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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 15 October 2014

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WEDNESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2014

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

ABSENCE OF SPEAKER

The Clerk informed the House that Madam Speaker was attending a funeral.
Mr Acting Speaker (Dr Mark Robinson, Cleveland) read prayers and took the chair.

PETITIONS

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

Wishart Outlook

Hon. Walker, from 370 petitioners, requesting the House to take action for the locality around Holmead Road, north to Bulimba Creek, south to the Pacific Motorway and east to the Gateway Motorway become formally known as Wishart Outlook with no change to its postcode of 4113 [\[6246\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3)—

William Gunn Jetty, Recreational Fishing

103 petitioners, requesting the House to allow the public access for recreational fishing on the William Gunn Jetty in Manly and other jetties in Queensland [\[6247\]](#).

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

Adult Entertainment Permits

Mr Watts, from 727 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 [\[6248\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

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

[6249](#) Letter, dated 13 October 2014, from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie) to the Clerk of the Parliament regarding a proclamation for the Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Act 2014, subordinate legislation No. 194 of 2014

[6250](#) Criminal Code and Another Act (Stock) Amendment Act 2014: Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 194

[6251](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie) to an ePetition (2233-14) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 258 petitioners, requesting the House to amend legislation so that offenders who commit serious offences against children are automatically given a 'never to be released' sentence, whether it is their first offence or not

MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Redcliffe (Mrs D'Ath)—

[6252](#) Non-conforming petition in relation to Moreton Bay Regional Council releasing the new draft planning scheme to the public and undertaking consultation with affected residents

Member for Capalaba (Mr Davies)—

[6253](#) Non-conforming petition in relation to a public access canoe ramp to Waterloo Bay in north Birkdale

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Cost of Living

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.02 pm): Three years ago under Labor, Queenslanders were facing daily living costs that were spiralling out of control. We saw huge water bill increases with ratepayers left to pay for unnecessary water pipes and Labor's rusting \$1.2 billion desalination plant on the Gold Coast, which has been dubbed Queensland's biggest lemon. Labor had removed the \$7,000 stamp duty concession on the family home. Our 8c cent a litre fuel subsidy was ripped away after promises to retain it and businesses had been hit with Labor's waste tax and green tape costs. Queenslanders had an out-of-control situation with their electricity bills, which were locked in to increase until 2015 by the state's worst ever Treasurer, Andrew Fraser. In previous sessions of this parliament we have tabled the letter in which he argued for higher rates of return for the electricity industry in Queensland. He asked for higher electricity prices to pay for the unnecessary gold plating of the power poles and wires. We were left with a solar bonus scheme that saw those who could least afford it paying higher prices and we inherited public transport fare increases of 15 per cent every year under the then Labor minister for transport and now the 'leader of the no position'.

We have set about turning around that sad and sorry state of affairs and Queensland's 'high cost of living ship', which was abandoned and set adrift by Labor. Today, I would like to highlight an example of the kind of cost-of-living support and savings that this government is delivering for some of the Queenslanders who deserve it most, our pensioners. For a pensioner couple who recently retired and moved from Brisbane to buy their retirement dream home on the Sunshine Coast, Treasury has highlighted the following cost-of-living initiatives and dollar estimates for support: of course, there is the \$7,000 stamp concession that we have reinstated for buying that dream home; there is \$85 over three years in savings on the registration of a four-cylinder car from our registration freeze; there is an average \$120 saving from the freeze on tariff 11, which we implemented for one year; there is \$89 from the carbon tax cut to electricity bills for a low-use user; our one-off \$80 water rebate; and \$42 in savings over two years from the cap on bulk water prices. Our new cost-of-living fund electricity savings will deliver a further \$432 in savings over five years, as has been estimated for an energy-conscious household. Savings are larger and more significant for larger households that use more electricity. There is also about \$43 in annual savings if both grandparents choose to travel from Nambour to Brisbane to visit the grandkids, which will come from our five per cent transport fare cut on 1 November. Importantly, there is more than \$2,000 per year available for a pensioner couple in state funded discounts for essentials such as rates, emergency services, water, electricity, gas, registration, eyeglasses and dental care.

Pensioners can find out if they are getting access to all the concessions available to them to assist with the higher cost of living by ringing 13QGOV, that is, 137468, or visiting the Queensland government website. In summary, unlike those opposite who have no real policies and no way to fund them, this government has a clear plan and is driving down the cost of living in this state. We will keep consulting with pensioners and all Queenslanders about how we can do even better for them.

Infectious Disease

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.07 pm): Community concern over the risks posed by infectious disease is at a high level worldwide. In the past week in the north and far north, there have been suspected or reported cases of ebola virus disease, tuberculosis and meningococcal, but the range of potential threats in Queensland is much wider and extends to the hendra virus, lyssavirus and beyond.

In responding to these threats, the presentation of information to the community by health authorities is a key, integral part of their responsibilities. Details of cases and actions taken or recommended by clinicians must be presented in an accurate, timely and authoritative manner. This is essential to maximise the impact of the clinical effort through wider coordinated action. Strengthening community awareness and engagement in the face of concern about disease builds resilience and improves results; false or conflicting information risks degrading those public health outcomes.

In two recent examples, this correct and considered flow of information has not been maintained. Those cases are now the central focus of a report being commissioned by the department of health. A range of comments have been made about this report, prior circumstances

and the decisions of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service to stand down two doctors from their duties. Across Queensland Health, suspensions are not uncommon. They occur to ensure staff on duty at public health facilities can work without distraction. As at 31 May this year, for example, 49 Queensland Health staff were suspended. The government takes very seriously its responsibility to deliver accurate, timely and authoritative health advice to the community. That is why we publish such a wide range of hospital performance data.

Last night in Cairns a meeting of the Far North Queensland Senior Medical Staff Association executive committee considered a response to these two suspensions. The SMSA is the independent professional organisation representing staff specialists, including senior and visiting medical officers, at Cairns Hospital. Its executive committee gave unanimous support to the three resolutions, which state—

1. The SMSA regrets that comments made by the senior clinicians were used by the press in their reporting of the potential case of Ebola virus. The Association did not know of these comments until after they were made. The two senior clinicians involved were commenting on a rapidly evolving situation and with the benefit of hindsight have acknowledged that this was unwise.
2. The SMSA is committed to working constructively with the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service management team to ensure the best health outcomes for the people of Far North Queensland. As a result of this situation, the SMSA has resolved to create a process for responsibly releasing statements to the media, if this is appropriate.
3. The SMSA requests that the District (or HHS) deal locally with the possible breach in the Code of Conduct, resulting in the suspension of the two senior clinicians. We request that the process described in the Contract of Employment between the District and the SMOs be implemented, as this is the agreed framework for dealing with these matters. It should be separate from the overall review of the management of the Ebola risk patient, to avoid prolonging the process to the detriment of the two clinicians and local services.

These resolutions were delivered by letter to the hospital and health service chief executive. I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 15 October 2014, from Dr Roxanne Wu, President, FNQ SMSA, regarding FNQ Senior Medical Staff Association Executive Committee response to the suspension of two senior clinicians [\[6254\]](#).

I want to thank the SMSA for its understanding of the principles at play in this important matter.

Today, Queensland Health has a strong plan that is about building a culture committed to our patients and their needs. It is about openness, accountability and performance. Queensland Health and its clinicians deliver better services in vital areas, such as the management of infectious disease, protected by a fail-safe reporting regime and with access to external oversight.

I can assure the SMSA that the independent review commissioned by the department of health will establish if proper procedures were followed regarding the treatment of patients, ebola and TB protocols, the release of private patient information, communications and the management of staff. I welcome the suggestions the SMSA has put to the HHS and look forward to the results of their forthcoming discussions.

Lease of Public Assets

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.12 pm): The LNP government has a strong plan for Queensland. We are making the strongest and smartest choice to lease a small number of government owned businesses so we can pay down debt, fund infrastructure and provide cost-of-living relief. Unlike those opposite, we will ask the people of Queensland for a mandate to implement our plan. When they go to the polls, Queenslanders will know exactly what we are proposing. We are not in the Labor mould where they tell voters one thing before the election and do exactly the opposite after.

The assets we are proposing to lease represent in value just over 11 per cent of the assets held by the state. It is true that the state would give up income if these assets were leased, but this would be offset by reduced interest payments. The assets we are proposing to lease returned revenue of \$1.08 billion to government in 2012-13, the last year for which final figures are available. That represents 2.6 per cent of government revenue.

It is also the case that not all businesses under consideration for lease return a profit to government. CS Energy has not turned a profit since 2008-09 and required a \$300 million capital injection from taxpayers in 2011-12 to keep it solvent.

By leasing the assets the government would be able to pay down our \$80 billion of inherited debt racked up by those opposite with their reckless spending. Reducing debt by \$25 billion to a more manageable level, as recommended by the Commission of Audit, would have the effect of reducing our interest payments by \$1.3 billion per year.

As members can see, the income lost is roughly equivalent to the interest we would save—in fact, slightly less. Importantly, however, we know that the income from these businesses goes up and down but the interest payment on Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt at \$450,000 an hour is constant. Even when these businesses make little or no return to government we still have to pay our interest bill. Any homebuyer knows that the bank will want their mortgage payments regardless of whether the household income goes up or down.

Our Strong Choices plan is a methodical and disciplined plan to continue the work this government has already done to get Queensland's finances back on track and back in the black. If Queenslanders accept our plan they will be backing a plan that will deliver funding certainty into the future for the vital services our growing state is going to need. Only the LNP has a strong plan to deliver a brighter future for Queensland.

Cost of living, Transport

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.15 pm): The LNP has a plan to deliver relief for Queensland families feeling cost-of-living pressures. It is a strong plan to reduce debt, to free up funds for job-creating infrastructure and to lower the cost of living for Queensland families.

In Transport and Main Roads this plan includes ending Labor's waste and ending the exorbitant cost-of-living increases that were delivered by the Leader of the Opposition when she was the transport minister. Gone are the warehouses full of backpacks and gold plating that Labor was so fond of. In its place is responsible management and policies that deliver for Queenslanders.

This government promised to freeze registration fees for the family car over our first term. We have delivered on that. Over the three-year freeze period the initiative will benefit the owners of over 2.5 million light vehicles and will assist most of the 1.15 million families in Queensland. The cost saving to run the family car will be \$48 for a four-cylinder vehicle, \$72 for a six-cylinder vehicle and \$98 for an eight-cylinder vehicle. Under Labor registration fees went up 30 per cent in just four years.

Public transport patronage has increased for the first time since Labor started hiking fares up 15 per cent every year from 2010. We have done this in a responsible way. Firstly, we halved Labor's fare hikes in January 2013 and January 2014. Secondly, we provided free travel after nine weekly journeys—a policy that is providing savings for about 80,000 passengers a week. That is 80,000 passengers who would be slugged if Labor got their way and scrapped that policy. Now, for the first time in Queensland's history we are cutting public transport fares across the state. Under Labor the average weekly passenger saw their fares increase by 52 per cent in just three years. Under the LNP a regular weekly passenger will be paying less now than they were in 2012.

What does that mean? It means savings of up to \$1,800 a year for a passenger travelling from Palmwoods station in the member for Glass House's electorate. It means savings of \$623 a year for passengers travelling from Ferny Grove station on one of the 15-minute services the member for Ferny Grove fought so hard to secure. It means a saving of \$88 a year for those travelling two zones in regional cities like Townsville, Cairns and Toowoomba.

The Leader of the Opposition failed to deliver reliable services. We have. She failed to deliver frequent services. We have. She failed to deliver affordable services. We have.

Get in the Game Initiative

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (2.18 pm): I am pleased to inform the House on how the Newman government's \$68 million Get in the Game initiative Get Started is helping Queensland families to get out and get active more affordably. Get Started lowers the cost of living for Queensland families, as we promised at the election. Get Started assists Queensland families by providing vouchers of up to \$150 to pay for the cost of sport and recreation club membership and participation fees.

Applications for the latest round of vouchers closed this week and the demand from Queensland families was extremely strong. More than 65,000 vouchers were issued across the first three rounds of Get Started. The last round of this program closed on Tuesday. It saw in excess of 13,300 vouchers issued to kids right across Queensland who want to play sport.

This program is all about ensuring Queensland kids have an opportunity to enjoy fitness and fun and go along to sporting clubs with their mates. The Get Started program has also been strongly supported by sport and recreation clubs. More than 3,400 clubs across the state have registered under this program. The Queensland government is very proud of the impact that the Get in the Game initiative through Get Started has had on families and sport and recreation clubs. The benefits for young people and clubs are a great example of the initiatives that are being delivered to ensure Queenslanders have access to sport and recreation opportunities and facilities regardless of where they live throughout the state. I am extremely proud and pleased with what we have achieved to date.

This government has a strong plan for a bright future that involves more kids playing more sport, not missing out because of the expense. I had a mum get in touch with my office just recently. She has five kids. She could afford for four of them to play sport but not for the daughter to play netball. This policy made the difference. Her child now has that opportunity, and all five of her children—five out of five—can now play sport. I am very proud that our government is giving people who have healthcare cards the same opportunities as all other Queenslanders. This is delivering great opportunities for all Queenslanders regardless of where you live in the state. If you want to get involved, get in the game.

Environment

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.20 pm): Unlike those opposite, the Newman LNP government does not believe environmental protection is measured in the pages of legislation, nor do we believe it should be used as an excuse to charge extra fees and dip into taxpayers' pockets. That is right: on top of the direct hits people were already taking under the former Labor government—such as hikes in transport fares, hikes in rego fees, hikes in power prices, hikes in water charges—those opposite ensured average Queenslanders were taking indirect hits through a range of environmental charges they imposed.

Motor mechanics and printing businesses were forced to pay extra fees to operate in the state of Queensland. But not happy with just charging businesses to operate safely, my predecessors also argued business needed to pay for their waste. They stood here and argued that every cafe, every construction site, every tradie needed to pay to dispose of their waste. That is Labor's way—create yet another tax, another cost, that is inevitably passed on to mums and dads across Queensland.

By contrast, the LNP government is cutting green tape while delivering strong environmental standards. We have scrapped the former government's ridiculous waste tax, saving businesses \$90 million every year. Let me repeat that: a \$90 million saving for Queensland businesses. By reducing the paperwork for 9,400 low-risk businesses throughout the state, we have delivered savings of around \$6.5 million in fees annually. Let us not forget the crown jewel of the green machine, Queensland's very own Office of Climate Change, costing Queensland taxpayers up to \$80 million each and every year. This office gave us gems like the 'low-carbon diet' initiative at the bargain price of \$1 million.

Rather than forcing taxpayers to foot the bill for millions of dollars in green schemes, the Newman government is implementing innovative programs that reduce costs, that reduce people's water bills, for example. We have delivered an Australian-first pilot program in partnership with Queensland Urban Utilities for managing nutrient emissions from a community sewage treatment plant at Beaudesert. This provided estimated potential savings of \$100 per annum for Beaudesert ratepayers.

The former government saw this portfolio as yet another revenue raiser. They slogged Queensland businesses with fees and tied them up in green tape. We are slashing fees, encouraging growth, delivering innovative solutions and saving families money. More importantly, we are focused on protecting our environment for the people of Queensland. Rather than charging business ridiculous fees, we are ensuring they are responsible. We have people out on the ground across Queensland carrying out more inspections than ever before. Unlike those opposite, we will continue to protect our environment and deliver real solutions for Queensland families and businesses.

Small Business

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.24 pm): Queensland's 400,000 small businesses are the backbone of Queensland's four-pillar economy. Whether it is your local butcher, baker or plumber, our small businesses touch the lives of Queensland families on a daily basis. Many of these businesses are mum-and-dad operations, working long hours to provide for their own families. Members on this side of the House understand this as many, like me, have run their own small businesses, unlike those opposite who when they were in government went out of their way to suffocate our small businesses under 92,000 pages of red tape and regulation. Doing business in this state was more expensive and cost the economy \$7 billion in taxes, fees and other charges.

In contrast, the Newman government has focused on getting out of the way and out of the pockets of businesses and in turn reducing Queenslanders' cost of living. The Business and Industry Portal—our one-stop shop for business to government services—contains over 800 services designed to help businesses in a variety of ways. Over the last three years, the BIP has saved Queensland businesses over \$400 million in time and money savings, savings that have been passed on to families through lower prices.

On Sunday the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Energy and Water Supply announced the Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund and the Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief plan. These changes will see the average electricity bill for small business reduce by between \$650 and \$1,400 over five years, depending on their current tariff. Caravan parks are now saving up to \$1,500 a year after on-site sewage treatment fees were halved. The payroll tax exemption threshold has been increased from \$1 million to \$1.1 million, meaning 90 per cent of Queensland employers are now exempt from paying payroll tax. Further, businesses with an annual payroll tax liability of less than \$20,000 will now only need to lodge returns twice a year instead of monthly, saving around \$2 million in administration costs.

I am very proud of what we have achieved to date, but there is much more to do and we will keep working hard to reduce the burden on our small businesses and lower the cost of living for Queensland families. Only the Newman government has a strong plan for a brighter future.

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (2.26 pm): Labor's record in government provides the most compelling evidence that Queensland families and businesses would have been better off if state owned power companies were in more capable hands. An old newspaper article from when the opposition leader was principal adviser to the energy minister helps tell the story. Energex advised shareholding ministers it would pay a dividend of 75 per cent of its forecast profit for the 1998-99 year. But the Beattie government forced it to increase this to 95 per cent. Messrs Hamill and McGrady made this comment—

We are of the view that the dividend paid by each Government Owned Corporation must be determined in a wider context, which includes—the returns the State expects from its investments.

The 2004 power crisis and a decade of skyrocketing power prices followed. And when Queensland Labor lost office, former Prime Minister Julia Gillard revealed what could be applied to Queensland Labor—a perverse incentive for power companies to overinvest in the poles and wires so they could charge more. Gillard then indicated the Victorian and South Australian sectors as more cost effective and linked bigger increases in power prices with a conflict of interest.

Gillard's claims may be argued, but what cannot be denied is that the Labor Party's operation of Queensland's electricity sector has delivered the worst of outcomes for Queensland consumers as seen in their power bills. Labor's decisions are still casting long shadows over Queenslanders' cost of living. At the next election, the Newman government is seeking a mandate to put even further downward pressure on the cost of power by setting aside a \$3.5 billion fund to offset the cost of the Solar Bonus Scheme and to lease our networks under stringent conditions. At the end of the day, it is clear that Labor has lost touch with Queensland families, but this government is committed to working with them.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I call question time, I acknowledge the schools visiting today: Coppabella State School from the electorate of Mirani; Bloomsbury State School from the electorate of Whitsunday; Gulmarrad Public School from New South Wales; and Wellington Point State High School from the electorate of Cleveland.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Police Service

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (2.30 pm): My question is to the Premier. Police Union President Ian Leavers has just said 'Tim Nicholls is putting people's lives at risk' because he does not follow through on the government's commitments to police. I ask: is the Police Union correct when it states that the Treasurer's broken promises are putting Queenslanders' lives at risk?

Mr NEWMAN: Mr Acting Speaker, we couldn't spot that question coming, could we? There must be some sort of union election or insurrection in the air, because it is fascinating that there has been an outbreak of commentary from people who, frankly, have no idea about the inner workings of this government and have no understanding of the significant support that this Treasurer has given over the last 2½ years in this government to the Queensland Police Service. I have a chart here which starts the ball rolling in terms of the relative funding. These are the number of police per head of 100,000 population in various Australian states. The traditional maroon is, of course, the colour for Queensland. At the time—this is 2012-13 data—there were at least 236 police per 100,000 head of population. Today, under this government that has risen to at least 252. I think it could be as high as 258. I was just doing some maths before. The point is the Queensland Police Service, on the basis of a comparison between New South Wales, Victoria and WA, is the most well resourced in terms of staff numbers of any of those police services, and I table the document.

Tabled paper. Graph titled 'Queensland v other jurisdiction detailing 2012-13 police to population ratio' [\[6255\]](#).

The budget of the Queensland Police Service today is \$180 million a year recurrent expenditure more than it was in the last Labor budget three years ago. There are well and truly over 800 more police on the beat. There are two police helicopters in the air. There are three new police vessels. There are 1,500 iPad devices that have been rolled out across the state for the use of officers so they are not entangled in red tape and bureaucracy in having to go back to the police station to do paperwork. We have also seen over a billion dollars spent on a new, secure digital radio network—something the police had wanted for years but the former Labor government would not give them.

Along with tough laws and a strong approach backing the Queensland police by this government, we are seeing an unprecedented drop in crime. The bottom line is this Treasurer, this cabinet and this government have backed the Queensland Police Service in an unprecedented way. Every single man and woman who wears the blue uniform knows that this government backs them. Every single man and woman who I meet in the blue uniform is very enthusiastic about a government that is very, very concerned about the safety and security of Queenslanders and backs them 100 per cent every single day of the week. A person who is right behind them 100 per cent is my friend the Treasurer of Queensland.

Police Service

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Premier's friend, the Treasurer. I ask the Treasurer: is the Treasurer undermining the Premier and putting lives at risk, as the Police Union says, by not delivering on the government's commitment to police?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. Like the Premier, I, too, am not taken by surprise by the tone and the tenor of the question. Lacking any issue of their own, they find whatever is said in the last 20 minutes on the news or on Twitter. The source of opposition information now seems to be Twitter feed. Twenty-three staff, \$2.7 million and all they can think of is to relay a Twitter feed.

Let me reflect on my complete and ongoing admiration for the hard work and the dedication of the men and women of the Queensland Police Service. Only last month I was at my own local police station, at the Hendra Police Station, talking to police and discussing with them the additional 800 extra police that we have put on the beat in order to make Queensland a safer place. We were talking about the additional two helicopters that we have put on after years of the previous government being asked by the police and the Queensland Police Union to provide those helicopters which are providing those services.

We talked about the introduction of a government wireless network—technology that has been in place in Victoria for over a decade but which, because of the former previous Labor government's financial ineptitude, could not be supported by them. They refused to provide the support which we have delivered in the first two years of our government and is now being rolled out across Queensland for the G20 Leaders Summit to ensure that not only are the world leaders, delegates and media representatives safer but the men and women of the Queensland Police Service are safer as well.

We have also supported the QPS request in relation to their Safe Night Out Strategy. Not only was funding brought forward; increased funding was made available including increased funding for workload for increased drug testing. Police working on the safe night out activities retain all of their employment entitlements. Overtime, salary and up to a 24 per cent superannuation contribution are all provided for. Only three weeks ago in response to a request from the Police Commissioner this government approved an extra \$1½ million in order to provide safety and security around cultural and religious buildings because of the recent upturn in ISIS. That funding request was approved without a shadow of a doubt. The people who are supporting the Queensland Police Service are the LNP government.

(Time expired)

Ipswich, Public Transport

Mr BERRY: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please detail how this government has delivered transport solutions for the residents of Ipswich to ensure taxpayers get more bang for their buck?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question. The member for Ipswich knows the real value of listening to his community. He has been a constant presence out there with commuters during the consultation period on how to spend the carbon tax savings—the \$30 million of carbon tax savings; the carbon tax that was never going to impact on the cost of living of Australians according to the Australian Labor Party. He was out there asking Ipswich residents whether they wanted more services or cheaper fares. The member visited Ipswich and Booval stations during early morning peak-hour traffic, and on weekends he could be found at local community corners in Ipswich's resurgent CBD. Commuters told him that the cost of getting to and from work was a heavy burden. Residents in Churchill, Raceview, Eastern Heights, Yamanto and Silkstone said that in some cases it was cheaper to drive to the city. Professionals, tradies, carers and industry sector employees all took a hit as a result of the ALP's skyrocketing public transport prices. The decision to reduce fares by five per cent and then freeze them in 2015 has, I must say, drawn a collective sigh of relief from the people of Ipswich. From 3 November a regular weekday passenger from Ipswich to Brisbane—that is seven zones—could save \$154 a year.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: That is a \$975 saving compared to what passengers would have paid under Labor. I will say that again, because the member for Bundamba might want to listen to it: they are \$975 better off under this government than under the tired, ideas vacuum of the group in front of me. The member has also delivered additional security with a Police Rail Squad outpost at Ipswich station. He has been a tireless advocate for public safety, and this facility is a vital addition for the people of Ipswich.

As I think many members would know, Ipswich has a proud rail history and it will soon host the maintenance facility for the government's 75 new six-car rail sets at Wulkuraka in the neighbouring seat of Ipswich West. The people of Ipswich were hit by years of car rego hikes under the Labor government—30 per cent over four years. I will say that again: 30 per cent over four years. What

have we done? When we got into office we froze family car rego for over 2½ million family vehicles for three years. This will save taxpayers \$3 million annually and continue to reduce red tape along with the decision to get rid of the rego labels.

This government cares about the cost of living and has runs on the board in terms of providing for a lower cost of living for Queenslanders.

Workers Compensation

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General. This morning I met with Phil and Michael, who were both injured at work because of legal changes the government introduced exactly 12 months ago today. Like many Queenslanders, they have lost the right to sue a negligent employer through common law. What does the Attorney-General say to Phil and Michael and the thousands of other injured Queensland workers who will also suffer due to this government's removal of their right to seek fair and reasonable compensation for their injuries?

Mr BLEIJIE: I am not sure who the opposition met with this morning, but I will take it on face value that the meeting took place. What I can tell the people with whom the member for Mulgrave met is that they have the best workers compensation scheme in Australia. They have the most generous workers compensation scheme in Australia. They are in the only jurisdiction in Australia that actually covers them to and from work. We have managed to have a fair system where the worker is entitled to a great statutory scheme. They can still claim common law damages. They can still sue their employers and they can also claim for journey claims.

This month is Workplace Health and Safety Month. Last week I was pleased to attend, along with Mr Shane Webcke, at Brisbane City Hall and King George Square to talk about the government's commitment to workplace health and safety. That follows travelling to Roma with Mal Meninga, our safety ambassador, where we launched our new campaign.

The opposition and the unions would have Queenslanders believe that, because of amendments to workplace health and safety laws and workers compensation, workers are less safe. The statistics speak for themselves. Recent workplace health and safety stats reveal that workplace fatalities have actually fallen under this government in the last 12 months by 21.3 per cent. General injury rates have fallen by 8.2 per cent. Serious injury rates have actually fallen by 6.1 per cent and there has been a 15.2 per cent increase in workplace health and safety visits to Queensland work sites. As I said, we have the best workers compensation scheme in Australia. If people want to deal with hypotheticals, I can say that through our legislation we did try to get rid of dodgy claimants—those who go back to work fully recovered but are still able to claim common law damages such as one payment of \$275,000.

We had the pleasure of launching, along with Shane Webcke, our moments that matter campaign. This is a new workplace health and safety initiative. I and the government ask Queensland: what is your reason for staying safe at work? Is it to come home to a family—I am a father of three; I have Taylor, Madison and Jasper at home. We want to make sure all Queenslanders have safe workplaces. I congratulate workers and employers for doing the right thing, for making sure that their workplaces are as safe as they can be. We want zero fatalities. Workers want zero fatalities. Employers want zero fatalities. That can be achieved through programs like this and millions of dollars of investment in workers compensation schemes and in workplace health and safety like the Zero Harm at Work leadership forum that Mal Meninga runs as our safety ambassador.

I guess the member for Mulgrave would not have told the people with whom he met this morning that a few months ago the member for Mulgrave claimed credit for the government's changes to workers compensation and for reducing the workers compensation premiums. I table a copy of the press release issued by the member for Mulgrave—

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 20 May 2014, by the member for Mulgrave, Mr Curtis Pitt MP, titled 'Desperate LNP take credit for Labor's Workcover premium decrease' [\[6256\]](#).

(Time expired)

Pine Rivers, Public Transport

Mr HOLSWICH: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please detail what the LNP government has done to ease the cost of living for Pine Rivers residents travelling to and from work, and are there any alternative plans?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Pine Rivers. It was a great pleasure to be out there in the member's electorate the other week. I know how passionate he is about his own community. He is passionate about public transport in his community, particularly about securing extra bus services. He is relentless in ensuring that I get the feedback from his mobile offices and from commuters as well. He has been a very strong advocate for the new track between Petrie and Lawnton that will allow additional train services to Brisbane.

Today is the fifth anniversary of a very dark day for public transport. On this day five years ago Labor announced that it was going to bring in its 15 per cent annual fare increases for public transport. They put out a release about this—and I have the release here—five years ago. Did they say they were going to put it up in the first paragraph of that release? No. Did they say they would put it up in the second paragraph, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the 10th or the 15th? No. Hidden away on page 2 of the release, in the 20th paragraph, are these comments, 'To help reach that goal fares will increase 15 per cent a year from 2011 to 2014.' Today marks the anniversary of that incredibly dark day in public transport.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you know that for the first time in Queensland history we are to cut state-wide fares by five per cent. The contrast is incredibly clear. Let us not forget who made that decision to increase fares by 15 per cent every year. Who was part of cabinet at the time? It was the member for Inala, the member for Mackay and other ministers who Labor now wants to bring back into this House. Their grubby fingerprints are all over this release about putting fares up by 15 per cent. In contrast, we have worked to deliver for electorates like Pine Rivers to improve the situation. We have introduced free travel after nine journeys; a \$38 million promise. As I said, we have halved Labor's planned fare increases. That was a \$158 million promise delivered. A regular weekday passenger travelling from Brisbane to Pine Rivers—five zones, as the member for Pine Rivers would be aware—will now save an additional \$126 a year as part of our cut of five per cent but, more importantly, they will save \$803 compared to the policies of Labor. It was a dark day five years ago for public transport. I do table that Labor press release from five years ago.

Tabled paper: Media release, undated, by the former Minister for Transport Hon. Rachel Nolan titled 'Paperless public transport a smarter way to go' [6257].

Police Union

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Does he support the comments made today by the president of the Police Union?

Mr DEMPSEY: First of all, I would like to thank the member for the question. I know that the member's question alluded to what was started in the latest edition of the Police Union journal. Before going a little bit further into the mischief of the member opposite, I want to acknowledge Darren Lees—'Beefa'—who was a member of the Police Union executive who passed away. On behalf of the member for Rockhampton and all other members, I pass on our thoughts to his family, his wife and children.

Going back to the member's question, I have read the article, as I have no doubt he did, on page 5. Then I went through the actual journal. I went to page 65 and other correspondence pages where it states, 'Nominations close midday on Thursday, 30 October 2014.' What is this for? It is from the Electoral Commission of Queensland for the union election in the coming weeks. I understand there is a bit of mischief from the union delegate—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Those on my left, the minister has not taken interjections. Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr DEMPSEY: Obviously there is a bit of mischief going around in the lead-up to the union election. I want to say that I have enormous respect for the Queensland Police Union and Queensland Police Service officers. All members of the cabinet have worked together hand in hand over the last 2½ years to make sure that we listen and continue to drive crime down. As the Treasurer just alluded to, the Premier recently announced \$1 million to go into extra funding over the next 60 days. That is listening and being able to get the best result for all Queenslanders. The Police Service in Queensland today has never been so well resourced. Compared to those opposite, 2013-14 was the first time in Queensland's history that the QPS had a budget of over \$2 billion. The Police budget has gone up every single year under the LNP government. I would like to table this for your information.

Tabled paper: Queensland Police budget information 2011-12 to 2014-15 [6258].

