



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

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## THURSDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2014

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

### PRIVILEGE

#### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister



**Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday during the motion on the ratification of the Queensland Plan the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection misled the parliament in his summation speech when he falsely quoted part of my speech, misrepresenting my earlier statements. What I did say was—

If this is the best the LNP government has to offer, then I share the views of non-government and crossbench members: if this is your best, it is not good enough.

Madam Speaker, I will be writing to you on this matter further.

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

#### Supreme Court Proceedings



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, early last week a presiding Supreme Court justice in a civil matter requested that the proceedings be brought to my attention as Speaker as there was a possibility that pleadings and evidence in the matter may have contravened section 8 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and that matters of parliamentary privilege were therefore involved. The case at issue is Flegg v Hallett. The Clerk, acting on my behalf, engaged Senior Counsel, who appeared on my behalf as amicus curiae, or friend of the court, in the matter. The issues are now before the court for consideration.

#### Papua New Guinea, Buk bilong Pikinini



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, Papua New Guinea is a neighbour and a friend of Queensland. Last week a delegation from our parliament travelled to Port Moresby as part of our parliamentary partnership with the national parliament of Papua New Guinea. Our members spent a very productive time with their Speaker, the Hon. Theo Zurenuoc, their Deputy Speakers and some of their committee chairs. Training was also delivered for some of their parliamentary staff by Rob Hansen, a parliamentary officer, who is the director of the PNG Pacific Parliamentary Partnership project. A more detailed report will be provided to the House. However, today I wish to advise members of a special initiative in the lead-up to Christmas. During our time in Port Moresby we visited the Buk bilong Pikinini library, a not-for-profit children's library run in conjunction with World Vision. Buk bilong Pikinini provides early education programs for children so they can learn to read and write. In a nation with limited literacy, this helps build a new generation of leaders.

This year the Queensland parliament's Christmas project will be a book drive to support this wonderful initiative. I have provided information to members in the chamber for those who would like to take part in contributing to the children of our friend and neighbour Papua New Guinea.

### PETITIONS

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation—

#### Torquay State School, Fencing

**Mr Sorensen**, from 750 petitioners, requesting the House to build a safer fence around the perimeter of the Torquay State School grounds [\[6399\]](#).

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

### Mason's Law

From 1,256 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that all Queensland Child Care Centres/Services and their staff are included as mandated notifiers in Queensland's legislation and that this new mandatory legislation should be known as Mason's Law—honouring Mason John Parker [[6400](#), [6401](#)].

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPER

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier (Mr Elmes)—

[6402](#) Family Responsibilities Commission—Annual Report 2013-14

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### G20 Leaders Summit

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.35 am): Being chosen as the host state for the G20 Leaders Summit is a huge vote of confidence in Brisbane and in Queensland. Only eight other cities have hosted the event in its current format, including Washington in 2008 and London in 2009. Brisbane has a growing reputation for attracting, planning and staging world-class events and now it joins these other cities in this distinguished class. The G20 is an incredible opportunity to showcase Queensland on the global stage as a world-class destination and as a rising star of the Asia-Pacific region.

Planning for the summit is right on track, and G20 activities are starting to roll out across this city, with G20 street banners appearing, the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre undergoing transformation and the cultural celebrations underway. This planning would not have been possible without our close partnerships with the Australian government and Brisbane City Council. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

The G20 Leaders Summit in Brisbane is the biggest peacetime security operation Australia has ever delivered. The Queensland Police Service is at the heart of the operation and in the lead-up to the summit and during the summit there will be approximately 6,000 police involved. Throughout the development of the G20 security operation we have been planning for all contingencies. Queenslanders will see fencing around principal meeting venues and leaders' sole-use hotels, but this is a necessary measure to ensure the safety of visiting delegations.

The QPS has undertaken extensive planning over the past two years to provide a safe and secure environment for visiting G20 leaders, delegates and the people of Queensland. I want to assure everyone that they are in safe hands. There will, of course, be some inconvenience experienced by people travelling to or through the Brisbane CBD during the G20. The Queensland government, in particular the QPS, has been working closely with the Australian government to minimise disruptions to the travelling public.

Last week the government launched the G20 cultural celebrations with the Colour Me Brisbane lights being turned on to light up the city. Queenslanders and visitors alike will have their chance to get involved with this fantastic free cultural celebration happening all over Brisbane for the next two weeks. The G20 Leaders Summit is a wonderful opportunity to showcase Queensland as a world-class destination for business, tourism, education, science and innovation. It will bring increased trade for Brisbane's hotels, shops, restaurants and venues as well as unprecedented international media exposure for Queensland in important trade and investment markets. The global exposure of the G20 will also increase awareness of Queensland's fantastic climate, culture and lifestyle. That is why we are committed—totally committed—to making the G20 summit an outstanding success in a great state with great opportunity.

### Newman Government, Achievements

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.38 am): This is a government that cares about those who are less fortunate or find themselves at a disadvantage. We will ensure the most vulnerable can feel safe and secure knowing that they can get excellent front-line services from

government when they need to. The most vulnerable in our society—our kids, our sick and elderly people and Queenslanders with disabilities—are central to our task of revitalising front-line services. There are also thousands of Queenslanders who are homeless who have fallen on hard times and need and deserve our help, and we will not let them down either.

This week we have spoken extensively about our focus on improving health, community safety and police services across-the-board. We have also carried out the most comprehensive review ever of Queensland's child safety system and we are implementing the recommendations. I note that we received a strong message of support from child safety campaigner and recently announced as Queensland Australian of the year for 2015, Hetty Johnston, when she tweeted, 'Thank you Premier for making sure that Queensland is the safest place to raise a child.'

We are refocusing our schools on delivering better early years education, and we have announced a massive new \$20 million investment in literacy for preschool kids through our libraries. We are giving schools the chance to have more independence and autonomy to deliver locally tailored solutions for kids to learn what they need to.

The Deputy Premier has been getting new funding into child care in some regional areas, providing security and peace of mind so that working mums and dads know that their kids are well looked after and safe while they are at work. We are also revitalising front-line services and care for people with disabilities. We are supporting parent carers and giving disabled people more personal choices about the services they buy with their funding and we are getting on with the NDIS, which will further improve the lives of disabled people.

We are demolishing Labor's housing waiting list of 30,000 which is already down by over 10,000 households, for which I congratulate the minister and his department. We are revitalising front-line youth services and giving young offenders a better chance to reform their behaviour through diversionary boot camps, and to help the hip pocket we are cutting public transport fares. We have a plan to drive down electricity prices. Madam Speaker, this government has a plan to help vulnerable Queenslanders by providing better services from a government that is working for them.

### Royalties for the Regions

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.41 am): Madam Speaker, our government made a promise to the people of Queensland at the last election that we would boost front-line services, and nowhere has our determination been greater than in regional Queensland to do just that. In regional Queensland communities have been neglected for decades and front-line services were run down by the previous Labor government.

Our regional economic development strategy RegionsQ encapsulates our government's determination to grow regional economies and to revitalise front-line services throughout regional Queensland. RegionsQ draws on the *Governing for growth: economic strategy and action plan* and identifies the priorities that will achieve the long-term vision that 80,000 Queenslanders themselves articulated in the Queensland Plan when they said they wanted a decentralised state and they wanted more people to live in regional Queensland. RegionsQ is about restoring respect for the important role that regional Queenslanders play in driving our state's economy and working with communities to find ways to grow investment, business opportunities and jobs in the regions.

Spearheading our efforts to boost infrastructure and services in regional Queensland is the Royalties for the Regions program with RegionsQ which we launched as soon as we were elected and that has so far funded not just roads, water plants and sewerage plants, but some much needed projects to deliver social services in regional communities. We understand the importance of early childhood education for kids everywhere, but for country kids in country towns too, so we have partnered with local councils in central western Queensland to provide the high-quality long day care services that they have never had before. In Barcaldine, with the assistance of the Barcaldine Regional Council, we identified the clear need for this type of community-driven centre to make life easier for working parents and to provide significant social and economic value to the region. The child care centre, funded by the Royalties for the Regions program, will be located on the grounds of the Barcaldine State School and will provide day care for babies to school aged children five days a week, after school and vacation care for children up to 12 years of age and a kindergarten program.

Not far away in Blackall, the Blackall-Tambo Regional Council asked us to help them fulfil a need for a long day care service in their town. Work will soon start on a \$1 million refurbishment program—over half of which is funded by the Royalties for the Regions program—of a disused preschool building at the Blackall State School to construct a state-of-the-art child care facility with plenty of space for the kids of that town. In the Burdekin region in north Queensland the Royalties for the Regions program will fund a much needed PCYC community centre expansion in Ayr that will provide a variety of services to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of locals, and I was very pleased to inspect that project a couple of weeks ago with the member for Burdekin. In the mining community of Dysart, \$750,000 worth of Royalties for the Regions funding will build a brand new medical centre to transform a situation in which Dysart's general practitioner was operating from a government owned house.

Of all the projects we have funded through the Royalties for the Regions program, one of my personal favourites was a brand new swimming pool for the kids of Karumba in the gulf. I will always remember looking down at the back of the hall that day in Karumba when we announced that we were going to allocate \$1 million from Royal for the Regions to build a new pool. It came as a complete surprise to the kids, and the mums shed a few tears of joy as well.

The Royalties for the Regions program is bringing these sorts of facilities to regional communities where they have never existed before. We are a government that is genuine about building vibrant, prosperous Queensland regions, and Royalties for the Regions has made a big difference to front-line services in country towns for country people.

### Strong Choices

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.45 am): Madam Speaker, this government is absolutely focused on delivering for vulnerable Queenslanders. We are doing this in a number of ways: we are revitalising front-line services; we are keenly focused on doing what we can to put downward pressure on the cost of living; and we are working every day to grow the Queensland economy. While we are proud of our achievements thus far, we know that there is much more work to do.

Population projections show us that, in the next 20 years Queensland's population will expand by 2.5 million people, there will be 400,000 more children who will need to be educated and there will be 650,000 more people over the age of 65 who will require medical and health services. To maintain our current standard of living and to prepare for the needs of our growing state, Queensland will need new schools, new hospitals and better roads and infrastructure, but we are being held back by the \$80 billion black cloud of Labor debt which hangs over the future of this state and inhibits our ability to invest in the infrastructure that we know a growing state is going to need.

Unlike those opposite, we have a plan to pay down that debt and to securely invest in the infrastructure that we know we are going to need in the future. We are taking that plan to the people of Queensland at the next election. Make no mistake, Madam Speaker: under our plan we will be delivering for Queensland's most vulnerable citizens. Our \$3.4 billion Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will put real downward pressure on electricity prices. If given a mandate to act on our asset leasing plan, we can take six per cent off retail electricity prices in 2015-16. This policy will help to stimulate the economy and it will provide relief to Queensland families who are doing it tough. Just as importantly, the Strong Choices Cost of Living Fund will also help generate about 8,600 new full-time equivalent jobs here in Queensland.

The \$8.6 billion Strong Choices Future Investment Program also has the potential to transform our state. It will mean better roads and schools and it will improve our hospitals, particularly in regional communities as I detailed to the House yesterday. It will lead to better services for Queensland's most vulnerable citizens, and it will stimulate growth in many regional communities. It will also generate up to 25,000 new jobs in job-creating infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, only the LNP has a plan to provide for the growth we know is just around the corner and to provide Queenslanders with the schools, hospitals and transport infrastructure that we know the state is going to need. Our positive plan will put downward pressure on the cost of living for vulnerable families and create up to 33,600 new jobs. It will strengthen the Queensland economy, providing more opportunities for all Queenslanders, especially those most vulnerable.

## Child Safety

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (9.48 am): At the 2012 election, the Newman government made a commitment to overhaul the state's child protection system. Our government has a strong plan for a brighter future for Queensland families, and we are revitalising front-line services so that vulnerable Queenslanders are safer and more secure. Our child protection reforms aim to ease the pressure on the overburdened system, giving us greater capacity to work more meaningfully with families.

Parents have the primary responsibility of caring for their children and protecting them from harm; however, sometimes families need additional support to provide care and protection to their children. Our stronger families reforms, funded with the commitment of \$406 million of new money over the next five years, will make sure that families have avenues available to them to access the supports that they need. From January next year we will start the rollout of new community based intake and referral front-line services that will transform the way that families access services in Queensland, giving families more timely and targeted support to prevent issues escalating to child safety concerns.

At the same time we will roll out new intensive support services and domestic family violence services, with the single largest investment in front-line family support ever seen in this state. These services will work with families who are struggling, to help them to build the resilience and capabilities they need to responsibly care for their children so they can grow up safe and secure.

We are also changing the way our child protection workers engage with families. When concerns are reported to child protection services, workers will have greater discretion as to how to work with the families. We are introducing a new practice framework that gives Queensland a contemporary front-line framework to promote strengths based practices rather than those practised in the past.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, sadly, are overrepresented in the child protection system, and the Queensland government is addressing this trend both in discrete Indigenous communities and in urban communities by expanding Indigenous family support services and putting on more Indigenous front-line support workers.

We are absolutely committed to improving assistance to young people transitioning from state care to independence. We are delivering on this commitment with \$2.5 million in 2014-15 to support young people in care to prepare for a transition to a healthy and financially responsible adulthood. This initiative will give young people practical life skills, access to employment and training as well as information, planning and services up to the age of 21 years.

