notice that the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, the Hon. Mark McArdle, is in the chamber. He is someone who is more optimistic than most that one day Queensland will return to building big dams in this state and I am sure in that process the minister will want to be assured that the engineers being used on such projects are very professional. I am sure that was also high on the agenda of the minister involved with this bill, the Hon. Tim Mander.

Mr McArdle: *The Dam Busters.*

Mr COX: *The Dam Busters*; I thank the minister for the interjection. The bill has been developed following a review of the Professional Engineers Act 2002 and consultation with many stakeholders. Its amendments will ensure that the act continues to adequately regulate professional engineering services in Queensland, protecting Queenslanders. I note that while in a former profession the minister probably had an affinity with those from across the border who wear the blue jerseys—and I congratulate them on finally getting a series win—we do not want any shonky people crossing the border and taking jobs from Queenslanders if they are not qualified in the profession of engineering. I am sure that would have been foremost in the minister's mind when he made that decision. I fully support the amendments that will provide a clear statement in the Professional Engineers Act to the effect that persons outside of Queensland carrying out professional engineering services for those projects based in the state of Queensland must be registered as professional engineers or must work under the direct supervision of a registered professional engineer. I have just stated the importance of that, not just in terms of taking jobs from Queenslanders but also for ensuring that we do not have shonks working in the construction and building program in this state.

I understand that the application of the act outside Queensland has been the source of some confusion among certain sectors in the industry. I commend the minister for including this amendment in the bill to ensure clarity in this area. However, I think there was a lack of clarity in some of the refereeing decisions that he made in his former profession, but we will not go back to that grand final.

I note that currently the Professional Engineers Act has no provisions for retired or non-practising engineers to maintain registration unless all the continuing registration requirements are met. Many retired or non-practising engineers, such as those on extended leave, have indicated that they would like to maintain their registration entitlement and have requested a new category of registration for non-practising professional engineers. Therefore, I am delighted to see that the bill introduces a new category of non-practising engineers to cater for retired engineers and engineers on maternity leave or other career breaks. As I said at the beginning of my speech, this is an important part of the bill and is in line with the plan of this government and the people of Queensland. We do have an ageing population that should be allowed to work longer, even if that is in a conciliatory role or in support of other professions. This part of the bill will go a long way to ensuring that security. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferry Grove—LNP) (8.22 pm): I rise to add to the debate and also to show my support for the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Specifically, I will address the section of the bill that deals with the management of licensees who enter into insolvency or bankruptcy. The Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 notes that a person must not carry out or undertake to carry out building work without a licence of the appropriate class. A range of provisions in the act set out when a person is prevented from holding a licence with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. This includes where an individual has entered into bankruptcy or where the executive officer is of a licensed building company that has gone into liquidation, administration or receivership.

Under the current legislation, a licensee who has one bankruptcy event or one relevant company event recorded against their licence will have their licence cancelled. The individual is then excluded or prevented from holding another licence or from being an executive officer of a licensed building company for a period of five years. However, if a licensee has two events recorded against their licence, the licence is cancelled. The person may then be permanently excluded or prevented from holding a licence or from being an executive officer of a licensed building company for the rest of their life.

Where an individual licensee experiences two bankruptcy events that arise from the same set of circumstances, then those two events are treated as one event and the individual may only be excluded from holding a licence or from being an executive officer of a licensed building company for a period of five years. Similarly, where a licensee experiences two relevant company events that arise from the same set of circumstances, then those two company events are treated as one event and the individual may only be excluded from holding a licence or from being an executive officer of a licensed building company for a period of five years. However, if an individual licensee experiences a bankruptcy event and a relevant company event, both of which arise from the same set of circumstances, then those two events are treated as two separate events. The effect on the licensee could then be significant. It means that a person may permanently be excluded or prevented from holding a licence with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission for the rest of their life.