But unlike Labor, one hour of their interest payment would enable the training of eight new police officers and nine extra police vehicles. One day of their interest payment would equate to 203 new police recruits, three extra police helicopters would be leased and the fit-out of one 24-hour station—

(Time expired)

Pumicestone Electorate, Public Transport

Mrs FRANCE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the House how this government's vision for public transport has benefited my electorate of Pumicestone?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for her question because, like all of our members, she has been out there listening to the electorate, talking about the issues that really matter and making sure that we do our very best to revitalise front-line services. The member for Pumicestone recently visited the Caboolture train station during the morning peak hour to hear how public transport users wanted us to spend carbon tax savings, and she found widespread support for fare reductions. One commuter from Bribie Island told her that he was absolutely over the moon to be saving \$205 a year on his commute to his current job in the city. I say that commuters travelling from Caboolture station to Brisbane, which is eight zones, will be saving more than \$166 a year.

If you take into account the other things that we have done—and the Minister for Transport was talking about that before—there is an annual saving for these commuters of \$1,053 per annum compared to if the Labor Party were in charge, and this is just in the area of public transport. If we talk about the other initiatives like the freezing of the family car rego, the \$80 water rebate, the \$7,000 less tax on the family home and add in to that the Strong Choices Electricity Price Relief, you can see that of all these savings start to add up. Because we are absolutely fair dinkum about cost-of-living relief and because we are prudent and sensible financial managers, people receive the benefits. The Labor Party, on the other hand, are poor and reckless financial managers. They spend and spend and spend, and their mistakes hurt people in their hip pocket. The Labor Party, as Margaret Thatcher used to say about socialists, spend other people's money until they run out of it. They hurt people in the Pumicestone electorate and across Queensland with their terrible financial management.

Whilst on the subject of transport and before I conclude, I want to comment that we have just released a concept plan for the replacement of the existing 50-year-old Bribie Island Bridge. The next step is to secure the corridor, undertake—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I am hearing some interjections. They would not work hard enough. The former member for Pumicestone clearly did not have the get up and go to get the agreement of the Deputy Premier and the CBRC for such an undertaking. We, on the other hand, are doing it because we believe in planning and the effective delivery of infrastructure. This new bridge will be the subject of a \$2 million business case over the next 12 months, which is another example of how we are dealing with transport and main roads issues to make life better for people in the Pumicestone electorate.

Mount Tyson State School, Maintenance

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Premier. Premier, I table a letter from the secretary of the P&C of the Mount Tyson State School, which suggests that, due to this government's school closures and the influx of new students, the toilets overflow and the children have to cross a busy road to use the toilets in the park.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 October 2014, from J Ruhle, Secretary, Mount Tyson State School P&C Association, to the member for Condamine, Mr Ray Hopper MP [\[6259\]](#).

I ask: Premier, is this acceptable? What and when will something be done to end this horrific situation?

Mr NEWMAN: Mr Acting Speaker, may I have a pause so that I can examine the letter, please. I thank the honourable member for bringing this situation to my attention and I undertake today to ask the acting minister to have a good look at this. May I say though that, looking at the letter, it says that the toilets do not always flush and overflow due to tree roots in the pipes. These are things we can fix because we have a \$300 million allocation in funding that is dealing with the backlog of maintenance issues across this state. The tree roots did not grow overnight and the septic system did not just magically develop problems. So how did this happen? That is right: it was 20 long years of underfunding by the former Labor government.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Is it not fascinating that those opposite can interject when they closed their eyes and their ears to the asbestos problems in our schools. We all remember that, do we not? Thanks to the great work by Dr Bruce Flegg, the member for Moggill, that was exposed—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. The Premier has the call.

Mr NEWMAN: Right across this state we had leaky roofs, faulty toilets, peeling paint, asbestos in schools, broken playing surfaces, rusty downpipes and blocked drains. Does any of that sound familiar? Yes, it does. But guess what, we are fixing these problems, and there is \$300 million available to fix these problems. I am sure that the future LNP member for Condamine, who I want to see get up, would be very happy to—

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Condamine, the Premier has the call.

Mr NEWMAN: At some stage the current member would clearly want to explain to his community why he allowed this state of affairs to develop. He has had 2½ years to bring these problems to us. Perhaps it has been a long time since he has paid a visit to the Mount Tyson State School. Do they even know him out there, or has he been busy down in the Nanango electorate tending ducks or something?

I am very happy to take this on, and I know the LNP candidate would be delighted to come forward with a solution for the people of the Mount Tyson State School and the school kids.

Bulimba Electorate, Public Transport

Mr DILLAWAY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please detail how Bulimba commuters are benefiting from the savings the government has achieved—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Bundamba under standing order 253A. The member knows very well that she is not to interrupt questions being asked during question time. I call the member for Bulimba to repeat the question, please.

Mr DILLAWAY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please detail how Bulimba commuters are benefiting from the savings the government has achieved thanks to the removal of the carbon tax?

Mr EMERSON: I do thank the member for Bulimba for the question. In terms of savings from the carbon tax, as I indicated earlier, from 3 November there will be a five per cent reduction state-wide in public transport fares. This is the first time in Queensland's history that we have seen a state-wide reduction in public transport fares for all Queenslanders who catch the train, bus or ferry, and I know that all three modes of transport run through the member's electorate. This means that a regular weekday passenger travelling from Brisbane's CBD to Bulimba in his electorate—two zones—could save an additional \$83 a year. That is a yearly saving of \$530 compared to what passengers would have been paying if Labor were still in power.

The member for Bulimba has been very successful in terms of lobbying for public transport improvements, in clear contrast to what occurred with his Labor predecessors and under the previous Labor government. I can still remember very clearly being lobbied by the member for Bundamba when I was the opposition spokesperson trying to get more park-and-rides for the Springfield station. She was ignored and dismissed by the then transport minister, now her leader in opposition. We have delivered those park-and-rides that the member for Bundamba passionately urged her now leader to provide for her after she was rejected and dismissed repeatedly.

I was reminded of that incident by a letter I received from the former member for Bulimba about this issue of park-and-rides. It was an extraordinary letter I received from one of those recycled candidates we all hear about—former members who could not deliver for their electorates. I recently received a letter from that person urging me to deliver more park-and-rides at Cannon Hill—something the current member is also arguing for and urging me to provide.

There is a very clear contrast, because under Labor's policies—the policies of the then transport minister and now the Leader of the Opposition—any new and additional park-and-rides within 10 kilometres of the city were banned. The former failed member for Bulimba could not get it through under the then transport minister and now she writes to me. The reality is that the great current member for Bulimba is working with this government to deliver those kinds of projects.

Let us not forget Labor's policy under the then transport minister and now Leader of the Opposition. It was to ban any new and additional park-and-rides within 10 kilometres of the city. They did not care for public transport when they were in office.

Gold Coast University Hospital

Dr DOUGLAS: My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister please inform the parliament regarding the progress of the investigation into significant matters, including critical incidents, at the maternity unit at the Gold Coast University Hospital on the Gold Coast?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for his question. I know that the honourable member would be very pleased and delighted as to the commitment of the LNP government towards the Gold Coast University Hospital and its very significant commitment to the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. Indeed, this particular hospital and health service has had the single largest increase in funding since this government came to power—some \$300 million, a 40.1 per cent increase. We are seeing the benefits of that right across the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. When it comes to this government's commitment to women and their birthing options, we are not only significantly investing in the state but also leading in the nation.

The information available to me—I am more than happy to share any information with the honourable member formally—would indicate that there are no extraordinary issues around that which the honourable member opposite has actually indicated here today.

Dr Douglas: That's not true and you know it. Be very careful.

Mr SPRINGBORG: If the honourable member has information and evidence that supports a particular proposition, the honourable member needs to make that available. It is one thing to stand in this place to make certain allegations; it is another thing to have those allegations validated and verified. A year or so ago, during the budget estimates process, the honourable member made certain allegations around issues of harm at that particular hospital. When there was an independent investigation done on those allegations, they could not be validated or verified.

I am pleased to say, on the information available to me, that there is a very positive trend with regard to normal birthing on the Gold Coast vis-a-vis caesarean sections. It is certainly very encouraging to see that those mothers are having very positive outcomes with regard to that. If the honourable member has any information to the contrary, and if he pretends to be the sentinel who can actually bring those things forward, I encourage him to provide it.

I can also say after meeting with my interstate colleagues in Melbourne the other day that there is an extraordinary amount of envy with regard to the way Queensland Health is continuing to ensure the reopening of birthing services across this state, the very significant investment with regard to access by private practising midwives to our public hospitals in this state, the opening of midwifery group services and the expansion of them around Queensland to ensure continuity of care for expectant mothers and to ensure they and their families have an environment in which they are most comfortable, and the growing of the midwifery workforce. Again, I extend an invitation to the honourable member if he has information to provide it.

(Time expired)

Coomera Electorate, Public Transport

Mr CRANDON: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier please detail how my electorate of Coomera has benefited from the transport policies of this LNP government?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question. He, like many members representing the southern outskirts of Brisbane or the northern outskirts of the Gold Coast, would shudder to remember the dark days of the 'Bombay express'. Of course, I am referring to the train service from the Gold Coast to Brisbane. The member spent many years pleading with the Labor Party when they were in government to reduce the horrendous overcrowding on those rail commuter services, particularly in the morning peak. His pleas and those of the community fell on deaf ears. When I was

Lord Mayor, one of the big challenges we had was that people were deserting the rail network. Instead, they would drive to the outskirts of Brisbane—to the Eight Mile Plains bus station—park there and then jump on the buses that were—

Ms Palaszczuk: Built by Labor.

Mr NEWMAN: I take that interjection. The Leader of the Opposition is saying the busways were built by Labor. I can tell you who approved the building of the busways: the Borbidge government.

We are committed, like the Borbidge government was, to revitalising front-line services for families in the Coomera electorate. This year residents commuting to and from work and school are benefiting from additional services that we have brought into effect, both on the rail network and throughout the bus system. We have added three additional Gold Coast train services for the morning peak and four for the afternoon peak. The member tells me—I am glad to hear this—that the 'Bombay express' is now becoming a distant memory. Long may it be so. One grateful commuter said that for the first time he was able to get a seat for the entire 80-minute trip each way. Imagine standing 80 minutes each way! No wonder people were upset. Coomera park-and-ride usage has increased from 33 per cent in October 2013 to 75 per cent in August 2014. The results of our hard work on rail speak for themselves, with an average increase of 1,500 boardings per month at Coomera station.

We have increased the bus services servicing the Coomera train station from three to seven. There are now more direct services from Coomera station to Helensvale. One of the member's constituents also told him that the direct bus from Santa Barbara to Helensvale station saves her 45 minutes compared to the old No. 10, which took her towards Southport where a second bus had to be caught. These are significant changes, and the increases have been a great boost for residents travelling to and from work and school. More services mean that Coomera passengers get home more quickly so they can spend valuable time with their families.

Due to our five per cent fare reduction, a regular passenger travelling from work in Brisbane to Coomera—14 zones—could save an additional \$253 a year. They are \$1,617 better off under this government—

(Time expired)

Gladstone Electorate, Housing Affordability

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. The high cost of rent and housing has regularly created problems in recruiting and retaining government employees in the Gladstone electorate. Given that experience, will the minister intervene to prevent the sale of government housing proposed in Mount Larcom?

Mr MANDER: I thank the member for Gladstone for her question. Let me say from the outset that this government is totally committed to providing affordable and appropriate housing for government employees right across the state. In a decentralised state like Queensland, which has incredible distances to travel, it is important that our nurses, teachers, other government employees and police have appropriate housing that is safe and affordable. At the moment we have around 5,000 government employee houses in this state and it is important that we keep them at a level that fits all of those categories that I mentioned before. Previously, those properties were managed by various departments but just last year we changed the policy and transferred the management and operation of those properties into my department because my department is the professional property manager. Before we did that we did an amenity check in 2012 to determine the standard of housing and, disappointingly—but not surprisingly—we found that the previous government had let a lot of houses fall into disrepair. However, we are committed to ensure that we have appropriate housing right across the state for all of our employees. I have a very personal interest in this. My daughter is a teacher and I want to ensure that when she does her country service she has appropriate accommodation. When I have toured the outback with people like the member for Gregory, I know how important this is to our employees.

Turning to the question in particular from the member for Gladstone, my understanding is that there is a house at Mount Larcom that actually is a social housing property that was leased by the department of education for a teacher at Mount Larcom. Upon a request from the local accommodation committee from the department of education, it said that that was no longer needed and sourced accommodation from Gladstone which it felt was, in this particular situation, more appropriate. I am led to believe that there are still two rooms available in multi-tenanted properties for

any future need and it is important that that need is there. So it is a social housing property that is under-utilised and there is no demand for it. My department is buying and selling properties all of the time to ensure that they are in an area of demand, but a classic example is that between 2000 and 2013 the Labor government sold 4,200 properties. I would suggest that the member go to the Minister for Education—

(Time expired)

Algester Electorate, Public Transport

Mr SHORTEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister please advise how my wonderful electorate of Algester has benefited from the five per cent fare cut and the successful '9 and free' policy?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Algester for the question. Again, like his colleagues, he has been a passionate advocate for public transport and a passionate advocate, unlike those opposite, for reducing cost-of-living pressures, and he has been successful. It is because of his advocacy that we have seen improvements in public transport. It is because of his advocacy that we are seeing for the first time in Queensland history on 3 November a cut state-wide to public transport fares. That is an important day in terms of Queensland's public transport history. As I mentioned, today is the fifth anniversary of a very dark day whilst 3 November will be a shining day for public transport users to see that five per cent cut. What does that mean for his electorate? It means that fares for buses, trains and other forms of public transport will be cut because he is very much aware of how important cost-of-living issues are to the people in his electorate. I know they have benefited from the freeze in family car registration. The member knows how difficult it was for his constituents to face a 30 per cent increase in car registration over just four years and for them to face the situation where fares went up 52 per cent in just three years for public transport users under the policies of the former Labor government under the guidance of the then transport minister and now Leader of the Opposition. In terms of 3 November, what does it mean specifically for his constituents? A regular weekday passenger travelling from Brisbane to Algester, which is five zones, as the member would know, could save an additional \$126 a week, and that is significant.

Mr Shorten interjected.

Mr EMERSON: I take that interjection, because he knows that a \$126 saving is significant for the people of his electorate and the people of all of our electorates. These things do count. More importantly, if Labor and its policies were still in place with those massive 15 per cent fare increases, the people in his electorate would be paying more than \$800 extra for their annual public transport bill. Imagine what people in all of our electorates could do with an extra \$800 a year. That is what we got from Labor. But the contrast is so very clear: the member's constituents are getting the benefit of ending that 15 per cent fare increase. I can tell members that we will not be going back to those dark, dark days of Labor's annual 15 per cent fare increases, and that is why the member for Algester's constituents are so keen on public transport.

Drought Assistance

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Minister, the existing drought assistance package is unattainable to many worthy recipients who are in dire need of help. Will the minister address this immediately with his federal colleague to ensure assistance is delivered where it is needed in a timely manner?

Dr McVEIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question. He knows full well the impacts of drought on his electorate, as do other regional members in this House. The member has referred to drought relief assistance programs from a federal perspective. Obviously there is the state program as well, and I might just recap on that very briefly for the benefit of members of this House. The state drought relief assistance program put in place and announced by the Premier and me in Richmond in May of last year was a program that represented \$31 million—a program that was a record amount in Queensland's history of drought support. The fact that the Treasurer was most supportive and was pleased to go along with the announcement of another \$31 million for this current financial year proves that this state government is very focused on drought relief assistance with its available resources.

When I was appointed minister just over 2½ years ago one of the first discussions I had was to sit down with both AgForce and QFF to have a conversation in relation to reform of national drought policy that was underway at that time. I have also discussed that with all of my federal colleagues as ministers for agriculture during my tenure in this position, and I refer to the two former Labor federal ministers and, of course, the current federal minister, Barnaby Joyce. I can advise the House that it took Minister Joyce to pull together just recently a forum in Canberra to look at rural debt issues, because what we are seeing with this drought is not only the impacts of the drought itself of course but the lingering impacts of the ban of the live cattle export industry by the former federal Labor government—a government that we know full well the member's party was quite supportive of and in fact engaged in all sorts of initiatives, including discussions around the industry in north and north-west Queensland—and the impacts of prevailing debt conditions in the bush as well. Do we raise that with the federal minister? Of course we do. Has this state government done more than any other before to address drought issues and provide appropriate assistance to producers? Of course we have. The federal government's program is based on a program of ensuring that at the end of the day these businesses are viable and, of course, we implement the federal government's requirements for its drought relief assistance in that way through the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority, and we will continue to do so.

Southport Electorate, Public Transport

Mr MOLHOEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline how government transport policy has helped to ease cost-of-living pressures for my constituents of Southport?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for his question. I know that he considers feedback from his constituents to be absolutely vital to the role that he performs in the community. He has been very active on transport issues in his electorate.

Recently, he spent a lot of time listening to his constituents who are commuters at the Griffith University light rail station. He was talking to them about the LNP government's historical fare reduction decision. He was particularly thrilled to hear how much it will reduce the weekly travel costs of all commuters, but particularly those of struggling students. So let me give members some figures. Commuters travelling from Helensvale station, which is just outside his electorate, to Brisbane, which is a journey of 12 zones, will be saving over \$225 annually as a result of the five per cent fare cut in November. So if we now do that comparison again between how things are under this government compared to if Labor had continued with its previously announced policies of high fare increases, we would see that this is an annual saving of \$1,441. That is how much better off one of these commuters is in the honourable member's electorate. That is the real cost-of-living relief that this government has provided.

We have also delivered a \$1.2 billion world-first project in the Gold Coast light rail. There has been an average of 17,000 trips per day since 20 July. I know how much the member for Mermaid Beach is committed to the Gold Coast light rail. He talks about it all the time with me. Patronage has exceeded our expectations and that stands in stark contrast to the flawed business case put forward by the Australian Labor Party.

There are other things going on as well: the Smith Street intersection upgrade involving \$119 million worth of works around the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct; a congestion-busting project will also see Olsen Avenue boosted to three lanes in both directions between the interchange and Crestwood Drive, with work to be completed in early 2013. On the Gold Coast rail line—I alluded to this before in answer to a question asked by the member for Coomera—we have increased services by 30 per cent from nine to 12 for the morning peak and a 40 per cent increase, from 10 to 14, for the afternoon peak in January 2014. One final point: under this government rail reliability is the best in the country, with 94 per cent of peak hour trains arriving on time and on the Gold Coast line it is 94.9 per cent on time.

(Time expired)

Pascoe, Ms H

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Heather Pascoe is one of the leading national figures in the battle to protect Queensland's agricultural aquifers, the GAB and subartesian basins. Has the

Deputy Premier been advised that Heather Pascoe's home was broken into on 13 February, 20 March and 1 May 2014? Has he had any communication directly or indirectly with the police on this issue and what was the nature of these discussions?

Mr SEENEY: The answer to the question is no.

Sandgate Electorate, Public Transport

Ms MILLARD: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please outline how this government is working to address cost-of-living pressures for commuters who live in the Sandgate electorate and what is the record of the former government?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Sandgate for the question. I know how important public transport is to her electorate and how passionate she is in terms of working to secure extra morning and afternoon peak services on the Shorncliffe line. As members know, and as I have mentioned already, we have announced for the first time in Queensland's history state-wide reductions in public transport fares to make it more affordable to catch the train and the bus and other public transport services.

In terms of the electorate of the member for Sandgate, a mum or dad travelling from Deagon to work across four zones could save an additional \$110 a year. That is important to them but, more importantly, if Labor policies were still in place those people travelling in her electorate across those four zones would be paying \$700 more a year. That would be a significant blow to their cost of living. So in terms of public transport, our policies are delivering through the hard work of the member for Sandgate.

As I mentioned, that cut on 3 November comes from \$30 million in savings from the axing of the carbon tax. I appreciate that the member for South Brisbane, my shadow, when asked in an interview on 4BC what she would do with that money backed our policy. She said, 'Well, you would give it back as cheaper fares.' So it is great to hear that she backed our policy. However, I was a bit surprised by other things that she said, particularly in terms of rewriting history. During the 4BC interview with Patrick Condren it came up what our backgrounds were. We were talking about our backgrounds and I raised the point that the member for South Brisbane was previously an ALP organiser. Her response was, 'No, I wasn't. No, I wasn't.' She was not an ALP organiser. So I said, 'Well, all right. You worked for the ALP previously.' 'No, no,' was her response. I must admit that I was a bit taken aback by that. I thought that it was pretty obvious that she had worked for the ALP.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. I fail to see the relevance to the answer to the question. Mr Acting Speaker, I ask you to rule on relevance.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. The minister has the call.

Mr EMERSON: I know that the member for South Brisbane would like to run away from her past—to say on 4BC radio that she had not been an ALP organiser, that she had never worked for the ALP. I am very happy to now table the official parliamentary profile of the member for South Brisbane. It talks about her party activities. Assistant state secretary of the ALP—'No, no, I was never with the ALP, but I was assistant state secretary.' There is a whole series of working with the ALP. Why is she running away from her past? It is the same as the ALP is running away from its previous policies and its poor record. I table that document.

Tabled paper. Queensland Parliament member biography for Ms Jackie Trad [\[6260\]](#).

(Time expired)

Sale of Public Assets, Consultants

Dr LYNHAM: My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, I refer to your claims last week that your Strong Choices mass privatisation program is being upfront with Queenslanders, and I ask: will you now be upfront and detail the amount of money spent in secret on the 17 asset sales consultants appointed so far without any approval from Queenslanders or, indeed, LNP MPs?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I call the Premier, member, your question is out of order with the direct use of the word 'you' towards the Premier. I will give you one opportunity to reword the question.

Dr LYNHAM: Premier. Will you now be upfront—

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Will the member take his seat.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr PITT: If we are ruling today on these matters, the member for Ipswich has also done that and several other members today. The opposition did not call upon—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have ruled on what is a longstanding standing order in the House. I gave the member the opportunity to repeat the question. I know that the member is new in the House, but he had a second opportunity.

Cost of Living, Transport

Mr MINNIKIN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline how this government is lowering the cost of living for Queensland families through public transport and car registration savings?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. I just reflect that the member for Stafford at times must be horrified by the group he is with when he hears about how they say that black is white and water flows up hills and, 'We never worked for the Labor Party, we never incurred debt, we never incurred deficits, we never sold off assets. We are the Labor Party. We never did any of this. We never got rid of the 8c a litre fuel subsidy. We never promised that we were not going to sell assets and then sold them.' It goes on and on and on.

The poor old member for Stafford. Unlike the member for Stafford, the member for Chatsworth is delighted to be a member of a strong team that is delivering public transport fare relief. A regular weekday passenger travelling from the Brisbane CBD to Carindale, which is three zones, will save an additional \$99 a year. That is \$623 a year better off under this government compared to the Labor Party.

The member for Chatsworth also has been working hard on some other things in his capacity as an assistant minister. He has delivered a great deal for those who travel to the southern Moreton Bay islands, bringing them into the TransLink network. The locals and visitors to the island are saving money and can take advantage of the free travel after nine weekly journeys, the free travel between the islands and, of course, the five per cent fare cut on 3 November.

I think today we have seen very clearly that, along with the \$7,000 reduction in tax on the family home, the one-off water rebate, the freeze on family car rego, the savings that are coming with electricity prices and the public transport savings that we are delivering in only a week or two's time, Queenslanders are far better off under this government.

(Time expired)

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2)

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) resumed from 10 September (see p. 3135) and Appropriation Bill (No. 2) resumed from 10 September (see p. 3137)

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)



Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (3.31 pm): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its reports tabled on 9 October 2014 regarding the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2014. I am pleased to note that the committee supports both bills and recommends that they be passed. As I mentioned when I introduced the bills, supplementary appropriation is required where

expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for a department is above the amount approved for that department as annual appropriation at budget time. I want to reiterate that, while 10 departments required unforeseen expenditure, most managed their budgets within the original appropriation limits. In this way total appropriation in 2013-14 was less than the total amount approved as part of the 2013-14 budget.

Most importantly, while appropriation was lower than budgeted, there have been front-line service delivery improvements. We are, as we said we would do, making sure that our savings are going into delivering better and more front-line services. In Health the number of category 1 patients waiting more than 30 days for surgery has been cut by 89 per cent over the last two years and the number of category 2 patients waiting more than 90 days for surgery has been cut by 83 per cent in the same two-year period. In Housing the long-term social housing waiting list has reduced by 38 per cent over the last two years and the government has introduced a new service, RentConnect, to help customers into the private rental market. In public transport, Queensland Rail has reviewed its business and timetable to deliver an extra 200 services each weekday in South-East Queensland. Since the new timetable was implemented an extra 27,000 trips a week have been taken. We are delivering better services for Queensland and doing it within budget. I want to thank my ministerial colleagues for their hard work, together with their departments, in this regard.

The introduction of supplementary appropriation bills at the same time as the Consolidated Fund Financial Report provides for timely consideration of unforeseen expenditure. I want to thank the committee for its detailed consideration of the supplementary appropriation bills and the 2013-14 Consolidated Fund Financial Report. While the committee made no additional recommendations, I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the statement of reservation lodged by the member for Mulgrave as part of the committee's report on Appropriation Bill (No. 2). There are a number of claims made by Mr Pitt that make allegations that we failed to respond to questions that expenditure had little to do with financial management and some other issues in relation to lapsing and the Strong Choices campaign.

Firstly to respond to these claims, in line with its commitment, Queensland Treasury and Trade responded to the specific queries of the committee and I note that officers of Treasury were in attendance and did attend committee hearings. Indeed, I had a look at the transcript and saw that they gave very complete and fulsome answers. However, every department has hundreds of adjustments to their appropriations each year, including increases and offsetting decreases. Given these complexities, the detail provided in the Consolidated Fund Financial Report, another document lodged with the parliament which is signed off by the Auditor-General, represents the best explanations that can be provided. This is in line with the practice and procedure of Treasury and governments for a very long period of time. There is nothing new. There is no change. I cannot help it if the member for Mulgrave cannot read the documents and understand them. When specific matters of concern were raised by the committee, Treasury provided additional information.

Secondly, the unforeseen expenditure in 2013-14 is much lower than in previous years under the former government all the way back to 2004-05 on both a total and as a percentage of appropriation. We all remember the days when the former government would come in and make wild and excessive claims about expenditure and promises and commitments to spend, blowing the budget out in the meantime, and then fail to do so. The great mystery was that despite the fact that it lapsed appropriations it still continued to rack up \$80 billion worth of Labor debt. Labor continued to rack up debt year in, year out. But as the record shows, its lapsed expenditure was far greater than we have provided information on in the last two years.

Overall, total appropriation in 2013-14 was less than the total amount approved as part of the 2013-14 budget and, as I have already mentioned, this has been at the same time as service delivery has improved, and I detailed some of those improvements. The Consolidated Fund Financial Report shows lapsed appropriation in 2013-14 of \$2.35 billion, representing five per cent of the total appropriation for the year. Lapsed appropriation reached almost \$3 billion in 2004-05, almost 14.1 per cent of appropriation under Labor's watch compared to five per cent in 2013-14. So, 14 per cent under Labor, five per cent under the Newman LNP government.

Finally, information about expenses relating to Strong Choices has been provided in budget papers, in responses to questions on notice raised during the estimates committee hearing and by me during the estimates hearings themselves. These are supplementary appropriation bills that the former Labor government said were no longer necessary and it actually changed the system to hide its problems. We reintroduced it to improve accountability. If the honourable member for Mulgrave

cannot discern enough information from the Consolidated Fund Financial Report signed off by the independent Auditor-General, and if the honourable member for Mulgrave cannot get enough information out of estimates, both questions on notice and six hours worth of questions—those who were there remember I actually lost my voice—if in all of that the honourable member for Mulgrave cannot find the information he wants one has to wonder what he is doing. That does not include the 23-odd staff and the \$2.7 million that goes into funding the opposition office each and every year. If he cannot find the answers to these questions in that process then the people of Queensland really have to wonder should he ever have put his hand up for the job of shadow Treasurer.

We are more accountable, we provide more information, we answer questions for longer and we provide answers through the independent Office of Treasury. They turn up down here, without me—no-one else is there—to answer questions and the member for Mulgrave still complains that he does not get enough information. Really, what does he want us to do? Does he want me to do his job for him as well? Does he want me to take on that responsibility, which he so patently cannot discharge? The appropriation bills provide a level of clarity and the processes put in place provide a level of transparency that the former government, of which the member for Mulgrave was a cabinet minister, sought to pull the veil of secrecy over. There is a much greater degree of transparency and any complaints are simply crocodile tears.

The Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014 seeks parliamentary approval of supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred by nine departments in the 2013-14 financial year of \$442 million. Over half of this is for Queensland Treasury and Trade's administered items and primarily relates to its whole-of-government financial management role. If you like, Queensland Treasury acts as the balancing mechanism to move money through the departments. The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2014 seeks parliamentary approval of supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred by this place, the Legislative Assembly, and the Parliamentary Service in the 2013-14 financial year of \$5.6 million. As I indicated in my first reading speech, this partly relates to determinations by the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal. Therefore, the total supplementary appropriation for 2013-14 is \$447.6 million.

I advise that I will be moving a number of other amendments during the consideration in detail stage of Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014 which I will now outline briefly. I understand that the opposition has been briefed on those amendments in the last little period. They relate to racing. Racing is one of Queensland's iconic industries, directly and nondirectly employing an estimated—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I hear the member for Mermaid Beach who, of course, very much supports the racing industry, both directly and nondirectly. It employs an estimated 68,000 people and supports more than 130,000 licensed clubs across the state. It is common knowledge that the Australian racing industry is reliant on TAB turnover to survive, and Queensland is no different. Over the past decade, the mutual interdependence between wagering and racing has primarily taken the form of a product and program agreement between TattsBett Ltd as the sole race and sports wagering operator in the state, the Queensland all-codes racing board trading as Racing Queensland and the Queensland Race Product Co. Ltd. Under the product and program agreement primarily, which expired on 30 June 2014, TattsBett paid a variable product fee of its gross revenue to the racing industry in return for the use of Australian racing information, the Queensland racing calendar and the Queensland racing program. In effect, it was the mechanism by which racing in Queensland was funded by the exclusive grant of the wagering licence that was given way back in, I think, 1989-90 by the then Goss government when it sold off the then TAB and called it UNiTAB. That agreement came to an end on 30 June 2014.

Mr Stevens: 1999, I think.

Mr NICHOLLS: The member for Mermaid Beach may be better off picking winners. On 27 June 2014, following an expression of interest process undertaken earlier this year with national and international wagering operators, Racing Queensland and the state reached an in-principle agreement with Tatts Group, the parent company of TattsBett, for a new funding package for the racing industry post 30 June 2014. The new arrangements are intended to provide over \$4.5 billion in funding over 30 years and more than \$850 million above what the industry would have received under the previous arrangements with TattsBett pre 1 July 2014. I emphasise that: an additional \$850 million more than the previous agreement, had it continued, would have provided.

As part of the new arrangements, it is proposed to grant TattsBett an extension to the retail exclusivity arrangements under its sports and race wagering licences for a further 30 years from 1 July 2014. An exclusivity period was previously attached to both licences from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2014. I acknowledge that the member was right: the privatisation did take place from 1 July 1999. That would have been under the Beattie government, not the Goss government. I correct the record in respect to that, too.