This year I committed funding for an extra 77 front-line Child Safety staff as part of our ongoing commitment to revitalising front-line services. These resources will bring down the case loads of child safety case officers across Queensland. I am pleased to inform the House that the average case load of child safety officers at the end of September has reduced to around 19 cases. In fact, it is likely that those case loads will be under 18 when new figures are released shortly. This is the first time in 10 years that case loads have been under 20. It has taken this government only 2½ years to do something that the previous Labor government could not achieve in a decade.

This government is revitalising front-line services and delivering on our strong plan so that we can make a difference right across this great state. We want families to be strong, we want families to be safe and we want families to be secure. We will work very, very hard until we have a child protection system in place that meets the needs of children and families as well as it can and as it should.

## Building and Construction Commission

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.52 am): The Newman government has been committed to revitalising front-line services. One of the areas in which we have been doing that is building regulation. This year we saw the creation of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. One of our aims has been to reduce the number of disputes that take place in the building and construction industry but also deal in the shortest possible time frame with those disputes that inevitably will happen.

One of the great reforms that have been introduced is the early dispute resolution service. Disputes can go on and on and on, costing money and causing a great deal of angst. We want to be able to reduce that. Some of the early trials of the early dispute resolution process have been incredibly encouraging. Whereas in the past people automatically had to go to QCAT or the building regulator could not intervene while the contract was in place, we have brought in new reforms to allow early dispute resolution to take place. By using this service, people's disputes are now being resolved on average in 15 days, compared to an average of 28 weeks with QCAT. What an incredible improvement—a great reduction in cost and a great reduction in angst.

The QBCC has also become far more customer oriented—the customer being the next person they are dealing with, whether it is a consumer or a building contractor. We have designed a new customer-friendly website. That has been designed by contractors and consumers for contractors and consumers. Almost 70 per cent of the information is accessible within two clicks and 100 per cent of the information is accessible within three clicks. We have introduced a new 24/7 telephone service. Of course, the building and construction industry is very active on the weekends. People are out viewing their homes on the weekends. The new 24/7 telephone service means that people can call whenever it suits them. Calls are answered by a customer service operator within 30 seconds, and that call will be dealt with on the spot or transferred to a specialist for further assistance. To date we have received more than 2,000 calls outside of normal business hours.

We also are committed to consumer education, so the QBCC has created a number of consumer education videos that star popular TV personalities Tom Williams and Liz Cantor. The videos guide consumers through the entire building process, from selecting a block of land to choosing a builder and what to do when their home nears completion. This video series is available for viewing on the QBCC's YouTube channel and the QBCC website.

Finally, I will talk about some of the legislative reforms that were brought in to make it easier for contractors. It now will be an offence for contractors not to pay their subbies, and there will be consequences for that. We have brought in new minimum financial requirements. This has cut a lot of red tape and is saving licensees thousands of dollars each year. We are also bringing in three-yearly licence renewals, which will mean a 17 per cent discount for contractors—again, reducing cost. This government is committed to revitalising front-line services and we are doing it with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

### **Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Fire Risk Management**

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (9.55 am): I rise today to speak about the important fire management work the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers undertake to keep our communities in Queensland much safer. As one of the largest land managers in Queensland, the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing faces many challenges in managing fire throughout a range of environments. However, my department is certainly up to the task.

QPWS rangers are on the front line meeting this challenge and take a professional, hands-on and cooperative approach to managing fire throughout our state. QPWS fire management systems provide a strong framework, including policy and procedures, and guide our rangers in implementing a broad range of effective fire activities throughout the state.

The Newman government is investing \$6.7 million this financial year on a range of fire management activities including planned burning, development and maintenance of fire lines, wildfire control and suppression on our protected area estate. In May this year I witnessed the start of the 2014 back-burning season at Mount Maroon. A helicopter mounted aerial incendiary device called a 'red dragon' was used to begin the planned-burn process, with a number of ignition spheres dropped from above the 3,000-hectare burn area.

Delivering an annual planned-burning program is a key priority for the QPWS. Planned burning reduces fuel loads, mitigates risks to life and property, and maintains biodiversity right across the estate. Planned-burn guidelines, released by the Queensland government last year, have been incorporated into the QPWS fire management program to further enhance fire management outcomes. Rangers have already carried out 327 planned burns over an area of 640,000 hectares during this year's burning season.

This fire season we have 500 trained rangers out there ready to do the job, ready for rapid response to wildfires, to minimise the impact and risk of fire to human life, property, the environment and also cultural values. I table a letter from North Queensland, up near Cooktown, where the local authorities are working with the fire authorities. This letter commends QPWS staff for working hand in glove with local communities to deliver great outcomes—protecting our natural environment and working with local authorities.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the Cooktown Local News, dated 23 October 2014, titled 'Mt Amos firefighters say thank you' [[6403](#)].

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### Declaration of Interest

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.58 am): I wish to advise the House of my financial interest as an investor and adviser to a consortium of prominent Queensland businessmen who are announcing today a proposal to build a \$100 million tourism infrastructure cable-car project from Neranwood to Springbrook in the Gold Coast hinterland. As many would know, I proposed a similar project 16 years ago, and the consortium believe I can add significant knowledge and expertise to this proposal to avoid the pitfalls of the previously proposed project.

I advised the Integrity Commissioner of my proposed involvement in this project well and truly before my acceptance of any role in the project and he has cleared my involvement and capacity to be involved whilst being a member of parliament and an assistant minister in the Newman LNP government.

The Integrity Commissioner has of course advised that I should have no part in the application or decision-making process, and I will adhere to that requirement in absolute totality. He did advise that I make the Premier aware of my involvement in the project, and I have complied with that direction. No-one else in the government was aware of the proposal until this disclosure and certainly not of my involvement in this exciting tourism infrastructure project for Queensland. All matters in relation to the project application process will be handled by the chief executive officer of the consortium and from this announcement day forward I will have no public comment to make, no role in the application process and no advocacy role with either the public or government members, as I leave the government absolutely free to judge the value of this visionary project to the Gold Coast and Queensland economy on an apolitical merit based assessment.

I thank the House for its indulgence this morning in allowing me the opportunity to be 100 per cent transparent, accountable and honest with regard to this difficult situation for me as the member for Mermaid Beach and I hope the House accepts my sincere attempt to have this project considered solely on its individual merit, free of bias, possible political point-scoring or interference.

## EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.00 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 41 of the Education and Innovation Committee, *Subordinate legislation tabled between 6 August 2014 and 26 August 2014*. The committee has considered the two pieces of subordinate legislation and has found no significant issues in respect of fundamental legislative principles or lawfulness. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 41—Subordinate legislation tabled between 6 August 2014 and 26 August 2014 [[6404](#)].

## PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

### Reports and Documents

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (10.00 am): As part of its oversight responsibilities regarding the Crime and Corruption Commission, the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee receives annual reports on a number of the commission's activities. As chair of the committee, I must table these reports within 14 sitting days of receipt. Accordingly, I lay upon the table of the House the following reports from the Crime and Corruption Commission: a letter from the acting chairman of the

commission dated 25 September 2014 enclosing the Crime and Corruption Commission's report on its activities regarding authorities for assumed identities in relation to criminal activity for the 2013-14 financial year pursuant to section 314 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000; a letter from the acting chairman of the commission dated 25 September 2014 enclosing the Crime and Corruption Commission's report on its activities regarding authorities for assumed identities in relation to misconduct offences for the 2013-14 financial year pursuant to section 146ZQ of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001; a letter from the acting chairman of the commission dated 25 September 2014 enclosing the Crime and Corruption Commission's report on its activities regarding aspects of surveillance device warrants for the 2013-14 financial year pursuant to section 358 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000; and a letter from the acting chairman of the commission dated 25 September 2014 advising of the commission's controlled operations activities for the 2013-2014 financial year pursuant to section 138(2) of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001.

*Tabled paper:* Annual Report to the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014—Compliance requirements under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for assumed identities [6405].

*Tabled paper:* Annual Report to the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014—Compliance requirements under the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 for assumed identities in relation to misconduct offences [6406].

*Tabled paper:* Annual Report to the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014—Compliance requirements under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for surveillance devices [6407].

*Tabled paper:* Schedule of Controlled Operations Applications for Misconduct Offences for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 [6408].

Finally, I also lay upon the table of the House a letter from the acting chairman of the commission dated 25 October 2013 advising of the commission's controlled operations activities for the 2012-13 financial year pursuant to section 138(2) of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. It has recently come to the attention of the committee that this report was not tabled within the required 14 sitting days of receipt. I apologise to the House for the oversight. I also table report No. 95 of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, *Annual report 2013-14*, in accordance with section 108 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. This report provides information on the committee's activities for the 2013-14 financial year.

*Tabled paper:* Schedule of Controlled Operations Applications for Misconduct Offences for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 [6409].

*Tabled paper:* Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee: Report No. 95—Annual Report 2013-14 [6410].

## LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (10.03 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 78 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, *Subordinate legislation No. 220—G20 (Safety and Security) Regulation 2014*. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 78—Subordinate legislation No. 220—G20 (Safety and Security) Regulation 2014 [6411].

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Madam SPEAKER:** Question time will finish at 11.03.

### Public Service, Jobs

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.03 am): My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his statement in January 2013 that public sector job cuts had ended. Given that recently tabled annual reports show that job cuts have continued with a further 2,767 government workers retrenched or made redundant in 2013-14, will the Premier explain to Queenslanders why he has broken another promise?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question and simply point to the fact that the size of the Queensland Public Service, if we look at where it is today compared to where it was when we took office, is growing again. Indeed, while we had to shed some positions—and those individuals were all looked after and given, in some cases, quite generous payouts—the Public Service is growing again.

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The actual net position means that, in terms of the Public Service—I do not have the figure in front of me—the net decrease in the size of the Queensland Public Service is less than—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** 2,767.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The net decrease in the Queensland Public Service since we came to office is now less than 14,000—the decrease. So the Public Service is growing. We are employing more nurses and doctors and teachers and police officers and firefighters and ambulance officers—people who serve Queenslanders on the front line every day of the week—because that is the truth of the matter. While we grow the Queensland Public Service on the front line where it matters, those opposite during their election campaign—they have started already—will continue to peddle quite outrageous falsehoods, and sadly we are going to see that in this election campaign. I say to Queenslanders: look at the facts. Hospitals—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** They're your facts. You've cut people's jobs.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I warn the Leader of the Opposition. You have been making a number of interjections. The Premier is not taking your interjections. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** We are seeing improvements in front-line service delivery. I point to the comments from AMAQ President Shaun Rudd the day before yesterday—I talked about them yesterday in this place—that hospitals are performing better. That is what he said. I point to the report from the Auditor-General tabled in this House this week which shows that emergency departments are performing very well—second only to WA, the second best performance in the entire nation. I point to the dramatic decreases in crime across Queensland because we have over 800 more police on the beat, strong laws, two police helicopters and new IT front-line technology. So we have grown front-line services. We have improved front-line services. We are making this a safer state for Queenslanders. If we want to talk about plans, we again remind the Labor Party about its plan which was with the Public Service Commission to downsize by about 41,000, and I have tabled this document before. So there you go. Those are the facts of the situation.

### **Bundaberg, Disaster Recovery**

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier outline total spending to date on disaster recovery in Bundaberg and will he guarantee all moneys allocated to the people of Bundaberg for disaster recovery will be spent there?

**Mr NEWMAN:** There are mechanisms available to the Leader of the Opposition to ascertain the total level of expenditure in Bundaberg, but I say this: we have shown an unequivocal passion and commitment to put that important regional city back on its feet, and that is what we have done. There are any number of ways that you can measure the performance of this administration with the former government in terms of putting Bundaberg back together. We have seen the restoration of important infrastructure such as roads and the Don Tallon Bridge. We have seen the betterment approach of this government coming to the fore with important projects being approved and then undertaken—for example, to provide safe access out of North Bundaberg in the case of a future emergency.

I and the members of the cabinet were in Bundaberg for the regional cabinet only a week and a half ago. Can I say that the response from the leaders of that community was extremely positive. The response of the community is a thing that I take to heart, because what I saw and heard from people is a proud city with strong and determined people putting their lives back together with the support of this government, the federal government and also their local government. The people there—people like Mayor Mal Forman and all the councillors—have worked very hard. We continue to support Bundaberg. We continue to do what is required.

Right now our focus particularly has turned to job creation, because it is something that we note they have taken some significant hits. That is why we announced significant funding—\$16 million, I believe—for the gas pipeline down to the Port of Bundaberg to allow for value-adding and manufacturing industries to be located not only along the ring-road but also down at the Port of Bundaberg.

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

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

**Mr PITT:** My question relates to the Premier's response. The question asked—

**Madam SPEAKER:** It was not your question. Please take your seat.

**Mr PITT:** I said 'the' question.

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

**Mr PITT:** The question asked for a particular funding amount. The Premier has to actually answer that—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Please take your seat. The Premier has the call. He has time on the clock. I have listened and written the question down. He is addressing the issue. He has addressed the issue in respect of Bundaberg and he still has time on the clock. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** What do you do with an opposition that has no plan, no policies, no way of funding the future infrastructure needs of this state, no real idea about how to create jobs and to make Queensland safe? The way you deal with it is you do not vote for it in 2015.