An example of the possible impact on a licensee is where an individual is a director of a licensed building company and gives personal guarantees as the company director for the benefit of the company. Let us assume that the company experiences financial difficulties and the creditors call in the guarantees that were provided. If, as the director offering the guarantee, the individual cannot meet their obligations and enters bankruptcy, which becomes the relevant bankruptcy event, this will in turn cause a liquidator to be appointed to the building company due to its inability to pay its debt. That is the relevant company event. Even though the relevant bankruptcy event and the relevant company event in this example stem from the same set of circumstances, the result for the director will be significant. The director may be permanently excluded or prevented from holding a licence with the QBCC or from, indeed, being an executive officer of a building company for the rest of their life.

During the hearing of the inquiry by the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee into the operation and performance of the former QBSA, a number of witnesses raised concerns that the current system of permanently excluding individuals from holding a licence or from being an executive officer of a licensed building company following related insolvency events is unfair. One submission from the Housing Industry Association highlighted that—

The biggest concern is that what most people would regard as one event counts as two... Where a building company fails this often results in the bankruptcy of the directors. While the failure of the business and the bankruptcy had the same cause, the Act requires these to be counted as two events resulting in permanent exclusion from the industry of the director.

The Queensland Master Builders Association supports the amendments as it—

... fixes a flaw with the current provisions which prevent a person associated with a failed company, who is the company's nominee supervisor, from holding a contractor or nominee supervisor licence.

The QMBA noted that there are many factors that can affect the performance of a business, particularly its financial viability. It also noted that the proposed amendments take into account the various business models that operate within the building industry and make allowance for the interrelationship formed within those businesses, both at the business and the personal level.

The Housing Industry Association also supports the proposed amendments because they effectively address a long-held industry concern that insolvency events can lead to unfair and unjust outcomes for licensees. In the report tabled on 18 August 2014, the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee also raised this sentiment. The committee noted its support of the proposed amendments to make it clearer that a licensee should not be prevented from holding a licence with the QBCC for the rest of their life or from being an executive of a building company if a bankruptcy event and a relevant company event arise out of the same incident. The amendment of the exclusion provisions affecting licensees impacted by a relevant insolvency event is one of the initial steps in implementing the government's 10-point plan and delivering on our promise to grow the building and construction industry as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. I support the passage of this bill through the House.


Debate, on motion of Mr Shuttleworth, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (8.29 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Ginger Imports

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (8.29 pm): I would normally say it is a great honour to rise and speak in this chamber, but tonight I rise very frustrated and very concerned about what is going on in our horticultural industry here in this state and I must admit with an element of, 'We told you so.' Some 2½ or three years ago I stood in this House, along with a number of colleagues, and raised significant concerns about the then federal Labor government's import risk analysis being done on pineapples and ginger, particularly fresh pineapples coming in from Malaysia and the likely import of fresh ginger from Fiji.

At that time the horticultural growers in the electorate of Glass House and in the neighbouring electorate of Nicklin, supported by horticulturalists in Bundaberg and the Burnett, were saying, 'We can compete on price. We can compete on quality. This is not about protectionism. This is about biosecurity. Our concerns are that in both of those two industries—the pineapple and ginger industries—there are diseases and pests in Malaysia, the Philippines and Fiji that will wipe out our horticultural crops as we know them if they take a foothold in this nation.'

I hate to say it, but what we warned of back then is coming to pass. We were told that all of these nations would be required to treat the imported goods with methyl bromide. I must admit, as I did back then, that that is something we do not allow our own horticulturalists to use. But the then federal government was quite willing to allow imported goods to be treated with methyl bromide and believed that that would treat any issue.

Just recently live root knot nematodes were found in a shipment of fresh ginger from Fiji. Root knot nematode is found in Australia. But what it demonstrates is that if the more risky and dangerous burrowing nematode gets through what is regarded as a biosecurity barrier and into this nation then we can kiss goodbye all of our wonderful ginger producers in this wonderful state. If we see that occur in ginger then we are likely to see it in our pineapple crops as well.