Amendments include necessary amendments to the Wagering Act 1998 to extend the retail exclusivities for a further 30 years from 1 July 2014, as agreed. It is worth noting that the proposed extension to TattsBett retail exclusivities is consistent with the operating models of a number of Australian jurisdictions that have both retained exclusive retail models for wagering. In fact, both Victoria and New South Wales have recently undergone a similar process that saw them extend the terrestrial exclusivities for their wagering operators at least until August 2024, with the possibility of an extension, and June 2033 respectively. That is both Victoria and New South Wales.

The government and I am firmly of the view that the in-principle agreement represents a genuine partnership between industry, government and the wagering operator and, for all intents and purposes, is the best outcome for all. I acknowledge the hard work of the Minister for Racing, the member for Buderim, in making sure that we achieved this agreement in time to meet the deadline of 30 June, ensuring a prosperous and well funded future for the racing industry, which is important to so many jobs and so many communities throughout Queensland. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (3.45 pm): At the outset, once again I congratulate the Treasurer for meeting his legal responsibilities under the Financial Accountability Act 2009 to table the Consolidated Fund Financial Report within 14 days of receipt from the Auditor-General. Well done, Treasurer, for once again meeting your minimum legislative requirements. The Treasurer's introductory speech on this bill was another performance of dishonest political spin, similar to what we saw last week when he tried to disavow his former self—

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take offence at those remarks and I request that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Manager of Opposition Business, could you please withdraw those remarks.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. Last week the Treasurer appeared on numerous live TV crosses, barely able to keep a straight face as he fibbed himself senseless trying to claim that a lease is not a sale.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take offence at those remarks and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, could you please withdraw those remarks.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. This is going to be a long afternoon if the Treasurer wishes to take umbrage at any—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, you have the call. Please continue.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. We also saw the Premier on ABC News with what can only be described as a truth tick, saying 'asset sale' and then quickly correcting himself to say 'lease'. After all those years of telling porky pies, it appears that it is all becoming a bit too much for the Premier.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask for your ruling on the use of the phrase 'porky pies'. Obviously it is meant to signify the word 'lies', which is unparliamentary. I ask for your ruling.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, that term has been considered as unparliamentary under previous rulings. I ask that you please withdraw the comment and refrain from using that term again.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. So—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, please withdraw the comment.

Mr PITT: I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker: I do withdraw those comments. After all those years of telling untruths, it appears that it is all becoming a bit too much for the Premier. Those overpaid fly-in fly-out spin doctors at Crosby Textor must have come to the Treasurer and said, 'Have we got a good idea for you. Why not just tell Queenslanders a furphy?' Using the Treasurer's own words—

Mr NICHOLLS: Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, I take offence at the words used by the member for Mulgrave and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, the Treasurer has taken personal offence at your comments and I ask that you withdraw them.

Mr PITT: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. We are off to a flyer in this debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, do you withdraw those comments?

Mr PITT: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Continue, please.

Mr PITT: In the Treasurer's own words, previously he has called these things a furphy. I will quote him on that. If he wishes to object to that, we are going to have to rewrite the parliamentary standing orders.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I object to the words that the honourable member has just used and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, the Treasurer has asked that you withdraw those words as they are personally offensive.

Mr PITT: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr PITT: As the Treasurer said back in 2010, why not 'perpetuate a con on the people of Queensland'? That is how the Treasurer previously described his current position on asset leasing: 'another attempt to perpetuate a con on the people of Queensland'. In his own words, the Treasurer is trying to con Queenslanders through his Strong Choices propaganda.

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, I find the member's words offensive and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Manager of Opposition Business, could you please withdraw the comments.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. I think it will be a long afternoon if the Treasurer continues to have a glass jaw.

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, the rules of the parliament are quite clear. I find the member's comments offensive and I ask that the member for Mulgrave withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, could you please withdraw.

Mr PITT: Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdrew and I made another statement. It appears that the Treasurer has found those comments unsatisfactory as well. If he continues to do that, I will heed the standing orders.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, could you withdraw those comments, please.

Mr PITT: I already have, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr PITT: How did the Premier describe the lease of Abbot Point Coal Terminal? The Premier said—

I think it is a mistake selling off the silverware ... I will ensure the port itself will continue to be owned by the people of Queensland.

What did the Deputy Premier say back in 2010? He said that the lease of Forestry Plantations Queensland was—

A major step in the sell-off of the plantations part of Queensland's state forests. It is the first in the line-up of assets that this government is proposing to sell.

The Deputy Premier then went on to criticise 99-year leases for being 'dishonest', 'sneaky' and, would you believe it, 'socialist'.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just a moment, Manager of Opposition Business. Treasurer, what is your point of order?

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. I ask you to rule on relevance. The bills we are debating are appropriation bills. I ask what relevance the honourable member's speech has.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, I would ask that you please keep your comments relevant to the appropriation of funds set out in the bills. You have the call.

Mr PITT: To pre-empt and to perhaps foresee in this unforeseen expenditure bill what further interjections we might get from the Treasurer, I refer members to page 17 of the Consolidated Fund Financial Report which details additional appropriations for the Newman LNP government's Strong Choices campaign.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business—

Mr PITT: I am still progressing—

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Treasurer?

Mr NICHOLLS: We are debating two bills and not the Consolidated Fund Financial Report. We are debating two appropriation bills. Their purpose is to seek supplementary appropriations for the 2013-14 year. I would think that that is what the relevant subject of debate ought to be and I seek your guidance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Treasurer, the scope of the debate in respect of the two appropriation bills for the 2013-14 financial year is quite wide. Manager of Opposition Business, I ask you to continue to keep your comments relevant to the appropriation bills for the 2013-14 financial year.

Mr PITT: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. All I am doing here today is laying out the context with regard to the Strong Choices campaign which is directly related to the Consolidated Fund Financial Report which is very much a part of this bill that we are debating today.

So apparently a lease is a 'sell-off', a 'sale' and 'socialist' according to the Deputy Premier's unique perspective of the world. In 2010 the now Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing—

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I ask: where does the honourable member draw a line between government policy and a report on expenditure in the Consolidated Fund? I seek your guidance on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, I have asked you to remain relevant to the supplementary spending contained in the 2013-14 appropriation bills that we are considering. I have heard what you have just said about statements in 2010. That is clearly prior to 2013-14. I ask you to remain relevant to the 2013-14 supplementary appropriations.

Mr PITT: Just so I am clear when I am referring to the appropriation that relates to the Strong Choices campaign, which is in the Consolidated Fund Financial Report which comes under Appropriation Bill (No. 2) which flows on from the original appropriation bill that we have debated, is your ruling that we are unable to speak about those items of expenditure or those matters relating to those items of expenditure? I ask you to rule on this. I await your ruling.

Mr NICHOLLS: On the point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think you have made your point clear. It is up to the honourable member to make a decision as to what he wants to debate, surely.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Treasurer. Manager of Opposition Business, you have the call. I ask you to continue with your second reading contribution.

Mr PITT: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. What we have had is LNP members standing in this chamber, putting their hands on their hearts saying that they would not sell our assets, they would not sell our state's electricity network and saying that it is a lease not a sale and it is a divestment. They make it up as they go. They have made it up as they have gone. When things do not go well we see the sort of acting that we have seen this afternoon from the Treasurer. He does not want to hear a dissenting point of view. He does not want to hear—

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find the member's comments offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, could you please withdraw those comments.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. Let us have a look at this. This government has continued to talk about \$80 billion of debt in this state. Let us talk about the fact that the Treasurer's government has a projection for debt to reach \$82 billion. We did not hear any of the other things mentioned in the Treasurer's speech. He did not mention that Labor had a projection to reach the debt figure that he so loves to rattle off.

When Labor left office Queensland's total gross debt was \$62 billion, not \$80 billion. No amount of taxpayer funded political propaganda can cover up the truth. In 2012 the Premier said that debt was \$62 billion. We will never hear him say that again now that he has been coached by the member for Clayfield, who whispers sweet nothings of answers to him during question time.

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, I find the member's comments offensive and I ask that the member withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, the Treasurer has asked that you withdraw those comments. I ask you to withdraw those comments.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. The Newman government says its asset sales plan will involve the pay down of \$25 billion in debt. What the Treasurer will not tell us is that more than two-thirds of this debt that will be paid down is LNP debt—the Treasurer's debt and the Premier's debt; the same debt that they had planned—

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find the member's comments offensive and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, I ask that you withdraw those comments.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. If we are to have the cut and thrust of political debate in this place, I really hope that we see some more maturity from those opposite.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Leader of the House?

Mr STEVENS: The member is clearly debating the ruling by the chair and quite clearly is disrespectful to the chair.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. Manager of Opposition Business, I would ask that you continue with your second reading address and follow the rulings of the chair and refrain from any commentary on them.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. If you have taken any inference there, there was none intended. In fact, there was none from me. What I have said is that it is about the maturity of those opposite and their willingness to have political debate.

At the last election the LNP said they had a plan for a plan. That is all they released before the last election—a plan for a plan; it was a to-do list. The LNP ministers and MPs cut the ribbons on infrastructure funded from this debt. They raised the debt, they take credit for what the debt paid for, but somehow the Treasurer insists that this is Labor's debt.

I wonder if the Treasurer were to win the next election would he still be blaming Labor for this debt six years after coming to office? He most likely would because he has been described as being very, very lazy. These are not my words. That is the description of him by a current LNP senator.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence at the comments and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Manager of Opposition Business, the Treasurer has found your comments personally offensive and I ask that you withdraw them.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. The change in the debt projection under the Newman government from \$85 billion to \$82 billion is almost entirely attributable to a \$2.9 billion sell-down in Aurizon shares, formerly known as QR National, and a lowering in the infrastructure spend by \$630 million from 2011-12 to 2014-15 compared with Labor. The arguments from the Newman LNP government on debt are dishonest. They are a disservice to this state and a disservice to a proper discussion with Queenslanders. The LNP have been in government now for nearly an entire term and yet they still take 'zero responsibility' when it comes to financial management.

At estimates the Treasurer was unaware that fiscal deficits had blown out by \$884 million, compared with the projections under Labor from 2011-12 to 2014-15.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Again I take offence and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, the Treasurer has taken offence and I ask that you withdraw.

Mr PITT: I withdraw. Those are larger deficits than projected under Labor. When confronted with these figures the Treasurer sent Treasury officials off to check them. They came back and confirmed that, yes, fiscal deficits from 2011-12 to 2014-15 are \$884 million larger than projected under Labor. The mass sacking of 20,000 workers was always about paying for the LNP's unfunded election promises, not about lowering debt—just as we have consistently said. The lower debt trajectory is due to asset sales undertaken so far, without an election mandate and lower infrastructure spending—not smaller fiscal deficits.

Since the election the LNP have committed to more than \$13 billion in new spending and revenue reductions, despite decrying a debt crisis. If the LNP government are the 'grown-up government' they claim to be, then they need to start acting like adults and take responsibility for their decisions, and they need to stop playing mindless and puerile blame games. Quite frankly, I speak for most people when I say I have had a gutful of it and certainly of the Premier's arrogance.

Government decision making is all about priorities, and this arrogant Newman LNP government has prioritised projects like a new office tower for the Premier and his ministers at 1 William Street over preventative health and new front-line health services to name one example. And the Premier's suggestion that the previous government was borrowing to pay the wages of public servants has been shown to be complete rubbish. If anyone has borrowed to pay wages with larger deficits—on their own measure, mind you—it is the Newman LNP government.

When asked about his larger fiscal deficits the Treasurer said it was falling revenue. But you will never hear him acknowledge that the previous Labor government was hit with a \$9.2 billion revenue write-down from the global financial crisis and unprecedented natural disasters. This Treasurer is so deluded with spin that I am surprised that he does not try to blame Labor for falling revenues under his watch.

According to this Treasurer, falling revenue is an acceptable excuse for larger fiscal deficits under the Newman LNP government than projected under Labor, even though the slowing of the Queensland economy has been attributed by numerous independent economists at the CBA, Deloitte Access Economics and Commsec to the reckless and short-sighted cuts of the Newman government. It is laughable for the Treasurer to claim in his introductory speech that this bill is about increasing financial transparency and accountability. If the Treasurer was truly committed to financial accountability, he would tell Queenslanders how many millions of their taxpayer dollars he is spending on the 17 asset sales consultant appointments so far without any election mandate.

There has been a procession of bankers and lawyers coming in and out of the Executive Building, as LNP members supposedly 'voted' for their record privatisation program. If the Treasurer cared about financial accountability, he would reveal how much he is spending on embedding spin doctors in Treasury to politicise the Public Service, including as a special guest at his media conferences now. If the Treasurer did care about financial accountability, he would reveal how much he is planning to spend on taxpayer funded political propaganda in breach of his own government's advertising code of conduct—

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take offence at the member's comments and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, the Treasurer has taken offence at your comments and I ask that you withdraw.

Mr PITT: I withdraw—a taxpayer funded advertising campaign to tell Queenslanders a 'furphy' or to 'perpetuate a con on the people of Queensland', to use the Treasurer's words. The Treasurer's 'final plan', as he calls, is not what he would have defined as a plan from opposition. Back in 2010 the Treasurer told this parliament—

Flogging off the family silver without addressing the underlying problem of a structural deficit is not a plan ... That is why we will introduce a state debt repayment strategy. We will make it part of our charter of fiscal responsibility. We will publish the plan with the budget each year and Queenslanders will be able to read, measure and judge the plan. The plan will deal with the structural deficit ... It will identify the importance of growth in the Queensland economy if we are to fix the state's finances.

Then at the election all Queenslanders saw on debt reduction was a 'plan for a plan', a plan that turned out to be no plan at all on the Treasurer's own definition, a plan for 'flogging off the family silver' or 'selling the farm', to use the Treasurer's own words, and a plan that will only cause structural damage to the state's bottom line. To quote the Treasurer again, he said—

Governments should not look at privatisation as a backup plan for its own failure to plan, budget and deliver. Similarly, privatisation should not be undertaken simply for the sake of doing it and simply for the sake of a few extra bucks ... It can best be said that privatisation should not be seen as a short-term fix for long-term structural problems.

The Treasurer's mass privatisation program will tear a structural hole in the budget bottom line. The Treasurer's latest effort at spinning Queenslanders is that interest costs will be lowered by \$1.3 billion a year from paying down debt. However, in response to questioning at estimates—and we do ask questions at estimates, contrary to what those opposite will have us believe—the government revealed that the businesses up for sale by the Newman government deliver a return of \$2 billion to the taxpayer this financial year after servicing their interest costs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, \$2 billion is a lot of money year in year out. It is nearly what the state receives in coal royalties and more than we get on gambling taxes or on car registration. If you take account for the fact that these returns from government businesses are delivered after servicing their interest payments—by looking only at general government interest costs—then the annual saving from debt repayment under the Newman government's record privatisation is likely to be even lower at around \$670 million a year. Based on these figures there will be a massive net loss to the taxpayer from the Newman government's plans for the largest asset sell-off in Queensland's history, a net loss to the taxpayer and a structural impost on the budget exceeding \$1 billion year in year out. While the Treasurer will have more money to spend over the short term for election promises from these sales, he will likely rip an expanding structural hole in the budget starting at more than \$1 billion a year.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Once again I ask what the relevance of this is. Here we have a flight of fantasy about something in the future that he knows nothing about and what he is talking about has no relevance to a 2013-14 appropriation bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, I ask that you please remain relevant to the expenditure of the 2013-14 year and the appropriation bills.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am just advising that I have spoken to the Clerk prior and asked what the broad-ranging issues that would be covered in this speech are and I am doing my very best to stay within those confines.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr PITT: The Newman government has been saying that people do not understand the benefits of their privatisation program and are pointing to pork-barrel infrastructure commitments to try to buy the support of voters and to buy their way back into office at the next election. But voters are much

smarter than what the government and their array of private sector spin doctors such as LNP firm Crosby Textor take them for. Voters understand that this Newman LNP government is trying to 'con' them. Not even the national Productivity Commission is supportive of this approach, stating earlier this year—

Ultimately, poorly conceived decisions to link asset sales to new infrastructure investments could in fact have a negative future balance sheet impact and create long term additional liabilities for government.

That is exactly what the Newman government's asset sales will do. The Productivity Commission also said—

The crucial issue is effective project selection, which is not addressed by locked-in finance.

This is exactly what Labor's Building Queensland policy is aimed at addressing—stopping waste like the \$2.6 billion in dead money sunk into a new office tower for the Premier and his ministers. Remember, Treasurer—'rent money is dead money'! And the Treasurer is yet to detail how he will fund the community service obligation for a uniform retail electricity tariff in Queensland which is set to cost \$683 million this financial year.

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, we are debating an appropriations bill. We are not debating next year's bill or anything like that. We are debating the 2013-14 appropriations.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is your point of order on relevance?

Mr NICHOLLS: I request that you rule on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, I have previously asked that you contain your comments to the appropriation bills for 2013-14 in particular. Again, I ask that you please stick to what is relevant to this bill.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Treasurer has claimed that the cost of this subsidy will fall with privatisation, but this could not be further from the truth. The cost of the subsidy to keep regional electricity prices in line with South-East Queensland will only rise with privatisation. Of course this is the privatisation program being put forward by the Strong Choices campaign in relation to expenditure which is included in the Consolidated Fund for this year.

Down in New South Wales the Nationals at least had the sense to stop their Premier from careering down a 100 per cent privatisation path for the electricity network because of concerns about service reliability falling and prices rising in regional areas. Up here regional LNP MPs unanimously fell in behind their Premier's plan to flog the lot—to sell 100 per cent of the electricity network as a private monopoly through a long-term lease. I understand that it was not unanimous in the LNP party room, but that is another story for another day. A private monopoly will price gouge Queenslanders for generations. Queenslanders are not mugs and this government thinks they are.

Mrs Scott: Taken for granted.

Mr PITT: Queenslanders have been taken for granted. Queenslanders living in regional communities will not forget this betrayal. They will not forgive the LNP if they sell the assets that provide power to their home, if they drive up their cost of living and if they cause them ongoing blackouts. The Treasurer can talk all he likes about the Australian Energy Regulator, but as we have seen in the media recently it is possible for this process to be gamed. Anyone who thinks that the private sector will not try to game the regulatory process to drive up profits is delusional.

I also take issue with the Treasurer's repeated claims as part of his Strong Choices propaganda campaign that 46 per cent of Queenslanders support his record privatisation and asset sales program. This is a further untruth and an appalling misuse of taxpayers' money for party political purposes. Why do I say this? Because the Strong Choices website made absolutely no mention of selling the entire electricity network via a long-term lease—none, zip, zilch, zero. Queenslanders were asked what their opinion on \$28 billion in 'private funding' for the electricity network was. They were told that the private sector would give the state \$28 billion and expect no control over those assets in return. It was a total nonsense and deceptive. There was no mention of the word 'sale', of the word 'lease' or of a private sector monopoly.

The nonsense, spin and rubbish is continuing from an arrogant and out-of-touch Newman LNP government. To say that this government is seeking a mandate is false. It has already hired the bankers and lawyers to sell them. What is worse is that now this government is trying to con

Queenslanders by saying they are not selling assets. Not only did they not seek a mandate; they are now actively using taxpayers' money to misinform Queenslanders about what they are doing. It is a disgrace.

To move back to the supplementary appropriation, the Treasurer in his introductory speech again made reference to historical unforeseen expenditure and tried to imply that this was financial mismanagement. He suggested that previous unforeseen expenditure was a failure to bring in balanced budgets and was financial mismanagement. He forgets that Labor recorded seven budget surpluses over 11 years, with deficits only coinciding with the year of the 9-11 terrorist attacks, the global financial crisis and the two years following natural disasters. Don't let these audited facts previously included in the Treasurer's investor booklet and signed off by previous auditors-general, including the one who signed off on the LNP's election costings, get in the way of the Treasurer's deceptive spin.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr PITT: The Treasurer continues to talk about a changed measure, and the changed measure is one of his own creations concocted with Peter Costello, the author of the Commission of Audit. We have always had operating balances in this state. Other states and territories use them. This Treasurer has done this to make asset sales more attractive. It is all about rewriting history to make previous Labor governments look bad. It is a neat political trick, but it is one that does not work when people look at the facts. Instead, the Treasurer wants to draw attention to figures without any context to make outlandish and deceptive claims—like the claim that unforeseen expenditure of \$9.305 billion in 2010-11 was because of financial mismanagement. Let us look again at what that unforeseen expenditure was. Well, \$6.85 billion of unforeseen expenditure was from Treasury, primarily from the repayment of debt from the sale of QR National and the sale of the Port of Brisbane. Note that I said 'sale', not 'lease'. At least one side of this House can admit it.

Another \$2.03 billion of unforeseen expenditure was from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, mostly for the response to unprecedented natural disasters. For the Treasurer to accuse the previous Labor government of being fiscally negligible for not predicting unprecedented natural disasters and for not counting asset sales proceeds before they were received is complete and utter rubbish. If you exclude these agencies and these factors, unforeseen expenditure was \$431.2 million in 2010-11, slightly less than the \$447.6 million in unforeseen expenditure in 2013-14 under the Newman government. The great irony here is that the repayment of debt from asset sales proceeds is classified as unforeseen expenditure. This means that, if the Treasurer is successful with his plan for Queensland's largest privatisation program in history, he will likely be the Treasurer who oversees the largest year of unforeseen expenditure in Queensland's history.

We have accused the education minister for being Nostradamus in this House because of the way he handles questions from backbenchers on his own side, but I wonder whether the Treasurer has foreseen that result coming. Time will tell. Of course the Treasurer will not be accusing himself of failing to keep expenditure under control. That is a matter for him and the way he is going to look at future budgets. This just goes to show how farcical the claims from this Treasurer are. It seems Queenslanders cannot trust a word that comes from this government. It does raise the question as to whether the Treasurer actually understands the Consolidated Fund Financial Report from the claims he is making in his introductory speech.

I take as another example the unforeseen expenditure referenced by the Treasurer of \$2.957 billion in 2008-09. Of this unforeseen expenditure, \$1.76 billion was in Treasury and \$481.54 million was in the Department of Education, Training and Employment. What was the main factor for education in 2008-09? It was the fact that the state had not accounted for subsequent federal stimulus funding for the Building the Education Revolution. This is hardly financial mismanagement. It was this stimulus which, like it or not—and those opposite tend not to like it—helped keep Queensland out of recession during the global financial crisis and kept unemployment lower than it is today under the LNP government. Those members opposite pillory the former Labor government, but they all love the schools and the school halls and so do their local school communities. Is the Treasurer saying that if Joe Hockey offered him cash out of his asset privatisation bribery fund he would say no? I do not think he would. If he did not, would this be reckless unforeseen expenditure and financial mismanagement? Of course he would not, because the claims made by the Treasurer about the financial management of previous Labor governments are a load of codswallop.

What was the main factor for unforeseen expenditure in Treasury in 2008-09? It was the expansion by the Commonwealth of the First Home Owner Grant as well as additional funding for the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority. Once again, this is not financial mismanagement. If the Abbott government offered more money for the QRAA, I hope we would not see regional LNP members decrying this assistance for agricultural producers as financial mismanagement.

The dishonesty of the LNP when it comes to the state's finances seems to know no bounds. If the statistics say it is white, this Treasurer would argue it is black. They talk about debt, they talk about leases and they talk about finances, but sadly the truth is not anywhere near. To selectively list unforeseen expenditure and carry on the way that this Treasurer has is a disservice to this parliament and it does his own reputation no end of harm. I cannot say what it means for his leadership aspirations. How are the numbers going in the party room, Treasurer? Are you any closer to knocking off the Premier? I did notice that recent polling puts him just below the Attorney-General—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Manager of Opposition Business, I would ask you to remain relevant to the bill before the House.

Mr PITT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I mentioned that recent polling looked at the Treasurer. Some of that performance must certainly be related to the fact that financial mismanagement under this government is there for all to see. Recent polling put the now quiet as a church mouse Attorney-General ahead of the Treasurer as preferred leader. That is not a bad effort by the Attorney-General, who almost appears to have gone to ground in some kind of LNP sponsored witness protection program.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sorry; I digress again. What about the unforeseen expenditure incurred by the Newman government in 2013-14? Some of it was for worthwhile initiatives like more money for Anzac centenary commemorations—a very worthy cause—while other increases in spending were for political propaganda campaigns such as Strong Choices or for 'public sector renewal initiatives' while front-line workers were being axed. While the Treasurer mentioned some factors for increases to unforeseen expenditure in his introductory speech, the government has refused to release a full breakdown or at least a breakdown of significant unforeseen expenditure—just as the government refuses to provide a full breakdown, or at least a breakdown of significant variances, for lapsed appropriation.

As I set out in my statement of reservation on this bill, there is little value in this legislation being separately debated if additional information is only made available at the discretion of the government. The statement of appropriations is already set out in the Consolidated Fund Financial Report, which is required to be tabled in parliament under the Financial Accountability Act 2009. The Treasurer's claim that the separate consideration of these bills increases financial transparency and accountability is without basis if the government is only willing to selectively release additional information to that contained in the Consolidated Fund Financial Report.

This report is normally tabled in September or October, shortly after the end of the relevant financial year, and depending on when the Auditor-General sends the final report to the Treasurer. What the separate consideration of this bill is all about is the selective release of information to perpetuate dishonest and politically motivated rhetoric. There was no mention in the Treasurer's introductory speech of lapsed appropriation under his watch—none. And there was no mention of the fact that lapsed appropriation was \$2.35 billion in 2013-14, which followed lapsed appropriation of \$4.42 billion last financial year. In 2013-14 lapsed appropriation is the highest since 2004-05. These underspends, in many instances, represent services not delivered to our communities and represent infrastructure not delivered on time. Failing to deliver budgeted services and infrastructure projects is not something to be proud of. An unprecedented underspend in health of \$538 million is not something to be proud of—although the health minister for cuts and closures may argue otherwise. Are these the reasons why the Treasurer could not bring himself to talk about lapsed appropriation in his intro speech?

The current state of Queensland's economy is nothing to be proud of either. At the beginning of this year, the Premier said that it was the year that it 'all comes together', but for Queensland's domestic economy it has all come apart—just as the Treasurer told us last year that he expected that 'the worst is now behind us' with unemployment. Now the Premier is saying 'watch this space' on the economy and the Treasurer is arguing that we have to sell assets to create jobs. This contrasts with the Premier saying earlier this year that job losses 'happen in privatisation'.

The Newman government certainly does not let the facts get in the way of taxpayer funded spin—like the fact that trend unemployment is 6.4 per cent in September, up from 5.5 per cent at the election. This unemployment rate is the highest in 11 years and higher than at any point during the global financial crisis. The participation rate in September is 65.9 per cent, down from 66.8 per cent in March 2012. This is significant because it represents 34,800 Queenslanders who have stopped looking for work since the election and who are no longer counted as unemployed. If these people were still counted as unemployed, we would be looking at a trend unemployment rate of around 7.6 per cent in September. Even more concerning than this headline unemployment rate is the fact that on either a trend or seasonally adjusted measure there were fewer full-time jobs in Queensland in September than at the 2012 election. These weak employment conditions are flowing through to the wider economy. We are seeing fewer full-time jobs to go around, despite an increase in Queensland's population of more than 170,000 over this period.

In August, Queensland recorded the largest seasonally adjusted fall in retail trade in the nation with a contraction of 0.6 per cent. In trend terms, Queensland was the only state to fall, alongside the Northern Territory. While LNG exports will prop up our state's headline growth this financial year, they also mask a substantially weakened domestic economy. The Treasurer's budget papers project that domestic spending—or state final demand—will contract by 1¼ per cent over the year. Already over the year to June, we have seen the domestic economy in Queensland contract by 0.4 per cent. This contrasts with growth in state final demand of 7.5 per cent over the year to March 2012.

Key areas of weakness in the Queensland economy over the year to June include: business investment, which contracted by 12.4 per cent; private investment, which contracted by 7.5 per cent; and household consumption, which still grew at 1.9 per cent but remains at historically low levels. As I have said before, Queensland needs a real economic strategy to support growth in new industries in order to manage our domestic economy out of this weakness. Pretending that it is not happening and that it will all balance itself out, as the Newman government has done over the last two years, is not an answer. Cutting front-line government workers and slashing employment programs while unemployment is rising is not an answer. And making up claims that the largest asset privatisation in Queensland's history will create jobs is not an answer either.

To conclude, while the opposition will not be opposing the passage of this bill, we do oppose the Treasurer's attempts to use the bills for supplementary appropriation as theatre, as we have clearly seen today, and to make baseless claims about historical unforeseen expenditure, which we heard in his introductory speech. If the release of information around unforeseen and lapsed appropriation remains at the discretion of the government, then there is little benefit in the parliament separately considering these bills. If the Treasurer had any credibility in relation to his claims that in some way he is the champion of increased financial transparency and accountability, then he would immediately tell Queenslanders how many millions of taxpayer dollars are being spent in secret on his armada of asset sales consultants for the Strong Choices campaign—those 17 asset sales consultant appointments without an election mandate, and with a cost potentially in the order of \$300-plus million without an election mandate. We are still waiting for the government to respond to the opposition's challenge on this figure.

True transparency and accountability would be to tell Queenslanders how much money the government is spending on asset sales without a mandate. How much money is being spent by the Queensland Treasury Corporation in order to circumvent right to information laws? The previous government at least told Queenslanders this information in the Treasury annual report. We did not use the Queensland Treasury Corporation to hide information from the public. We did not use QTC to keep hidden from Queenslanders how much was being spent on asset sales consultants, and we did not hire political mates at millions of dollars of taxpayers' expense to come up with baseless spin. That is what this Treasurer is about—jobs for LNP mates at taxpayers' expense, using taxpayers' money to come up with his political messaging and to hire his political mates to do it. It is just not right to use taxpayers' money on advertising in the lead-up to an election in an attempt to con Queenslanders.

People I talk to in the community are very angry about this. They are angry that their money is being spent on a political propaganda campaign—a campaign that is designed to deceive Queenslanders. If the Treasurer wants to increase financial transparency, then he should tell us how many millions of dollars in contractual arrangements with asset sales consultants he has locked Queenslanders into without seeking their permission. He should tell us how much he is spending on this latest wave of saturation advertising to 'con' Queenslanders—or to tell them a 'furphy'; take your

pick—about the biggest privatisation program in our state's history. If the Treasurer does not release this information, then nobody should believe a word he says about financial transparency and accountability. I know I certainly do not and I know that I am not alone in holding this view.

I note that the Treasurer will introduce amendments during consideration in detail to this bill to enact the wagering deal he did with Tatts earlier this year. The ink is dry on this deal and there is little point in debating it further today. However, the Treasurer is yet to confirm whether the civil action against Racing Queensland was dropped as part of this deal. Serious questions remain as to whether Queensland taxpayers got a good deal.

I note this deal includes a drop in the wagering tax rate from 20 per cent to 14 per cent for the parimutuel, or the totalisator betting for racing and sport, and from 20 per cent to 10 per cent for fixed odds for racing and sport as part of the package offered to the Tatts Group. While there is money on the table over the next few years from Tatts, it remains unclear as to what the long-term cost to the taxpayer will be of this deal and whether it really delivers value for money. This deal followed a disgraceful taxpayer funded witch-hunt by this government, only for it to later clear the former racing minister and reject major recommendations.