I should reflect on the very disappointing approach yesterday to the Queensland Plan. Eighty thousand Queenslanders, including people from Bundaberg, want a plan to take this state forward for the next 30 years and yesterday the Labor Party, in front of their eyes in the figurative sense, ripped up the people's plan—ripped it up and would not support it. It has no plan, no policies, no leadership or commitment.

*(Time expired)*

### **Housing 2020 Strategy**

**Mr PUCCI:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline how the government has delivered improved front-line housing services for low-income families in my electorate through the government's Housing 2020 Strategy?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the member for the question. I note that the member for Logan knows that people in his electorate value great front-line services that help ensure that disadvantaged people are safe and secure. He has been a champion for improving front-line housing services in his electorate. I am told that the member has assisted a constituent—let us call him Wayne—a paraplegic man with a young family. Wayne had been living in a converted shed for 10 years and in recent times his property was flooded. The honourable member has helped Wayne and his family get into public housing nearer to a medical facility that is able to further assist his situation.

That is an example of the way members of my team roll up their sleeves and help people across this state in their electorates every single day of the week. Our side wants to help people. The other side wants to play politics. This side is passionate about dealing with not only the big picture but also the small, human issues that we see on a day-to-day basis.

To that end, this government has slashed Labor's public housing waiting list by over 10,000. Those opposite pretend that they want to do something about those sorts of issues when they are in government. This side of politics, when we are in government, because we have the financial acumen and the ability to make a real difference, actually make a difference. There are 10,000 fewer families or households on that waiting list.

The government has also provided more than 56,000 Queensland families with interest-free loans to cover the bonds on rental properties, getting them over that first private housing hurdle. Four thousand five hundred of these households are in the Logan area. Our RentConnect program has also helped more than 27,000 households find a private rental property after struggling to find a place. Two thousand five hundred of those people are in Logan. One of them was a young man who was struggling to find somewhere to live after coming out of rehab. He had no rental history and no experience of dealing with real estate agents. RentConnect officers at the Logan Housing Service Centre helped him find a private rental, helped him with his application, helped him negotiate and now, 18 months later, he is still happily housed.

The Logan Renewal Initiative is Queensland's biggest social housing revitalisation project as part of our Housing 2020 Strategy. It will see over 2,600 homes redeveloped as a mix of social, affordable and open-market housing. Why? Because—

*(Time expired)*

### Rex Airlines

**Ms TRAD:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Newman government's buy locally campaign, and I ask: will the Premier explain why his government has awarded subsidised air routes to Rex, a New South Wales based company, instead of Skytrans, a Queensland based company that employs hundreds of locals in Far North Queensland?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for her question and it is a fair and reasonable question. The overall answer is that we are determined to get the best possible value for money for Queenslanders, because at the end of the day—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! A question has been asked and I want to listen to the answer.

**Mr NEWMAN:** What those opposite do not understand, because they are poor financial managers, is that if you do not have robust, proper procurement processes and get best value for taxpayers then you cost taxpayers. Those opposite cry crocodile tears on the issue of cost of living, but this side of the chamber has held government expenditures down. As a result we have been able to do things such as take \$7,000 in tax off the family home, provide a one-off \$80 water rebate for those in South-East Queensland, slash the previously announced former Labor government's public transport fare increases and then provide the first-ever reduction in public transport fares—the first ever in this state's history. That is what this government is doing. If we are re-elected we will also provide cost-of-living relief on electricity bills. You can only afford to do that if you manage money wisely. So when we go to market to provide a service or, indeed, some infrastructure for Queensland, we are determined to get the best possible price, the best possible service. That allows us to keep the pressure off taxes and charges.

I think those opposite misunderstand what buy locally is about. It is about emphasis, it is about encouraging all of us to look to those local buying opportunities. That is what I do in my electorate and that is what members of this team on this side of the House do. Wherever possible, that is what we do.

It would not take too much scratching around, though, to demonstrate the total and blatant hypocrisy of those opposite. I dare say that only a few minutes of investigation by Treasury or departmental officials would find any number of cases where the former Labor government awarded contracts to interstate firms. So—

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Manager of Opposition Business, you have been constantly interjecting. I ask you to cease your interjections. I will start warning you under the standing orders and other members on my left who are constantly interjecting. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** If they would like an example of their breathtaking hypocrisy that cost a fair bit of money, a bit of loose change—\$1.2 billion of taxpayers' funds—I talk about, of course, the IBM Health payroll contract, a global multinational, when IT companies in this city on many occasions said to me, 'Why didn't the former Labor government come to us? We could have delivered a payroll solution for Queensland Health and it would not have cost, Premier, \$1.2 billion.' So there you have it: strong financial management, delivering cost-of-living savings to Queenslanders, because we know how to manage the finances of Queensland.

### Lytton Electorate, Disability Services

**Mr SYMES:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister please inform the House how our government is revitalising front-line services and improving care for people with disabilities in my electorate of Lytton?

**Ms DAVIS:** I thank the honourable member for his question, his ongoing commitment to his local community and his great interest in revitalising front-line services particularly for people with a disability, their families and their carers who want to have choice and control over the support services that they need.

Our government is committed to revitalising front-line services as part of our reform program. Unlike the former Labor government we are breaking down silos. We are working collaboratively across agencies. In fact, my department is working with Queensland Health and the Department of Housing and Public Works on a five-year joint action plan to assist people who have been in long-term hospital settings move out into the community. Last year 38 people were transitioned from Queensland Health facilities into more appropriate community based accommodation settings. I am delighted to advise that we are likely to see an additional 20 people transitioned in the next year.

Our government has a strong plan for a brighter future. Whilst we have taken action on transitioning people into the community, we do know that there is more to do. Compare and contrast that with the former Labor government and the two former disability ministers, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mulgrave, who had no plan at all for this cohort of people and left people with a disability languishing in hospital settings.

The member for Lytton specifically asked about disability services in his electorate. The member has been very passionate in his advocacy for a group of individuals living in Casuarina Lodge. He has been working very closely with the Friends of Casuarina for a way to transition those people into the community. We have arranged a collaboration with Wesley Mission to build new accommodation for 10 residents of Casuarina Lodge. We are very excited about that outcome. I know that the member for Lytton has been working strongly with Friends of Casuarina. I know that they are absolutely delighted with the outcome that they are going to receive for their family members.

This government has a strong plan for a bright future. We are revitalising front-line disability services. We are preparing our state for the NDIS so that people with a disability can receive the supports and services that they want.

### Natural Gas

**Mr HOPPER:** My question is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. I table a report on the unintended consequences of natural gas.

*Tabled paper:* National Institute of Economic and Industry Research report to the Australian Industry Group and the Plastics and Chemicals Industries Association titled 'Large scale export of East Coast Australia natural gas: Unintended consequences—A study of the national interest effects of the structure of the Australian gas industry', October 2012 [\[6412\]](#).

The National Institute of Economic and Industry Research reported that for every \$1 earned from gas production on the east coast of Australia \$21 is lost in the domestic industry. In light of this, does the minister acknowledge that supply constraints and price spikes will exist in the market for periods too long to avoid severe damage to Queensland industrial users of gas?

**Mr McARDLE:** I thank the member for the question. What this comes down to is: do we support a gas reservation policy? Can I make this point very clearly. I have been asked that question on many occasions, as has the Deputy Premier and also the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. The answer is no. This government does not support a gas reservation policy.

**Dr Douglas** interjected.

**Mr McARDLE:** Can I make this very clear. What needs to happen is this: we need across the eastern seaboard a policy for exploration for gas, not shutting down gas exploration and production. At about the same time that this state moved into CSG to LNG, New South Wales did as well. Now what we find in New South Wales is they have pulled back for political purposes and they are now facing a major shortage of gas in either 16 or 17 years. We need a rational approach to exploring for gas and understanding that by exploring for gas more becomes available to be used in the domestic and international market. What we did in this state is understood that we needed to put in place a regime by way of protection for the farmers and also the industry to ensure both were successful. We put in place the GasFields Commission. The Commissioner, Mr John Cotter, a man well respected right across this state, has worked very well with all sectors and there have been positive outcomes for all concerned.

**Dr Douglas** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Gaven, you will cease your interjections. They are not being taken. I call the minister.

**Mr McARDLE:** That is the way it should be approached in other states, not be captured by small interest groups seeking their own personal gain. State governments have a very clear obligation to ensure outcome in gas production of all levels to ensure their own domestic services are met and also to supply the international market. There have been many claims now that the gas price is getting higher. Yes, it is. We live in a global economy. The market has changed dramatically. We are no longer simply a domestic market; we are a domestic and international market. I quote from an article by Craig Emerson and Greg Combet in the *Australian Financial Review* about coal seam gas—

Any development in NSW and Victoria needs to meet high hydrological and other environmental standards. But environmental issues should be determined on the basis of science, research and empirical evidence, not on political grounds.

This government has taken the bull by the horns and put in place a regime that delivers outcomes right across the state. We will be producing something like 2,000 petajoules per annum in 2016-17. We have taken the issue raised by the member and we are dealing with it. The problem now rests with Victoria and New South Wales. They have to deal with their issues. They cannot keep blaming this state for their inactivity, their inaction and the negative outcomes that are disastrous for gas prices in those states. New South Wales prices are going to go through the roof because of inaction.

### Murrumba Electorate, Schools

**Mr GULLEY:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. How has the LNP government delivered for school communities in my electorate of Murrumba since we came to government in 2012 and how does this plan for education differ from other approaches?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I thank the honourable member for Murrumba for his question. He understands how important education is to members of his electorate and how much work there was to do after the 2012 election and the conclusion of 20 years of Labor government.

The difference between the government and Labor is the same now as it was in 2012. Where we have a strong plan to build the best education system in Australia, those opposite still have no plan. Let us have a look at some of the specifics. With the Great Results Guarantee we have delivered \$131 million in 2014 directly to schools right across the state to enable them to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes. In Murrumba that has meant that the eight schools in the member's electorate have received nearly \$2.5 million in 2014 and will receive another \$2.5 million in 2015. To give specific examples for the electorate of Murrumba when it comes to the Great Results Guarantee, Bounty Boulevard State School in North Lakes received nearly \$333,000 in 2014. It is a school with a large contingent of Australian Defence Force families coming from interstate and overseas. The principal has said that the best thing about this additional investment has been the flexibility to target resources where they are most needed so that they can address the needs of newly arrived and diverse students. While we are backing our school principals to work with their school communities to make decisions that reflect their unique needs, Labor ran the old command-and-control model, telling schools how they should spend their funds right down to the last dollar.

I have already mentioned that \$183 million will go to schools for the Great Results Guarantee in 2015. There is another issue we also inherited: school maintenance. We inherited a \$300 million maintenance backlog. Labor was prepared to borrow money for everything, but not for fixing our schools. It was prepared to run up an \$80 billion—heading to an \$85 billion—debt but not prepared to have our schools look as good as they might.

We fixed that backlog. The state schools in Murrumba have shared in more than \$4.2 million. At Deception Bay High School that meant that it could clear the \$721,000 backlog that it had when we came to government. I thank the member for Murrumba for attending the opening of its refurbished library.

Deception Bay State School had a \$226,675 maintenance backlog in 2012. It has used its \$352,000 in funding to address a number of security and safety issues, including upgrading 15 doors to meet fire and evacuation standards, repairing leaking roofs, fixing cracked toilet floors and installing security screens.

It does not matter which school we look at in the electorate of Murrumba; they are getting extra prep teacher aide hours. We are making sure that we are getting on with our plan. We have a proud record in Murrumba. It is a record that bears out across the rest of the state of Queensland.

### Lease of Public Assets

**Mr PITT:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I table the recent Standard & Poor's rating of Queensland referred to by the Treasurer in the House yesterday which talks to the Newman government's 'asset sales' and ask: given that the Queensland Treasury says that a sale via a finance lease is the disposal of the assets and ratings agency Standard & Poor's says that they are asset sales, why are Queensland taxpayers still paying millions of dollars for ads saying that no assets are being sold?

*Tabled paper:* Article from [www.standardandpoors.com](http://www.standardandpoors.com) titled 'Queensland Ratings Affirmed at "AA+/A-1+" On Exceptional Liquidity and Strong Financial Management; Outlook Stable' [\[6413\]](#).

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I just go back to the comments of the Victorian state opposition leader who wants to be the Premier. He has said that if he is elected he will lease the port of Melbourne. Our Treasurer made very clear what he had said. He was asked specifically about this on radio in Melbourne. He was asked, 'Is this a sale?' and he said, 'No, it is a lease. It comes back.'

The other example I use for the benefit of those opposite—and again I think it is a very good example—is that over 100 years ago the then government of China leased a patch of real estate that is now one of the most important global economic powerhouses with, I would suggest, trillions of dollars of property. It is now known as Hong Kong. It was leased. Back some 15 or 16 years ago it was handed back to the people of China. There is a clear difference. No assets are being sold; we are leasing them.

I have dealt with that question. I go back to a previous question from the opposition. I thought I would elaborate on the hypocrisy from Labor members. I wanted to remind them about the 1,500 T-shirts they bought that were emblazoned proudly with slogans about buying locally when they were made overseas.