I commend the state Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Minister McVeigh, for raising this with his federal colleague. I am appalled at the response of our now federal coalition colleague in Canberra who has said that this has all been looked at before. It has. It was wrong. It needs to be stopped. Let us ban their import while we review the position. Let us go back to the basics and protect our precious horticultural industry in this state.

(Time expired)

Safe Night Out Strategy



Mr BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (8.32 pm): The Premier's Safe Night Out Strategy commenced over the long weekend. I can update the House on some of the results. Before that, we must remember that the Safe Night Out Strategy was born out of the Premier's overruling of his own LNP colleagues, including the Attorney-General and the health minister, who had all but signed up to the benefits of reduced trading hours to combat alcohol related violence and injury.

So what are the results of the first weekend? An 18-year-old female has been charged with the serious assault of a taxi rank supervisor in Fortitude Valley. This offence was alleged to have occurred at 4.16 am. A man has been charged with assault occasioning grievous bodily harm following a coward's punch attack in Townsville. This offence is alleged to have been witnessed by two police officers and occurred at 3.40 am.

If members remember my last speech in the parliament on this topic, I outlined how the New South Wales police gave evidence that following the reduction in trading hours in Kings Cross grievous bodily harm assaults went down from 22 to two compared with the same time the previous year. The Townsville coward's punch offence saw an 18-year-old require facial surgery for a depressed cheekbone. He has paid a price and the community is paying a considerable price for the Premier's overruling of his own ministers.


I thought the Premier said that the \$44.5 million Safe Night Out Strategy had all the answers—the best in the country. The *Courier-Mail* reported that 10 people were thrown in the drunk tank. That experiment is going to cost \$1 million. I can inform the House that I tried to ascertain from senior police during the crime inquiry where the \$44 million was going to be spent. I can say that I was left none the wiser. They certainly did not know at the time.

It appears the Townsville police state that they have just as many police in the nightclub district under this arrangement as they had under the drink-safe precinct model. I am aware of other complaints about the funding of this strategy.

What other damage has the Safe Night Out Strategy caused our communities? The moratorium on late-night trading hours has been ended and a flood of applications has followed. This will be the only government in the world to try to reduce alcohol related violence by making it easier to get drunk for longer periods of time.

But who pays for all of this? Communities like Rockhampton that have de facto nightclub suburbs—perhaps? People urinating and fighting in the streets, police, ambos and nurses getting assaulted, shop windows being smashed and drunk and homeless people interfering with cafe businesses are pretty much the norm and to be expected with this. I can tell members that it is not the alcohol industry, not the liquor industry, that is paying the price. It expects taxpayers to pay for the hospital surgeries, the exploding insurance premiums and more police, nurses and paramedics. The question needs to be asked: why did the Premier oppose the reduction in trading hours and the late-night suburban trading when he was lord mayor?

Townsville Crocodiles

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (8.35 pm): I rise tonight to issue a call to arms to my home city of Townsville. That call to arms is to support one of our national sporting teams at a very crucial time in its history. That national sporting team is not my beloved Cowboys, is not my Northern Fury that were once in the A League, is not the wonderful, dynamic Townsville Fire, it is the Townsville Crocodiles. A great start to the season has been had by the Crocodiles. They won the Blitz tournament and were awarded the Loggins-Bruton Cup—the first bit of silverware the club has won. Right now the NBL is at a very important time in the history of the league. But likewise the Crocodiles are at a very important time in their history.

I was fortunate to attend the first home game of the season on the weekend, which, unfortunately, the boys did not win, but it is early days in the season. The club has a new leadership team on the court. They have a new home ground that they have moved to—Townsville RSL Stadium. They have new off-the-court management who are trying their best to garner support. They are trying their best to ensure that commercial people get on board for corporate sponsorship.

I want to see a return to the glory days when a ticket to a Townsville Crocodiles game was something that was cherished. As a young chap I remember receiving tickets to a game at a school fete and thinking I was the luckiest bloke in the world to be going to the basketball. That is what we have to return to in Townsville. The guys have a role to play on the court, but off the court we also have a role to support them, to make sure the club is viable, to make sure that we create a situation where the sport blossoms.