I am very disappointed to see that the Treasurer was not able to take it as good as he gave it because his introductory speech was all about berating the previous government and even today berating me. It is clear that one person is up to the task and one is not, and I think I know who that is. I will back myself over this Treasurer to sit in that chair on the treasury bench any day.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (4.27 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014. This bill provides for the supplementary appropriation of unforeseen expenditure of \$447 million that occurred in the financial year 2013-14. Firstly, I would like to commend the Treasurer and his department. It is refreshing to see a steady hand in government holding the chequebook of the state—

Mr Costigan: Safe hands at the wheel.

Mr DAVIES: They are safe hands at the wheel—I take that interjection—and they are also mature hands at the wheel. He is willing to make the hard decisions to get the state back on track. As a government, we have worked extremely hard to repair what can only be considered as out-of-control state finances—with waste, incompetence and profligate spending the order of the day. Our hard work as a government has meant our current economic performance is the envy of the other states. The state's economy is well on its way to being the powerhouse state, with a balanced focus on the four pillars of our economy—namely, agriculture, mining, tourism and construction. This disciplined approach to our state's finances means a predicted fiscal surplus is on the horizon—and more than that it is very, very close—something that was a pipedream under Labor.

Year after year, deficit after deficit, in fact jurisdiction after jurisdiction, the ALP cancer actually caused the nation of Australia and particularly the state of Queensland to be terribly in debt. Debt is such a poison that it stops government doing the things that governments need to do. I think about the interest that we pay hourly—\$450,000 an hour—and what that would do for the Cerebral Palsy League in my electorate of Capalaba. That two hours of interest would fund them for the year. I can only imagine what \$450,000 would do for one of my schools in my electorate and what a difference that would make with the extra teachers it could employ.

Debt has a detrimental effect on the ability of government to actually do what government should do best, and that is to provide services to the community. Unfortunately Labor, both in Queensland and nationally, has actually shackled the conservative governments with a debt to which we have to find a solution. I want to commend the Treasurer for the hard work he is doing to get us back into surplus and find a solution to the debt. As I said, debt destroys our ability as a government to actually deliver the vital services that the people of Queensland sorely deserve.

The 2013-14 budget clearly highlighted why Queensland is the best place in Australia to do business and raise a family. This bill is crucial to the effective operation of government. We are committed to restoring the state's AAA credit rating, saving Queensland taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in unnecessary interest. We are also committed to reducing the red-tape burden that weighs down businesses. We are also committed to running a more efficient and resilient bureaucracy to meet the modern needs of a modern state.

The Finance and Administration Committee, which I chair, was tasked with reviewing the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014, which provides for supplementary appropriation incurred throughout 2013-14. The committee recommends that the bill be passed.

This government is intent on undoing the financial mess of the last administration and being the fiscally responsible government that the people of Queensland deserve. As I said, debt is an absolute weight around the neck of the people of Queensland. But there is a plan, and I want to commend the Treasurer for the great plan that he is putting forward to actually reduce the debt, to actually find a solution. Those opposite offer no solution. It is just wait and see, have a cup of tea. We need to find a solution. I come from the banking sector. Often people would come before us in the throes of financial hardship. As a financial adviser to those people, I think they found it very difficult sometimes to talk about some of the tough decisions they had to make to get their finances back on track. Getting finances back on track often takes very tough decisions, and this government has not shied away from that. We have made the tough decisions. The Treasurer at the wheel, as it were, of the economy has made those hard decisions.

The member for Mulgrave just made statements that we are making it up as we go. He was banging on a little bit about transparency. I find that quite hypocritical. It was his lot who, prior to an election, had said they had no plan to sell assets—no plan whatsoever. Yet a few weeks afterwards out came this plan that they had ferreted away, and apparently ferreted away quite well because even ministers in the cabinet did not know that they had a plan to sell the assets. The sale of assets was not necessarily the real problem; it was the duplicity of the ALP government which said they would not sell assets and then they did. Contrast this to the government of which I am part—and I am proud to be a part—that has actually been open and transparent. Yes, we have actually advertised. We are taking the people of Queensland on a journey with us: this is what we have to do to bring debt down.

I commend the great work that the Treasurer has been doing. It is good to see that unexpected expenditure is lower, both in quantum and percentage. I would like to thank the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, for introducing the Appropriation Bill (No. 2). I would like to thank the members of the committee from both sides. It is a good committee to work with. I acknowledge the support given by the Finance and Administration Committee support staff, particularly Deb Jeffrey, Maggie and Lyn, for their hard work. They really do put in some hard yards. Finally, I would like to thank all those who briefed the committee and assisted with our inquiries. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the bills to the House.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (4.33 pm): Like many others in the community, I am very concerned about these cognate bills because they indicate expenditure that is over and above that which was budgeted for in the budget put forward by the Treasurer earlier this year, only four months ago. Critically, at that time I raised these important issues with his then budget. Firstly, the government had added another \$20 billion to the gross Labor debt in the previous two years; secondly, the disappearing surplus of that year's budget became a \$2.3 billion deficit despite midyear estimates projecting surpluses of \$665 million; and, thirdly, there was a consistent pattern of a government trying to be a market maker rather than a market facilitator.

This bill is applying for another \$447.5 million in aggregate funds to add to the budget expenditure and is a good indicator of the problems that any incoming government will face when the LNP government is removed at the next election, probably when it presents its election budget—and it will not go to estimates. The government will then move into the caretaker period. The incoming government will actually present another budget that will give us the same type of thing that was said in the previous year's budget predicting surpluses which will, of course, disappear. We are currently in the 54th Parliament and that forthcoming parliament would be the 55th Parliament.

For those needing reminding, I point out that the Queensland Treasurer projected a surplus of \$188 million for 2014-15 with growth expenditure of 2.2 per cent, remembering that the 2013-14 year had a projected \$665 million surplus. Judging by a previous pattern, this then implies that the deficit for next year will be approximately the same, if not, greater. Despite many claims of economic growth of the order of 3.6 per cent possibly reaching four per cent—and it has been claimed that in the forthcoming two years it will be six per cent—there is a report that was released yesterday by Roy Morgan stating that the current real state unemployment level is 10 per cent, not 6.3 per cent. As people would know, that is projected to rise in the next four months to 6.8 per cent. This is occurring simultaneously with actions presently being taken by this Campbell Newman government, an LNP government, to pork-barrel in a variety of electorates, including spending \$80 million in the Premier's own electorate of Ashgrove. Therefore, pork-barrelling is not generating jobs. It certainly is not generating any goodwill for the LNP despite what they are doing to ring fence those electorates that they think they can win. I would say it is going to compound both the losses to the state and the losses to them in government.

The explanation given today by the Treasurer for the need for those extra funds is effectively, 'You don't need to know that and I'm not telling other than that the Treasury needs the money.' That is effectively it. This is a totally unsatisfactory and puerile explanation and is more reflective of the contempt that the Treasurer holds for the public of Queensland because that is effectively who he is talking to. He is actually holding the public in contempt. He got up here today and said, 'We want the money. We're in control. We're not saying why beyond that Treasury need it.' This is from a government that condemned Labor for both a lack of transparency and recklessness. Do members here not see that not only is the Treasurer just repeating the dreadful precedent set by the former Labor government, albeit by a different method, but this is critically adding to the state debt for no specific advantage other than the benefit of the ultimate expenditure of funds which, unfortunately, are very difficult to obtain at these times?

Ordinarily, it is not unreasonable to seek supplementary funds for Treasury when the purpose of those funds is transparent and stated as such. This is not occurring with this appropriation legislation. No such evidence has been given here today or earlier or has been given to other members in briefings other than the action taken by the Treasurer is in response to what he says is a need for the money. I listened to his response to the Manager of Opposition Business. I know there was a lot of toing and froing and immature arguments, but there was nothing that confirmed the need and the reasons for that money. It follows on from the fact that the Treasurer and his undersecretary basically refused to answer my very reasonable questions in the most recent, very shortened estimates hearings with regard to accrual accounting and the fact that they cannot understand what they are spending when they do not understand their own accounts. Judging by the accounts that have been presented and the answers to the questions, clearly the person who answered those questions did not understand that, if they did not effectively provide even a cash book, they would not understand how they had spent that money.

I put it to you that the government does not really know what it is actually spending where, because it does not understand its own accounts and it does not produce a set of accounts so that anyone could reasonably say where that money has been spent. If you do not know where you are spending your money and you do not know when and how you are spending money, you will never know what you are doing wrong. In other words, you do not know that you do not know, and when you are spending other people's money this is a major problem.

Without doubt this legislation will pass and money will be spent. The difficulty for Queenslanders is that it is other people's money, and the public realise this is their money and at this time more and more people are falling into the poverty trap. If this money was to be spent even just improving the lot of the working poor, we would be all the better for it and you would see impacts on our unemployment rate, and that would improve our effective bottom line not just in the next financial year but in the current financial year. We discovered that before the Second World War because it was the concentration when we spent money on reducing unemployment which improved our budget bottom line in all of the states and in the Federation. But this is unlikely from this government because they do not understand how they manage money.

This other legislation that is contained in the legislation today is the enabling legislation to allow for the exclusive Tatts deal with Queensland Racing for 30 years as from 1 July 2014. The government has done everything it can to see this ridiculously long deal after a protracted period, with the result that in that time we have seen two board members from Queensland Racing resign including the deputy chair, Barry Taylor from Townsville, and the other member effectively represented harness racing. But having said that, these people stated that they were not being informed of the process that was going on and that is why they left. In other words, nobody really knew what was going on. We still do not know, but the state have gone out to the media and said, 'This is great for the industry and it is great for racing,' but the evidence is all to the contrary and I will give you those reasons.

As I have stated, in the last year alone we have seen a record number of horse studs fold, an inability of people racing to compete for prize money and fields reduced massively as a result compared to other states, making the investment in racing not worthwhile. The critical data in Queensland, particularly with regard to the stud industry, is that only 1,800 foals will be delivered in the next year. In the breeding industry, the percentage of mares covered is 35 per cent down in this year on top of 35 per cent down in the previous year. This is the pattern, and people do not know where it is going. The state currently is only getting 82c out of every \$100 in wages. Certainly it is getting \$28 million to go into Queensland Racing for the rights annually, but the industry was told nothing and they knew nothing of what has gone on.

'This is a great deal for Tatts,' and I will tell you who said that: Citibank. They said that this is the best deal that Tatts will ever get, and Queenslanders ought to know about what has happened. Tatts shareholders will gain \$114 million. Tatts will get another \$40 million windfall for seeing the 10-year time payment for its \$150 million exclusive fee. RQ will only get \$15 million to \$20 million out of the next agreement. So much for the extra \$50 million a year needed to bring us closer to Victoria! They get \$80 million per race. For those that are keen on them, dogs and pacers will cop another hiding. As for fixed odds and sports betting, none of these things will benefit RQ.

This was a really bad rushed deal by people who shun transparency, and they are repeating the continuing pattern set by the LNP government. The LNP government repeatedly claims to have plans, better economic skills and commitment. The evidence, which is in their legislation and certainly in the Tattersalls deal, says it all. They basically say that incompetence reigns in this government. They do not believe in honesty and ethics, and they certainly do not believe in transparency. And when you are dealing in this industry, you have to do all of those things.

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (4.44 pm): It is with great relief that I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2). I speak on behalf of the electorate of Murrumba, which is the Aboriginal word for 'good place'. Please note that I am a member of the Finance and Administration Committee which reviewed the bill, and I will base much of my speech on report No. 49 of the Finance and Administration Committee into the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2). I will be supporting both the bill and the report.

I will move to the detail of the report and section 2.1. Can I state that at the start of my parliamentary career and during the first budget I was surprised to discover that supplementary expenditure was only appropriated in the following years. My experience as an accountant overseas, in Sydney and in Brisbane working for organisations such as Morgan Stanley, Suncorp and Westpac and in commercial and not-for-profit sectors has been that variances to budgets were reported immediately during an annual report. The fact that the previous government delayed the reporting and the accountability of any supplementary appropriation to another budget cycle was a clear indication of management that either cannot keep control of its finances or—debatably, even worse—set out to hide or obscure its failure to deliver on its own commitments. I applaud the Treasurer for reinstating a separate bill for supplementary appropriation which demonstrates his commitment and our government's commitment to an open and accountable government.

Moving to section 2.4.1 and the subject of transfers, I note that only accountants would get excited about the discussion, but nevertheless it was important.

Moving to section 2.4.2, I note the \$447 million in unforeseen expenditure with the single largest component of that being \$265 million to cover volatile superannuation benefit payments and long service leave scheme claims. A quick look at my calculator shows that, in accounting language, variance to budget for the Queensland government is within one per cent. But one should not look at section 2.4.2 in isolation without looking at section 2.4.3, lapsed appropriations, which came in at \$663 million—a sum greater than the unforeseen. Importantly, netting the two this government lives within its means and spends what it says it will.

I note the comments on page 11 of the report discuss that these variances were due to timing changes to grant payments and also the reduction in required levels of funding. If I were one of the state's bankers, an industry analyst or a credit reporting agency, I would take note of this appropriation bill and the sound financial manager now in charge of Queensland's Treasury and look favourably upon the skill and competency of the current Treasurer and compare and contrast that to the previous Treasurer, who lost control of the steering wheel and subsequently the state's finances, which spun out of control.

I also note the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2014 and its related Finance and Administration Committee report No. 50. I will also be supporting both of those documents.

My electorate is the Aboriginal word for 'good place'. I believe that Queensland is a good place with great opportunities. Only the Newman LNP government has the track record of reducing cost-of-living increases by reducing waste. Only conservative governments live within their means. May I remind the House that the Newman government has reduced the cost of purchasing the family home by introducing stamp duty relief, has frozen car rego prices, for the first time ever is reducing the price of public transport fares and is taking action to reduce electricity prices. The government that I am proud to be a member of has a strong plan to repay Labor's debt and a strong plan to create jobs and lower the cost of living for Queenslanders, including the good people of Murrumba. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.48 pm): I rise to speak to Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014 and Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2014. I will make only a short contribution. Unlike the member who spoke before me, I am not an accountant and I do not purport to understand the intricacies of accounting, but I do purport to understand that the community expects that its hard-earned money will be spent appropriately, responsibly and with the best return reasonably possible.

A number of issues have been raised by members from both sides of the House in relation to these documents. The one issue I am interested in canvassing is the issue of lapsed appropriation. The explanation that was given to us is that if a department does not draw down the full amount of its approved appropriation during the financial year the appropriation is considered to lapse. In the committee briefing we were told that there are varying reasons for that appropriation to lapse, for example, timing changes of grant payments and other programs or a reduction in the required level of funding or expenditure.

However, it is with some concern that I look at some of the departments for which lapsed appropriation was listed, in particular Queensland Health. Some \$129.7 million lapsed in departmental services, \$407.4 million lapsed in equity adjustments and \$1.2 million lapsed in administered items. Each of those categories reflects a different area of the department. However, I would have to say that any Queenslanders would find it more than concerning that in a department like Health, as an entity and the discipline that the department covers, which can consume any expenditure that is made available, this lapsed appropriation has been reflected. I would certainly be interested in greater detail in relation to that.

At the hearing we had with departmental officers it was stated that there has not been such a high level of lapsed appropriation—that is, \$2.35 billion in the 2013-14 budget cycle—since 2004-05, when it reached almost \$3 billion. I found that a little quizzical, actually, because I did not think the Labor government had any lapsed appropriation.

Again, the question could arise in a reasonable person's mind as to why an appropriation could lapse in some departments. I believe that the people of Queensland deserve a much more detailed explanation than an outline of what expenditure in departmental services covers, in very general terms; what equity adjustment covers, again in very general terms; and what administered items covers, again in the most general terms. Equity adjustments are used to manage the government's investment in a department, administered items are those that a department manages on behalf of the government and departmental services are obviously the cost of administering the services for that department. I do not think that is an adequate explanation, especially of lapsed appropriation of the size that is contained in this document. As I said, I certainly believe that the people of Queensland deserve a much more detailed explanation as to what that lapsed appropriation was for and how it occurred.

In closing, I thank the secretariat of the Finance and Administration Committee, who are always ready to provide information to those of us on the committee, and the departmental representatives who came and gave evidence and information to the committee at its hearings on the two bills. Treasury is a vast portfolio—all of the portfolios in government are significant and vast in their cover—so it is most appreciated when departmental officers come and answer questions—in my case some fairly basic questions—in relation to these matters. I look forward to any further information the Treasurer may choose to give us, in relation particularly to the lapsed appropriation.

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (4.54 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate on Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014. This bill provides for the supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure that occurred in the 2013-14 financial year. This bill is critical to the good order and effective operation of government. One thing this government has prided itself on during its first term in office is good financial management. We are committed to restoring the state's AAA credit rating, reducing red tape and running a more efficient bureaucracy.

Our economic performance is the envy of other states. The state's economy is on the cusp of strong growth as we head towards our first fiscal surplus in years. The 2013-14 budget clearly highlighted why Queensland is the best place in Australia to invest, employ and grow. Of course, an excellent budget and thorough estimates hearings cannot precisely calculate unexpected expenses—that is, expenses above the amount approved by the appropriation bills introduced annually with the budget. There are times during the course of a government when circumstances necessitate an outlay that has not been expressly allocated. That is why this bill is a necessary mechanism of

government—to ensure that our balance book is above reproach and that all departmental expenses during the course of the last financial year, whether big or small, have been accounted for. This bill is, thus, the bedrock of an open and accountable government.

The Finance and Administration Committee was tasked with reviewing the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014, which provides for supplementary appropriation incurred throughout 2013-14. The committee recommends that this bill be passed. This government is intent on undoing the failings of previous governments and setting an example of what it means to be an open, accountable, fiscally sensible and efficient government.

This bill is yet another example of efficiency. We have reduced the time between when unforeseen expenditure is incurred and when it is finally approved by the parliament. Previously this delay had been unacceptable. Unforeseen expenditure was not made accountable until the following budget bills—almost a year after the end of the financial year to which they related. Such a delay is indicative of a Labor government that did not want to be held to account. I fully approve of the current process of having a separate bill for unforeseen expenditure.

This bill has been introduced as soon as possible after the end of the financial year. This is the way it should be. I would hope that this approach remains in place for all future years in Queensland. This is because it is of utmost importance that our government provides an explanation for the reasons for unforeseen expenditure and that scrutiny of this unforeseen expenditure is conducted in a timely manner. The public expectation is that government finances are accounted for at budget time. This is both reasonable and logical. We do not want to create an impression that we are fiddling the figures by passing supplementary appropriation bills months and months after the relevant financial year.

The Treasurer's Consolidated Fund Financial Report has been provided to the Auditor-General for independent assessment and verification. Independent review is, of course, a cornerstone of fair and accountable government. This review is no more important than when the review relates to government finances and government expenditure. The Auditor-General has given his approval to the Treasurer's report.

Any unforeseen expenditure requires adequate explanation. As we have heard from the Treasurer, much of the additional expenditure relates to relief provided during the natural disasters, one-stop shop funding for Smart Service Queensland, the government's wireless network and planning for the G20 event.

At a public departmental briefing I was able to clarify what is required for each explanation and what guidance Queensland Treasury and Trade provides for the departments with regard to reporting requirements. I was advised that this is largely a matter for negotiation between individual departments and their Queensland Audit Office field auditors. I also raised the issue at the departmental briefing that departments retain discretion to vary expenditure according to their collection of controlled revenue and that this is not subject to the discretionary approval of parliament. This remains an issue, and possibly an issue that requires redress. Nevertheless, I acknowledge and accept that our appropriations management is limited by the Tridata system currently in place. While any system is capable of improvement, large scale changes to implement a new financial management system would require tens of millions of dollars. A public policy decision would have to be made as to whether finetuning our current system warrants huge investment in a new IT system.

The Finance and Administration Committee expressed some concern about a seemingly high lapsed appropriation figure of \$2.35 billion. Lapsed funding is allocated funding that was not appropriated for that year. The main reasons given for lapsed appropriation were timing changes of grant payments and reduction in required level of funding. However, the committee was advised that much of the lapsed appropriation, particularly lapsed appropriation caused by delays, will simply be deferred into the following year. I thank the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, for introducing the appropriation bills. I thank the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, Mr Steve Davies, and thank the members of both sides as well as the Independent member for Gladstone for their contributions. I acknowledge the support given by the Finance and Administration Committee support staff. Finally, I thank those who briefed the committee and assisted us with our further inquiries. I support the passing of the bills.

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (5.01 pm): I rise to give a brief commentary on the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2014. The bills provide for supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred in the 2013-14 financial year by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. The supplementary appropriation sought was

based on the Consolidated Fund Financial Report 2013-14. The bills provide for supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure that occurred during the 2013-14 financial year to be authorised. The department advised that the way in which parliamentary approval is sought changed last year. Reflecting the practice for annual appropriation bills, supplementary appropriation for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service is sought via a separate bill and hence there are two bills for supplementary appropriation this year. Prior to this, the two bills were combined. This meant that the supplementary appropriation was dealt with almost a year after the end of the financial year to which it related.

Aligning the introduction of appropriation bills for supplementary appropriation with the tabling of the Consolidated Fund Financial Report enhances parliamentary scrutiny of unforeseen expenditure. The Treasurer and Minister for Trade stated—

This government remains committed to transparency and accountability. The introduction of a separate bill for supplementary appropriation demonstrates this commitment by ensuring timely consideration by parliament of unforeseen expenditure incurred during 2013-14, just shortly after the end of the financial year.

Consultation was undertaken with departments in establishing the appropriations payable to them pursuant to the bill. The committee heard from Alex Beavers, the Deputy Under Treasurer from Queensland Treasury and Trade, and Mr Dennis Molloy, Assistant Under Treasurer from the Fiscal Strategy Division of QTT. The committee examined the bill's consistency with fundamental legislative principles and found that the bill has sufficient regard to FLPs and recommended that the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014 be passed. In closing, I want to thank the departmental officers for meeting with the committee and for their cooperation in providing information to the committee on a timely basis. I also thank the hardworking support staff and of course my colleagues on the Finance and Administration Committee.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.04 pm): I rise to speak to Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014. The explanatory notes state—

On the recommendation of the Treasurer, the Governor in Council authorised unforeseen expenditure that occurred in the 2013-14 financial year, that is, expenditure from the Consolidated Fund in excess of the amount provided by the Appropriation Act 2013, in accordance with section 35 of the Financial Accountability Act 2009. Payments from the Consolidated Fund, including unforeseen expenditure, must be formally authorised under an Act of Parliament in accordance with section 66 of the Constitution of Queensland 2001.

The fact that it says that it must be authorised has been put in place to ensure that there is good governance. At the same time, whether in opposition or on the crossbenches, it is important to give supply to the government to go about its general business. There are times of emergency when the Cabinet Budget Review Committee must look at emergency funding for different areas that are important to particular regions. In the past I have applied for funding for certain projects and asked for support from the Cabinet Budget Review Committee for priority areas that were a danger in my electorate. However, it is also important that we do not squander money.

Sometimes the government needs to ensure the appropriation of funds, and I give the example of Upper Barron Road. That is a major arterial link and we have been pushing for many years for funds for that road to be sealed. It is a major arterial link from Malanda through the Gregory Developmental Road to Emerald. However, every year that road just gets graded. There have been a lot of accidents and people are not using that road. If the appropriate funds were given straightaway, we would never have to worry about repairing that road year in, year out and that money would be saved. That is good governance. The explanatory notes continue—

Timely consideration of unforeseen expenditure enhances transparency and accountability of Government expenditure. As such, supplementary appropriation is sought via a separate Appropriation Bill as soon as possible after the end of the financial year rather than combined with the annual Appropriation Bills introduced next year at Budget time.

It is disappointing that the exact details of the expenditure have not been categorised, so we do not know exactly what it is. We know that the departments have expenditure and that there has been overexpenditure in each department. Bucketloads of cash, such as the \$80 million mentioned, have been put into Ashgrove. Obviously with this bill the government needs to draw down more money because some of that money will be going into the seat of Ashgrove. There were also not only the payouts for sacked public servants but also then the re-employment of those sacked public servants. This was an expenditure that was not only unforeseen but also unforeseen by the people of Queensland because they were promised that public servants would be well looked after. We can see why the government is coming back to the parliament to try to get more funds because this unforeseen expenditure has taken place. We were also quite surprised at the massive amount of money that has been spent on advertisements promoting the government.

When we look at the Appropriation Bill, we need that money. We need supply. The only way that we can get money into the state is through two different areas. One is through taxation and the other is through receiving money from our profitable assets. This income from these assets comes in year in, year out. I can remember economists saying that we are \$1 billion or \$2 billion short of funding. Of course we are billions of dollars short because, with the coal component of Queensland Rail, we raked in \$1.2 billion a year. That is \$1.2 billion that could have been coming back to us year in, year out. So what do we have to do? We have to find money from somewhere. That is why we are here today debating this bill. We are here to pass legislation so that we can give more money to the departments, because that money is not flowing in. We privatised the above-rail assets and right now \$470 million is not coming into the state. In terms of the retail arm of our energy sector, last year the retail companies made \$1.1 billion from selling electricity. That is nearly \$3 billion that we now do not have year coming in year in, year out, coupled with the income from ports and Plantations Queensland.

With these appropriation bills we are giving more money to the departments. But we also want good governance. If we sell our remaining assets, the state will have less income coming in. So where do we get that lost income from? Taxation or extra charges on our bills. That is the only way we can do it. That is why we have to be very careful when selling our profitable assets that are income producing. That is income that comes back to us year in, year out.

We have to question the cost benefit analysis of what we are going to lose over the next 20 years. There is talk about sport stadiums that are going to be built out of the money from selling our ports. There are a massive number of jobs created by our ports and the income generated by our ports comes back to us. There is sugar transported by rail to the ships. The farmers send their products to those ports. That injects a massive amount of money into the economy. And what are we talking about? Selling our ports for a sports stadium, just to give a little bit of a sweetener.

In terms of this Appropriation Bill, yes, we will always have an overspend in various areas. But we need to spend the money in the right areas. We should not have to come in here and allocate money because we sacked 15,000 Public Service employees and then we put some of them on contracts because we want people to forget at the next election about that rash decision that was made earlier. I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.13 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the appropriation bill. The government is intent on reducing the deficit. So today we seem to be discussing a \$441 million supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure. I have no great problem with the appropriation, but I have a problem with the way money is being spent and the attitude that is taken towards our economy. I speak mostly about the obsession of achieving a fiscal balance to what I would say in many cases is to the detriment of industry policy and employment.

I also have a big problem with the way the budget is sold to the Queensland public. Because of its obsession with achieving a fiscal balance, this government has taken a very one-dimensional attitude towards the decision that is offered to the people of Queensland. They are told that, in order to get the debt down, we can either sell assets or raise taxes. There are other pathways and I think most people would be aware of them. Having that one-dimensional attitude of offering options that are palatable to the public in order to try to sell their program to the public is, I would say, at best misleading. I would say that mischievous is probably the more accurate word.

Governing the state and its economy is far more complex. Achieving fiscal parity should be conducted on a much more longer term basis and there should be a more qualitative assessment made in the decision-making process. The discussion needs to start with where the money is spent and is it being spent appropriately. The big financial commitment that I have heard made—whether money has changed hands yet or not—since I have been here is for a new office building that is going to provide a stimulus to the economy. There are jobs there for three years, but that building is not something that is going to deliver long-term growth to Queensland. Bridges, dams, irrigation schemes and transmission lines are the sorts of things that we should be spending money on. The problem is that there are no votes in those areas where that infrastructure needs to be built. Very rarely do such projects come about from either side of politics. As long as this debate is puerile and revolves around achieving a fiscal balance, I think that Queensland will always lose out. The pathway to a fiscal balance in the long term will be made by generating jobs and industry.

At the moment, blind Freddy could see that people in industry or other people in our electorates are doing it tough. Regardless of how we got into this tough position, the only way we can get out of it is through debt funding infrastructure. These are not my words; many eminent economists are saying that the conversation should not start with, 'How do we immediately resolve this fiscal balance?'; it should start with, 'How do we get industry and jobs going to kick-start the economy?' That means that the discussion needs to start with what infrastructure we are building. If we are talking about a sports stadium in Townsville and an office building in Brisbane and another tunnel in Brisbane, I do not think that that is the correct use of money. I do not think that that is the best way to stimulate or rejig our Queensland economy. That is where the discussion needs to start. We need to stop having this one-dimensional debate about getting the debt down by raising taxes or selling assets. I think that is a really poor outcome for the people of Queensland.

Since taking office in 2012, the government has added an additional \$20 billion to gross state debt. That path may very well have been set before the government took office. But the unemployment rate has risen from 5.5 per cent in 2011-12 to six per cent in 2013-14. That does not indicate that we are spending the money in the right places. The focus should be on building roads and bridges in places where we can create those jobs and get industries investing.

Mr Knuth interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Member for Dalrymple, I cannot hear your own party member. Please cease.

Mr KATTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is hard to hear with the conversations going both ways. I appreciate that. There is precedent for the position that we are in right now. The other day I was interested to read an article about Robert Menzies, the father of the Liberal Party, whom many would say was a great leader. I would agree that he did some great things for this country. If we want to argue about achieving a fiscal balance, by most people's assessment between 1958 and 1959 and then between 1966 and 1967 then Prime Minister Robert Menzies would have been one of the worst Prime Ministers or managers of the economy we have ever had. At that time he ran deficits of 1.8 per cent of GDP. In his final year in office his biggest deficit of 3.3 per cent was larger than the deficit left by Wayne Swan. But Robert Menzies did that because he was nation building. He was happy to put the country into debt to build. He had the confidence that the money was going to assets and infrastructure that were nation building. Many would argue that Robert Menzies had a great political mind. But by our standards today and by the level of debate that we hear in the mainstream media and in here, he would be judged very harshly because we do not have nation-building projects anymore.

The other proposition I put to members is that if we are not focusing on industry policy and jobs first and we are prioritising fiscal balance all the time, we could be standing with our hands on our hips in three or four years proud of ourselves because we have delivered a surplus with the smouldering ruins of the economy in the background with no jobs or industry. There must be more focus put on the economy first and worry about the debt later. I say unequivocally that mainstream commentators in the debate we are hearing in the media need a change in attitude. We should not be afraid to use public debt to fund growth and we should not be afraid of debt as long as it is spent on the right assets and the right infrastructure. It will deliver a surplus in the long term.

One of the best examples of that is the rural industry where at the moment across agriculture in Australia rural debt is the lead weight that is dragging everything. There are some great cost effective initiatives that address that situation but they are not being grasped by governments of either political persuasion. One of those has been the much discussed Australian Reconstruction Development Board that has the ability to stimulate industry and keep those jobs going in agriculture but for some reason it is failing to get support at the upper level.