But I also thought that I would have a look at their car buying habits to see how committed they are to the Australian automotive industry. Let us have a look. The member for Bundamba supposedly has two motor vehicles. I think they are Suburus. Are they Australian cars? No. We have the Leader of the Opposition driving a VW. We have the member for Mulgrave driving a Calais. Good on him. But he did not buy an Aussie ute; he bought a VW ute, as I understand it. We have the member for South Brisbane driving a Toyota Camry Hybrid.

**A government member:** Of course.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Of course she is driving a hybrid in South Brisbane. I concede it may have been made in Australia.

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

**Mrs Miller** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Bundamba, I could ask you to leave the chamber, but I will warn you under standing order 253A. I was on my feet and you were interjecting. There was other noise across the chamber. Manager of Opposition Business, you have a point of order?

**Mr PITT:** It relates to relevance under standing order 118(b). When will the Premier actually speak to Standard & Poor's, the central point of the question? He has not even used the words in his response and I find that unacceptable.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I have taken your point of order. Premier, I refer you to the question that was asked. I know you addressed part of it, but I take you back to the question.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Gladly, because the Standard & Poor's report gives a very solid commentary on the performance of this government in the fiscal area. It actually says this government is doing a good job. Do members know what? This government will do an even better job if we are given a mandate to reduce the huge amount of Labor debt, pay down that debt, reduce our interest payments and create 25,000 new jobs through \$8.6 billion of infrastructure investment.

### Hervey Bay Electorate, Youth Services

**Mr SORENSEN:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House about how young people in my electorate of Hervey Bay will benefit from the government's work to revitalise front-line youth services?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the member for his question. I know that he is totally committed to helping young people in his electorate. I was lucky enough to meet some of those young people, some Hervey Bay students, when I launched the Queensland Plan. That plan reflects a range of community aspirations and our youth will play a key role in helping to realise that vision for the state.

I comment that on that day, down at the marina in Hervey Bay, those young people were so excited about the plan. How distressed and disappointed they would be to know that those opposite actually repudiated the people's plan in this place yesterday. They literally handed back the document. In a figurative sense they ripped it up in front of them. They would be most distressed by that, as would the people across this state who participated in the preparation of the plan.

Going forward from the Queensland Plan I say to members that we have been very determined to get on top of the youth policy area. One of the first things we actually did when we came to government was develop a new youth strategy. We are investing in youth services so that the right services for young people are being delivered in the right locations at the right time. We are giving youth offenders the chance to change the direction of their lives through our boot camps. There is one operating at Hervey Bay.

We know that the Fraser Coast needs this sort of investment. Our government is committed to revitalising front-line services and connecting young Queenslanders with the support and services they need to reach their full potential. That is what it is all about.

Census data from 2011 showed that the youth unemployment rate in the Fraser Coast region was almost double that of the rest of the state. Even more disturbingly, Fraser Coast youth were six per cent more likely to be homeless or living in improvised dwellings than other people across Queensland.

That is why Hervey Bay and Maryborough will receive funding for a new youth support service commencing in 2015. As the member for Hervey Bay can attest, the Fraser Coast has a real need for this service. An open tender process to establish this youth support service is now accepting applications, with funding of around \$840,000 over three years on offer to help vulnerable young people. This new service will aim to help young people find employment and help them access education and training opportunities.

This government does have a strong plan for a brighter future for all Queenslanders. We are committed to implementing the people's plan—the Queensland Plan. We are embracing it wholeheartedly and going forward with it. It is a bright torch, a beacon to guide the future of this state. It is so disappointing that the Australian Labor Party has not only failed to announce any of its own plans or policies but also figuratively ripped up the people's plan in this place last night. It is rudderless and leaderless and it has no team work or policies or plans.

### 1 William Street

**Dr LYNHAM:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer again to the report from Standard & Poor's which describes 1 William Street as a contingent liability and the Auditor-General's finding that 1 William Street is a risk to the operating sustainability of the state's finances and ask: how can the government criticise Labor for delivering much needed hospitals when the LNP's ongoing contingent liability on the state is an office tower for the Premier and his ministers?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for Stafford. Yes, I checked his car as well. He drives a VW Golf. That is another strong commitment to the Australian automotive industry from members of the Australian Labor Party—buying locally.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Have I hit a raw nerve, Madam Speaker? I worked out what the 'L' means in ALP. It means you just keep running over the cliff. You just keep going. You get caught out and found out for your hypocrisy. You get found out for your lack of plans and policies for the state and you keep running over the cliff. It is not bad.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Just pause the clock. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, they have no plans or policies and they also have no financial or business acumen. That is why we have undertaken the 1 William Street project, which does a number of things. It saves the government over the years to come many,

many millions of dollars—tens of millions of dollars. What it does as well is it creates a thousand jobs throughout the construction period and it is being funded by a superannuation fund. We are not putting the money up. Superannuation funds are paying for it. They are paying for it. What it does as well is it gives hardworking public servants appropriate office accommodation. On many occasions I have shown people from the private sector the conditions that the Labor Party asked public servants, hardworking men and women, to work in, and many people are always amazed at the terrible office accommodation that line public servants have been working in.

We are transforming the Queensland Public Service. We are transforming it into a true service government—one that wants to put the best interests of Queenslanders as their first consideration—that delivers better infrastructure through better planning. That is what we are about. I think it is only fair and reasonable that we make sure that the people who work in the Queensland public sector and do a great job because they want to serve the community have appropriate office accommodation.

This issue has been raised by members of the Labor Party time and time again. Frankly, it shows again that they have nothing but negativity because they have no plans or policies. They have no plan to actually build infrastructure in the way that we do. We are showing such innovation in the way that we deliver with projects like 1 William Street and also the Toowoomba second range bypass. We see constant negativity from them—never any positive plans for the future. Frankly, I say Queenslanders are working it out. That is very clear. They are working out that those opposite do not have a plan for this state going forward.

### **Springwood Electorate, Residential Tenancies Authority**

**Mr GRANT:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Can the minister update the House about recent boosts to front-line service delivery at the Residential Tenancies Authority and what benefits those services will bring to people in my electorate of Springwood?

**Mr MANDER:** I do thank the member for Springwood for his question, a man who in his current role, and in his former role as a councillor, is very, very committed to providing appropriate housing for people in his electorate. The government is committed to improving front-line services, and that includes the statutory authorities as well. I already mentioned earlier some of the reforms that have taken place in the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, but there are also some major reforms taking place in the Residential Tenancies Authority.

Over the past 2½ years there have been big changes made to the RTA to make it a far more customer orientated organisation than it has been in the past. There are more front-line staff helping with phone inquiries and tenancy disputes. We have put additional phone lines in and new software. There is more professional development for staff than there has been. There is an enhanced state-wide outreach program that will now focus on the emerging community housing management sector. We have been working on a new online portal to allow online bond management 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and I look forward to updating the House on the progress of that next year.

This year the RTA introduced the client support service to help people resolve tenancy issues before they grow into full-blown disputes. Queensland is the only state to provide this additional service. Since July last year more than 80 per cent of clients who have used the client support service have managed to resolve their own tenancy issue, saving themselves the hassle and expense of having to take matters to QCAT. Six people from the Springwood area have recently used that client support service to their satisfaction.

Every day the RTA answers around 1,650 phone inquiries and processes more than 1,000 bond lodgements and refunds about the same number. In the last financial year the RTA held 527,695 bonds, valued at over \$721 million. It holds in the Springwood area 2,656 rental bonds, valued at just over \$3.5 million. So we are talking about a great deal of money. We received 27,036 requests for dispute resolution—203 came from the Springwood area. The RTA answered 419,316 tenancy inquiries, so it has been kept incredibly busy.

The RTA does exceptional outreach work with people from across the Queensland residential rental sector. Last financial year the RTA hosted 65 tenancy seminars, industry and peak body presentations and other information sessions across the state. We are continuing to restore front-line services and protecting Queenslanders in whatever way we can.

*(Time expired)*

### Gas Reservation Policy

**Mr WELLINGTON:** My question is to the Minister for Energy. I note the minister's comments this morning and those comments made last year when the minister said, 'The government will not move to a gas reservation policy unless everything else falls by the wayside,' and I ask: what are the criteria that the government needs to 'fall by the wayside' before Queensland has a gas reservation policy?

**Mr McARDLE:** I thank the member for the question. As I said earlier, this government does not support a gas reservation policy. What has happened quite clearly is that there are claims from Victoria and New South Wales that what we have done is push gas into the international market, thereby making the gas prices higher in this state and in this nation. Can I make the point very clear here: New South Wales and Victoria have not taken the political determination to derive a positive outcome for the people of those two states. The evidence is that New South Wales could face a major crisis in gas supply in 2016 and 2017. Quite clearly there needs to be a very firm determination by those state governments to push aside the sectional interests and deal with the issues of their domestic supply and the international market as well. This government has taken the initiative by putting in place the GasFields Commission and the GasFields Commissioner to deal with the issues that those governments are not able to deal with. We do not apologise for doing that, because we struck the right balance between the right of landowners and the obligation we have as a state to develop resources and to feed into the international market.

On Curtis Island we are looking at an investment of somewhere between \$60 billion and \$65 billion that has generated millions of dollars into this state and will also generate significant royalties into this state when the ships push off the banks. That is millions of dollars into this state to assist with the roads, the hospitals, the construction that we need and also to help pay down the debt left by the Labor Party. In New South Wales and Victoria they are captive of sectional interests and have not taken the affirmative step of dealing with the issue that they now confront. To turn around now and try to blame this state is simply a nonsense. As I said, the quote from Emerson and Combet indicates very clearly that it is the issue of science that needs to be dealt with, not the fact that they are politically incompetent of dealing with the issues they face. This government again a long time ago dealt with those issues properly and effectively.

As this state grows there will be further exploration for gas right across the state, but that needs to be joined by the eastern seaboard states to establish what gas is available and to feed into the international and domestic market. They need to take the step that we have taken and actually push back against the sectional interests and achieve outcomes for their own constituencies. At the end of the day, if they do not do so, the crisis they will face will see major impacts on price rises in gas. I recall seeing recently an increase in the price of gas in New South Wales of about 17.6 per cent. That is because they have not taken the appropriate steps to supply their own industry base, their own domestic market, by taking the steps of exploration. That is their obligation to take care of their constituency. We do it here in this state very effectively and efficiently and we have taken every step to do so in the future.

*(Time expired)*

### Ipswich West Electorate, Schools

**Mr CHOAT:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. The schools in my electorate of Ipswich West amaze me with their innovative approaches to delivering education. What has this government done to encourage and enable this great work?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I thank the honourable member for Ipswich West for his question, and I agree with him wholeheartedly. As I travel around the state and visit schools I am always impressed by the dedication of principals and teachers in making sure that the children at their school are getting the education that they deserve to make sure they can be all that they can be in terms of the innovation that individual principals and teachers are applying in their schools.

The efforts differ from school to school to reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community. I have already mentioned in one of my answers this morning the Great Results Guarantee. In Ipswich West we are giving them the tools to encourage and enable decision making at the local level. In Ipswich West they shared nearly \$1.2 million in Great Results Guarantee funding in 2014, and they will receive more than \$2 million next year. These funds are not intended to fund business as usual. They are provided directly to principals to ensure children are meeting the minimum standards in literacy and numeracy.

In schools like Fernvale State School they used \$116,700 in 2014 on professional development for teachers, comprehension strategies, provision of literacy resources, intensive teacher aide support programs for targeted students in early year levels in literacy, and the purchase of additional iPads. Next year in Fernvale they are casting their minds to what they will do with the \$150,000 they will receive in 2015. I hear that it includes more teacher release time for teachers in grades 2 to 6 to undertake reading comprehension analysis for every student, year level planning days to enhance the literacy and numeracy focus in teaching, the provision of an intensive intervention teacher to support and improve levels of reading and reading comprehension in years prep to 2 and a numeracy coach. The list goes on.

We have also seen some innovation and resourcefulness of schools in Ipswich West at Leichhardt State School. It received a literacy and numeracy grant for \$13,256 under our Getting the Basics Right initiative. The school applied for this grant because a number of students were starting prep with poor vocabulary and literacy skills. Using its grant the school clustered together with other schools to get the best value for its money, put on a speech pathologist and rolled out explicit instruction teaching models because that is what the school community decided was the most effective way to ensure that students at Leichhardt State School can achieve the best possible outcomes.

On top of this, prep children in Ipswich West are benefiting from an additional 444 prep teacher aide hours. That is 444 hours of additional support for prep teachers and children to get the best start to their school education. This is a snapshot of some of the great things that communities are doing in Ipswich West, but it is a great exemplar of what our principals, teachers, parents and students can do when they have the backing, the support and the resources they need. Under this LNP government that is exactly what they will get. I remind members that tomorrow is World Teachers Day and I encourage all of them to thank their teachers in their communities.