Why? It is not just about basketball. It is not just about people who are passionate about basketball. Our national sporting teams are so much more than that. In the case of the Townsville Fire, it is about the fact that we have the only women's national sporting team in northern Australia. We are proud of that. In the case of the Cowboys and in the case of the Crocodiles it is about identity for our city.

When the Crocodiles came into the league in the early 1990s, the people who backed the bid were not basketball tragics. They were Townsville tragics. They were people who just loved the city. They saw it as an opportunity to promote Townsville on a national scale.

We are proud of the city we have become. We are proud of the fact that we have national sporting teams. We are proud that we play host to a round of the V8 Supercars. We are proud that we host a national Festival of Chamber Music in our city. What we need now is the community to rise up, support this great club and ensure that this year's first maiden championship is done in front of a record home ground.

(Time expired)

Chameleon House

 **Mrs D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (8.38 pm): It is my pleasure tonight to rise to speak about Chameleon House which is a youth housing shelter in my electorate of Redcliffe. It specialises in youth crisis accommodation and living skills programs for young people. This week I had the pleasure of going along to their AGM.

I want to tell the parliament a little bit about Chameleon House. They have been operating for 26 years in Redcliffe. They have been supporting homeless young people and families in Redcliffe and the surrounding community. I know that they actually get referrals from not just across Queensland but even interstate. Specifically, they offer programs in three main areas: a specialist homeless service for young people aged 15 to 17; a transitional housing program for young families aged 18 to 25; and the I CaN HOPE Program that was launched in October 2013.

This is a non-funded program but it is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who are at risk of having their newborns removed at birth due to homelessness or unsuitable and/or insecure housing. They developed this I CaN HOPE Program in partnership with Ngarrama, part of the Metro North Hospital and Health Service—a free antenatal, birthing and postnatal service to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

I just want to give the House some of the very impressive statistics of Chameleon Youth Housing since 2011 in the delivery of quality client outcomes for accommodation being provided. Since 2011 Chameleon Youth Housing have delivered 3,597 nights to a total of 63 clients or 21

families in its transitional program comprising 27 adults—22 females, five males—and 36 children. During this time 10,282 bed nights were provided to these families. Of the 63 clients, 62 per cent are identified as Indigenous. One hundred per cent of these clients transitioned to safe and secure accommodation, demonstrating Chameleon Youth Housing's ability to provide real sustainable pathways out of homelessness by developing 'resilience, not reliance'.

I just want to congratulate Chameleon Youth Housing—their director, Carmel Riethmuller, and their wonderful staff. They have done a tremendous job over the years. They have supported so many young people in the community. They certainly have my full support and the support of the broader community. We thank them for the great work they do and we will continue to support them into the future.

Nanango Electorate, Primary Producers



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (8.41 pm): Primary producers are the lifeblood of my Nanango electorate, and they have been doing it tough over the last several years, with two floods and a severe drought. It has been my goal this year, and every year, to focus on the primary producers and to provide as much support as possible. I wanted to highlight in the chamber tonight two key outcomes which I believe will assist the landholders in and around that great area of the South Burnett.

Firstly, earlier this year I was contacted by a group of irrigators who work the land adjacent to Barkers Creek near the township of Nanango. This group of around 50 farmers were seeking representation to assist them in the review of the Burnett Water Resource Plan, which initially suggested water licensing and meters may be required to help manage the Barkers Creek groundwater. Over several months I was able to work with the landholders and we also conducted a public meeting with them so that I could understand and hear their issues and work on strategies to address their concerns.