There are many devices and mechanisms available to rejig our economy. We all have to agree that it is very tough at the moment. I think it is very naive to suggest otherwise. We should not be afraid of using government debt to fund infrastructure. We should not be afraid of debt. We should be selecting the right projects to spend this money on. It should not all be spent in the south-east corner. There should be some very deliberate spends in the far western and far northern regions and those areas that will continue to deliver industry and jobs to this state and be the primary drivers of our economy.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (5.21 pm), in reply: Where to begin? What a cornucopia of comments we have had from members this afternoon. I thank all members for their contribution to the debate. I particularly single out those members of the government who have taken advantage of the committee process, who have read through the report and understand what it means to be fiscally responsible, what it means to be able to manage your budget appropriately, to pay your expenses as and when they fall due, to put money aside to pay down debt and to save for a rainy day.

I want to acknowledge the comments made by the member for Mulgrave. He has a view and has put that forward. I was particularly grateful for the member for Mulgrave's comments when I had to listen to the member for Gaven because compared to the insanity from the member for Gaven the member for Mulgrave's comments were at least in the realm of accounting standards and some sort of understanding of financial figures. To listen to the member for Gaven is to enter the realms of tin hats and fantasy that rarely are seen in public finances. To listen to the conspiracy theories was something beyond belief.

Let me just deal with the contribution from the member for Gaven. He had a number of theories. He thought, for example—and he tried this during the estimates committee—that in some way, shape or form the under-treasurer of the state of Queensland was not able to present figures and numbers in a way that was acceptable and showed we knew what we were spending our money on. This is despite the fact that these figures are presented in accordance with the Australian accounting standards for government bodies; this is despite the fact that the figures were presented in accordance with the uniform presentation framework agreed amongst all the states and the federal government; this is despite the fact that those figures have been presented in exactly the same way for many, many, many, many years—since those standards were in fact agreed upon; and this was despite the fact that all of these figures are signed off by the independent Auditor-General as being a true and correct representation of the state's finances, including the Consolidated Fund Financial Report which I tabled in the House. Where the member for Gaven comes from in terms of his comments is somewhere I think only the member for Gaven can understand and explain because it is not explainable by reference to anything else known to mortal man.

He also is, of course, highly contradictory. This time around he repeats some of the claims that he made during the budget debate, but, in fact, in 2012 he said—

In Queensland, we are net borrowers and we are at the mercy of our lenders.

He did understand back then. Perhaps he got a fair bit of guidance from the party room he was a member of in relation to the fact that too much debt was bad and we were at the mercy of our lenders. He said—

This 2012-13 Queensland state budget was probably the budget we had to have but arguably did not deserve. I say this because, in a modern world, money is scarce, it has no borders and it usually finds a home where it is more likely to give a guarantee of a return of both interest and security of principal.

He also said—

We had to have this budget because the Bligh and Beattie Labor governments just squandered every new opportunity, looted every GOC and then finally borrowed, in far too high proportion, just to pay for recurrent expenditure with limited capital expenditure averaged over their 14 years. Labor failed the public and trust in them evaporated. Therefore, this budget was a test of LNP nerve to do what the public demanded.

He also said—

The Treasurer and Premier have every right to blame Labor for the need to retrench staff and cut programs because their job is to restore confidence.

There are a number of other comments, but I also want to deal with the comments that he made in relation to racing. He seemed to think there was some great conspiracy and that the racing industry had been hard done by. I am actually glad to be able to respond to his comments because it gives me an opportunity to again point out the tremendous deal that was achieved by Racing Queensland, the independent body, together with assistance from the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing and with some assistance from Projects Queensland, to put the industry on a sustainable footing.

We now have a new 30-year wagering agreement, which, as I said, is similar to those exclusive agreements that are in place in New South Wales and Victoria. It will provide \$850 million in revenue over the next 30 years. That is in addition to the revenue the industry currently receives under existing

arrangements and revenue from race information fees of approximately \$160 million a year. Of that \$160 million, Racing Queensland has earmarked \$97 million for infrastructure development and \$5 million over five years for country and regional racing.

If there was one story that we heard about racing under Labor it was its total and utter disregard for country and regional racing. Not only have we put extra prize money into country and regional racing, not only have we used part of the \$110 million racing capital fund to support tracks down at Beaudesert and other tracks around the state, but we have also now secured an additional \$5 million to go into regional racing. We have a clear agreement from Tatts to invest more than \$74 million by increasing marketing activities and retail offerings—so promoting strength and confidence in the industry—and we also have here now a world-leading gaming product operator based at Newstead, providing jobs, writing the software, writing the code, operating here in Queensland and paying payroll tax and all the other things that go with that sort of employment.

Globally Tatts supports 300,000 jobs, 11,350 here in Queensland. There is much more to the deal, but most of it was included in the media release that was offered by the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, myself and the chair of Racing Queensland.

The member for Gaven referred to some research that was undertaken by Citibank. He seemed to be quoting from a Mr Peter Cameron, sometime journalist and columnist formerly with the *Gold Coast Bulletin* and now with, I think, the *Sunday Mail*. Of course, what he failed to understand is that in the week that TattsBet's share price increased, Tatts had been successful in a Victorian court action in the sum of some \$500 million. If you do not think a \$500 million court victory is going to have any effect on your share price, you should not be in the business. Quite clearly, Mr Cameron has not had all of the facts at his disposal and the member for Gaven, despite his obvious in-depth research of the pages of the *Sunday Mail*, has failed to understand that aspect of it, as well.

What did Peter V'landys, the CEO of Racing New South Wales, say? He said that the deal was great for racing and a platform for the future. The member for Gaven spoke about the industry in terms of the breeding of thoroughbreds. What did Basil Nolan, the president of Thoroughbred Breeders Queensland, say? He was fulsome in his praise of the deal because it provided additional funding to support the QTIS scheme in Queensland that sees Queensland bred, owned and raced racehorses eligible for increasing prize money across-the-board. Therefore, we can safely dismiss the comments of the member for Gaven for the ravings that they were.

The member made some other comments, as the member for Mermaid Beach advises me. For example, he mentioned Mr Barry Taylor, who resigned from the board of Racing Queensland. Many stories and some information were provided around the reasons for that resignation. That will be for Mr Taylor to disclose. In fact, he did not come from Toowoomba; he came from Townsville. That shows the level of accuracy of the contribution of the member for Gaven. He needs to do more than research on Google.

Some members made a number of comments about advertising and the advertising spend. The advertising by this government has been positively frugal compared to that of the former government. We came to office with a clear commitment to reduce the spend on advertising by 20 per cent compared to that of the previous administration. We also made commitments to reduce other expenditure on communications and travel. I point out the figures: under the LNP government, the departments spent \$49.09 million on advertising placement in their first 26 months—that is, April to May 2014. The previous Labor administration spent \$81.78 million in the first 26 months of its last parliamentary term. That is a 40 per cent reduction over the spending by Labor. Now we annually proactively release independently audited advertising placement expenditure by departments under a publication scheme on the Premier's website. Therefore, one can see that the claims by those who think that advertising by this government has gone up are completely and utterly false when compared to the previous government's expenditure.

Many claims were made by the member for Mulgrave in relation to the appointment of advisers. In relation to that I can advise that all appointments of advisers were undertaken under strict probity conditions. They were undertaken by the officers of QTC. Firstly I announced that we would be seeking advisers and then I announced the appointment of advisers, with no secrecy whatsoever. We have been forthright, we have been upfront and we have provided information, both on the scoping studies and the appointment of advisers.

When those opposite produced their myths and facts brochure when they engaged on their asset sales program—and theirs was a sales program, as the member for Mulgrave so furiously admits—they did not tell anyone how much they were spending on those programs nor that they were going to appoint Bernie Fraser as their go-to man for the union movement, which they tried to pacify by sending him around the place. In a panicked way, they had to find someone who would be their front person to speak to the union movement. They put Mr Bernie Fraser on for—I am not sure—12, 14 or 18 months to try to sell the then Labor government's undisclosed, without a mandate, rushed, panicked fire sale of assets.

By comparison, what are we doing? We are doing exactly what we said we would do. We said we would not go down the path of asset transactions without first taking it to the people of Queensland. We said we needed a mature debate about how we pay down the debt. We said there will be pros and cons with this. We spent six months talking to Queenslanders. I travelled almost 20,000 kilometres. We held more than 30 public meetings, town hall meetings and community leaders' meetings. We had 55,000 people engaged via the internet on the People's Budget tool—that is, 55,000 people spent an average of more than 20 minutes completing that. There were more than 250,000 individual page visits to that site, together with paper and written submissions. Then we released a draft plan and we spoke to the people of Queensland about that. They came back to us and said, 'Yes, we want you to reduce debt. We understand that too much debt is bad for the state. As anyone with a household mortgage understands, we understand that you can only borrow so much and you can only max out the credit card so much before you have to start paying down the debt. We want you to pay down the debt; it is the responsible, sensible thing to do.' They said, 'We don't want you to increase taxes,' and we did not. In our last budget, there were no new taxes and no increase in taxes.

Let us compare that with the last three years of the former government. The member for Mulgrave was proud of the fact that he increased fees, taxes and charges. In his Mythbusters, he said—

Already we have:

- raised land tax and stamp duty at the top end
- increased taxes on casinos and introduced new liquor licensing fees—to help meet the costs of alcohol abuse
- increased coal royalties
- increased motor vehicle stamp duty and we have recently introduced a rise to car registration.

Then he said—

The only substantial tax that could be increased is payroll tax and this is not good policy at a time of rising unemployment.

Will the member for Mulgrave give an iron-clad guarantee to the people of Queensland that he will not raise payroll tax? Will he give that iron-clad guarantee that he will not raise payroll tax at the next election? That is what I would like to hear from the member for Mulgrave. We have increased the threshold for payroll tax, saving about 4,000 businesses from the need to actually pay payroll tax. What else have we done? We have reduced the reporting requirements for them. All that small- and medium-sized enterprises have to do is lodge a return twice a year. We have saved them time and money, and paperwork on the way through. Will the member for Mulgrave give an iron-clad guarantee? I ask this because the member for Mulgrave has said on radio—in his own words—that he needs to look at the revenue side of the equation.

The person from whom the member for Mulgrave appears to be taking his economic advice is Professor Quiggin from the University of Queensland. What has Professor Quiggin said? Firstly, when talking about electricity businesses, Professor Quiggin says, 'Well, because these are regulated businesses, ownership is not going to make much difference to the price.' You will never hear the member for Mulgrave say that, but that is what Professor Quiggin says. He then says, 'If we want to continue services and grow those services, we should not sell these businesses; we should increase taxes and charges. That is the only way you can do it.' Professor Quiggin's solution is increasing taxes and charges, and to see that one needs only read the comments and reports that he has made in relation to it.

Then we have Mr Battams, the President of the Queensland Council of Unions, who suggests that all we need to do is raise the level of taxes in Queensland to match those in New South Wales and all our problems will be solved, which proves two of my points. The first is that Queensland is still a low-tax state, because Mr Battams, of course, says we have to raise our taxes to the level of New

South Wales, which must mean that we are below its rate. It also proves my point that the economic advice being taken by the member for Mulgrave is that of the union leaders who control 50 per cent of the votes when it comes to the leadership of the parliamentary ALP—that is, 50 per cent of the votes when they go through there.

I note a report—and I am yet to have it confirmed; perhaps the member for Mulgrave will do that—that he has actually swapped sides and bailed on his mates in the AWU and gone to some other faction. How many can there be? There are only nine members. Which faction is it in this week—is it the left faction, is it right faction, is it the AWU, is it Labor Unity, is it the Old Guard, is it the new guard, is it the mudguard? Who knows what it is likely to be. Who knows what internal ructions are going on in the microbus of the ALP.

Remember that after the 2012 election the member for Mulgrave wanted to have a crack as leader. He put his name forward. He was going to be one of the contenders for leader. After the 2012 election he was seriously considering it. I think the three members in the AWU faction said, 'We will have the current Leader of the Opposition.'

Then we had the member for South Brisbane come in. That added a new dimension to the toxic mix of the Labor factional operations. What did we see happen at the state conference? We saw the guy who was here but got turfed and who is now going to be the candidate for Woodridge say, 'The unions have too much influence.' Then we had the member for Bundamba who said they did not have enough and she thought it was all about self-interest. We had the member for Bundamba complaining about someone talking about self-interest. There you go! So we had the former member for Greenslopes, the soon to be candidate for Woodridge—

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Just a second, Treasurer. What is your point of order?

Mr PITT: Under standing order 139 I ask you to consider relevance. It pains me to get to my feet because I do believe that these are certainly matters that are important in terms of vigorous debate in this House, but I ask you to rule on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Treasurer, I have been listening carefully. I would ask you to draw back to the bill.

Mr NICHOLLS: Perhaps another time, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think this is a field worthy of further investigation and endeavour. I am fairly sure that there will be more to come.

I turn back to the appropriation bills. Let me answer some of the issues that were raised. If I recall correctly, I was talking about the mythbusters, the assets myths and sales program and the increase in fees, taxes and charges that were the hallmark of the shadow Treasurer's time in government—his proud record of increasing fees, taxes and charge. As the member for Indooroopilly, the transport minister, said, we had the highest car registration fees in Australia under the former government. That is something that I am sure all Queenslanders will remember.

What does the most recent ratings report from Standard & Poor's say? This report is from 10 October 2014. Let us put aside the arguments and the debate backwards and forwards—the member for Mount Isa wanted to have a sensible debate—and see what Standard & Poor's said. It stated—

Queensland's economy is very strong compared to its global peers', and supports the ratings on the state. Its nominal Gross State Product ... per capita of about A\$62,000 ... at June 2013 is high by international standards, and reflects the state's wealthy and relatively diverse economy.

...

We consider Queensland's financial management to be strong, supporting the state's creditworthiness ... In our view, the state's prudent approach to debt management, as well as the development of medium- and long-term fiscal and economic strategies, demonstrates its financial strength. We view the state's revenue and expenditure management to be strong ...

Then under the heading 'Outlook' what does it say? It states—

The stable outlook reflects our expectation that the state's financial management will remain strong, in particular its expense management, which we expect to lead to operating surpluses in its forecast years. Elevated capital expenditure levels, driven in part by natural disaster reconstruction activity—

and I will address that issue—

will continue to contribute to after-capital account deficits, but continued expenditure management is expected to lead to a stabilisation of its high debt burden through the end of the forecast period.

The people who stand independent of the state, the people whose ratings other people listen to, the experts when it comes to measuring these metrics, the people who took away the AAA rating under Labor in 2009 now say that the state is soundly managed and its financial management is strong. We have a prudent approach to debt management. We have developed medium- and long-term fiscal and economic strategies that demonstrate financial strength. Their expectation is that the state's financial management will remain strong, in particular its expense management.

What did we see under Labor when it came to expense management? We saw a decade of expenses increasing. From 2001 through to 2011-12 we saw a decade of expenses increasing at nine per cent. At a time when Queensland was experiencing its strongest terms of trade growth, at a time when we were getting the best prices ever and the best volumes ever for coal exports, at a time when property transfer duties were going up, at a time when land tax went over a billion dollars and at a time when we were earning those rivers of gold, what did Labor do? They poured it out the door faster than it was coming in.

That is why in 2013-14 we achieved a very good expenses growth rate, as set out in the budget papers. We have done what Labor was unable to do because they kowtow to the union movement on each and every occasion. We were able to bring our expenses under control and divert our funds to the delivery of front-line services.

There are a couple of other things that were raised in relation to unforeseen expenditure. I think a couple of people perhaps did not quite understand the points I made in my second reading speech. I think particularly the members for Mount Isa, Charters Towers, Gladstone and Gaven—what exalted company—all said that we are spending an extra \$2.35 billion in unforeseen expenditure. In fact, the total supplementary appropriation is \$447.6 million. But that is only for the departments that went over their budgets. There are other departments that spent under their budgets. So, in fact, as I said in my second reading speech, the total appropriations—that is, the total budgeted outlays—in 2013-14 were actually less than those that were approved. So they were approved at an amount and we actually spent at a lower amount. We actually spent less than was budgeted.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mulgrave, he is not attacking you at this point in time.

Mr Pitt: I was not suggesting he was, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would appreciate just a slightly lower tone, thank you. I call the Treasurer.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am happy to, if you want. What I need to perhaps explain to members is that some departments spend more and some departments spend less. The total of 2013-14 expenditure reported on is actually less than was budgeted for because of tight financial management and prudent financial management. There was expenses growth of only 2.2 per cent. Let me make that abundantly clear.

The member for Gladstone raised a number of questions about lapsed funding. If I read the transcript correctly, both the Deputy Under Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer explained how lapsed funding goes. Let me do it one more time. Where the total amount appropriated by annual appropriation at budget is not paid to a department within the financial year, the unpaid amount lapses. The Consolidated Fund Financial Report is prepared on a cash basis of accounting for transactions made in a single financial year. So if funding is deferred into a subsequent year it lapses and comes back the next year. There might be any one of a variety of reasons for that occurring. A project might not be ready to go. There may be a weather event. A supplier may not be available. A contractor may not be prepared to go. There may be any one of a myriad reasons funding needs to lapse.

What we do, as agreed and as signed off by the Auditor-General, is we net out the lapses and all of those sorts of things and we come up then with a final figure, and that is what has occurred. So the Consolidated Fund Financial Report shows lapsed appropriation of \$2.35 billion, as I said in my second reading speech, representing five per cent of total appropriation for the year. There are a number of other areas where there have been some overs and unders, and they are subject to timing.

I think I have dealt with most of the issues that were raised by members during the discussion we had. In the short time left I do just want to thank the officers of Queensland Treasury and Trade for their work, their diligence, their dedication, their time spent in preparing these documents and also the

budget documents, and their time spent with the committee answering the questions and providing fulsome answers—as I say, the independent officers of Treasury providing fulsome answers in a process that only four years ago was nobbled by the then Labor government, who brought their final appropriation batch in the following year's budget, therefore giving a two-year hiatus for the examination of questions.

I welcome the opportunity to answer questions here and to debate this legislation. I just want to indicate, as I said earlier, that I intend moving an amendment to the bill during consideration in detail which makes necessary amendments to the Wagering Act 1998 to extend the retail exclusivity associated with TattsBet sport and race wagering licences for a further 30 years from 1 July 2014. The extension relates to an in principle agreement between Tatts Group, Racing Queensland and the state for a new funding package for the racing industry post 30 June 2014. The funding package will help to secure a much stronger and more sustainable future for Queensland's racing industry.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Appropriation Bill (No. 2)

Insertion of new heading—

Mr NICHOLLS (5.52 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 **Before clause 1—**

Page 4, before line 2—

insert—

Part 1 Preliminary

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. Tim Nicholls's amendments [\[6261\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): I note that the Treasurer's amendment No. 2 proposes to insert a new clause 1A, which relates to proposed new clauses in amendment No. 3 which is outside the long title. Therefore, consideration of amendment No. 2 is postponed until after all other clauses and amendments have been considered.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

Mr NICHOLLS (5.53 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr NICHOLLS: I move the following amendment—

3 **After clause 2—**

Page 4, after line 19—

insert—

Part 3 Amendment of Wagering Act 1998

3 Act amended

This part amends the *Wagering Act 1998*.

4 Replacement of s 4 (Meaning of exclusivity period)

Section 4—

omit, insert—

4 Meaning of *exclusivity period*

- (1) The ***exclusivity period***, for a race wagering licence, is the period starting on 1 July 2014 and ending—
- (a) 30 years after 1 July 2014; or
 - (b) if, within the period of 30 years after 1 July 2014, a race wagering licence held by TattsBet or a TattsBet subsidiary is cancelled, surrendered or ceases to have effect for another reason (other than suspension)—on the day the licence is cancelled, surrendered or otherwise ceases to have effect.
- (2) The ***exclusivity period***, for a sports wagering licence, is the period starting on 1 July 2014 and ending—
- (a) 30 years after 1 July 2014; or
 - (b) if, within the period of 30 years after 1 July 2014, a sports wagering licence held by TattsBet or a TattsBet subsidiary is cancelled, surrendered or ceases to have effect for another reason (other than suspension)—on the day the licence is cancelled, surrendered or otherwise ceases to have effect.

5 Amendment of s 16 (Application for race wagering licence)

Section 16(2), 'UNiTAB'—

omit, insert—

TattsBet

6 Amendment of s 17 (Application for sports wagering licence)

Section 17(2), 'UNiTAB'—

omit, insert—

TattsBet

7 Amendment of s 22 (Conditions for granting application for wagering licence)

Section 22(1) and (2), 'UNiTAB'—

omit, insert—

TattsBet

8 Insertion of new pt 17, div 6

After section 340—

insert—

Division 6 Transitional provision for Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014**340A Application of particular provisions**

The amendments of sections 4, 16, 17, 22, 341 and schedule 2 made by the *Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014* are, for the purposes of a wagering licence, taken to have had effect from 1 July 2014.

9 Amendment of s 341 (Validation of extension of sports wagering licence)

- (1) Section 341(1), note—

omit.

- (2) Section 341(3)—

omit.

10 Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary)

- (1) Schedule 2, definitions *UNiTAB* and *UNiTAB subsidiary*—

omit.

- (2) Schedule 2—

insert—

TattsBet means TattsBet Limited ACN 085 691 738.

TattsBet subsidiary means a wholly-owned subsidiary of TattsBet.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will now consider the postponed amendment.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr NICHOLLS (5.54 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 **Before clause 2—**

Page 4, before line 9—

insert—

1A Commencement

Part 3 commences on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

Part 2 Supplementary appropriation for 2013–14

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (5.54 pm): I move—

That the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2), as read, and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2), as amended, be now read a third time.

Question put—That the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2), as read, and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2), as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (5.55 pm): I move the following amendment to the Appropriation Bill (No. 2)—

4 **Long title**

Long title, after '2013'—

insert—

and to amend the *Wagering Act 1998* for particular purposes

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—That the long titles of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2), as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 14 October (see p. 3376), on motion of Mr Mander—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algester—LNP) (5.56 pm): I rise today to make a short contribution to the debate on the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The bill proposes to amend the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Building Act 1975. The changes will transfer licensing, compliance and disciplinary functions relating to plumbers, drainers and pool safety inspectors, and associated assets, from the Plumbing Industry Council and the Pool Safety Council within the Department of Housing and Public Works to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, or the QBCC as we know it.

The bill also provide for the disbandment of the Plumbing Industry Council and Pool Safety Council, whose licensing and compliance functions transfer to the QBCC once the changes are in place. These amendments will reduce administration costs by combining the licensing and compliance functions for pool safety inspectors, plumbers and drainers with the other regulatory functions already performed by the QBCC in relation to builders and trade contractors.

Also, and most importantly, the amendments will consolidate regulation in regard to plumbers and drainers. Currently different regulators are responsible for occupational and contractor licensing in relation to plumbers and drainers. The amendments mean a significant reduction in red tape—plumbers and drainers will only need to hold one combined licence instead of a separate occupational licence with the Plumbing Industry Council and a contractor's licence with the QBCC. It is important to note that the amendments will not remove the policy responsibility for the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and the Building Act 1975 from the current department, the Department of Housing and Public Works.

At the public departmental briefing into the proposed amendments, the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee sought assurances from the QBCC that it will engage industry so that they are well informed of these changes. I note that Mr Steve Griffin, the Commissioner of the QBCC, assured the committee that all plumbers and drainers should now have received a letter which outlines the proposed changes and the benefits to the industry. The commissioner noted that 43 per cent of plumbers and drainers will save \$123.10 in fees per year by not having to hold dual licences, which is a substantial benefit to them. When you think about how many plumbers and drainers there are in Queensland, this is a substantial saving for the industry as a whole.

The transfer of the pool safety inspector licensing, compliance and disciplinary functions to the QBCC will also pave the way for more effective community education regarding requirements for inspections of pool fences. The QBCC is presently charged with the responsibility of providing support, education and advice for homeowners regarding those who undertake building work in Queensland. Transitioning pool safety licensing, compliance and disciplinary functions to the QBCC is a natural extension of the government's objective of creating an accountable and transparent building industry. It is also in keeping with the government's efforts to create a more effective, streamlined industry that is not hindered by unnecessary red tape.

In its report on this bill tabled on 18 August 2014, the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee mirrored this sentiment. It noted that these changes regarding plumbers, drainers and pool safety inspectors will contribute towards the ongoing streamlining of regulation for Queensland's building and construction sectors. These amendments are a key step towards completing the government's 10-point action plan. This is a better way of doing business. It will reduce unnecessary red tape and regulation for our industry at no additional cost.

I put on record once again my thanks to the secretariat of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee. They are very dedicated to their task. They keep the committee on track. They provide the information that we require when we require it. They are one of the hardest working secretariats within this parliament, and I congratulate them on their leadership. I also congratulate the chairman of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, Howard Hobbs, who has over the last 2½ years led the committee with an iron fist in a velvet glove. I have learnt a lot in 2½ years under Mr Hobbs's leadership. I congratulate him on his 29-odd years of service to this parliament, and I look forward to seeing out the remainder of the term with him as chairman of our committee.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (6.02 pm): I rise today to speak to the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. During the inquiry by the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee into the operation and performance of the former Queensland Building Services Authority, a number of witnesses raised concerns about having to go through a review process with the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, or QCAT, if they disagreed with a decision made by the BSA. In particular, one submission from Mr and Mrs Walker observed that the QCAT review process was—

... lengthy and expensive even for self-represented parties. The cost of engaging an expert witness alone is extremely high.

Overwhelmingly, the committee received evidence that the review process is unsatisfactory because it is ineffective, time consuming and costly. I can relate to that from the number of people who have come through my door. Sometimes it takes months and months and nothing seems to get done. They were a bit like a toothless tiger. They did not have the teeth to really get into some of the complaints by a lot of people, and it was quite disappointing to see some of the results. Some people would just give up and go away. One example that I saw was faulty concrete. The water was coming up through the concrete and under the carpet it was all mouldy. It was unreal what was happening. Going through that whole process nearly causes some people to have a nervous breakdown at the end of the day. When you have a new home built, there should be some confidence in the legislation to make sure that those builders rectify those problems.

The bill will give people who disagree with a decision about licensing, rectification orders, compliance issues, certification investigations or insurance claims made by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, the QBCC, a choice to either apply for an external review of the decision to QCAT or to access an internal review service within the BCC.

Under the amendments, applications for internal review can be made within 28 days of receiving the original decision. The internal review application must be decided within 28 days of receiving the application unless the applicant agrees that the 28-day time frame can be extended. The internal review service will be available to homeowners and contractors at no cost. The review will be conducted by very senior and experienced officers at the QBCC. Any person involved in the original decision-making process will not be involved in making the reviewed decision. The person conducting the review will be more senior than the person who made the original decision. The bill does not take away a person's right to apply to QCAT for an external review. If a person is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review process at the QBCC, they will still have the right to apply to QCAT for a review of the decision.

In its report on this bill tabled on 18 August 2014, the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee expressed its support for the proposal to establish an internal review service within the QBCC. Delivering an internal review service within the QBCC is one of the steps in the government's 10-point plan and meets the important objectives of improving governance, improving risk management and reducing red tape at no additional cost to the industry and homeowners.

Another example of a certification investigation in my area involved a person whose shed was built over a sewer main which was never supposed to be built over. I reckon that was the funniest one. Everybody was heading for the hills and no-one wanted to do anything. But it is good that we have some teeth left in this legislation to make people do the right thing at the end of the day. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.06 pm): I am very happy to also provide a contribution to the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I would like particularly to congratulate the minister for bringing this bill before the House, because the engineering industry is a particularly important industry. It is an industry that the community puts a lot of confidence in. The Professional Engineers Act regulates the engineering industry. The fact that this act is there gives an assurance to the community to have confidence in these very important people.

As my colleagues have previously pointed out, the registration of professional engineers in Queensland ensures consumers, as I said, of professional engineering services. It ensures them that they are protected and that they only deal with competent and qualified people in the role. In addition to this, registration also provides an avenue for complaints about unsatisfactory professional conduct of those registered professional engineers.

The Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland is particularly active in taking action against registered and unregistered persons who engage in unprofessional conduct or who commit offences under the act, thereby providing more confidence in the industry. A number of the proposed amendments in this bill are aimed at ensuring that the board is able to continue carrying out this work. This, therefore, ensures that consumers continue to be protected.

Firstly, the bill will 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 proven to be very difficult for the board to meet—in particular, where the board uses an investigator to conduct an investigation where there may have been complaints and then the board has to meet to make a decision on whether to proceed with a prosecution based on the investigator's report. This does take time, and six months is quite a short period, so the extension of time will allow the board to adequately investigate an alleged offence and consider the investigator's report to determine the best course of action to take. This will ensure justice for both parties, because there are always two parties within such an investigation.

The bill will also expand the options for the board in deciding about unregistered engineers, such as to caution, reprimand and enter into undertakings, so that lengthy and expensive prosecution processes may be avoided in some cases. I understand that this proposal has received broad support from industry and I am not surprised at this. These changes will ensure that alleged offences by unregistered professional engineers are dealt with in the most efficient way and it will pave the way for a more effective use of the board's resources.

The bill also includes additional provisions in the act 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 will also ensure a more effective use of the board's resources. Current reasons a complaint can be rejected are if it is found to be frivolous, vexatious or trivial.

The proposed amendments ensure that all penalties and fees recovered by the Board of Professional Engineers are paid to the board. The proposed changes will also permit the board to delegate decisions in relation to the renewal processes. This will improve the efficiency of the board and ensure that resources are used more effectively and go towards where they are needed most—that is, ensuring the protection of consumers in Queensland.

I also commend the work of the committee, which in 2012 and early 2013 conducted a significant inquiry into the operation and performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority, the QBSA, which involved extensive consultation with stakeholders. That report was tabled in the parliament, and a certain amount of what is in this bill is as a result of the work that they did. The committee have produced a report on this bill, and I note that they received six submissions which they looked at quite extensively. There has certainly been a very broad range of consultation right across this bill and it seems to have been received with a great deal of favour across the industry.

In 2012, the board had 8,854 professional engineers on its register, with its numbers increasing by an average of more than 115 a month. That is an enormous number of professional people we are looking at. I am not sure what the figures are at this stage, but that is a huge number of very important professional people. I commend this bill to the House and congratulate the minister for bringing this bill to the House.

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (6.14 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their interest and their contribution to the debate this afternoon and last night on the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In particular, I once again want to thank the members of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for their diligence and the hard work that they put into examining this legislation. I would also like to acknowledge those who made submissions on the bill and those who took the time to present their arguments before the committee. I will be moving some minor amendments to the bill during the consideration in detail stage which will help clarify the bill and make editorial changes or promote consistency with the remainder of the bill and its intent. I will quickly address some of the issues that were raised during the debate.

I refer to the member for Rockhampton's contribution and thank him for his recognition that changes to the Professional Engineers Act are strongly supported by the industry. I do have to take issue with the member's suggestion that the QBCC will not be as good as PIC at regulating the industry. There is absolutely zero evidence to support that view. In fact I would like to quote the executive director of the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland who said, 'MPAQ is of the view the QBCC is committed to working with the plumbing industry to ensure a high standard of licensing is maintained and strengthened. The level of engagement MPAQ has experienced with the Commissioner would indicate this to be true.' I know that they are delighted with the way the commissioner is engaging with them and know that their views are being heard and that they will continue to be engaged with the commission in a very active way.

I note with some amusement the member for Rockhampton's comments about Labor's policy being to replace the PIC with a new body that sits within the QBCC. For all intents and purposes, that is exactly what this legislation does. As a result of this bill, the staff at the Plumbing Industry Council will transfer over to the QBCC with the same pay, leave and super entitlements that they are on now. So Labor's plan for regulating the plumbing industry is to do exactly what the LNP is doing but to do it six months after we have already done it.