### **Carbon Tax**

**Mr KNUTH:** My question without notice is to the Premier. The Premier stated that the money from the carbon price refund would be used to help all Queenslanders by reducing the price of tickets for rail, bus and ferries by five per cent. How does this help reduce daily living costs for constituents in rural and regional towns who do not have the luxury of public transport infrastructure?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I certainly respect that question. To explain what we have done here and the background, the first thing I need to repeat is that when the federal Australian Labor Party brought in the carbon tax they told Australians this amazingly wonderful tale. They said, 'You can save the planet by having a carbon tax but it is not going to cost you.' They kept telling people that again and again, because that is their technique. They keep saying things again and again. Repetition is the order of the game for the Australian Labor Party. They do courses on it. Repeat the thing again and again and ultimately it sinks in. They told Australians this great untruth that the carbon tax would not cost them but it did cost them. In the case of public transport—

**Ms Trad:** It is just another mistruth.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I am hearing interjections. I hear the member for South Brisbane saying it is an untruth. It is extraordinary, Madam Speaker. We looked at what it was costing the transport department and we found there was \$30 million a year in recurrent savings in the area of transport. That is the money from the abolition of the carbon tax that we are giving back to people so that public transport fares can come down.

I acknowledge the honourable member's point, but I say this: his constituents are benefiting in terms of what is happening in the area of electricity prices because that is an input to the cost of electricity in this state that has now been taken out. People are seeing cost-of-living relief in their bills of eight to 8½ per cent. Can we do more? Well, more could happen. I note there is a federal debate at the moment about the renewable energy target, and we have seen some very strong representations from people in the renewable industry who perhaps are self-interested. But the facts are that, if the renewable energy target of 20 per cent was adhered to, there would be further savings for the member's constituents in the Dalrymple electorate.

In a similar vein, this government has a plan to take a huge amount of cost pressure off people's electricity bills. I am referring to the Strong Choices Cost of Living Relief Fund, which will see \$3.4 billion allocated from asset leases to provide that relief. We will essentially take the responsibility for dealing with the terribly conceived Labor solar feed-in tariff. We will meet the obligations of those

who have those solar panels, but we will take the burden off the honourable member's constituents in the electorate of Dalrymple. The bottom line for the honourable member is that there will be significant cost relief for families and, happily, for businesses. I hope that helps him understand how the carbon tax repeal particularly will lead to cost-of-living savings for his constituents.

### **Pine Rivers Electorate, Families**

**Mr HOLSWICH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister outline the government's achievements in revitalising front-line services to support families and protect vulnerable children in my electorate of Pine Rivers?

**Ms DAVIS:** I thank the honourable member for Pine Rivers for his question and acknowledge his absolute and unwavering support for vulnerable families in his local area. He really works hard and advocates on their behalf so they get the services and support they need.

The Newman government is working hard to revitalise front-line services to ensure that Queenslanders feel safer and more secure. As I said, the member for Pine Rivers is absolutely passionate about this. Members may not be aware that each year the member for Pine Rivers hosts a Lego expo, primarily I think because he is a bit of a Lego fanatic but also because the proceeds of that Lego expo go directly to supporting local front-line services to help his local community. I have had the very great pleasure of attending one of these expos. In the year that I did the member had a session set aside for young people with autism, their siblings and their parents to enjoy the expo in a setting that was safe and supportive. For those people who know about autism and some of the challenges that young people face, they know that being in some settings can escalate behaviours. I congratulate the member for Pine Rivers for doing that for families. Seeing the long line of families snaking around the community centre and the enthusiasm of those young children is a real credit to him and his commitment.

One of the community groups that benefits from the proceeds of this expo is Encircle, formerly known as the Pine Rivers neighbourhood centre. It provides some fantastic front-line services to the local community both in Pine Rivers for the member for Kallangur and across to Redcliffe. They do amazing work. I thank the member for Pine Rivers for his support for Encircle in delivering those services for young people in the community and families in the community.

Another beneficiary is Bravehearts, which has a centre in Strathpine. I also acknowledge Hetty Johnston today in receiving that great honour for her efforts in protecting young children in this state. Bravehearts do amazing work. Bravehearts agree with the government that we need to make Queensland the safest place to raise a family and to raise a child. We are absolutely committed to do all we need to do across this great state to make it the safest place to raise a child.

### **Public Sector, Salaries**

**Mr BYRNE:** My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the Prime Minister's offer of a below-inflation pay increase to the Australian Defence Force personnel which mirrors the below-inflation offer made by the Newman government to the Queensland public servants. Does the Premier support below-inflation pay rises for hardworking public servants and defence personnel whose families are facing cost-of-living pressures just like everybody else?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. It is as good as any that could have been delivered from this side of the chamber. I say this: this government gave pay rises to hardworking men and women in the Queensland Public Service that met inflation over the three years of this term. That is what we did. We saw nurses and teachers in particular being rewarded by this government. So I say that is our position.

In relation to the current federal government offer in the ADF pay case, I say this: I do not agree with it because it is 1½ per cent and it is lower than inflation. I inform the House that I have been more than happy to write to the Prime Minister—I have written to the Prime Minister—and the federal member for Ryan, Jane Prentice, supports my position as well. She has a son who serves this nation in the Australian military. So I have written to the Prime Minister asking him to reconsider the pay offer of 1½ per cent. It is well below what this government has offered public servants. We offered proper inflation or higher than inflation pay deals.

I will also be taking the step of writing to all members of my electorate—ADF members, I am referring to—enclosing a copy of my letter to the Prime Minister. So I have done that; I have written that letter to the Prime Minister. I do not support that position. I think they deserve better and this

government would not support that at all because we totally are on the side of ADF members who serve our country, particularly at a time when our nation has many challenges and when safety and security is paramount in our minds, and particularly at a time when brave men and women from the Australian Defence Force are involved in combat missions to interdict and take the fight up to ISIS in Syria and Iraq. That is my position, and I am proud enough to say that. I know that the honourable member used to serve in the Australian Defence Force, and I do not doubt that he would feel the same way as I do, and I thank him for his question.

### Public Housing, Waiting List

**Mrs FRANCE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Can the minister inform the House how this government's front-line housing services are helping to clear the number of vulnerable families and individuals stuck on Labor's waiting list in my electorate of Pumicestone and across Queensland?

**Madam SPEAKER:** I call the minister for two minutes.

**Mr MANDER:** I thank the member for Pumicestone for her question. She is someone who is totally committed to her electorate, particularly in this area of public housing. As we have said many, many times, we have methodically worked at reducing the public housing waiting list over the last 2½ years from 31,000 down to below 18,000—a 41 per cent reduction. In the seat of Pumicestone, it is even better. The reduction in that seat has actually been 46 per cent, so we have moved from 677 households down to just 367. Since coming to office, almost 600 low-income families in the Pumicestone electorate have been issued with an interest-free loan to cover the cost of a bond on the private rental market. Another 3,500 households have made use of the RentConnect service available from the Caboolture Housing Service Centre. These are people who are capable of renting but who just need a little bit of help to get them across the line—people who might otherwise be stuck on Labor's endless waiting list.

The Pumicestone electorate has also received 139 dwellings under the National Rental Affordability Scheme. Not only are people getting housed, but the length of time that people are waiting for public housing is also down by 20 per cent. Under Labor, those with very high needs or high needs took an average of 10 months to find a house; now we are getting them in at eight months, which is a 20 per cent reduction.

None of this stuff is rocket science; none of this stuff is trickery. We have not changed the eligibility, as the opposition might claim. It is because we are better managers. It is beyond belief for the opposition that we can actually bring about these great outcomes, but it is simply beyond their capability to be able to do this. We are continuing to deliver front-line services in the public housing area. We are committed to making sure that the most vulnerable people have housing. We are delivering that in Queensland and also in the Pumicestone electorate.

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

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tours

**Madam SPEAKER:** Before calling the next order of the day, I wish to acknowledge schools visiting today: St Patrick's Catholic School in the electorate of Bundaberg and Glenala State High School in the electorate of Inala.

## EDUCATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 26 August (see p. 2666).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (11.05 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Education and Innovation Committee for its comprehensive review of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I wish to acknowledge the contribution of stakeholders who have made submissions on this bill to the

committee and taken the time to appear before the committee at its public hearing. I am aware that in the examination of the bill and preparation of its report, the committee received two separate briefings from officers of my department, considered written submissions from stakeholders and held a public hearing with stakeholders.

The committee tabled its report on 20 October 2014, making four recommendations in relation to the bill. I am pleased to advise that the committee was supportive of the bill and recommended that it be passed. Recommendation 2 is that the government consider limiting the advice obtained from the police to whether there is a potential risk to the school community, and extended to include advice as to risk minimisation or elimination. This recommendation is not supported by the government.

The committee's recommendation relates to the amendments in the bill that allow the Director-General of the Department of Education, Training and Employment, on the request of a school principal, to seek information from the Commissioner of Police about charges or convictions to inform disciplinary decisions relating to serious offences, such as sexual or violent offences, or other offences where it would not be in the best interests of other students and staff at the school for the student to attend the school. This is a measured, common-sense amendment that is intended to ensure that school principals have the facts to make the right decisions for all members of the school community. This is an amendment that relates to serious offences and protecting the best interests of students and staff. Murder, attempted murder, rape and arson—these are the sorts of offences that this amendment contemplates, and I know that most parents in this state would support the principal of their children's school knowing if another student had been charged or convicted of these kinds of offences. The director-general may only exercise this power to seek information if he or she reasonably suspects that a student has been charged with, or convicted of, an offence and the information is required for the purpose of determining whether to suspend or exclude a student. Further, the director-general will only provide the principal with information that they deem to be relevant to allow the principal to make an informed decision about a suspension or exclusion. Strict protocols around the storing and sharing of information obtained by the director-general from the Queensland Police Commissioner will apply.

The amendment relates to the enhanced school disciplinary powers that came into effect in January of this year and is intended to support the use of these powers. The student discipline powers provide principals with the power to respond to situations where a student is charged with, or convicted of, a criminal offence. To fully utilise these powers, accurate information about a student's charges and conviction is required to allow principals to determine if and how the potential risk posed by the student's ongoing attendance at the school can be managed. Because principals understand the local school community and the resourcing and staff support available at their school, principals are best placed to make the assessment about whether a student charged with, or convicted of, a criminal offence poses a risk to the school community. If adopted, the committee's recommendation has the potential to limit the scope of information that may be provided to principals and, accordingly, their capacity to make an appropriate decision for the student and the broader school community. This is contrary to the intention of the amendments in the bill, and contrary to this government's view that the safety and security of school communities must be given absolute priority.

Recommendation 3 relates to the amendments in the bill about special-assistance schools, specifically the amendments which enable a special-assistance school to provide special assistance at a temporary site. For context and background, the rationale for enabling special-assistance schools to operate from a temporary site is intrinsically linked to the nature and operation of a special-assistance school. Special-assistance schools seek to re-engage children and young people who are not participating in school, vocational education and training, or employment. Providing for special-assistance schools to operate from a temporary site enables them to respond in a more timely and effective manner to emerging needs of disengaged children and young people within a community.

The committee has at recommendation 3 submitted that the bill be amended to allow a governing body of a special-assistance school to extend the time period in which they can operate from a temporary site. This recommendation is supported in principle; however, an amendment to the bill itself is not required as the bill does not address the time period in which a special-assistance school can provide special assistance at a temporary site. What the bill provides for is that the time frame and other matters are to be prescribed in the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001, or the accreditation regulation. The temporary site time period, therefore, is a matter for consideration in developing the consequential amendments to the accreditation regulation.

Determining the appropriate time period in which a special-assistance school can operate a temporary site requires a balancing of considerations and the views of the stakeholders will be taken into consideration in the development of the regulation.

Finally, the committee's recommendation 4 is that the government ensure consistency in the offence provisions applying to so-called letters patent schools and other non-state schools. The government supports this recommendation and does not consider that further amendments to the bill are currently required. The bill introduces new arrangements for governing bodies established by letters patent under the now repealed Religious Educational and Charitable Institutions Act 1861. These amendments allow these entities to nominate additional directors for the purposes of the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001, or the accreditation act, other than those recognised by their governing documents if they wish to.

No other non-state school governing bodies will nominate directors in this way. Other types of governing bodies are able to change their directors using the mechanisms provided for in their incorporating legislation. This will be the only way that the board will be able to be made aware if an additional director has been nominated. Accordingly, the offence provision is appropriate to ensure that the board is promptly notified of directors appointed through this process.

The accreditation act is currently under review. In this context, the government will consider whether all governing bodies should be required to notify of changes to the directors of a governing body where these changes to directors are made in accordance with relevant incorporating legislation. The government will also consider whether a corresponding penalty provision for failing to notify is appropriate.

I turn now to the two points on which the committee has sought clarification. The committee has sought clarification to explain exactly what information would be sought by the chief executive from the Police Commissioner; what information would be conveyed to the principal and how the chief executive would determine that; and who would have access to the information while it is in the department's possession. These questions from the committee have been addressed in the government's response.

The committee's second point for clarification relates to the requirement for approved providers of Queensland education and care services to notify the department of various matters, including serious incidents. The term 'serious incident' is clearly defined in the Education and Care Services Regulation 2014 and includes, for example, the death or serious injury of a child while at a Queensland education and care service. The department has a well-established process of liaising with approved providers about such matters. The department will ensure that approved providers are notified of any changes to the definition of 'serious incident' that would impact on the providers' notification obligations.