The group were able to put together an excellent submission which demonstrated how they could manage the water sustainably without the need for meters. I was able then to take that submission directly to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Hon. Andrew Cripps, requesting him to consider their request and to highlight the fact that under the current difficult circumstances the last thing my locals needed was more paperwork and costs. I am extremely pleased to say that the minister recognised the farmers' submission and no water licences or meters will be required on Barkers Creek. This has been an excellent outcome and I would like to thank the local primary producers involved for their patience in working through this extremely important issue. I would also like to again thank here in the chamber tonight the minister Andrew Cripps for the hard work he also put in to resolving that issue for us.

In the time I have left I would like to mention the recent agriculture and natural resources forum which I held in the town of Kingaroy during September. This was my second agriculture forum and it was my goal to bring both the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Natural Resources to the South Burnett to give our primary producers the opportunity to speak one on one with these key decision makers. It was a fantastic day and next year I would encourage more landholders and producers to come along. Both ministers stayed in Kingaroy at the forum for the whole day, so anyone who wanted to address any concerns with either the Hon. Dr John McVeigh or the Hon. Andrew Cripps were able to do so directly. Many issues were brought to the forefront and I know that both of those ministers have been working very hard through those issues, so I would also like to thank them. It was a wonderful day, and again I would like to encourage as many landholders as possible to attend the 2015 agriculture forum.

(Time expired)

Gladstone Electorate, Accommodation



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (8.44 pm): Over the last few years I have risen in this place to talk about the cost of accommodation and the cost of rent in the electorate of Gladstone. In particular, over the last three to four years with the commencement and construction of LNG, the rise in rents has been exponential. This has affected in particular those people on ordinary, more modest incomes and also those in a slightly better income range.

Some of the groups that have been most highly affected have been government employees such as teachers, nurses, firefighters, ambulance officers—those critical positions to the safety and welfare of our community. Indeed, at one stage we had an entire crew of firefighters who were living

in Rockhampton and transporting on a daily basis or on a shift basis to Gladstone—certainly not an ideal situation. Police had to be recruited at a young age so that young police officers—singles—could be put together in one house just for affordability. Teachers, unless there was teacher accommodation, found it very difficult to come to Gladstone and survive on their income with our elevated rents.

So it was quite surprising when I received a complaint from a resident who had seen an advertisement in the paper for the sale of a Queensland department of education house in my electorate. Every three to four years—it is a regular cycle—there is some bureaucrat in Brisbane who decides that, as Gladstone is one of the few electorates on the eastern seaboard that still has significant government housing, the housing there should be divested. It is a nonsense and it is a very short-term view.

If these sales as proposed go ahead and we have another construction boom—and we will have another construction boom on the basis of the infrastructure and industry that is in my electorate already—then the ability to recruit and retain staff in these critical areas of employment to the community will decrease significantly. It will not be possible to recruit teachers, firefighters and ambulance officers. It is incumbent on any government to look at the long-term issues in electorates like Gladstone and ensure that that fundamental support for employees on those more modest wages compared to construction are able to be affordably retained and offered accommodation.

Black Diggers



Mr WATTS (Toowoomba North—LNP) (8.47 pm): I wish to bring to the attention of the House the highlights of a recent telecast of the *Black Diggers* play, which was aired at the Toowoomba Empire Theatre, attended by over 300 people. It was actually aired in the new Armitage Centre, which is a new part of the theatre that was built, with over \$2 million raised in the local community. In a state-wide first, this live telecast to regional Queensland is one of the key components of the Queensland government's Anzac centenary commemorative events program. Coming live from the Playhouse at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in Brisbane, this performance of *Black Diggers* brought people together from across the state in nine venues—at Ayr, Bundaberg, Cairns, Gladstone, Mackay, Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville.

The production was directed by Wesley Enoch and written by Tom Wright. *Black Diggers* uncovered the fearless contribution that Aboriginal men made to Aboriginal history and followed their journeys from their homelands—some in Queensland—to the battlefields of Gallipoli, Palestine and Flanders. To mark 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War, *Black Diggers* explores the untold exceptional stories of Indigenous Australian soldiers who fought for the British Commonwealth. Shunned and downtrodden in their own country at that time and banned from serving in the military, Aboriginal men stepped up to enlist and take up arms to defend the free world in its greatest time of need. Grand in scale and scope and drawing upon new research and extensive consultation with veterans, black diggers' families, historians and academics, this all-male, all-Indigenous cast evoked the memory of these heroic men, largely unknown to history.