I want to thank the member for Thuringowa for his contribution around the need to protect consumers. As he rightly pointed out, most consumers do not have sufficient knowledge about the skills of different engineers due to the technical nature of professional engineering services. Additionally, potential problems may not emerge until well after the service has been provided, such as issues with the footings of a house.

The member also spoke of the need to ensure that people living outside of Queensland are registered in Queensland if they are working on projects here. Approximately 25 per cent of engineers registered under the act reside either interstate or overseas. Although not explicitly stated in the

current act, the rules of statutory interpretation together with judicial authority strongly support that the PE Act requires engineers who provide professional engineering services outside of Queensland for Queensland projects to be registered under the act or directly supervised by a registered professional engineer. However, there have been frequent requests from the profession that there be a clear statement in the act to avoid confusion amongst engineers outside of Queensland, and this amendment provides this clarity.

I thank the member for Ferny Grove for his contribution around exclusions. This amendment clearly demonstrates the Newman government's commitment to consultation and listening to relevant stakeholders. The amendments relating to exclusions come about following industry feedback provided as part of the parliamentary inquiry into the performance of the old Building Services Authority. Unlike Labor who just want to dictate to industry, we work with them and listen.

I thank the member for Gladstone for her comments and support. The member asked for some clarification around the new provision allowing the board to reject complaints if it considers it to be unfounded or lacking in substance. It is intended that the additional words will enable the board to reject complaints which are not frivolous, trivial or vexatious but are based on some sort of misunderstanding or do not have sufficient substance to justify an investigation. For example, the board would be able to reject a complaint if it relates to a contractual dispute between a consumer and a professional engineer and does not have anything to do with the engineer's professional conduct.

I thank the member for Warrego for his support and, as always, his stewardship of the committee. I thank him for his recognition that the bill will improve the structure of industry and take the industry forward. That is what this government is all about—driving growth in the construction industry, unlike Labor who just want to tie it up in red tape.

I thank the member for Murrumba for his contribution, particularly his highly amusing preamble. I note his comments about the strength of the construction industry in his electorate. The construction industry is a key driver of economic growth in Murrumba, just as it is right throughout the state. It employs around 250,000 Queenslanders and generates around \$60 billion for the economy, which is why it is so important that we have a regulator in place that is up to date, customer focused and capable of keeping standards high.

I say thanks to the member for Springwood, who spoke passionately about the need to protect consumers. Comprehensive registration is essential for ensuring the protection of consumers by restricting the practice of engineering to those who have demonstrated the required level of qualifications and skills. With regard to some of those stories that the member relayed about failures of engineers operating in his electorate, I would encourage the member to advise his constituents that complaints about the conduct of engineers can always be referred to the board for proper investigation.

I thank the member for Gaven for his recognition that the old BSA was very much in need of renewal and I welcome his support for changes to the QBCC and licensing arrangements, particularly regarding pool safety. With regard to the member's comments about one of his constituents who has issues with the Plumbing Industry Council, I can confirm that if he is referring to the case of Mr Darren Creswell my office responded to his correspondence on 27 August. If he was referring to another matter, I would be happy for the member to raise that matter directly with my office at his convenience.

I thank the member for Algester, who spoke about the new licensing regime reducing the cost of licences. I know that he is concerned about the cost of living, as all government members are. I am glad that he has recognised that. I would also like to second the member's commendation of the member for Warrego and his leadership of the committee. I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his usual good contribution and I also thank the member for Burdekin for hers. In conclusion, I would like to thank once more all honourable members for their interest and their contribution to the debate.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Message from Governor



Mr MANDER (6.21 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

The Deputy Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly that—

An appropriation be made for the purposes of the attached amendment, to be moved by the Minister, to a Bill for an Act to amend the Building Act 1975, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Professional Engineers Act 2002 and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, and to make minor or consequential amendments of the Acts mentioned in schedule 1, for particular purposes.

(Sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 9 SEP 2014

Tabled paper: Message, dated 9 September 2014, from His Excellency the Governor recommending amendments to the Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[6262\]](#).

Clauses 1 to 40—

Mr MANDER (6.22 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr MANDER: I move the following amendments—

1 After clause 33

Page 20, after line 28—

insert—

33A Omission of s 246CZ (Review of PSC's decision)

Section 246CZ—

omit.

2 Clause 34 (Replacement of ch 8, pt 9 (Pool Safety Council))

Page 23, line 15, '256(6)'—

omit, insert—

256(6) or (7)

3 Clause 36 (Amendment of s 256 (Prosecution of offences))

Page 24, lines 19 and 20—

omit, insert—

(5) Section 256(2)(g) and (h)—

omit, insert—

(g) for an offence against section 246AP(2)—the QBCC commissioner or a local government; or

(h) for an offence against chapter 8, part 4, division 5, subdivision 2, other than section 246ATH(2)—the QBCC commissioner, a local government or a person authorised by a local government; or

4 Clause 36 (Amendment of s 256 (Prosecution of offences))

Page 25, after line 4—

insert—

(7) All penalties recovered as a result of an infringement notice served under the *State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999* for an offence against this Act and for which QBCC is the administering authority for the infringement notice must be paid to the QBCC commissioner.

(8) In this section—

administering authority, for an infringement notice, see the *State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999*, schedule 2.

I table the explanatory notes to the amendments.

Tabled paper: Professional Engineers and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. Tim Mander's amendments [6263].

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 40, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 41 to 58—

Mr MANDER (6.23 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr MANDER: I move the following amendments—

5 Clause 47 (Insertion of new pt 2, div 3)

Page 44, lines 1 to 4—

omit, insert—

(2) The following must be applied toward the administration of this Act, including monitoring and enforcing compliance with this Act—

(a) revenue received under subsection (1);

(b) a monetary penalty recovered for an offence and paid to QBCC.

6 Clause 52 (Amendment of s 138 (Offences under Act are summary))

Page 46, after line 3—

insert—

(5) All penalties recovered as a result of proceedings for which the QBCC commissioner, or a person authorised by the commissioner, is the complainant must be paid to QBCC.

(6) All penalties recovered as a result of an infringement notice served under the *State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999* for an offence against this Act and for which QBCC is the administering authority for the infringement notice must be paid to QBCC.

(7) In this section—

administering authority, for an infringement notice, see the *State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999*, schedule 2.

Amendments agreed to.

Division: Question put—That clauses 41 to 58, as amended, be agreed to.

AYES, 56:

LNP, 55—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gullely, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Kaye, Kempton, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McVeigh, Menkens, Minnikin, Molhoek, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Watts, Woodforth, Young.

INDEPENDENTS, 1—Cunningham.

NOES, 11:

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

INDEPENDENTS, 3—Douglas, Judge, Wellington.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 41 to 58, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 59 to 68—

Mr MANDER (6.32 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr MANDER: I move the following amendment—

7 Clause 63 (Amendment of s 86 (Reviewable decisions))

Page 59, after line 9—

insert—

- (3) Further, a decision of the commissioner relating to the accumulation of demerit points by a pool safety inspector under the *Building Act 1975* is a **reviewable decision**.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 59 to 68, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule 1—

Mr MANDER (6.32 pm): I move the following amendment—

8 Schedule 1 (Minor and consequential amendments)

Page 78, amendment 16, table after line 5, entries for section 246CZ, heading and section 246CZ(1)—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. TL MANDER (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (6.33 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. TL MANDER (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (6.33 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.

Sitting suspended from 6.34 pm to 7.35 pm.

QUEENSLAND BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 7 August (see p. 2557).

Second Reading

 **Hon. TL MANDER (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (7.35 pm):** I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In opening, I thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for its consideration of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and for its deliberation of, and report on, the bill which was tabled on 8 October 2014. I am now pleased to table the government's response to the committee's report No. 54.

Tabled paper: Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 54—Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, government response [\[6264\]](#).

To develop this bill, stakeholders for the building, construction and housing industry as well as the general community have been extensively consulted. This bill is a reflection of the ideas and suggestions of many Queenslanders who care about the future of our building, construction and housing industries. We are committed to growing the construction industry as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. The bill being debated today is another step towards meeting this commitment.

The industry injects around \$60 billion into our economy and employs approximately 250,000 Queenslanders. The amendments are intended to reduce red tape and create fair regulation so that the industry has the best possible platform for this growth. The bill we are debating today will build on previous reforms and implement the third stage of the government's 10-point action plan to reform the building industry. It also addresses some miscellaneous amendments to enable the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, the QBCC, to be more effective.

The proposed amendments in this bill are as follows: firstly, the amendments will update the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme so that there is greater protection for consumers. Consumers will have the choice of purchasing greater coverage as well as the ability to purchase insurance for pools and manufactured homes. The amendments will also provide better clarity for consumers when purchasing insurance so that Queenslanders are more aware of what insurance they are purchasing.

Secondly, the bill includes various reforms to improve Queensland's domestic building dispute process. Examples include the proposed introduction of a free mandatory mediation process with QBCC. This will enable disputes to be resolved more quickly, potentially saving consumers and licensees time and money. Previously all disputes had to go to QCAT, which could be lengthy and most costly. An early dispute resolution process has been successfully piloted at the QBCC. From 1 July 2014 to 10 October of the same year the pilot has successfully resolved 198 disputes well within the 28-day time frame. If this mediation is not successful and the matter is referred to QCAT, then the QBCC can rectify the defective work as an insurance claim. Previously consumers would need to wait for the dispute to be resolved by QCAT before the insurance could be accessed.

Thirdly, the proposed changes also introduce a schedule in the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, the QBCC Act, to simplify building contracts and provide greater flexibility for consumers and contractors. An example includes the introduction of a level 1 contract for domestic building projects which are proposed to be valued from \$3,300 to \$20,000 and a level 2 contract for domestic building work valued at over \$20,000.

Fourthly, a new free, faster and more consistent process will be introduced under which the QBCC will deal with all building disciplinary proceedings. This process is similar to those currently used for plumbers, electricians, drainers and pool safety inspectors. Building disciplinary matters are currently dealt with by QCAT, which again can be lengthy and costly for licensees. Licensees will be able to apply for an internal review of any disciplinary findings or have them reviewed by QCAT.

This bill will also enable us to get tougher on builders doing the wrong thing and will enable heavy penalties to be applied. To improve compliance the current demerit point system will be strengthened. Demerit points will be increased to encourage licensees to do the right thing. It will also enable the QBCC to remove recalcitrant licensees from the industry.

The commission often receives complaints from subcontractors in relation to head contractors not paying in accordance with the contract or using commercial leverage to force subcontractors to accept lower amounts than originally agreed to. We need to protect subcontractors so that they are paid for the work that they do. The bill extends the grounds for disciplinary action to include the failure of a contractor to pay a subcontractor in accordance with the contract. It should be noted that these amendments also provide for such disciplinary proceedings to be reviewable in QCAT.

The amendments will also provide greater protection for homeowners impacted by works being done on an adjacent property. Contractors will be liable to remedy damage to a neighbouring property, not just any damage incurred on the site they are working on.

The amendment will allow the QBCC to obtain the evidence and information it needs about unlicensed contracting and other serious offences. This includes gathering evidence regarding builders who breach their financial requirements or phoenix operators working behind other licensed building companies. The bill will also reduce red tape so that the licensing system becomes more efficient. For example, licences will be able to be reviewed every three years instead of every year, with savings passed on to licensees.

The second purpose of this bill is to propose amendments to the Housing Act 2003 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008. All of the amendments that I will outline tonight, whether they relate to the QBCC or community housing, are about enabling others to do what they do best. While we outlined the reasons for needing to enable the QBCC to do its job, we also need to empower community housing organisations to do theirs. In turn, this will allow the government to focus on the regulatory needs of the sector rather than on managing public housing tenancies.

These amendments will facilitate the government to continue to implement the Housing 2020 Strategy and, as part of this strategy, transfer the management of 90 per cent of public housing to the community housing sector by 2020. The proposed amendments will also allow the department to transfer key tenancy information to housing providers so that they can effectively manage the tenancies.

The proposed changes will also provide rigour around decision-making delegations and client obligations. For example, some amendments to the Housing Act include giving housing providers access to key tenancy information as tenancy managers. This includes information on the state housing register and the department's property and tenancy management databases. It will give the chief executive the ability to delegate functions to the community housing provider and their staff and it will allow providers to update and maintain housing register records. In terms of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act, the proposed amendments change the mechanism by which providers become the lessor of existing public housing tenancies. Tenants will not need to re-sign a new tenancy agreement.

I now turn to the committee's recommendations in relation to this bill. In total, the committee has made 16 recommendations and sought clarification on two points. Recommendation 1 states that the bill be passed. I thank the committee for its endorsement of the bill. Recommendation 2 seeks to retain existing provisions for stage certificates until the Building Act review of certification is completed. This recommendation has been accepted by the government. We expect the review to be completed by the end of this year.

Recommendation 3 is to move provisions related to staged progress payments from the act to the regulation. Currently the act states when contractors should be paid as part of stages contracts. The government does not support this recommendation. By removing the staged progress payments provisions from the act it will provide consumers and builders with greater flexibility as to when works will be paid for. Recommendation 4 is to review the deposit maximums proposed in the bill to ensure they are suitable, given that the current five per cent maximum has been in place since 2000. The government has agreed to the committee's recommendation, and a review will be undertaken by the QBCC as early as possible next year.

Recommendation 5 is to amend the bill to ensure that builders whose work is predominantly carried out off site, such as builders of sheds and prefabricated structures, are able to seek and receive progress payments beyond the 20 per cent deposit allowed for in the bill. The government does not support this amendment as it is considered that the bill currently represents a fair balance between the interests of contractors and consumers. It should be noted that any increase in the deposit amount could present an increased risk for consumers. The consumer may be paying for work they are unable to inspect or control or take possession of in the event of the insolvency of a contractor.

Recommendation 6 is to enable a domestic building contract to be entered into when the builder is not able to release foundations data but guarantees in the contract that there will be no price increases when the foundations data is subsequently obtained. Foundations data includes such things as ground conditions and other elements of the site which may not be known until site preparatory works commence. Given that consumers will be better protected as there will be no price increase when the foundations data becomes available, the government agrees to this recommendation. It is proposed that the bill be amended accordingly.

Recommendation 7 is that the bill be amended so that any request for an extension of time under a regulated contract must be in writing as opposed to by signing. This amendment comes after receiving feedback from the industry, including the Housing Industry Association and Master Builders. They raised concerns about the potential for delays. The bill is being amended to allow consumers to approve a time extension claimed by email rather than by signing. I am also proposing that the bill be

amended so that the obligation on the builder to notify the consumer within 10 business days of becoming aware of a delay applies when the builder becomes aware of the cause and extent of a delay.

Recommendations 8 and 9 amend the definitions of 'practical completion' for both level 1 and level 2 domestic building contracts. We propose to simplify the definition of 'practical completion' so that there is a consistent definition of 'practical completion' for both level 1 and level 2 contracts.

Recommendation 10 is that the bill be amended to reduce the statutory warranty period for non-structural defects from two years to one year. Submitters raised concerns that the two-year warranty period would likely impact on housing affordability as it would potentially drive up house prices. The government has accepted this recommendation, which aligns with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission's Rectification of Building Work Policy, on the basis that it will provide adequate consumer protection. I propose that the bill be amended accordingly.

Recommendation 11 is that building owners must give builders access to work sites so they can rectify any alleged defects. The government acknowledges the importance of balancing the rights of contractors and consumers, and I propose to make this amendment to the bill. Recommendation 12, like recommendation 7, aims to improve domestic building contracts to explicitly incorporate electronic communication in the definition of 'in writing'. This relates to agreeing variations in writing. This has been agreed and I propose to amend the bill accordingly.

Recommendation 13 is to amend what constitutes an invalid contract. Currently, even a minor aspect of a contract that has been inadvertently omitted could make a contract null and void. The government agrees that the bill should be amended to provide that the contract has effect if it is written, dated and signed by both parties.

Recommendation 14 is that the bill should explicitly state which part of the manufactured or prefabricated homes process will be covered by the statutory insurance scheme and which parts will not. The government considers this to be unnecessary because a new section to be introduced by the bill adequately states which part of the process will not be covered by the statutory insurance scheme. I consider that the best approach is to monitor the situation. If, following consultation with consumers and contractors, it is decided that further clarification is required, this will be best addressed by an amendment to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Regulation 2003.

Recommendation 15 seeks to amend the bill to include variation thresholds for insurance premiums. The government agrees with the recommendation and I propose that the bill be amended. This proposed amendment means that an additional insurance premium is required to be paid where a variation results in an increase to the value of construction work of \$5,000 or more. In recommendation 16 the committee recommends that licensing and other issues raised by the Civil Contractors Federation be considered as part of the planned review next year. This review related to licensing provisions in the QBCC Act and the QBCC Regulation. The government agrees with this recommendation. I also propose to introduce other amendments to the bill in addition to those which have stemmed from the committee's recommendations. These include introducing a definition of 'repair' and 'repair contract'. They also include improving the provisions relating to the inclusion of the contract price or method for calculating it in the contract as well as minor amendments to the housing related provisions to clarify circumstances in which providers can use confidential information.

In addition to the recommendations in this report, the committee also sought clarification on two matters included in the bill. The first of these relates to the circumstances in which an owner is able to dispute a matter after it has been resolved. Currently, it is possible for the QBCC to issue a direction to rectify in relation to work which has been the subject of a previous cash settlement between the builder and an owner, as the QBCC is not bound by such agreements. If a contractor has performed defective building work, the QBCC can require the rectification of that work in order to maintain standards in the industry, regardless of whether any cash settlement may have occurred. The QBCC considers that there would be no benefit to consumers or contractors if incompetent contractors could simply settle their way out of these matters. It is also sometimes the case that consumers may enter into unfair terms of settlement due to a lack of experience or because they do not have the funds to continue a legal dispute with the contractor. The removal of the power to issue a direction to rectify in such circumstances would leave consumers without assistance. It should be noted that the QBCC is

not required to issue a direction to rectify where it is considered unfair to do so. It should also be noted that the contractor retains the right to have the decision reviewed if they are of the view that the direction to rectify is unreasonable.

The second point of clarification sought by the committee relates to the practical implications for the builders and the owner of any damaged adjacent site where the QBCC has given a direction to rectify consequential damage. As noted previously, issuing a direction to rectify is not done solely for the purpose of ensuring that a consumer has defective work rectified. Directions are also issued to maintain standards in the industry and to prevent future problems with a contractor. The government considers that if a contractor knows that they will be held responsible for consequential damage to an adjacent property they are more likely to take steps to ensure that that damage does not occur in the first place. This is considered to be preferable to having the work fixed under a contractor's insurance policy. The purpose of many of the changes proposed in this bill is to keep consumers out of conflict with contractors and out of the tribunals and courts and it is considered that placing them in conflict with a contractor's insurance company would simply replace one problem with another. It would be unfair to expect an owner of an adjoining property to fight an insurance company through the courts because a contractor engaged by their neighbours did defective building work. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.53 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The bill has two separate and distinct components. It makes amendments to the Housing Act 2003 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 in order to allow the government to implement its Housing 2020 Strategy by transferring the management of 90 per cent of social housing in Queensland to the community housing sector by 2020. It also makes amendments to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 in order to implement what should be the final tranche of the government's legislative changes to the construction industry.

I firstly turn to the aspects of the bill which amend the Housing Act 2003 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to implement the LNP government's Housing 2020 plan. These amendments will provide the mechanisms to allow the LNP government to transition 90 per cent of social housing in Queensland from the management of the state to the community housing sector by 2020. While the opposition, as indicated by the member for Bundamba previously in this place, does not support the bulk transfer of department of housing properties en masse to the not-for-profit sector, we do agree that the not-for-profit sector has a role to play and believe that, if done correctly, properties can be gradually transferred over time to the not-for-profit sector. Therefore, the opposition will not be opposing these amendments. However, there are still many unanswered questions about these arrangements. In particular, the Labor opposition wants to know what will happen to the current staff of the department of housing centres. This is an issue that has not been adequately addressed by the minister or his department for some time after first being raised by the opposition in the 2013 estimates hearings.

We do not believe that those opposite have done their homework. We do not believe that they have established the appropriate ground rules and safeguards to ensure that the housing stock is properly transferred to the appropriate provider. This appears to be yet another assault on the social housing sector in this state. On top of the government's proposal to outsource 90 per cent of the public housing and community housing sector to the community housing sector, the LNP has previously introduced a temporary absence policy and increased the weekly rents of public housing tenants. As an aside, the opposition has heard stories of public housing tenants' weekly rent going up by more than the \$7.50 cap that the minister stated would be enforced, so it is no wonder that there is some anxiety and uncertainty within the Queensland public housing community regarding the government's 90 per cent transfer scheme. The opposition does not support the bulk transfer of public housing stock to the community sector. We will not be opposing the amendments before the House because they provide a basis to assist the transition of public housing to the community sector. We are not against this approach. We just believe that it should be undertaken in a methodical, gradual manner and that the government's target of 90 per cent is much too high. The opposition will have more to say about these amendments through the contribution of the member for Redcliffe and shadow minister for housing later during the debate of this legislation.

I now turn to the amendments that the bill makes to the construction industry legislation. There are some proposals that have prompted concerns from the industry and the parliamentary committee, and I will primarily address those issues. The bill repeals the Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000 and introduces a new part, schedule 1B, into the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 which details the minimum requirements to be included in domestic building contracts. The bill also introduces the concept of level 1 contracts and level 2 contracts. A level 1 contract is for building work valued at between \$3,300 and \$20,000. A level 2 contract is for building work valued at over \$20,000. Most of the concerns raised in submissions and in the committee recommendations relate to the requirements to be imposed under this new schedule. I will now address some of those issues in turn.

Firstly, under a level 2 contract, a contractor may not claim payment for any stage of work unless it has been inspected and certified by an inspector. Concerns were raised by industry that common project and payment milestones were often quite different to inspection milestones and there can be a delay in certification. These practical issues make this requirement a difficult one for industry to deal with. The committee recommended that the government retain existing provisions concerning the provision of stage certificates in the QBCC Act until the outcomes of the Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000 review, which is currently underway, can be determined. I am not sure if the minister said earlier that he was embracing those, so therefore I am not sure whether they have been accepted by the minister. I ask him to again reinforce the position of the government on that issue.

In relation to progress payments for building work, a builder will not be able to claim an amount that is not directly related to the progress of and is not proportionate to the value of work. Under these amendments, the minister may make a regulation to prescribe when an amount is proportionate to the value of the subject work. However, there is no immediate intention to make such a regulation. Currently, section 66 of the act prescribes progress payments for designated stages contracts. The committee has recommended that those provisions be replicated in a regulation. However, it does not appear that that recommendation has been accepted.

The bill caps deposits for building work at 10 per cent of the price of a level 1 contract and at five per cent of the price of a level 2 contract. There are other allowances for a contract where most of the work is undertaken off site. In its submission, the Master Builders Association requested a 7.5 per cent cap for level 2 contracts. So, clearly, there is some difference of opinion about the appropriate level of capped deposit. The committee has recommended that the minister review the continuing appropriateness of the level of the caps and I support that recommendation.

Under the bill, progress payments cannot be claimed for work that is undertaken off site. That will prohibit companies that complete much of their work off site—for example, prefabricated buildings—from claiming progress payments throughout the project. The committee has recommended that the bill be amended to remove this prohibition. Apparently, the government has not accepted this recommendation.

Under the new legislation, before entering into the contract a building contractor must obtain the foundations data that is appropriate for the building site and it attaches a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units, the same penalty that existed in the previous act. The industry believes that foundation data is essential before work starts, but not necessarily before entering into a contract. The committee recommended that the minister consider amendments to enable a domestic building contract to be entered into where the builder is not able to obtain foundations data but guarantees in the contract that there will be no price increase when the foundations data is subsequently obtained. I note that the government has accepted this recommendation and the bill will be amended accordingly.

The new schedule also provides that a building contractor under a regulated contract may claim for an extension of time under the contract only if the claim is given to the building owner in writing and within 10 business days of the building contractor becoming aware of the delay or when the building contractor reasonably ought to have become aware of the delay and if the owner approves the claim by signing the claim. The industry has criticised this provision as being onerous, arguing that the extent of the delay may not be fully realised for a period of time beyond when the contractor first became aware of the delay. The department has indicated that consideration will be given to amending this provision so that the obligation falls on the builder to notify the consumer within 10 business days of becoming aware of the cause and extent of the delay. The committee supported this proposal and I am pleased that it has been accepted and included in the circulated amendments.

The new schedule contains definitions for the practical completion of work. Concerns with the proposed definition included that, for level 2 contracts, the definition of 'practical completion' contemplates that practical completion has been reached only when all certificates of inspection have been received. For level 1 regulated contracts, practical completion could require the subject work to be completed without minor defects or omissions. For level 2 regulated contracts, the definition of 'practical completion' requires that there are no minor defects or omissions unless it was not practicable to fix them. The committee recommended that the minister amend the definition of 'practical completion' for both level 1 and 2 regulated contracts in the schedule 1B dictionary to include minor defects and omissions in the case of level 1 regulated contracts and to remove references to 'not practicable at the time of completion' for level 2 contracts. I note that the minister has accepted this recommendation and will amend the bill.

The new schedule proposed warranty periods for regulated contracts of six years for a breach that results in a structural defect, as prescribed by regulation, or two years in any other case. That would extend the defects liability period for minor defects to two years from the current six months. The industry opposes this extension and the committee suggests an extension of one year rather than two. The government has accepted the recommendation and the bill will be amended accordingly.

A new defence to warranty claims is also introduced, allowing for the defendant to prove that the deficiencies arise from instructions given by the person for whom the work was done contrary to the written advice of the person who did the work. The industry supports this provision, which is modelled on the New South Wales provision, but also requests the inclusion of another New South Wales provision allowing for an additional defence that establishes a duty for the building owner to provide reasonable access to the building contractor to rectify an alleged defect. The committee supported this request in its recommendations and, again, the government has accepted this suggestion. The committee also recommended that the minister amend proposed provisions to explicitly incorporate electronic communication into the definition of 'in writing' for the purpose of agreeing to variations in writing. This recommendation has been accepted and an amendment to reflect the new position has been circulated.

In the proposed schedule, if a level 1 or 2 contract does not comply with strict form requirements that are spelled out, the contract has no effect. The committee recommended that the minister amends the bill to provide that contracts are not deemed invalid for failure to comply with all requirements of those respective sections. Again, this recommendation has been accepted.

The bill also expands the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme to include new swimming pool construction and manufactured homes as well as introducing optional additional cover, clarifying the provisions of the scheme to reduce uncertainty and to assist with the management of claims. Some concerns were raised regarding the clarity of those sections and what will now be covered by the scheme. The committee has recommended that the minister amend the bill to state explicitly which parts of the manufactured prefabricated homes process will be covered by the statutory insurance scheme and which parts of the process will not.

Under the new legislation, the QBCC will still be able to order rectification work or grant statutory insurance claims where the matter has been brought before QCAT. That is because delays in the resolution of reviews in QCAT have resulted in defective or incomplete work being not addressed for long periods. The new law does not stop the contractor or consumer from exercising their rights in QCAT. If the commission decides that work should be rectified under the insurance scheme, the contractor is still able to dispute that the work is defective or incomplete or that the repair work proposed is excessive. The contractor's review rights are preserved.

We do not oppose the changes made to the construction industry by this bill. However, I want to make some comments about the large number of recommendations in the committee's report. From the volume and tenor of the submissions made to the committee, it is evident that there was a great deal of concern in the industry about the initial bill that was put forward by the government. To its credit, the committee has worked diligently, taken those concerns on board and made a large number of recommendations about ways to improve this bill. Frankly, I would expect nothing less from the member for Warrego, who I see is present in the chamber this evening. He has brought so many fine qualities to his role as the committee chair. At the start of this parliament I had the privilege of being a member of that committee for a short period. I wish him well in his retirement. It was a great pleasure to be a member of his committee. He is a gentlemanly pragmatic man.

The government says that it has been consulting and listening to the industry in the formulation of this legislation. If that had been the case, why has it been left to the committee—and the hard work of the committee—to give voice to the concerns that have been brought to its attention? Why did the government not consult and listen before the legislation was drafted? I will read a section of the explanatory notes, which is illuminating—

Consultation on the content of the Bill was undertaken with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury and Trade, Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel.

That means that there was no external consultation on the content of the bill in its final form. The government falls back on the response that it had already consulted the industry through the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's inquiry into the BSA and the KPMG report which informed the government's response. The committee delivered the BSA report in November 2012 and the government finalised its response in early 2013. While industry stakeholders might have been able to express a view about the issues and operation of the BSA generally through that process, until specific proposals for legislative change were drafted and circulated for feedback it was difficult for them to give detailed comments. This is just another example of the minister assuming too much and failing to consult the industry properly.

Recently there were serious issues with the Building and Construction Industry Payments Amendment Bill 2014. The opposition said during the debate on that bill that it was obvious that the consultation by the minister and his department had not been adequate. The consultation task had basically been outsourced to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee which had to make 18 recommendations in order to try to rectify the substantive issues with that bill. The Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee has had to make 16 recommendations in order to address the problems with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. What is it about this government? If the government thinks it can just consult the industry once at the start of a term of government and then not bother to engage again over the next three years that is a mistake.

The opposition supports the bill and the amendments that have been circulated by the minister. I am pleased that some of those committee recommendations have been accepted because they are sensible recommendations. I honestly commend all members of that committee, in particular the chair as I said before, for dealing with what are complex issues and formulating very sensible pragmatic recommendations that I think strike a reasonable balance. It is certainly the committee's role to make small improvements to legislation where it is deficient, but I do not believe it is the committee's job to have to make so many recommendations that involve what are quite substantial issues within a bill. Those issues should have been resolved before the bill hit the floor of the parliament by working with industry on perhaps an exposure draft of the legislation. As I mentioned at the outset, the member for Redcliffe will make additional comments regarding the proposed housing legislation amendments that are included in the bill. I look forward to the minister addressing some of the points that I have raised during my speech.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (8.12 pm): I am pleased tonight to talk to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before the House. First of all I thank the members of my committee for being very diligent and forthright. We look at all of the aspects of many pieces of legislation that come before us. This is report No. 54 which shows that there has been plenty of work done. I also want to thank the minister and the shadow minister, the member for Rockhampton, for their comments about myself and the committee. The minister has accepted all but three of the 16 recommendations and in relation to those three there have been part approvals in a lot of ways. I think that goes to show that there can be good work done by this process. It is our intention to do the very best we can to improve legislation to move this state forward and have the best mechanisms that we can have to make things better for all Queenslanders.

The committee notes that this bill represents the third stage in the government's implementation of its 10-point action plan, the government's response to the recommendations contained in this committee's report No. 14, *Inquiry into the operation and performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority 2012*, tabled in November 2012. In addition to a range of other amendments, this bill proposes amendments to the licensing system, introduces an improved demerit point system, expands the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme, introduces an early dispute intervention process and introduces a two-tier contract system. We are pleased that numerous recommendations made in our earlier QBSA report have already been implemented through stages 1 and 2. It is satisfying that we are seeing before our eyes the improvements that have been made by

this parliament in this term. This bill proposes amendments which will further implement the recommendations stemming from the QBSA report. On behalf of the committee I thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions on this bill and others who have informed the committee's deliberations: the committee secretariat, officials from the Department of Housing and Public Works and the Technical Scrutiny of Legislation secretariat which does a power of work.