The committee report includes a statement of reservation from Dr Anthony Lynham MP, member for Stafford. The member for Stafford has sought clarification about the process to be followed for secondary state schools to be prescribed as a mature age student school. The department will undertake an expression of interest process to determine which schools, other than the schools located in the south-east, North Queensland and metropolitan regions, commonly referred to as centres for continuing secondary education, have interest and capability to provide educational programs to mature age students. This expression of interest process will be open to all Queensland secondary state schools, other than special schools and schools of distance education. This process is being undertaken in recognition of the fact that there are some schools that do have expertise, appropriate programs and facilities to provide suitable education programs for mature age students. Schools will be assessed based on their capacity to provide curriculum, facilities and services appropriate to mature age students and school community support for such a program.

The member for Stafford also invited me to provide a copy of the current guidelines relating to the use of the school discipline powers. I take this opportunity to inform the House that the safe, supportive and disciplined school environment procedure, together with supporting policy documents, is publically available on the department's website. If this bill is passed, the department will amend the safe, supportive and disciplined school environment procedure to incorporate the legislative amendments and have the revised procedure publicly available on its website by January 2015.

In addition, the department will ensure that all principals who access information about student charges and convictions undertake mandatory training with respect to the guidelines and the risk assessment tool. Principals will not be able to request information until they have completed this

training. At this point, I would like to foreshadow to members that amendments will be moved during consideration in detail to address minor and technical issues that have arisen under two acts falling within the portfolio of the honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. First, an amendment to section 287 of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 will be moved during consideration in detail to clarify that a general ruling of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, QIRC, including a state wage case ruling, applies to employees bound by an industrial instrument, which includes premodernisation awards and modern awards. The amendment addresses a matter raised by the full bench of the QIRC in the 2014 state wage case about whether a state wage case general ruling could apply beyond premodernisation awards. The amendment will ensure the state wage case can apply to employees covered by a modern award. This minor and technical amendment clarifies the operation of the Industrial Relations Act 1999.

Amendments will also be moved to address a minor drafting omission that has been identified in the Property Occupations Act 2014. Progressing this minor amendment as part of this bill will ensure the Property Occupations Act operates as intended from its expected commencement date of 1 December 2014. Consistent with the current position under the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, the amendment to the new Property Occupations Act will ensure that statutory revocation rights apply to appointments of property agents for the sale of fewer than three residential properties and are not inadvertently extended to other types of sales appointments, such as appointments relating to the sale of businesses or commercial property.

Let me again offer my appreciation for the considerable work undertaken by the committee in its examination of the bill. I recognise that a miscellaneous amendment bill, such as this one, requires considerable skill and adeptness in mastering its varied subject matter. I now table the government's response to the committee's report.

*Tabled paper:* Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 40—Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, government response [\[6414\]](#).

In closing, let me reiterate my earlier statements when introducing this bill that this bill embodies objectives that are at the very cornerstone of Queensland education reforms. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Dr LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (11.18 am): The opposition is happy to lend our support to the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Let me start by thanking the secretariat of the Education and Innovation Committee for their hard work and diligence during our consideration of the bill. We would also like to thank the departmental representatives and stakeholders who appeared before the committee for their assistance. My gratitude also extends to the other members of the Education and Innovation Committee, particularly its chair, the member for Burdekin. The committee process for this bill proceeded smoothly and we worked together amicably. I agree with the considered recommendations of the committee but also felt it necessary to raise two further issues of clarification in my statement of reservation, and these have been adequately addressed by the minister. I will deal with those matters later in my speech, but first I will run through a few of the more minor provisions of the bill.

I will begin with the issue of banning a person from school premises. One of the provisions in this bill allows a school principal to deliver a verbal notice to ban a person from school premises for a period of 24 hours. I understand that in circumstances where an adult is causing disruption in a school and potentially risking children's safety, it is not practical for a principal to produce a written notice. It is unreasonable to expect a principal to leave the scene of the incident, return to their office, type a letter and then deliver it to the person. There is, of course, merit in ensuring that there is a proper record of such occurrences, and I note that during the committee process, under questioning from the member for Albert, the department indicated that these bans would be recorded on the One School database.

The opposition is satisfied that this provision allows principals to make decisions in the interests of school safety quickly, whilst still ensuring that proper processes are followed. We note that decisions to ban hostile persons from school premises for longer than 24 hours will still be delivered in writing and will be appealable.

The bill also makes a number of sensible changes to the compulsory schooling provisions of the Education (General Provisions) Act. It will now allow principals at non-state schools to grant exemptions from compulsory schooling provisions of up to 100 days. The opposition supports this change, as it allows decisions to be made closer to the source and will reduce pressure on families to

go through a difficult bureaucratic process. We understand that the circumstances in which a child needs to be exempted from compulsory schooling provisions are rarely good. They often involve significant illness, and we do not wish to place an extra burden on families that are already in a difficult position. We are also satisfied that these decisions will be reviewable and will be properly recorded. We are happy to join with the government in supporting this change.

The bill will also allow that powers to commence prosecutions for parents who fail to ensure their child attends school be delegated to regional directors. Again we have no problem with this change.

The bill removes chapter 18 of the Education (General Provisions) Act which deals with international educational institutions. I initially had some misgivings about this; however, I was satisfied with the explanation provided by departmental representatives that any institution which operates in such a manner will only be able to teach children in the country for very short periods of time or as an addition to properly accredited schools for children who meet the requirements for compulsory schooling. I understand that such institutions will still be regulated under fair trading and working-with-children frameworks. To my knowledge there has never been any such institution of this type operating in this state thus far.

To be frank, I am not sure that the government has provided particularly compelling reasons to remove this chapter, but nor is there a compelling reason to retain it. I suspect this change is being undertaken merely to meet the government's target to reduce the volume of regulations. Given that this chapter has little effect, I do not think this constitutes an egregious example of red tape. In fact if I may assist the government, this section could be deleted in total.

This bill will also amend the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001 to recognise and approve the establishment of special-assistance schools. The opposition supports this change, and we also support the recommendation of the committee that the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board be able to provide a once-only extension of 95 school days for a special-assistance school to operate from a temporary site.

Queensland Labor understands and respects the role that special-assistance schools can play in providing an education for at-risk children who have disengaged from mainstream schooling. There are wonderful special-assistance schools working well in the state today; however, I would also like to place on record my personal reservations about the significant increase in the number of special-assistance schools we are experiencing. I am concerned that this growth does not reflect improved educational services for at-risk children, but is instead the result of a reduction in services for these children in state schools. I am concerned that there are too few guidance officers in our schools to assist children before they disengage from education. I am concerned that the capacity of Education Queensland to work one-on-one with at-risk children to increase their capacity to study in a mainstream school has fallen under the Newman government.

The scenario is an easy one to comprehend. A child is experiencing difficulties in mainstream schooling. Imagine a well resourced school with staff to assist in a supportive and nurturing environment with access to specialist regional office staff when required where every effort would be made to address any issue that may be causing disjunction with the school. The child therefore has every chance to be kept in a mainstream school. Today, as we have learned from our discussions with Education staff, there are complaints that less is available to deal with a disruptive child within the school's own resource pool. With the pressures of NAPLAN, resources and the easier availability of special-assistance schools, the trigger to send this child on this pathway is indeed attractive. Some children who should be in mainstream schooling with adequate resources will find themselves in special-assistance schools with falling chances of reintegration. Families can be split, with one child in one school and others elsewhere.

As I stated, special-assistance schools no doubt have a role to play with certain children, but as we look into the future some referrals may be based not on the needs of the student, but simply on the lack of resources at the school to manage that particular child. I also believe part of the role of special-assistance schools must be to build student capacity to participate in mainstream schooling and indeed offer reintegration back to mainstream schooling. Unfortunately, I am not convinced that this capacity building is happening in every special-assistance school, and the response I have had from education stakeholders reflects this. I know that there are no easy answers in relation to this issue and I do not want to denigrate the important work that special-assistance schools carry out, but I think it is incumbent on us all to consider the best way to cater for disengaged young people. I will be considering this matter carefully in the future in my role as shadow minister for education, and I trust that the minister is giving it serious thought as well.

I will now turn to the provisions of this bill which deal with mature age students. The opposition appreciates and supports the legislative intent of requiring mature age students to attend a prescribed secondary school or to access secondary education through a school of distance education or TAFE. While adults should be assisted and encouraged to improve their education, it is not always consistent with the duty of care that schools have to the children enrolled to allow mature age students to study at every facility. Many Queensland secondary schools, particularly small ones, simply do not have the capacity to provide appropriate services to mature age students.

While the opposition supports these changes, we do have some concerns with their potential practical effects. During the committee hearing departmental representatives were not able to provide a clear idea on how many schools would become prescribed adult education facilities. In my statement of reservation I asked the minister to set out in his second reading speech how the expression of interest process will be conducted, and I thank the minister for his response. My other concern on this issue is that mature age students will be pushed towards studying in the TAFE system. I appreciate that in many respects TAFE may be more suitable for mature age students than enrolling in a secondary school; however, given the regressive changes this government has made to the TAFE system, I think we face the real possibility that adults who want to further their education will not be able to afford the increased fees. I would hate to think that the policy decisions of this government both increase the number of adults seeking access to TAFE and also make it harder for these people to afford that particular education.

The final issue I want to address in this speech is the changes concerning the suspension or exclusion of students who have been charged with a criminal offence. These provisions were first introduced into the Education (General Provisions) Act last year and the Leader of the Opposition, who was then serving as the shadow minister for education, provided the Labor Party's support. The Leader of the Opposition, during the debate almost a year ago to the day, stated—

The department was able to provide these policies and procedures to the committee. Having read those policies and procedures, the opposition is now satisfied about the government's intention. The opposition will be supporting this bill.

I recognise that some stakeholders, most notably the Queensland Law Society, have raised concerns with that bill. Mr Damian Bartholomew, Deputy Chair of the Queensland Law Society, made the following contribution during our hearing—

The Law Society is particularly concerned that these powers can be used when a student is charged with an offence rather than on the basis of a conviction for an offence. This is inconsistent with the presumption of innocence, and very often the student will be advised by his or her lawyer if they are charged with an offence not to comment on those matters that are before the court. That then takes away the ability of that child or young person to respond to the allegations that are raised by the principal. A suspension or exclusion can adversely affect the student, especially if the charge is later dropped and they are not convicted for it.

In his second reading speech the minister responded that the charges were of a more serious nature, such as murder, arson, et cetera, but unfortunately these are not reflected in the guidelines. There needs to be more clarification around the degree of severity of the offence as to when these powers can be implemented.

I understand the concerns raised by the Law Society, and Labor believes that these powers should be used very sparingly indeed. The most appropriate way to determine if a child charged with a criminal offence is a danger to others is through the youth justice system which already exists. That system should consider these factors when deciding whether it is appropriate for a child to be released on bail. If this system is working properly then it should be rare indeed that principals need to consider whether to suspend or exclude a student who is on charges. As the Leader of the Opposition said one year ago, Labor's concerns were assuaged when the department provided draft guidelines for the use of these new powers.

This bill contains a number of other minor provisions which I do not intend to speak to but which the opposition is satisfied are desirable. I thank the minister for addressing my concerns in the statement of reservation, but I fail to understand why the minister has not accepted all of the committee's recommendations and sought to make amendments to this bill. The opposition will be supporting this legislation, subject to the small number of concerns I have raised.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.31 am): May I begin with a quote from Brigham Young—

You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation.

Thank you for indulging me, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am very happy to offer a contribution to the debate on the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which was referred to the Education and Innovation Committee in August this year. The committee report makes four recommendations. A

number of issues were identified in the five written submissions made by stakeholders. These were outlined in the public hearing, at which six witnesses gave oral evidence. The Department of Education, Training and Employment provided an initial briefing and a follow-up briefing after the hearing. On behalf of committee members I sincerely thank those departmental officers who were involved in those briefings. I particularly thank the submitters of evidence and those witnesses who appeared before the hearings. I also acknowledge the excellent efforts of the Education and Innovation Committee staff—Bernice, Melissa and Carolyn—because they are remarkable staff and their research efforts are tremendous. I know that all committee members really do appreciate their work. Of course, I must also acknowledge my fellow committee members, who work really well as a group.

I particularly thank the minister for his response to the committee's report. I note that the government does support three of the four recommendations made. I also appreciate the very well outlined reasons for not supporting the other recommendation. It does make a great deal of common sense and I can certainly follow the arguments put forward. I also note the comments the minister made in his speech this morning when he outlined more fully many of those reasons. I also thank the minister for the government's response to the various points for clarification that were raised in the committee's report. The government did give a fulsome response and it is certainly appreciated.

This particular bill covers quite a few areas, but its focus is on initiatives to give schools more autonomy with localised decision making, at the same time reducing the regulatory burden to improve educational outcomes. The bill also particularly recognises the principal's role as decision maker. The amendments in this bill are designed to actually enhance that role.

The bill provides that mature age students may only enrol in mature age state schools which are prescribed in a regulation, or they may enrol in state schools of distance education. It is the principal of that school and not the director-general who may determine whether to enrol that student. Naturally, there are a lot of mature age students who are looking for further secondary education because they may have missed out at a younger age. Now there are certainly a lot more areas in which this can occur. There are changes in this area. The focus is on the fact that there are only certain places in which mature age people will be able to enrol to learn and study. Existing mature age students will not be affected by this legislation. Nor will students who are 18 and who return to school within the next 12 months. They will not be subject to this new regime.