I had the pleasure of attending with my school captains from both campuses of Toowoomba State High School: Josephine Burton, Lyndon Enright, Lilly Goddard and Alex Stephens. It was interesting to talk to them about how they felt after they had seen the play. I would also like to thank the principal, Chris Zilm, for contacting them whilst they were on holiday to get them to come along. The audience was very impressed with the telecast and was very emotional. I have even been contacted by a local school asking if the recording of the performance would be available as a resource for the school.

I congratulate the Anzac Centenary Coordination Unit and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the delivery of such an outstanding performance. I would like to mention to Minister Walker that if they would like to do a live performance in Toowoomba and telecast it for those people living in regional Queensland and particularly here in Brisbane, we would only be too happy to host them in Toowoomba and telecast it back for them to enjoy the experience we had in Toowoomba.

Newman LNP Government, Economic Performance



Mr JUDGE (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (8.50 pm): I want to add to the question I asked the Premier today about employment and I want to talk about the four pillars of the Queensland economy that the Premier pledged to grow. We have seen the recent Roy Morgan poll indicate that real unemployment in Queensland is 10 per cent, as indicated today, and that underemployment is eight per cent. That

means that total unemployment is 18.3 per cent. The Premier made a pledge to bring unemployment down to four per cent within six years. It is certainly going north, not south. The Premier is failing in that regard.

We should scrutinise the Premier's four pillars, firstly, tourism. In terms of domestic overnight visitation, the market share of international visitors has declined. In 2009, for example, the share was 40.3 per cent and has since slumped to 34.1 per cent. By comparison, Victoria has grown from 29.1 per cent to 33.8 per cent. Looking at mining, Queensland mining is in structural decline and we see jobs being lost on a daily basis. Hundreds and thousands of jobs are being lost throughout Queensland as a consequence of the mining decline. In agriculture, landholders in Queensland and on the Darling Downs are accusing the Newman government of being too close to mining. The Premier makes no apologies for that, yet he is ignoring the agricultural sector, which is one of his four pillars. That is a disgrace. The Newman government has also recently removed longstanding public rights to object to mines. This means that successful objections by neighbouring graziers and others to groundwater impacts such as at the Alpha coalmine, for example, cannot be brought under the new system. On top of this, there is the overriding prioritisation of mining interests over agriculture in Queensland. In Queensland the agricultural sector is struggling under exceptional and unprecedented drought conditions.

During this term of government we saw the Deputy Premier claim a 42 per cent pay rise whilst the Premier was overseas.


Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr JUDGE: The member voted for it. The member for Nanango wanted it. They wanted a 42 per cent pay rise. What a disgrace! They held the Public Service down to two per cent and they asked for a 42 per cent pay rise. What a disgrace! I made a submission to the independent tribunal on that matter because I believed it was wrong. All the LNP members sat there and did not make a submission because they supported it. If they disagreed with it they would have written a submission. They were too afraid to make a submission. The Deputy Premier made a smash-and-grab for a 42 per cent pay rise. What a disgrace when public servants were held down to two per cent.

We have seen WorkCover rights being stripped away under the Newman government. We are coming up to the anniversary of WorkCover being stripped away. Sixty per cent of injured Queensland workers have no fault claims of their own that they can claim. The Newman government is failing Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Whitsunday Electorate, Road Safety

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (8.53 pm): Tonight I would like to advise honourable members of some very good news in the electorate of Whitsunday, particularly in the important area of public policy, and that is road safety. I am sure that is something that all members in this House would agree on without qualification. Last week I was delighted—absolutely thrilled in fact—to announce funding for flashing school zone lights on Hill End Road, the main drag in the suburb of Glenella on Mackay's north side. Glenella State School is located on Hill End Road. It is a great school in my electorate, starting as a country school in the canefields way back in 1879, 17 years after Mackay was first started and 14 years after my great-great-grandfather came to town. Suffice to say that back in those days the school had a very different traffic flow at the front gate to today's world where we have more and more cross-river commuters passing by every year.