The most important recommendation that we made was that we supported the general objectives of the bill and recommended that the bill be passed. I will move on to a few other sections that I will cover as briefly as I can as they are very detailed. In relation to stage inspection certificates, clause 60 proposes to insert a new schedule stating that a contract must contain a provision that states the contractor may not claim payment for the completion of any stated stage of the subject work unless the contractor has given the owner all certificates of inspection relevant for the stage. There are some changes to be made here. The committee delved into it. We asked the department what it thought. The department stated—

It is acknowledged that there is currently a review being undertaken of the Building Act (Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000) and the certification regime. It is proposed that the existing provisions concerning the provision of certificates be maintained and be considered following the outcomes of the Building Act and certification review ... Consideration will be given to reinstating the current position under s39 of the DBC Act.

The department went on with a bit more detail that people can read in the report if they wish. The committee was concerned that there may be unforeseen consequences stemming from the proposed amendments to mandate stage certificates prior to progress payments. In response to issues raised in submissions—and the committee looks at the submissions that come in and goes into them in detail to see what the issues are—the department has proposed to retain existing provisions concerning the requirement for stage certification pending the outcomes of the Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000 review and the committee supports this proposed amendment to the bill. Our recommendation was that the minister amend the bill to retain existing provisions concerning the provision of stage certificates in the QBCC Act until the outcomes of the Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000 review can be determined. The minister has accepted that recommendation. That is very good.

Regulation to prescribe progress payments is an important aspect of the building industry. There is a proposed new section in the bill that provides that a regulation may prescribe when an amount is proportionate to the value of subject work under a regulated contract. It is a bit confusing. The committee looked at this and noted the department's advice regarding the rationale for removing prescribed progress payments for designated stages contracts. However, the committee believes that prescribing the stages of payments may afford some protection for consumers and therefore has concerns about the possible implications of the removal of these prescribed payments from the act. Further, the committee is not aware of evidence that the existing provisions, which prescribe staged progress payments, have caused undue issues or difficulties and therefore is not convinced that the current approach is problematic. Therefore, the committee is recommending that the prescribed progress payments for designated stages contracts be retained but encapsulated in subordinate legislation.

The committee recommended that the minister ensure that the provisions relating to staged progress payments for designated stages contracts, which this bill proposes be removed from the QBCC Act, be transferred to subordinate legislation under a proposed section. Although the government did not accept that entirely, it has said that the bill provides for regulation to prescribe when an amount is proportionate to the value of the work under a regulated contract in the event that the Queensland Building and Construction Commission encounters emerging consumer protection issues in regulated contracts. In other words, they will be monitoring that and if an issue arises they will be able to look at it. That in itself is good. I am pleased that the government, the minister and the department are looking at that.

The deposit on contracts is another issue that is very important to the building industry. A building contractor under a regulated contract must not, before starting to provide the contracted services of the building site, demand or receive a deposit under the contract, and there are three categories, but I will not go into the details of those. That is what happens. We looked at that. The committee supported the introduction of a higher deposit maximum for contracts where more than 50 per cent of the contract value is constructed off site. Regarding the Master Builders recommendation that the deposit for level 2 regulated contracts be raised to 7.5 per cent, the

committee noted the department's acknowledgement that cost structures may have changed since the implementation of the deposit maximum in the year 2000. That is quite reasonable. The committee encouraged the minister to review the deposit maximum proposed in the bill. We recommended that the minister review the suitability of deposit maximums proposed in this bill given the period that has since lapsed. The minister has accepted that recommendation.

The committee considered progress payments for on-site work only. I will not go into all the details there, but generally speaking the committee recommended that the minister amend the bill to ensure that the builder whose work is predominantly carried out off site is able to seek and receive appropriate progress payments beyond the 20 per cent allowed by proposed new sections of the act and in line with the progress of their work. That also has had a part approval and there will be ongoing work in relation to that recommendation.

We looked at foundations data, which is very interesting. Proposed new sections provide that before entering into a contract a building contractor must obtain the foundations data that is appropriate for the building site and it attaches a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units. It should be noted that both the requirement and the penalties remain unchanged from those that have applied under the DBCA for the past 14 years. I will not go into the committee comment, but we recommended that the minister consider amending clause 60, proposed new section 31 to enable a domestic building contract to be entered into where the builder is not able to obtain foundations data, but guarantees in the contract that there will be no price increase when the foundations data is subsequently obtained. When you look into that, it is the best solution. We agonised over that and, at the end of the day, the minister and the government have accepted that recommendation.

We also looked at the extension of time, which is another aspect of the bill. I will not go into all the details of that. We recommended that the minister amend one of the clauses to propose a new section of the act to require the consideration of the cause and extent of a likely delay in a building construction to enable the approval of a time extension claim by the owner to be in writing rather than by signing. In other words, in this day and age you can send an email. In the past you had to sign it or find someone to sign it, but often people were not around or they were pretty busy. However, an email will work and that is good.

Practical completion is another bone of contention in the building industry. We have made recommendations that the minister amend the definition of 'practical completion' for both level 1 and level 2 regulated contracts in the schedule dictionary to include minor defects and omissions in the case of level 1 regulated contracts, to remove references to 'not practicable at the time of completion' from level 2 contracts and to limit the application of the suitability for occupation test. Further, we recommended that the minister consider conditioning to provide exemptions where part of the work required to be certified is being undertaken by a third party. That has been accepted and I think it will certainly help the industry moving forward.

The proceedings for a breach of warranty have always been a bone of contention. In the building industry, it is one of those things that you have to have and the consumer needs it. We talked about that. The committee noted the general concern from submitters that extending the time frame for the statutory warranty period for a non-structural defect to two years, and six months in some cases, is problematic. The department advice is that it will propose an amendment to revise the time period down to 12 months, in line with the recent QBCC board changes to the defective building work policy. We recommended that the minister reduce the statutory warranty period for non-structural defects to one year. I think that will be more practical for the whole building industry.

Proceedings for a breach of a statutory warranty is another aspect that is important for the building industry. We recommended the introduction of an additional defence that establishes a duty on the building owner to provide reasonable access to the building contractor to rectify an alleged defect. In many instances, you will have a row going on between the builder and the owner. The owner will say, 'No, you can't go in.' The builder will say, 'I want to go in.' It also happens the other way around where the builder does not turn up. At the end of the day, we have to have some sort of compromise and this seems to be the best outcome.

Other aspects considered include that the variation must be in writing. We recommended that the minister amend the schedule to explicitly incorporate electronic communication into the definition of 'in writing' for the purpose of agreeing variations in writing. That was done. Generally speaking, that pretty well sums up where we have been with this bill, although there are a few other parts to it. This

bill will make a significant difference in terms of the progress that we are making within the whole building industry. I thank the minister and I thank the opposition for supporting these practical recommendations. This bill will certainly take Queensland further into the next century.

 **Mrs D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (8.27 pm): Today I rise to make a contribution to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I note that my colleague the member for Rockhampton and shadow minister for public works has already made a detailed contribution on the contents of this bill, so I will confine my remarks to the aspects of the bill that amend the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2008 and the Housing Act 2003. As the member for Rockhampton has already indicated, the amendments before us today build on legislation introduced under the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 and the opposition will not be opposing them, as they are technical in nature.

The amendments before us today are required to facilitate the smooth transition of public housing to the community housing sector, regardless of whether it is undertaken in a methodical and measured manner, which in our view is the way it should be approached, or like a bull at a gate with a 90 per cent target such as those opposite advocate. However, many questions have been left unanswered satisfactorily by the government in relation to these changes.

In relation to tenancy agreements, the bill before us today will allow the state to terminate a state agreement and replace it with a community housing provider agreement to allow for the smooth transition of the tenancy. While that appears to be sound, I ask the minister: will the new agreements with the community housing provider be the same as the state based agreement? Will the transfer of the tenancy agreement from the state to the community housing provider allow for changes or amendments to occur to the tenancy agreement?

I note that the explanatory notes state—

The proposed amendments ... support the strategy goal of transferring management of 90 per cent of social housing to the community housing sector by 2020.

However, I note with interest that when comparing this legislation with that of other jurisdictions, the explanatory notes indicate—

... smaller scale management transfers have been undertaken in other places. However, under the 2020 Strategy, Queensland has committed to a more expansive program than other jurisdictions.

While this information is not new, it does put into context the way other jurisdictions are going about this, which is via a methodical approach, undertaking small scale transfers to begin with and then presumably working their way up gradually. This is an approach that the opposition supports. We believe that we should be working in partnership with the community housing sector and not just off-loading the responsibility of public housing to the community housing sector, abrogating our responsibility in the process.

If those opposite were genuine about their Housing 2020 Strategy, why have they not, to date, publically named the successful tenderer for their Logan Renewal Initiative project? As members would be aware, the Minister for Housing announced the short-listed organisations for the Logan Renewal Initiative more than 600 days ago, on 19 February 2013. Those organisations were Queensland companies Brisbane Housing Co., Horizon Housing Co. and Mirvac Queensland and New South Wales company Compass Housing Service Co., which I note has recently bought out local Queensland housing organisation 4walls Ltd.

While the opposition is aware that the New South Wales company Compass Housing Services Co. has been the successful tenderer, there has been no announcement by the government that we can find—not even an update, that I am aware of—indicating how the process is going. All we could find was a media release on the Compass Housing Service Co. website, dated 22 September 2014, which states—

Compass Housing services have been selected by the Queensland Government to play a key role in Queensland's largest ever housing renewal project.

It goes on to state that the project is the Logan Renewal Initiative. As this is the minister's flagship housing renewal venture, we would think that the government would be keen to be announcing the transfer arrangements to the new provider.

I note that during the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's deliberations on this bill, the deputy director-general of housing services within the minister's department, stated—

The Logan Renewal Initiative and the Gold Coast Management Transfer Initiative are the first of these transfers, expected to commence in early 2015.

I ask the minister to provide a detailed update to this House about the status of these initiatives given that the Logan Renewal Initiative was announced more than 600 days ago and there has been very little movement on the ground nor, from my understanding, communication with existing public housing tenants. Why has it taken over 600 days to come to the point of awarding the tender to Compass Housing Service Co.?

In relation to privacy and confidentiality, the bill, as outlined in the explanatory notes, provides a better mechanism to transfer public housing tenancy leases to the community housing provider and also establishes legislation to allow the transfer of confidential tenancy records and information from the department to the community housing provider to enable the provider to continue the tenancy. While this is an important step to ensure that information is maintained, managed and used in an appropriate manner, I ask the minister what guidelines will be in place to ensure that confidential information is maintained and used in a correct manner once transferred from the department to the provider? Will the department have oversight and powers to investigate?

While on the topic of transfers, which is the key objective of the Housing 2020 Strategy and which these amendments pertain to, will the minister outline in his reply what stage the transfer is up to? What regions have started to transfer their stock? I refer to the Department of Housing and Public Works fact sheet entitled 'Transfer of the management of social housing to the non-government sector', dated July 2013, which outlines indicative time frames for starting housing management transfers. I note that it indicates that by now the housing service centre areas of Woodridge, Robina, Redcliffe, Maroochydore, Gladstone and Cairns should have commenced transfers, with Mackay, Rockhampton, Emerald, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Caboolture occurring in the current 2014-15 financial year. Have any of these actually commenced?

I can advise that no such transfer will occur in Redcliffe because the Newman government instead chose to unilaterally close the Redcliffe housing service centre last year without advising the community or even leaving a note on the door as to where people could now get assistance. I also note that the document indicates that the Logan Renewal Initiative, which I have already referred to, commits to the management transfer of approximately 4,732 units of accommodation from the Woodridge housing service centre. As stated, the government has not yet publically announced the successful provider. Can the minister outline how this target will be met, with no publically available plan or timeline in place?

With such a high number of dwellings proposed for transfer from the control of the Woodridge housing service centre's jurisdiction to the community housing sector, what will happen to the existing hardworking public servants working in those centres? What thought has been given to the future of existing hardworking public servants, currently working on the front line with Queensland's public housing tenants?

I understand from reading the record of the 2013 budget estimates hearings that the minister did not give a guarantee about the future of public servants working in the housing service centres to which this legislation will be applied via the transfer of management. I believe his words were—

If they are passionate and are doing as good a job as I think they are doing, they will be snapped up by these community housing organisations.

Although that might be the case, that does not provide any reassurance to our hardworking public servants that their jobs will be safe. Couple this with comments made by the deputy director-general of housing services from the Department of Housing and Public Works at a recent hearing of the parliamentary committee on 27 August 2014, where he stated under questioning by the member for Woodridge—

I would have thought, however, given the nature of the task, there would be significant interest from a community housing provider in the very good staff that we have within housing services.

These two statements, by the minister and his department, do not give our current hardworking public servants any comfort. The opposition has been contacted by many public servants who are worried about their futures as the en masse management transfers commence. I ask the minister today to provide a guarantee that our hardworking front-line public servants, jobs will remain safe and that there will be no further job cuts in his department as a result of the transfers.

In conclusion, while the opposition will not be opposing the amendments pertaining to public housing management in Queensland, we do believe that there are a number of issues that the minister and those opposite need to address. We believe that there are a number of potential consequences that will result from the management transfers, including the loss of further public servant jobs. We have seen public housing tenants in Queensland come under attack by those opposite, such as introducing the draconian temporary absences policy, which they have only tweaked at the edges when they were caught out by the opposition.

We are now hearing from Queenslanders who are contacting the opposition that public housing tenants' rents are going up by more than the \$7.50 a week cap the minister stated would be applied. While we believe that the community housing sector has a role to play in public housing in Queensland, we believe that the transitions need to occur gradually—similar to what is happening in other jurisdictions—after tenants are well informed of the changes and with strict rules and conditions in place to ensure that public housing tenants are not disadvantaged.

We believe that the focus should not be just to outsource the public housing system en masse, as quickly as possible, but to ensure that there are adequate support services available to actively assist tenants. There also needs to be proper and meaningful consultation and an information campaign regarding the changes to public housing tenancy arrangements.

While I note that on the surface there may not be any difference from the tenants' perspective regarding their lease and day-to-day tenancy, public housing tenants in Queensland have gone through a roller-coaster of change since the Newman LNP government came to power, with many feeling they have been victimised and attacked by those opposite. I would appreciate the minister outlining how he proposes to actively and positively communicate the transferring of management changes to existing and new public tenants in Queensland. As the shadow minister for housing, I and my Labor colleagues will continue to monitor and watch the public housing space in Queensland to ensure that public housing tenants and indeed all tenants in Queensland receive a fair go and are treated equally.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (8.37 pm): I rise to support the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, which continues the government's commitment to stimulating economic growth by reducing red tape. This bill represents the third stage of our 10-point action plan for the QBCC and demonstrates our commitment to improving the construction industry by protecting consumers and making it easier for honest, hardworking Queenslanders to get on with the job of building our great state, while at the same time weeding out any dodgy operators who might harm the industry.

After many years spent working in the building industry, and still a registered builder, I thoroughly understand how misunderstandings can quickly become long, drawn-out disputes that ultimately take a huge toll on all parties, both emotionally and financially. I welcome any measures that help eliminate or reduce this burden on the people of Queensland.

One area in particular with the potential for confusion is building contracts. The vast majority of building contracts are at the smaller end of the scale where the customers are everyday mum and dad homeowners or investors. For these consumers, negotiating a building contract could quite literally be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and certainly not something they do as part of their everyday life.

This bill introduces two levels of domestic building contracts based on the value of the work being done. Under this system, consumers will be protected from contractors who might take advantage of their lack of experience. Regulations on smaller projects will be a lot simpler and will make it easier for those who are not industry savvy to know where they stand.

I also welcome the introduction of an early intervention process for disputes. The QBCC will have the ability to mediate disputes—and potentially resolve them—within 28 days of them being lodged, and this is at no cost to the parties involved. When compared to the prospect of a long, drawn-out and expensive resolution process, I would expect that both consumers and contractors would appreciate the possibility of having an issue resolved quickly so they can move on.

As with all industries, in the construction industry it is the small minority who do not do the right thing that often taint the reputation of the majority who are actually decent and honest operators. This bill seeks to introduce greater deterrents for dodgy operators who try to flaunt the rules by using a demerit points system and heavier sanctions to flag those operators and make it harder for them to take advantage of unsuspecting consumers.

When it comes to identifying these operators, I am sure that most people outside the building industry would be surprised to learn that building inspectors currently do not have the power to compel people to provide their correct identity. With dodgy builders often operating under false names, I am sure that most people would find it absurd that the industry regulator cannot even be certain who they are talking to when investigating questionable practices. The measures in this bill that give QBCC inspectors additional powers to accurately identify an individual correct something that has been very wrong in this industry for a long time.

The QBCC will also be able to access data from other government agencies and statutory bodies, making it easier for them to weed out unscrupulous behaviours and of course the people who try to hide themselves in amongst complex paper trails. Subcontractors who rely on the main building contractor to pay them the correct amount in a timely manner will also enjoy greater security of income under this bill. Grounds for disciplinary action against a contractor have been extended to failing to pay a subcontractor in accordance with their contract. Self-employed subbies are an essential part of the domestic building industry and they need to know when and how much they will be paid.

Another area for disputes that is characterised by many different shades of grey is that of consequential damage to adjacent residential sites, and this occurs mainly during construction. During his introductory speech, the minister cited the example of excavation work undermining a retaining wall on an adjacent property. With the trend in recent years towards the smaller blocks in urban areas that we now see as part of our community, the potential for these types of disputes has increased significantly. I am pleased to note that this bill gives the QBCC the power to direct rectification under certain circumstances.

Another common-sense measure taken by this bill is expanding the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme to cover new swimming pool construction and manufactured homes. More and more people are taking advantage of quite reasonable prices on new pools to create an addition to their new home that allows them to enjoy our fabulous climate. This is a logical development of the scheme that will give more Queenslanders the peace of mind they deserve.

Still on the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme, the QBCC will now be able to sort out defects under the scheme even though a dispute might be active in QCAT. As the minister pointed out in his introduction of the bill, this is a big win for average Queensland consumers who have taken the plunge to build a new home. Instead of waiting months for the dispute to work its way through QCAT, they will be able to access money through the scheme much sooner.

Finally, I want to touch on the aspects of the bill which seek to help the community housing sector better serve our most vulnerable Queenslanders by helping them secure appropriate and affordable housing. As part of the government's Housing 2020 Strategy, this bill gives community housing providers access to essential information currently held by the department. As the management of department owned housing is progressively transferred to community providers, it is essential that they have access to this information to make the transition as seamless and stress free as possible for public housing clients. At the same time the confidentiality of the client's personal information needs to be assured. This bill addresses those concerns and facilitates an effective transition process.

Current forecasts predict that thousands of people will move into parts of my electorate of Burnett over the next 10 to 20 years. Naturally we will need new homes to accommodate this growing population. I would like to envisage a future for my constituents where the experience of building a new home is one of excitement and anticipation of seeing their dreams realised—not one of heartbreak and frustration. To do that we need legislation such as this bill that ensures the majority of good quality builders prosper while weeding out the few that disregard the rules and the wellbeing of their customers and subcontractors. I thank the minister and his department for their efforts and foresight in bringing the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 before the parliament. I support its progress through the House.

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (8.44 pm): I rise to support the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I want to acknowledge the work of the committee and particularly the chair, Mr Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, who is an excellent chair and has been an excellent member of this parliament for many, many years. The relationship that occurs within the committee between the government, non-government and opposition members is quite amicable and constructive.

I think that the departmental staff of the Department of Housing and Public Works deserve to be honourably recognised in the chamber for their support given to the minister. I know that they work very hard to support the minister. I am sure that, even though from time to time there are criticisms directed towards the minister, he has the best of intentions for Queenslanders as well.

Having said all of that, the member for Burnett in his experience as a builder made the point about dodgy builders in the industry. A lot of us in the course of our life have built a home. I personally did not build one; I got a builder to build one for me. It is an exciting experience. It is also a very stressful experience for people, particularly young families. Couples might have recently married and they might have a young child or two and they want to build a home for their family. It is a long-term investment—one of the biggest investments they will ever make in their life, so it means a great deal to them. It is a very emotional experience for them, and the protection offered under this legislation is incredibly important.

The deposit for construction on site is relevant—7.5 per cent, I understand, is a compromise between the industry and the government and other vested interests in this legislation. In terms of progress payments for construction off site, construction off site is becoming more and more a common theme. A lot of construction is now occurring off site. I do not think we should just turn our minds to industries like—and I do not endorse any particular industry—Altec, for example, that build prefabricated extensions to people's homes. I think as we move into the future what we will see is more fabrication of homes being done off site. We really need to turn our mind towards how we manage the progress payments for off-site construction.

Prefabrication is probably the way of the future in terms of construction of homes and other developments that occur throughout our society. In fact, I read an article recently where there has been 3D construction of small dwellings occurring in Asian countries, and small prefabricated structures are being built rather rapidly through that process. I do not think we should ignore the challenges faced by industry that deals with off-site construction in terms of the outlay of labour costs and materials for largely a fabrication that is occurring off site with only a 20 per cent deposit. In my view, there needs to be a view taken whereby progress payments are made for the works that are being done off site, and that is a challenge for the minister and his department into the future.

In terms of foundations data, the good chair, Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, touched on that. I think he summed that up very, very nicely. In relation to an extension of time being dealt with by email, we all live in the modern era. In fact, if you did a little bit of research about who owns and uses computer technology nowadays, you might be quite surprised. Plenty of people above the age of 65 and 70 use technology. There is an argument—if I can go off on a tangent for a moment—to move to online reporting of minor motor vehicle traffic incidents. I once conducted some research in relation to that matter and it was quite surprising to realise the extent of computer technology and the use of online information by people aged 65 years and older.

The technology is there. It is being used by a broad spectrum of our community. Extensions of time in writing are probably something that should be considered and included. The fact that it is raining is not the only consideration. A site may well not be suitable for construction for the on-site and safe working conditions of subcontractors and contractors in terms of building a home due to the wetness of the ground and the unstable footings they might need to work on. These sorts of conversations need to occur between an owner and a builder, and the legislation certainly needs to address that.

With regard to the structural warranty of a home and non-structural defects within one year, I think when most of us have moved into the first home we have built, usually within a number of weeks or a number of months, we identify most of the things we find in the house that are not satisfactory. Most builders, if you have a decent builder and not a dodgy builder, as the member for Burnett pointed out—I am sure if he were a builder he would be quite a good builder—would come back and happily rectify reasonable defects in a home.

This is somewhat relevant but not totally relevant. We were talking about subcontractors. One of the things that I think is very important for the minister to consider in consultation with the qualified staff who work in his department is the security of payment legislation. I believe that is a serious challenge for the industry. I would respectfully encourage the minister to turn his mind to that as something that would be ideal to identify and rectify in this term of parliament. I know that he is surrounded by the expertise with which to address that challenge.

There has been discussion about the demerit points that occur within the industry, and I will not revisit that. Overall, I am pretty happy with the excellent work of the committee led by the chair, the member for Warrego. I congratulate the department on its support for the minister. I support the bill. I thank the support staff of the committee for their assistance in preparing the report. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (8.52 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Firstly, I note that this bill contains a number of important aspects relating to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and the Housing 2020 Strategy. I commend all aspects of this bill, but I would like to take a little time to focus on those aspects relating to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, or QBCC.

One of the most significant issues I was confronted with from families in my electorate upon becoming the member for Mount Coot-tha was those associated with the former Building Services Authority, or BSA. These families and homeowners had major issues with their residential building that were just not able to be adequately dealt with by the BSA, which was commonly referred to as a toothless tiger. This bill goes a long way towards addressing many of the aspects that have previously negatively impacted on families and homeowners in my electorate. These relate to action by the QBCC while proceeding in QCAT; early dispute resolution for domestic building contracts; red-tape-reduction initiatives; and a new offence for failure of a contractor to pay a subcontractor.

In relation to action by the QBCC while proceeding in QCAT, this bill enables the resolution of disputes between homeowners and builders faster, cheaper and far less stressfully for both parties. We know that in the past some unscrupulous contractors have used section 83 of the QBCC Act as a way of preventing the QBCC from becoming involved in a matter by filing spurious disputes in QCAT in order to delay or deter consumers from accessing the QBCC's dispute resolution service. I have seen this on a number of occasions firsthand through residents in my electorate. This has resulted in unacceptable delays for consumers in having disputes resolved.

The bill also allows the QBCC to act while a domestic building dispute is on foot in the tribunal, avoiding such delays. This is particularly important given that the QBCC now offers early dispute resolution and internal review processes which are likely to resolve disputes far more quickly than a domestic building dispute in the tribunal. Any decisions made by the QBCC when a domestic building dispute is on foot will remain reviewable via the usual processes.

The bill also enables the QBCC to continue to act in relation to defects and insurance claims while a domestic building dispute is being conducted between the consumer and the contractor. Contractors will no longer be able to prevent the QBCC from approving a claim to rectify defective or incomplete work under the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme while a dispute exists between the contractor and the consumer in the tribunal. For example, if the contractor and the consumer are in proceedings in the tribunal in relation to variations or monies owed, the QBCC will still be able to direct the rectification of substandard work.

The review rights, currently available to contractors, will remain after this amendment. The amendment also means that the QBCC and the contractor can enter into negotiations in relation to the recovery of the insurance payment early in the proceedings rather than having to wait an extended period of time for the tribunal to hear all of the domestic building disputes and review proceedings.

Consumers will benefit as rectification works will occur quickly and consumers will not be caught up in proceedings in the tribunal as the dispute will be between the QBCC and the contractor. Contractors will also benefit as they will have the ability to negotiate with the QBCC regarding recovery of insurance payouts rather than being the subject of expensive debt recovery proceedings. Further, it is likely that by having matters promptly rectified under the Queensland Home Warranty

Scheme there will be savings on insurance payouts as the delays currently being experienced inevitably lead to work being more expensive to complete or rectify due to price rises and the deterioration of defective work left untouched for months or years, often exposed to the elements.

I have already touched upon aspects of early dispute resolution for domestic building contracts. Disputes between homeowners and builders will now be resolved faster, cheaper and with less stress for both parties thanks to these proposed amendments. The QBCC Act currently empowers QCAT to hear and decide building disputes between consumers and contractors, but there is no requirement for the parties to attempt to resolve a dispute through the QBCC dispute resolution process. As a result, a significant number of matters go to the tribunal which could be resolved by the intervention of the QBCC as an independent conciliator or mediator.

Up to 40 per cent of disputes are resolved at compulsory conference at the tribunal. However, under current processes the parties cannot be guaranteed a compulsory conference until three months after the filing of an application. This bill includes amendments to the act to assist in the early resolution of disputes for domestic building contracts by ensuring that the parties to a domestic building dispute can only go to the tribunal following an attempt to resolve the matter with the QBCC. By ensuring that the parties must seek the assistance of the QBCC prior to going to the tribunal, it is likely that the tribunal's workload will be reduced and matters resolved over a shorter time frame.

The QBCC has developed an early dispute resolution process which will provide a no-cost conciliation or mediation process which will be completed within 28 days of bringing the matter to the QBCC's attention. This will also apply to disputes that arise while the contract is on foot. As the process is provided free of cost, consumers and contractors are expected to make a significant saving in legal fees. The dispute resolution service is consistent with schemes that have been in place in other jurisdictions including Victoria and New South Wales for a number of years and where the number of disputes being lodged in their respective tribunals has decreased.

This bill includes a number of red-tape-reduction initiatives, particularly relating to the simplification of domestic building contracts which I applaud. However, I think one of the most important parts of the bill is the introduction of an offence for the failure of a contractor to pay a subcontractor. This is a huge win for all subcontractors who want, and deserve, to be paid for the work that they do. The QBCC often receives complaints from subcontractors of head contractors not paying them in accordance with the contract or using commercial leverage to force subcontractors to accept lower amounts than originally agreed.

The bill provides the QBCC with the power to take disciplinary action against head contractors in relation to failure to pay subcontractors as per the terms of the contract. Head contractors who believe they have a legitimate reason for not paying a subcontractor will be able to state their reasons and defend their position. The bill will enhance the protection for subcontractors within the industry and help to provide them with the surety that they will be paid for the work they have done as per the terms of their contract. The reason I say that this is one of the most important aspects of the bill is that I have a family in my electorate going through the heartache of having had a builder who did not pay the subbies. In fact, they have had issues in relation to every aspect of this bill, although the provisions have not previously been there for them to be able to deal with it. The builder subsequently went under, and because the subbies have not been paid this family is unable to get the certificates it needs to complete the build. These will hopefully be able to be negotiated, but the point remains that severe penalties need to be applied to builders like this who do the wrong thing and do not pay their subbies.

In conclusion, the government has made a very significant commitment to Queensland to revitalise front-line services. This bill goes a long way to continuing to deliver on that commitment by turning a toothless tiger into something with a bit of bite, and rightly so. It is certainly something that many people in my electorate have been crying out for, as indeed have many builders, so I add my support to the passing of the bill.

 **Mr KING** (Cairns—LNP) (9.00 pm): I rise to make a very brief contribution in support of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. My focus, like the member for Mount Coot-tha, will be on the legislative amendments required to implement the next stage of reforms from the government's 10-point action plan in response to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's inquiry into the operation and performance of the former Queensland Building Services Authority.

First, to provide some context, I want to give a quick overview on where the building and construction industry in my great electorate of Cairns has come from, what it has been through and where it is at now since the LNP government came to office in March 2012. I have spoken at various times in this House about the dire state of the Cairns economy, particularly our building and construction industry, under the former Labor government. The Cairns economy was battered from pillar to post in the last four years of the former Labor government. We had major construction companies collapsing, countless tradies out of a job forcing them to leave town, and of course a broader local economy that was absolutely in the doldrums. In the past 2½ years a very different picture has been emerging. In numerous conversations I have had with local builders and construction companies in Cairns, it has been abundantly clear that the changes that the housing minister and this government have made to what was the Building Services Authority have been extremely positive and proactive. By all accounts, the relatively new QBCC has been a breath of fresh air for an industry that was struggling under the weight of onerous regulation, unresponsive oversight and excessive red tape—all of which are hallmarks of the former Labor government right across all departments.

This bill we are debating here tonight continues the reform undertaken by the LNP government and progresses that 10-point action plan aimed at reforming regulation of the Queensland building and construction industry. This reform contained in this bill, along with a range of other economic policies and the rebuilding of industry confidence, has led to a promising turnaround in the building sector in my electorate. Today we are seeing major construction projects either getting started or being close to starting in Cairns. We are seeing the residential building sector starting to fire again, backed up by the latest building approval figures. Indeed, the latest building approvals for the construction of new homes in Cairns has picked up 'significant pace' since the start of this year, with a remarkable 31 per cent increase evident in the building approvals trend between January and July 2014. To keep this momentum rolling, it is very important that we continue to renew and reform regulation of the building and construction industry, we continue to cut red tape and we continue to focus on practical outcomes and sensible processes. I, too, pay tribute to the member for Warrego and his committee for doing just that in their work on this bill.