There are some very good reasons for this amendment. It is important to be able to provide an appropriate learning environment for adults. I am sure that many adults would not want to be in a group of teenagers because there is a totally different atmosphere. It will also empower local decision making. It is also to ensure a safe environment for younger students with older people present. Allowing mature age students to enrol in a normal school can cause issues. It may cause issues that the school is not appropriately equipped to handle. It may not be appropriately equipped to actually offer the level of education adults would be looking for. Enrolling mature age students has the potential to disrupt education and it could, in certain circumstances, pose risks to the safety of children enrolled at that school. It is understood that four schools have been nominated as mature age schools, although the department has advised that this number could increase.

Mature age students in rural and regional areas do have the option to access distance education, and in some areas there could also be the option of subjects being offered by TAFE. We as a committee were very privileged to be able to visit the school of distance education in Charters Towers. It was really interesting to see the raft of educational areas that this school covered. It was not just the traditional education of students out in the bush, as we tend to think of the school of distance education. There are a lot of wonderful education facilities there for adults.

The committee certainly supports the delegation of the ability to approve enrolment of mature age students. Originally it was with the chief executive but it has now been delegated to the school principal because, naturally, they understand their situation. The bill also empowers principals to obtain criminal history information about prospective mature age students. Previously this power was with the chief executive. The Queensland Law Society expressed quite major concerns about this. It felt that such information should rightly be held only by the chief executive, given the seriousness of accessing criminal history information. However, in its response the department stated that giving this power to principals would reduce red tape, support school autonomy and give decision-making power to the principal. That is important. The principals should have that decision-making power and the committee did support this.

One of the real focuses of this bill is empowering principals. They run the schools, they know what is there, they understand their staff, they understand their community and they understand their students, and this government is focused on giving those principals the ability to make many more decisions than they have been able to make previously.

This bill also provides principals in both state schools and non-state schools with the ability to deal with hostile persons—that is, those people who could be creating difficulty when they enter school grounds. This bill will enable principals to give a verbal direction to a hostile person to immediately leave and not re-enter the premises for 24 hours. Currently, a principal must give a directive in writing which, in the minister's words, 'can often be impractical when confronted with difficult and sometimes rapidly evolving situations'. The department described it as counterproductive to have to issue a written direction in emerging situations. Can members imagine that? This is what the situation has been like for years: if a hostile person enters school grounds, under Labor the principal had to go back into their office, sit down and write that person a letter to say, 'Get out of the grounds.' How ridiculous is that?

**Mr Walker:** You could probably email it now.

**Mrs MENKENS:** Yes, perhaps you could email them, but we will not go there. This is a totally sensible decision. The bill will also give state and non-state school principals the power to give a written direction to prohibit a person from the premises for up to 60 days. This is a more serious prohibition from school grounds and this is actually a written direction, but prior to this that direction would have been given by the chief executive. This bill now empowers the principal to be able to give a written direction for up to 60 days. Another power that will be granted to principals in both sectors—state and non-state—is the ability to grant exemptions from compulsory schooling to a student for up to 110 school days or approximately two terms. This could be necessary for a raft of reasons—for example, students could be involved in national sports or even global sports, for health reasons or for family reasons where families are moving interstate or overseas. This is a power that is currently available to state school principals but, under this amendment, it will become available to non-state school principals. That is a sensible tidying up.

The original bill, the Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Bill 2013, provided school principals with the ability to suspend students who have been charged with a serious offence or any other offence if the principal believes it to be in the best interests of other students and the school community for that student not to attend school while the charges are pending. The law as it now stands is that principals can exclude students if they have been convicted of a criminal offence and the principal believes, again, that it is in the best interests of the school for them not to be enrolled. That bill provided that the department's chief executive would be able to obtain confirmation from the Police Commissioner that a student had been charged and could also obtain a brief statement of the circumstances of the charge. There must be reasonable suspicion that a student has been charged and it would only be for serious offences—offences of a nature that would warrant suspension—and this information is only to be used for disciplinary decisions and not for enrolment decisions.

The Queensland Law Society again raised quite a lot of concerns about that original bill, but that does not deal with this bill. However, it also raised a number of issues regarding these amendments and the department has quite adequately responded to those issues. Some of the issues raised were with respect to natural justice and also to the retention of information. The Queensland Law Society also submitted concerns with regard to the determination about safety and wellbeing of students in relation to the obtaining of information regarding offences. Its suggestion was that another person should be involved to analyse that information and suggested that a behavioural scientist should be involved. That would certainly add many more layers of red tape and create a lot more circumstances to make this particular situation a lot more difficult. The only reason that a principal or the chief executive would be doing this is because they are concerned about the safety of other students and holding up the process by going through something like this would not be practical. The committee certainly supported the department's response, which was that principals have a detailed understanding of their school context and they also understand their individual students in their school and they are the ones who are best placed to assess the likely risk that a student may pose to other students. This issue created quite a lot of discussion within the committee, but the committee certainly supports the principal's right and the chief executive's right in this case.

This legislation also deals with special-assistance schools. These schools cater especially to young people who have become disengaged from school and, in many cases but not all, some of them have virtually become disengaged from society. These schools provide tremendous support for young people who are often in very vulnerable situations and they are responsible in many cases for the re-engagement of these young people. The processes within this bill allow the streamlining of the establishment of more of these schools, should that be necessary, and also allow schools to be recategorised into special-assistance schools. Currently, it is only with the director-general or with the director-general's authority that this can occur. However, the authority to set up one of these schools or to reassess a school will now be undertaken at a regional level. This acknowledges that at a regional level the director at the regional level and the principal of the school have a much more local knowledge of the student and of the parental circumstances in the various situations of those students. The committee supports amendments in respect of distance educators terminating enrolments and also for fee collection, as there are some minor amendments in that area.

With regard to this bill in respect of non-state schools, an offence would be created and a penalty would apply to governing bodies of letters patent schools that fail to notify the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board if they nominate directors. It was pointed out by a couple of submitters that this penalty did not apply to governing bodies of other schools that are not actually letters patent schools, because there are only a reasonably small number of letters patent schools and I understand that they come under different legislation. However, I particularly appreciate the government's support of the committee's recommendation in this area. After listening to submitters, the committee's recommendation was that the government ensure that there is consistency in offence and penalty provisions between letters patent schools and other non-state schools.

Other aspects of the bill refer to processes for teachers' registration and temporary closure arrangements for education and child-care services in times of natural disaster or for other reasons, and that is extremely sensible, especially in times of cyclones. I note the presence of the member for Hinchinbrook in the chamber, because he would be aware of the terrible devastation when a cyclone hits a small community. It may take out a child-care centre. This bill allows for a temporary area to be set up where children could be cared for, which would be of use to those parents who are probably desperately trying to clean up after the cyclone. So this bill allows for flexibility that did not exist before.

Education is incredibly important. It is one of our most important areas. This was certainly acknowledged by the many people who were involved in developing the Queensland Plan. We can be very proud of the educational services that we offer in Queensland. I know that the Newman government is totally focused on making Queensland the education state of the nation. New initiatives such as the Great Results Guarantee are already seeing major improvements across the state. The feedback that I have had from principals about the money that has been coming into their schools for resources is that they are over the moon. They are so happy to see that money coming in and that they are able to spend that money as they see fit.

There are 34 schools in my electorate and I am so proud of the efforts of all of them—the wonderful staff and the students. The students are our future. This bill provides a real focus, which is very important. I am very happy to support the minister on this bill.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (11.51 am): I rise to speak to the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Our schools need to provide a safe environment so that our children are allowed to prosper and develop the skills that they need in later life. We regard our schools as the bastions of academia, but schools are much more than that: they are places that help to provide our children with life skills and moral guidance through practical social interaction. Students learn both good and bad habits from adults and potentially other students at school. After all, we are all role models. One of the key aspects of this bill is to give principals the power to maintain a high level of control over the conduct of individuals within the school precinct. Under this legislation, the principal will be able to give a verbal direction to a hostile individual to leave the school and not re-enter the premises within a 24-hour period. Under the previous legislation, this direction had to be given in writing. The problem with putting such a direction in writing was that such situations can be very fluid and can escalate very quickly. For a principal to have to go back to their office, get a piece of paper, write down the direction and serve it on the individual seemed completely and utterly impractical. But there is still a high degree of accountability in that what transpired in the altercation is to be recorded.

This legislation also deals with the difference in requirements for students who are absent. At the moment, if a student in a state school goes on a holiday with their parents for a period of time—just say a month or two—the principal of that school can deal with that absence quite easily whereas a principal of a private school has to apply to the department to grant this absence. This bill streamlines that system. It cuts red tape for our private schools and allows private schools to have the same process as state schools. Certainly, students are always encouraged to attend school for every single day. It is crucial that our next generation gets the education that they rightly deserve and need so that they can have a career path which they deserve and desperately need.

The committee chair referred to the Great Results Guarantee. This funding from this program has certainly empowered our principals. Under the Great Results Guarantee, our learning institutes have the ability to customise funding arrangements so that money can be directed into places where it is needed desperately. When it comes to this funding, schools in the Albert electorate are certainly going to receive a massive windfall next year as \$3 million will be funded directly into those schools, which is over \$1 million more than what was funded this year. The Great Results Guarantee is a great initiative. It will certainly help students to learn the basics—reading, writing and arithmetic, the fundamentals of education.

This bill also contains provisions relating to criminal history checks. As I have stated previously, the safety of students and staff is paramount to providing a productive learning environment. I can certainly say that many parents have expressed their support for this initiative, because they have a very dim view of criminal behaviour and believe that we need a safer learning environment. This bill enhances the power to suspend students who are charged with or convicted of a serious offence. In addition, students convicted of a serious offence can also be excluded from school if that is deemed to be in the best interests of other students and staff. I believe that that is common sense. I realise that some people are concerned about this provision, but the safety of our children is paramount. This bill provides for the CEO of the Department of Education, Training and Employment to seek information from the Queensland Police Service regarding criminal behaviour. This information can be used to maintain a high degree of safety in our school environments to allow students to study in a safe and secure environment.

This government has spent a lot of time improving our learning environments. Another great achievement of this government is in terms of school maintenance. I have said many times in this House that when I became the member for Albert the schools in my electorate were run down. Parents were saying, 'Look, I don't want to send my child to that school because look at it. There is paint peeling off the walls. The doors have holes in them. It looks absolutely appalling.' Parents were saying, 'We don't want to send our children to those schools.' I can certainly say that one school in my area now looks brand spanking new. Parents are flooding to send their children to that school because it is such a great educational facility. It has had a new coat of paint. It is looking brand spanking new again. It is a fantastic facility. That school is Pimpama State School. The teachers and the principal, Marius Marx, certainly deserve a loud round of applause for their efforts. Having the school looking brand spanking new again has made a massive difference. I realise that you cannot judge a book by its cover, but first impressions count.

I want to refer to school safety. Today in my electorate a wonderful event is taking place and that is the installation of additional flashing school zone lights at Windaroo State School and Windaroo Valley State High School. The installation of those flashing school lights at those schools joins a long list of flashing school zone lights that have been installed in my area since the last election at Coomera Springs State School, Upper Coomera State College, Coomera Anglican College, St Stephen's College, Mount Warren Park State School and Cedar Creek State School. That list highlights my efforts as the local member to fight for the installation of this important safety equipment outside local schools. I would also like to thank the Gold Coast City Council for its involvement in getting flashing school zone lights for Norfolk Village and Pimpama state schools.

In closing, I thank the committee chair, Rosemary Menkens. It is always a pleasure to have her as chair of our committee. She does a wonderful job, as do Melissa and Bernice, our researchers, and my fellow committee members. It is a humbling experience being involved in the education committee and learning what is transpiring in education in this state. I am very proud to see the direction that this government is taking. Through the Queensland Plan Queenslanders have spoken very loudly about how important education is for the future of this state and for developing our economy. I thank the minister for this well-thought-out piece of legislation.

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (12.00 pm): I rise today to make a brief contribution in support of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I begin by acknowledging the work of this government in creating safe and supportive learning environments for our school students. This bill recognises that our school principals, in consultation with their school communities, are best placed to make decisions in the best interests of their students, staff and community. This bill also represents the next stage of work being undertaken by this government to support key initiatives to enhance school autonomy, localise decision-making and reduce red tape.

While this bill contains amendments to various acts within the education portfolio, as the Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education I particularly support the amendments to this bill regarding mature age students and special-assistance schools. In relation to mature age students, the changes in the bill align with broader key Queensland government themes of ensuring school safety, improving educational outcomes, reducing red tape and empowering local decision making. The bill removes the mandatory requirement for every state school to accept enrolments from an eligible mature age student who is in the school's catchment area. As outlined in the explanatory notes to the bill, Queensland is the only jurisdiction with such a requirement. The bill will restrict mature age student enrolments at state schools to prescribed mature age state schools or state schools of distance education. There is a very good reason for this. Not all state schools are able to provide the learning environment that is most appropriate for adult learners. It is important to note that the explanatory notes detail that adult learner completion rates are higher in schools specifically set up to cater for adult students. This is about enabling mature age students to have the best opportunity to obtain the best outcome. The bill also removes the requirement to obtain a mature age student notice. Instead, principals of mature age state schools will now be able to access a prospective mature age student's criminal history, if there is one, and then consider the applicant's suitability for enrolment taking into account any criminal history information.