At the start of this year I raised the issue of road safety and specifically the growing need for flashing lights with Principal Cliff Powys and also some of the parents at Glenella State School. Fast forward a few months and we have a result. It is a result that certainly got the thumbs up from Mr Powys, Stuart Naylor, the P&C president at Glenella, and many of the mums with whom I caught up at the drop-off zone last week who were tickled pink with the news that the flashing lights would be coming in 2015.

I must also heap praise on the two lollipop ladies who do a wonderful job, as they do right across the length and breadth of Queensland. In the case of Glenella specifically, I am referring to Giralda Synnott and Vicki Muscat. They have seen it all on the job. They have seen lunatics speeding past when poor little kids are being dropped off at school or are being walked to school. As members can imagine, some of them are also on their phone. Some have even been seen having a shave. It is disgraceful. Hopefully, common sense will prevail when these lights are installed next year.

It is no different to what was achieved at Bucasia State School. I can remember the now Premier of Queensland and myself making a commitment when regional parliament went to Mackay in May of 2011 that we would do something similar at Bucasia. Guess what? Bingo! Early last year the families of Bucasia State School were celebrating the installation of flashing school lights along busy Shoal Point Road in the northern beaches of Mackay. I know that Belinda Eckford and the crew at Bucasia are very pleased.

More recently we have announced some road safety initiatives at Proserpine State School to install a new drop-off zone along busy Renwick Road. I take my hat off to Kylie Edmondson and the team from Proserpine State School. Going forward, we are doing some good things looking to get a better outcome for Sonia Zadebernyj and her team at Cannonvale P&C for the betterment of students at Cannonvale State School.

Western Queensland, Local Supply

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (8.56 pm): Yes, we all know how tough it is out there. I can tell honourable members that it is only getting a darn side tougher when contracts outside local towns in my electorate are let to coastal tradespeople. They bring their own supplies and materials with them to fulfil the needs of those mainly government jobs in the central west and right throughout the electorate and the local tradespeople are missing out.

I appeal to Minister Tim Mander and other government ministers to take note of the situation. It is totally unacceptable. Our tradespeople who live and work in those areas buy their materials locally and spend their money locally. Local businesses usually give them credit, as they do many other people right throughout the electorate and in western and remote Queensland. Yet these people are coming from the coast and from afar, bringing their own materials with them that have been purchased at a cheaper rate, cutting our local people out of jobs.

I do not care who these people are, but I will be starting to name them and chase them away from the area in question. This is not fair. I know we live in an era of competition. However, we have a policy in this government of buying local. I think this is also about supporting local. I have seen it happen time and time again that those people can buy at a cheaper rate. Internet marketing is also crippling our local businesses, and I know that is an ongoing saga everywhere. This is something I am not going to stand for. My local businesspeople are also hurting because they are not getting the business from local tradies. As I say, most times those businesses give credit for up to two or three months to the local people to pay their accounts because they know that they are going to come good in time. They have local families in the towns and they live and spend every cent in the towns. Some of those people have now not had a contract in months. This is a totally unfair situation.

Since QBuild went off the radar, a lot of these contracts are now being awarded to outside people. I appeal to the ministers in question, especially the housing minister, to make certain that this flow is stemmed and that the local people become the sole operators for these contracts. We are losing families. We are losing businesses. We are losing people left, right and enter from the west. We are crippled with one of the worst droughts in history and the situation is not improving on a daily basis. Whether they are from Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay or wherever, these other tradespeople are not welcome in the west because we have our own tradespeople who can do these jobs and do a quality job at that.

(Time expired)

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.00 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, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Latter, Lynham, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, 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