Importantly, as the member for Mount Coot-tha pointed out, some of the key changes for me are around the dispute resolution system. That is a key change of this bill. It means that parties to a domestic building dispute are only able to go to the tribunal following an attempt to solve the matter with the QBCC. In addition, an early dispute intervention process has been developed which will provide a no-cost conciliation and mediation service for consumers and licensees which ensures that the process is completed within 28 days of being brought to the attention of the QBCC.

In conclusion, I commend the minister and the committee for their work. I particularly commend the minister for listening and responding by adopting the majority of the committee's recommendations. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (9.04 pm): I rise in the House tonight to support the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to thank the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the Hon. Tim Mander, for bringing this important bill before the House. I would also like to thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee and in particular the chairman, my friend and colleague the Hon. Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, who will be sorely missed in this House after the next election. The committee spent a lot of time reviewing this bill and I note that the committee recommends that the bill be passed.

I welcome this bill and the role it plays in addressing the legislative amendments required to implement the next stage of reforms from the government's 10-point action plan to overhaul the Queensland Building Services Authority and building regulation in Queensland. This review into the BSA was one of our government's earliest promises. The 10-point plan which resulted from the review has been instrumental in establishing the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, the QBCC, to replace the old BSA.

The minister knows that I have been a strong advocate for better building regulation, and the review and further public consultation revealed serious shortfalls with the BSA. The minister will recall that we met with numerous builders right here in Brisbane and we also held meetings with local builders and, more importantly to some extent for my electorate, subcontractors who have been

affected in the great electorate of Nanango. I met with builders such as Darrin Kefford, who is always an extremely strong advocate on behalf of the subcontractors. He is always keen to remind me that we really need to get this reform right.

Our government has identified the building and construction sector as one of our four pillars of economic growth, and it is through bills such as this that we can continue to fulfil our commitment to grow the sector, cut red tape and support not only homeowners—the mums and dads, the grannies and grandads—but our builders and local subcontractors. The member for Mount Coot-tha, Saxon Rice, put it very eloquently. Quite often it is unfortunate that it is the builders who are the ones who are not paying our subbies, so we need this reform. This legislation is giving the commissioner and the commission a bit of bite, and it is about time. I use those words from the member for Mount Coot-tha—‘a bit of bite’—because this is what the people in her electorate and the people in my electorate of Nanango have been waiting for. I am really pleased that this is actually the way it is.

For the remainder of my time tonight, I would like to focus on the Housing 2020 Strategy and the positive impacts these amendments will have on the social housing sector. The minister must be congratulated for the vision presented in this housing strategy. It is ambitious but it acknowledges that the public housing sector needs reform. Over the past 20 years, the needs of our tenants have changed dramatically but unfortunately the system simply has not. Our government, however, is committed to helping people in housing stress while creating a flexible, fair and integrated system. Part of the strategy is to have 90 per cent of housing tenancies managed by the not-for-profit sector by the year 2020.

The key objective of this strategy is to achieve more efficient and effective delivery of the full range of housing services by progressively transferring the management of the department owned and managed social housing and other housing assistant functions to approved providers. Again, like almost every time I have stood in this House since I became the elected member for Nanango, I can say that this is common-sense legislation that is being brought before this House by a common-sense government—the Newman led LNP government.

The proposed amendments to the Housing Act and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 are designed to ensure the smooth transition of public housing tenancies and other housing assistance functions to approved providers and to make sure the right arrangements, including protection for confidential client information, are in place to support the ongoing delivery of accountable and responsive services. The need for a good social housing system is extremely important. In my electorate of Nanango, I regularly receive inquiries from people who are in housing distress and who desperately need our help—from families, single parents, young men and the elderly.

I am proud to know that the changes that our government has introduced so far are helping to reduce the waiting list and to put roofs over the heads of those most vulnerable and needy people. In fact, earlier this year I announced that in the electorate of Nanango 43 extra families were able to secure a public housing home. This decreased my region’s public housing wait list by 57 per cent. This is a wonderful achievement. For years upon years upon years these people were lingering on the waiting list. The previous Labor government did not care about the electorate of Nanango. They did not even know it was there. Incredible! We have been able to reduce the public housing waiting list by 57 per cent. Well done, Minister. I am very pleased with that.

This is thanks also to plenty of hard work by our housing service centres and some innovative new policies. Not only is it working in my electorate—

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON:—and the member for Rockhampton can shake his head because I am proud of the work we have done here—it is also working across the state. With more than 5,500 households moving off this waiting list in the last 12 months and another 665 places under the National Rental Affordability Scheme, this is a massive drop in the waiting list and it was due to a combination of more new dwellings, better waiting list management and greater awareness of the alternative types of housing assistance.

Under the previous Labor government what we saw was a social housing or bust mentality in which long-term government subsidised housing was seen as the only option. Under our Newman government’s Housing 2020 Strategy, the emphasis is on giving people options wherever possible, helping them become self-reliant rather than remaining dependent on the taxpayers’ dollars and

dependent on government. Obviously there will always be people who will need social housing and for whom we have an enduring responsibility, but there are plenty of others who are perfectly capable of sustaining a private tenancy if they get the right help, and that is what the intention of this bill is all about. With those words, I would like to support this bill.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (9.11 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Much has been said already in relation to this legislation, particularly on the two major strategies that are addressed by the bill: the further steps taken in relation to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and then the Housing 2020 Strategy. In relation to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, one of the best incremental benefits for me and the people in my electorate that this legislation will bring is early dispute resolution. There have been a lot of instances in my electorate where, particularly with out-of-town builders who have rushed up during the construction boom, there have been disputes over the building work that has been done. Previously—and it was not the problem of the people who worked at the BSA—the process that was in train was that certain things had to occur in the building program before the dispute could even be addressed. For people who are aggrieved, it is an intensely frustrating place to be where something is wrong or something needs to be remedied, but it cannot be addressed at an early stage. One of the previous speakers was talking about the fact that building work that needs to be remedied or restored only continues to deteriorate unless the work is carried out promptly.

The other matter that I wish to talk about is the Housing 2020 Strategy which proposes to move the management of government housing to private providers. I have spoken in this place about the real risk and I have spoken also to the ministers about the experience that I observed when the feds handed over the part of Centrelink that dealt with job seeking to private providers. What happened was that those people who were chronically unemployed or had significant difficulties in gaining employment because of either their own disabilities or lack of competence were left by the private providers; the private providers were not interested. In some Centrelink offices—and I will not say all—there was a little office out the back where a mini job-hunting service was provided for those people. When I have spoken to the minister and to previous ministers their response has been that private providers will not be allowed to pick and choose for whom they provide housing. I think that is a very positive and good sentiment, but I still wanted to make that cautionary comment that there may be some people who will be very difficult to place. It could be that the government will be left with those most difficult people to place simply because nobody else will know quite what to do.

It is critically important that people in our community are housed. Homelessness in itself is a huge challenge to self-confidence and self-reliance. Homelessness also gives rise to other problems. I know I am speaking to somebody who is well informed in those areas because of the minister's work with SU. Good housing for the people in our community who are vulnerable is essential. That vulnerability could be age, it could be reduced competence, it could be social or economic stress; but all of those people are critically important to our community. So many of the folk who are the backbone of our community are people who are not high income earners. They are the mums and the dads who just battle away day after day. They are the ones who have a very great—not that everyone does not—and generous spirit, and good housing is critically important to the strength of our community.

I would like to give recognition to a number of organisations in my electorate that will be looking at privately managing the public housing list, and that includes Gladstone Affordable Housing, Roseberry Community Services, Anglicare and Gladstone Community Advisory Service. They are some of the ones that already manage housing and that are keen to be involved in this longer term management. There is also the Aboriginal co-op which has some houses as well.

I also commend the minister for expanding the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme to cover new swimming pool construction and manufactured homes. Manufactured homes is an area that I think crept up on everybody a little bit unexpectedly. Once some of those manufactured homes are completed, people would not know that they were skidded in on a truck such is the quality of those buildings once they have been installed and landscaped. This bill recognises some of the new initiatives in home building and also in the swimming pool area, and I commend the minister for that.

There is one comment that I want to make. I do not want to be in any way negative towards the member for Nanango because I believe that the current member for Nanango does a wonderful job representing her community. She made a comment that Labor when in government did not know

about the electorate of Nanango. Can I say that her predecessor did a very good job at making sure that the electorate of Nanango was at the front and centre of ministers' minds? As I said, I am not in any way denigrating the work of the current member for Nanango, but I could not sit here and not put forward the point of view of the former member for Nanango.

I commend the minister for the work that he has done in representing the vulnerable in our community. That is not just those who need housing; that is also those who, in building their dream home, find things have not gone the way they expected. It is not an easy row to hoe and it is not an easy portfolio to manage, looking after and giving support and confidence to those people who suffer, as I said, because of age, a lack of competence or social or economic stress. I commend the minister. I know that the compassion that he showed in his former work has also transferred to his current portfolio.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Cunningham, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.20 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Ashgrove Electorate, Can Do Awards

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.20 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am so pleased to rise tonight to report to the House the winners of this year's Can Do Awards. As local member for Ashgrove, I have established a local awards program focused on recognising our local champions—the people who do so much in our local community and deserve to have their work recognised. In its second year the Can Do Awards have recognised over 31 locals, community organisations and businesses from the local community.

I am very pleased to report that last Saturday, 11 October, I hosted the Can Do Family Night and, as a part of these celebrations, the Can Do Awards. It was a great night with well over 350 local residents attending to take part in the festivities and celebrations. The event gave local community groups such as the Mitchelton Youth Club, the Enoggera and Districts Historical Society and Mitchelton State School the opportunity to raise funds. Over \$900 was raised to support our local community. The day provided free entertainment for local families with jumping castles, music, face painting, cheerleading displays and a free screening of *The Lego Movie*.

I would just quickly like to take a moment to acknowledge this year's winners in the Can Do Awards. The Can Do Award went to Mick Ackery, creator of The Gap 4061 Facebook page and Vice-President of The Gap Residents Association. Hero of the Year went to Chris Pemberton, the Officer in Charge of The Gap Police Station. The Senior of the Year went to Janet Dawson. Enlisting into the Army Reserves in 1982, Janet is a role model for junior soldiers and embodies the army's core values of courage, initiative, respect and teamwork. The Youth of the Year went to Ruby Hughes. In 2014, at the young age of 10, Ruby was invited to address the National Press Club in Canberra in an effort to help influence and effect change in the perception of what a deaf child is capable of achieving. The Volunteer of the Year went to Susanne Fleming. Susanne is a local mum, lawyer and former president of The Gap State School P&C. The Educator of the Year went to Marilyn Gordon. Marilyn is a full-time prep teacher at The Gap State School who was recently recognised for her teaching efforts with a nomination for the National Excellence in Teaching Award. Community Organisation of the Year went to Community. Community is a well-known not-for-profit organisation which has worked within the north-west community of Brisbane for over 34 years. Small Business of the Year went to the Ashgrove Dance Studio. They have been teaching Ashgrove residents of all ages to enjoy dance for over 50 years.

These awards were decided by popular vote by the local community, and I am pleased to say that over 1,200 people cast over 1,800 votes in this year's awards. I would like to acknowledge all of the nominees in these awards. All of them have done so much for our local area, and I would like to acknowledge all of them for their efforts. They do a great job, they are worthy of recognition and they make the Ashgrove electorate the great part of Brisbane that it certainly is. I implore them all to let people know about the awards and to see nominees come forward for next year.

Stafford Road Traffic Forum

 **Dr LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (9.23 pm): On 7 October I honoured an election commitment and held the Stafford Road Traffic Forum at the Stafford State School. It was a great evening. It was well attended and it was an important event for the people of Stafford as road traffic issues, especially those involving Stafford Road, are a major concern. Stafford is an area where traffic from outlying areas funnels through our inner-city electorate in their daily efforts to get to the CBD. Rat-running is commonplace, especially through Gordon Park and Grange, and is causing angst and stress to residents of previously quiet suburban streets. Stafford Road is a major east-west arterial that was not designed at all for the traffic volumes it is experiencing. Businesses on the roadway are closing, parking is impossible and one particular business cannot even access its own driveway safely.

The Stafford Road Traffic Forum was a bipartisan apolitical event. It was attended by the opposition transport spokesperson, Jackie Trad, two LNP councillors and one of Brisbane's leading traffic planners. There is a further event on 30 October. This involves council designated streets and has been organised by the local LNP councillor. It is well supported again in a bipartisan manner.

The difference between these two events lies in the support provided by the respective layers of government. The council event has full support from the LNP council, with planners and engineers being released to speak at the event. These are the very people that the public want to hear from and express their concerns to. My community was bitterly disappointed by the total disregard of the Minister for Transport to the Stafford Road Traffic Forum. Not only did the minister refuse to attend, but he refused to send a delegate. Worse still, he would not allow departmental staff such as planners or engineers to attend the event. These are the very people that the residents of Stafford need to hear from—the very people that the residents find hard to track down to voice their concerns. Stafford is now well and truly an electorate that the LNP could not care less about. A simple request to attend an important event was refused.

Now let us look at a neighbouring electorate. Let us imagine a traffic forum that would be, say, in a neighbouring electorate like Ashgrove. Would the Minister for Transport have allowed his staff to be there? You bet he would. The minister would have driven them there himself. The minister may have even driven past the new Samford Road-Wardell Street upgrade on his way there, dodging pork barrels littered through the electorate. Let's look at my electorate of Stafford. We held a traffic forum with absolutely no support from this LNP government. I therefore call upon the Minister for Transport to attend a future event at Stafford with departmental staff. I am happy to organise another event at a time that suits him—just let me know!

Edwards, Most Rev. LJ

 **Hon. IB WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (9.26 pm): I wish to raise in the adjournment debate tonight the death of the Reverend Louise Jane Edwards, who was a significant Uniting Church pastor within my community. Louise was born in Ipswich, the daughter of Sir Llew and Leonie Lady Edwards, and she attended both primary and secondary school in Ipswich. She worked with the Westpac Bank for seven years and then entered the youth and education assistant course at Trinity College for the Uniting Church, graduating at the end of 1988. She ministered in many places around Brisbane: Moggill, Windsor, Wilston, Grange, then out to the Lockyer Valley, back to Aspley, Bald Hills and eventually found her way to the Broadwater Road Uniting Church within my electorate. She was ordained in 2009 to the ministry of deacon within the Uniting Church.

Louise was an extraordinary person. She had a particular interest in youth ministry, and she continued that during her time at Broadwater Road. She was a lively person. At her funeral people commented about her endearing qualities. She was a single lady, but a wonderful aunt to her nieces and nephews who remembered her very fondly. She was an erratic driver, and people said that when she was behind the wheel people really needed to get off the road because her driving skills were not the greatest. She was not a prompt or punctual person and would sometimes not turn up on time or turn up at the least expected time in order to serve the people both in my electorate and abroad and also to assist those within her family, by whom she was greatly loved.

She also had a significant ministry to people in Fiji. She established an annual schoolies trip to Fiji, and that was a well-known and well-regarded event within church circles within my electorate. Louise did a tremendous job in establishing links between Queensland and Fiji as a result of that, and there were warm messages of support from Fiji at her funeral.

Louise was in her early 50s. She contracted breast cancer, and we had a service at the Broadwater Road Uniting Church on 3 August, at which she retired from active ministry. Unfortunately, her death occurred and her funeral was then subsequently held in the church on 11 September. It was a wonderful occasion. Her brothers Mark and David and their families spoke very fondly of her. Sir Llew himself spoke well, and I certainly record the sympathies of my community to her family, David and Mark and their families, to Sir Llew and Lady Jane Edwards, her stepmother. I wish to put on record the tremendous service that she gave to my area and surrounding areas.

Hampson, Mr T

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (9.29 pm): I rise to pay tribute to a great man, a great Queenslander and a great comrade. Terry Hampson was born in Allora on the Darling Downs in 1935 and passed away three weeks ago in Cambodia after his long-anticipated visit to Angkor Wat.

Terry was an avid sportsman and, after moving to Brisbane for work, joined the Australian Labor Party in 1965. Terry quickly threw himself into every role in his local branch, the Bald Hills branch of the Labor Party, and ensured that they participated in every social protest movement that was occurring during that time—from the anti-uranium movement to the anti-apartheid demonstrations during the Springboks tour, the anti Vietnam War protests and, of course, very important civil liberties protests under the Bjelke-Petersen government.

Terry was particularly passionate about the environment movement, and he spent 30 years as an executive member on the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation. Because of that, he played an enormous role in the protection of Fraser Island and its eventual World Heritage listing.

For 10 years Terry served as Brisbane city councillor for the ward of Marchant, from 1994 to 2004, and he was instrumental in ensuring that his local community had improved social infrastructure and increased community amenity.

In 2001 Terry became a member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his services towards conservation of the environment and for his distinguished service to local government and Queensland politics. It is because of that particularly that the Labor Party owes Terry a debt of gratitude. For many years he worked in ensuring that the Labor Party was a reformed Labor Party that was democratic and outward looking and a party that could take on the ambitions and the challenges of governing Queensland. In fact, many of the reforms pursued by Terry and many others during that crucial time of the late 1970s and 1980s will go down in our party's history as incredibly important.

Terry succeeded in the highest organisational role in the Queensland branch of the Labor Party as state secretary in 1988. Much of the work he did during his time in party office was credited for the organisation and electoral success achieved by Labor in 1989 under the leadership of Wayne Goss.

Terry was a life member of the Labor Party, and he is survived by his beautiful wife of many decades, Anne Hampson, his children and many grandchildren. I place on record in this House my condolences to Anne and his sons and his grandchildren and the condolences of the Labor opposition and the entire Queensland branch of the Queensland Labor Party for their loss. Please know that we grieve with you for the loss of one of Australia's greatest environmentalists, a passionate reformer, a social justice campaigner, a strong unionist and, very proudly, a Labor man.

99.7FM; Volunteers; The Space; Koalas; Walk for Kids

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (9.32 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of Murrumba. May I update the chamber on the status of radio station 99.7FM. The station continues to be occupied by unwanted squatters masquerading as board members. Like illegal squatters, they are refusing to vacate and using bogus names and padlocks on doors. May my community be assured that I am seeking for our region to have a broad community running their radio station. Watch this space. I thank the community members who attended the meeting on 1 October to seek to resurrect this radio station.

Volunteers make our community organisations prosper, sporting groups thrive and communities flourish. It was my privilege to take the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Tracy Davis, to visit some of the volunteers in Murrumba. I acknowledge her presence in the chamber tonight. At Deception Bay Meals on Wheels the minister was given the rounds of the kitchen when she helped volunteers to fill and seal the trays. At this point I would like to acknowledge president Des DeWar, vice-president Glenda Bartel and the many wonderful volunteers,

being Glen Bartel, Caroline Capelli, Lisa Diano, Mary Emerson, Brian Goudgi, Penny Hayes, Ann Jansen, David Mains, Doug Moore, Lester Rolph, Noel Thomas, Bob Turner and Bertha Wilson. The work of volunteers at Meals on Wheels is not just about the provision of food; it is also about a smile. For some clients it is an important daily social connection.

I took the minister to the YMCA facility called The Space at North Lakes. I would like to acknowledge a couple of their volunteers including Richard Hatch for his work as a school breakfast volunteer, Dejan Mavrenski and Sam Peina for their fundraising of \$2,350 to purchase music equipment, and Marija Batkovska and Genevieve Walker for their volunteering at the centre.

Murrumba is one of the fastest growing areas in Queensland, with new residents arriving every day. Today I would like to talk about the privilege of welcoming three new residents. Many people will have seen their arrival on the nightly news. I speak of Sarah, Andrew and Rhubarb, the three new residents of Griffin, who have relocated as part of the Moreton Bay Rail Link translocation plan. If you have not figured it out, Sarah, Andrew and Rhubarb are koalas. They are among the 365 koalas that have been fitted with GPS radio collars as part of the Moreton Bay Rail Link monitoring and tagging project. Their new home is on state land dedicated to support koalas where I helped plant 17,000 koala habitat trees.

On 13 and 14 September I walked in the Walk for Kids 100-kilometre walk from North Lakes and concluding at the Sunshine Coast. We raised funds for Mater Little Miracles and the Deception Bay PCYC. I would like to acknowledge, amongst many, Matt Roue, Daisy Bolton, Chezy Chau and Chris Bowmaker and his team for creating and supporting a wonderful cause. PS: the blisters are still healing. I table the media report. Murrumba: a great place.

Tabled paper: Article from *Quest Community eNewspapers—North Lakes Times*, dated 18 September 2014, titled 'Walk for Kids nears \$20K' [\[6265\]](#).

Bribie Island Combined Emergency Services Expo; Police Service

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (9.35 pm): Tonight I take great pleasure in standing up and talking about last Saturday's Combined Emergency Services Expo open day at the VMR on Bribie Island. It was an absolutely fantastic day in the lead-up to Get Ready Week. We had representation from the police, the ambulance, the fire brigade, the SES, the Water Police, the rural fire brigade, the VMR, the surf-lifesaving clubs, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Maritime Safety Queensland, National Parks and Wildlife, Red Cross, Maritime Safety Military Cadets and TS Cooper naval cadets and my office, all to promote Get Ready Week and the emergency services in our area.

It was a free expo and family fun day. There were fantastic displays and demonstrations of kitchen fires, road crash rescues, flare demonstrations, water cannon displays and equipment demos where we got to crawl all over the boats, the trucks and the bikes. The ambulance diagnostic dummy was out and about. We also had jumping castles.

It was a terrific opportunity to acknowledge the services that we have in our local area and also to talk about getting ready for the upcoming bushfire and storm seasons. I was very pleased to hand out the bright yellow slap bands from the state government with the USB stick on them. They are fantastic for making sure that all of the documents you are going to need, in case you have to evacuate your home, are all in one convenient location. We also were out promoting the MoretonAlert telephone system to warn us about upcoming bushfires and storms. There were many, many suggestions on how to get your home prepared for the upcoming storm and bushfire seasons.

I give a big thank you to Senior Constable Chris Bird or, as he is referred to in my house, 'Policeman Birdy', for helping out. I also thank the VMR for hosting the expo and all of the fantastic volunteers who made the day such a success.

I would also like to talk about the brilliant night out we had on Saturday to celebrate 150 years of policing. In attendance were Commissioner Ian Stewart, Superintendent Mick Brady, Pat O'Loughlin and David Crawford-Raby, Scotty McQueen and their teams—

Ms Davis: Ah, Scotty.

Mrs FRANCE: I take the minister's interjection about Scotty. They have all done a wonderful job keeping our community safe. It was a terrific night at St Columban's College in Caboolture. I congratulate the school and the students on hosting us there for the night. I also mention the Caboolture Sports Club—Kel and Tony—for doing such a terrific job; Geoff Mazlin; Rosemary

Worthington; Craig Hewlett from 101.5 and his team; and Superintendent Mick Brady and his offsider, Mel, from the Moreton Bay police district for such a wonderful evening in Caboolture. I thank all of our businesses who supported the evening.

Mrs Frecklington: Was it good?

Mrs FRANCE: I had a terrific night myself. Thank you for asking.

Mental Health, Funding

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (9.38 pm): It is the matter of mental health about which I wish to speak. It is the case that Ipswich is no different from any other society in that we have a prevalence of mental health issues affecting our society. It affects not only workplaces but also families. This is something that has always been known to me but is something that was highlighted by the doctors—the general practitioners and specialists—with whom I met on 21 August 2014, when we discussed a range of matters including the improvements to the Ipswich Hospital and the fact that Springfield hospital will really not be appropriate for the greater environs around Ipswich because, in fact, that is where the growth is going to be. The doctors were very frank in their discussions with me. They indicated that one of the real difficulties in our region is mental health and spoke about what we need to do about it.

I know that we are fiscally challenged right at this moment, but in a humble way I ask for the Minister for Health to consider mental health as being a real problem as something which permeates our society and something which is ongoing and affects a cross-section of society. To give the House an example, we have all heard about chroming, autism and those things that are prevalent in our schools, in our workplaces and in our homes, but we also have to consider the returned servicemen from Afghanistan and Iraq who suffer from PTSD. I went to a forum before the federal election and there was a group of servicemen there. I was talking with a man's commander and one man in the front row was extremely agitated. It turned out that he in fact was suicidal. Supported by his wife, it took a lot of guts to go to that meeting and to be able to stand up and talk about his position.

Mental health is something that we need to focus on and to direct our energies to, because it is important that these people are cared for. It is important for us to care for all people in our society, and of course mental health is one of those issues where they do not have the resources to be able to get themselves out of the mire that surrounds them. Mental Health Week gives me an opportunity to appreciate all of the people who support those people in Ipswich who do suffer mental health issues—Jacaranda Clubhouse, Partners in Recovery by the Richmond Fellowship, Ozcare, Neami National, Drug ARM, Red Cross and the Salvation Army. I thank people like Roy Henderson and Susan Barron-Hamilton for the good service that they give our community. I thank them very much on behalf of the Ipswich electorate.

Consumer Protection

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (9.41 pm): Recently I attended an event at Bli Bli on the Sunshine Coast which was streamed live around Australia and overseas. I understand that it was a first for Queensland and may have even been a first for Australia. Ashton Wood and his family destroyed, with help from others, their \$49,000 Jeep vehicle out of a sense of frustration and anger that the manufacturer and importer would not take responsibility for persistent and unresolved problems with their car. The destruction of this once-expensive Jeep highlights the need for our laws to be tightened to protect consumers against some manufacturers and importers of vehicles who refuse to take responsibility for persistent and unresolved problems with vehicles. The event was supported by people throughout Australia who want better consumer protection laws so that when someone buys a vehicle and is then faced with persistent and unresolved problems the manufacturer and the importer of the vehicle are required to replace it or refund the purchase price. I understand that many states in America have had these tougher consumer protection laws in place for many years and it is time that we had these similar laws in Queensland. The current laws in Queensland make it too easy for some manufacturers to avoid their responsibilities that vehicles they sell are reliable, durable and safe. Let us compare this with how quickly the government will act to close down a fast-food outlet if there are complaints about the fitness of the food while the big vehicle manufacturers and importers remain protected.

The first thing the Newman government can do is remove the \$25,000 claim limit that is set at the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal so that these disputes can be investigated and action taken in an affordable forum for people. I table copies of petitions supporting this call coordinated by Connie Cicchini, a Queensland resident who is also the founder of the lobby group Lemon Laws for Australia. Connie was also the major sponsor of the recent Destroy My Jeep event because she owns a lemon vehicle which, I understand, was also manufactured by Fiat Chrysler. I also recognise Mr Stewart Lette for his work as a consumer rights advocate in supporting our calls for lemon laws to be introduced in Queensland. Connie, Stewart and Ashton are in the public gallery tonight and I thank them for their commitment to the cause.

The RACQ Vehicle Technologies Department supports the cause and prepared a paper titled 'A case for consumer motor vehicle lemon laws in Queensland'. I also inform members that the Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council and the Victorian government's Consumer Affairs department also support the introduction of lemon laws for motor vehicles, but in Queensland there is dead silence. It is time that the Queensland government acted. If the Newman government finds this request too hard, at least it could start on a review of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal and hopefully the next state government will attend to the necessary changes to the laws so that manufacturers and importers are by law required to take responsibility for persistent and unresolved problems with vehicles. It is a good cause and this government should support it.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition regarding claim limit set at the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal [\[6266\]](#).

Townsville South State School, Anniversary

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (9.44 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise tonight to speak on a wonderful state school in the Townsville electorate. Townsville South State School is one of the smaller primary schools in Townsville, but what it lacks in size it makes up for by being big in heart and spirit. The school has just recently celebrated its 130th anniversary. I attended the official celebrations last week when I was honoured to meet both past and present students of the school. Three generations of students attended the event, some coming all the way from Sydney and even Gippsland to take a step back in time and revisit their roots. As part of the celebrations we attended a display of old school photos and resources before we headed to an official assembly, where principal Chris Riggs took a roll call of past students. I also found out why the school students are fondly known as 'mud pickers'. In past generations students had to make their way through the mudflats with no shoes to get to school. They then had to pick the mud out of their feet before entering the classroom. For those of us at the assembly who were not quite sure how 'mud picking' works, the principal was kind enough to organise a demonstration. He provided a bucket of the finest mud from the local mudflats and somehow managed to get some of the current students and past students to volunteer to show us exactly how 'mud picking' works—much to the delight of the rest of us at the assembly. Fortunately, I managed to escape dry and without any mud between my toes.

One of the best moments was when the youngest student, Lachlan H, aged five years and three months, and the eldest former student attending, a Mr Martin, a spritely 91 years young who attended the school from 1928 to 1932, unveiled the plaque with the names of all current students, staff and the P&C executive. We then moved on to plant a new rose garden at the front of the school to reinstate a piece of history that was at the school. There had been an historic rose garden which was first planted in 1963 which lasted for about 30 years before some very dry wet seasons took their toll on the garden. I had the responsibility of planting a wonderful *Melaleuca leucadendra* tree—that is, a paperbark; I did not know that before I did it—in the front entrance with the help of the two school captains. Well, let us say I just supervised their work. I congratulate principal Chris Riggs—who I also found out is a fine baker of scones and maker of fudge—his staff and in particular the P&C and its President, Carolyn Milsop, who have worked together not only to make the 130th anniversary something special but also to make this school such a wonderful success. It is due to their hard work and dedication student enrolments have significantly increased over the past year. In November last year there were 74 students and today there are now 117 students, and that is an increase of two class sizes. The current and past students have helped create a wonderful school that has plenty of spirit that I am sure will be around for the next 130 years of 'mud picking'.

Springwood Electorate, Road Infrastructure

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (9.47 pm): I rise to speak on topics of importance to the residents of the Springwood electorate. Congestion on our roads is a significant issue that constituents want this government to address. Obviously there are many congested roads at certain

times of day and night at a local level, but of particular concern is the congestion on the M1 motorway at the Gateway merge where the number of through lanes reduces from four to two, causing a bottleneck. If there was ever a case for a project with economic development benefit, this one ranks as extremely high. Let us consider the practical and financial benefits that flow by the reduction of lost time for hundreds of thousands of people, including our ministers, as well as pollution reduction through elimination of unproductive burning of petrol and diesel for three-quarters of a million vehicles per week, week after week, and that is just the beginning. Research shows that thousands of people make the choice not to accept work in the CBD because of the prolonged delays experienced in daily peak-hour traffic.

Commuters are also asking for more car parks to be constructed near our bus stations, but this will not be easily achieved due to a shortage of physical space. I am concentrating on the search for funding of a new park-and-ride facility on Underwood Road at the northern extremity of the Springwood electorate. There is also a great need to have the busway extended to the south of Underwood Road with the buses running alongside the M1 motorway. This project will also see the upgrade of the intersection of Underwood Road with Rothon Drive. Let us remember how difficult it is to find funds for such essential projects in the current fiscal environment. We certainly cannot simply put the cost of these projects on the credit card. Indeed, it only becomes feasible if funds for these projects can be allocated from the proceeds of the Strongest and Smartest Choice initiative led by the Treasurer. If the good people of Queensland choose to support the LNP government in this proposal at the next election, the process will allow us to acquire new government assets in the near future. I am confident that the Treasurer has in place objective measures to evaluate in the coming months the economic development potential of these projects as a means of setting project priorities to benefit the residents of the Springwood electorate and indeed the whole state.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.50 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, D'Ath, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, 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