This bill aligns with key government initiatives to reduce red tape and improve education outcomes for all students, as well as more autonomy for principals to determine what is in the best interests of their school communities. It is widely acknowledged that education is the key to securing a brighter future for all students. In fact, it is fair to say, without a doubt, that the best way to a fantastic job is obtaining a great education. Unfortunately, the reality is that for a variety of complex reasons not all young people are able to participate in a mainstream school. That is why this government is continuing to support special-assistance schools to provide an invaluable alternative to mainstream schooling by catering specifically for those students who are not engaging with or participating in any school, vocational education, training or employment pathway by providing wraparound education services that not only provide an individually tailored educational program to students but also access to supports that assist students to address the underlying reasons that lead to them disengaging from an educational pathway in the first place.

Further, the bill recognises for the first time special-assistance schools within the non-state school accreditation legislation. This recognition will reduce red tape by streamlining the current burdensome multi-application process to enable these assistance schools to refocus as needed to cater for disengaged students and get on with the job of educating and re-engaging our students with an education sooner. Importantly, these amendments also make it clear to special-assistance schools the quality of the educational programs that this government expects them to deliver to our students. Further, by recognising special-assistance schools in the non-state school accreditation legislation, the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board will have clear powers to act as necessary to ensure that the schools meet their accreditation obligations. These amendments are important to ensure that all Queensland students have a quality education irrespective of their personal circumstances. The amendments to this bill will also enable existing non-state schools to be more responsive to the challenges associated with disengaged students right across Queensland. The amendments will provide existing non-state schools the ability to refocus as required to cater for our disengaged students, enabling our local communities and schools to work in partnership to address the challenges to education faced by students requiring special assistance to re-engage with their education. In conclusion, I commend the Minister for Education, Training and Employment for the bill which creates a safe, supportive and disciplined environment for all our students. I add my support to the passing of the bill.

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (12.05 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The reduction of red tape, a key theme of this LNP government, is an important component in the improvement of the function of schools across our great state. That is exactly what the Education

and Other Legislation Amendment Bill strives to achieve. This bill supports school autonomy by enhancing localised decision making, supporting school safety, improving educational outcomes and, as I have said, reducing red tape. It is a bill that is all about the government ensuring that high-quality education is provided to every young person no matter what their geographic, social or personal circumstances might be.

Among these amendments is the ability for the principal to give a hostile person a verbal direction to leave school grounds. This is a very practical measure as the safety of students, staff, parents and visitors to a school premises is absolutely essential. Like many other members of this House, I think of safety in the well over 20-odd schools in my electorate in terms not only of my constituents, but also as a father of children in schooling and particularly as a husband of a teacher, my wife Anita being a teacher at primary schools in Toowoomba. Respecting the relevance of local decision making continues the key theme in this bill given that it gives the school the right to grant exemptions for a student attending that school if necessary. Quite simply, the principal at a school is the person most aware of the personal circumstances of a student and his or her family.

I note with some interest that the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill addresses the question of enrolment of mature age students at mainstream high schools as well. The fact that the bill gives the mature age applicant the ability to attend schools of distance education or TAFE as a sensible and more appropriate alternative in many situations is something that I think makes great sense. The bill allows for regional directors to commence prosecutions against parents for not complying with what we all recognise is the compulsory attendance requirements for students at our schools. Quite simply, that is a commonsense, practical, localised response, one that is not centralised as was previously the case. At the end of the day we all recognise that it is in the best interests of children to be at school to receive a first-class education and to prepare them for their life in our community. I note the bill also allows flexibility for special-assistance schools to meet the needs of children and families in the situation where young people are disaffected. To engage them in special-assistance schools is something I support very strongly, having seen the impressive results of such activities. I understand that in the coming weeks the minister will join me in Toowoomba to see the results for himself in terms of special assistance provided through such schools. The results for young people, the results for their families, the results for local communities, as I am observing in Toowoomba, are most impressive indeed.

I also wanted to make mention of the fact that the bill allows for principals to ensure that students are engaged in schooling through the development of a range of targeted strategies. A variety of people or other agencies might be involved. Again, this reflects the bill's focus on respecting the power of localised decision making—the local knowledge so important if schools, principals and our staff in schools are going to respond to student and community needs.

As I said at the outset of my brief contribution, the amendments included in this bill certainly do facilitate school autonomy—that localised decision making I have referred to. I am impressed that the bill particularly supports school safety and of course education outcomes for our children. This is all through a process of common-sense, local decision making and a reduction of red tape. It is for that reason that I congratulate the minister and offer my very strong support for this bill.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.10 pm): I rise to support the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 which continues the government's commitment to giving schools more local autonomy, reducing red tape and improving education outcomes by giving principals and teachers the support they need. This bill will help bring our education system in Queensland up to date with expected standards relating to mature age students, disengaged students and international and interstate students. The bill will also help school principals deal with hostile persons on school grounds and exemptions from compulsory schooling in a much more practical and timely manner. I acknowledge the committee's examination of the bill and the unanimous support for the four recommendations. I also note the minister's response.

The first issue I wish to cover is that of mature age students. I am sure most of us can appreciate that it is not unusual for people who may not have made the best decisions the first time around, to want to properly complete their schooling. As a government we certainly want to support them in their endeavours and ensure they have the best chance of success in an age-appropriate environment.

For that reason, this bill restricts enrolment of mature age students to prescribed mature age state schools, known as centres for continuing education, or state schools of distance education. Currently mature age students can enrol in any state school provided they have a mature age student notice from the director-general of the department. While a student may not have a criminal history and be able to obtain a notice, the reality is that their presence in schools not equipped for the special needs of adult learners causes all sorts of problems. In fact, the department's research shows that adult learner completion rates in centres for continuing education are around 80 per cent compared to around 50 per cent for mature age students in other state schools. There is no doubt that centres for continuing education provide a more appropriate learning environment for adults whereas the majority of state schools cater predominantly for students under 18.

I note that the locations of the four existing centres for continuing education will not suit all adult learners, particularly those in regional areas, with the only facility outside the Brisbane metro area being in Townsville. However, as mentioned previously, there is also the option of distance education. As the minister pointed out in his introductory speech, TAFE Queensland and other training providers are able to provide alternate pathways to higher learning if that is the student's ultimate goal.

I feel comfortable that mature age students in regional areas have plenty of options to pursue learning that will give them the skills they need to improve their employment opportunities or go on to higher learning such as university. At the same time, we are able to maintain age appropriate learning environments for all students in state schools. This measure also gives us the opportunity to remove another piece of unnecessary red tape. By ensuring that mature students can only enrol in prescribed mature age schools it creates an opportunity to give principals of these schools more autonomy to make decisions on a prospective adult students' suitability for enrolment. This bill empowers principals to do just that.

I move now to the issue of state and non-state school principals needing to deal with hostile persons on their school grounds—an unfortunate reality of working life for our teachers and principals and students. Currently a principal is required to give a written direction to a hostile person. Under this bill they will be empowered to give a verbal direction to a hostile person to immediately leave and not re-enter the school for at least 24 hours.

At the departmental briefing to the Education and Innovation Committee, I posed the question as to whether the current requirement actually provided an opportunity for the principal to temporarily remove themselves from the escalating situation and take a breath, so to speak. The minister's staff demonstrated that throughout their consultation with key stakeholders there was overwhelming support for this measure that gives principals the ability to deal with a hostile person quickly and practically on the spot. I therefore welcome the inclusion of this measure.

I also welcome the further enhancements to the process provided for in the bill. These include empowering a principal to give someone a written direction banning them from the school for up to 60 days. Further to that, the director-general of the department or a non-state school governing body can issue a direction banning a hostile person for 60 days to a year.

Altogether the bill creates a clear, practical and easy to implement series of steps for dealing with hostile people that gives principals the power they need to keep their school community safe. I note that these measures for dealing with hostile individuals do not apply to students of a school. The school's disciplinary measures will apply if it is a student who is being aggressive or hostile.

Another area in which this bill enhances local decision making is that of granting exemptions from compulsory schooling or the compulsory participation phase in non-state schools. Exemptions are often sought for a range of reasons including illness, travel and other family needs. There is nobody better placed to make an informed decision than a local school principal who is familiar with a student, their family, and their overall situation.

Currently state school principals are able to make a decision on exemption through delegation from the director-general. However, non-state school principals must apply to the department on behalf of parents of their students. Under this bill principals of non-state schools will be able to grant an exemption of up to 110 days, or roughly two terms, per calendar year. This common-sense measure brings non-state schools into line with state schools on this issue while still retaining the safety net of review by the director-general if required.

I move on to the cases where parents do not do the right thing and fail to comply with compulsory schooling and compulsory participation requirements. The bill puts into place another common-sense measure for dealing with this at a local level. Unfortunately, not all parents care about, or perhaps understand, the importance of sending their children to school. The reasons for this

are often complex and again best dealt with by someone with access to detailed knowledge of the student, their family circumstances and other community issues that affect school attendance. Given that, I welcome the provisions in this bill that empower the appropriately qualified people, such as regional directors, in consultation with school principals, to commence prosecution against parents who fail to comply.

The bill of course does not change the prerequisites, including notices and meetings, to discuss a child's absenteeism before the problem escalates to the point of prosecution. What it does provide is direct access to a final course of action for those who are fully informed about the individual circumstances of a student and their family, and what attempts to rectify the situation have been made before arriving at the last straw so to speak.

On a similar issue, some of the amendments in the bill are aimed at improving educational outcomes for those young people who have disengaged from mainstream education and who are not working or pursuing vocational education. Special-assistance schools are non-state schools that exist specifically to cater to this group and give them the best possible opportunity to re-engage with their education. Critically they do not charge tuition fees. This bill makes the process of becoming an accredited special-assistance school much less complicated and also provides much more flexibility allowing operators of these schools to be much more responsive to the needs of disengaged youth—something that not only benefits the individual young people, but the state of Queensland as a whole. The bill also allows a non-state school to operate dual campuses—one offering a conventional education and a separate site being for a special-assistance school. This currently is not allowed, but I do welcome this development.

Further to the main issues I have covered, the bill provides a raft of miscellaneous amendments which are all designed to achieve the government's ongoing objectives of continually reducing red tape and building an education system that effectively serves Queensland into the future. I acknowledge the work of the Education and Innovation Committee. The Education and Innovation Committee of the 54th Parliament formed in May 2012 and has met on 29 occasions during 2013-14. With many varied and interesting inquiries and issues reviewed and debated during this term, I would like to touch on some of the positive initiatives of the department and this government.

The OneSchool system is a great resource for tracking and monitoring attendance. That is something that the committee has done a fair bit of work on over the last couple of years. I acknowledge all the schools, teachers and stakeholders, particularly in the Bundaberg-Burnett region, for organising school visits for the committee to gather much needed data. I particularly acknowledge the departmental officers' engagement with the committee; it was very professional and very much respected.

The work in engaging with Queensland families has been really important in emphasising the importance and value of a good education. There is also the targeting of chronic absenteeism, like Principal Karen McCord of the Bundaberg State High School and her team who have conducted a lot of work and have set standards in the community in dealing with this issue. I would like to acknowledge the Bundaberg schools that pooled their resources to fund a TAFE teacher to work with disengaged young people—a great success and also an ongoing program.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognise the Goodwood State School principal, Mr Steve Coleman, as one of five finalists for an excellence in teaching award. The Queensland College of Teachers Excellence in Teaching Awards recognise outstanding and inspiring teachers from across the state. Mr Coleman is in the running for the Dr John Dwyer Excellent Leadership in Teaching and Learning Award for 2014. I acknowledge Mr Coleman's involvement in the Education Accord and the great contribution that he made.

I highlight 26 schools in the Burnett region that will be better off following the announcement of our government's education program, Great Results Guarantee—clearly a long-overdue initiative and one that is very welcome. It remains clear we are about investing in our future, our children, and ensuring that Queensland remains a great state with great opportunity for generations to come—for example, after-school numeracy tutoring, reading workshops for parents or a coach to improve teachers' skills in delivering programs for students with a disability. I was particularly thrilled to see the investment in Woongarra State School, with \$110,000, and Rosedale State School, with \$196,000, to continue the great work in that space.

Our investment in great outcomes for students everywhere is highlighted by the support for the Isis District State High School. It will receive nearly \$350,000 to work with the local community on plans that will achieve the best outcomes for their community and their students. From the \$20 million best start program to the \$5 million in my electorate alone to fund the backlog in maintenance for all the local schools, this has been a great initiative and, as alluded to by previous speakers, a wonderful policy and a great outcome. I am very proud of the work the committee has done.

The abundantly clear message that comes through during the many community consultations is that what matters most is the quality of education our young people receive and that they are well supported through the tender years of early adolescence and through their student educational journey. Supporting education is important and so is continuing our record funding in education, targeted especially to all state schools and non-state schools. We are empowering school communities, principals and the P&Cs with flexibility to spend money wisely. It is particularly important to acknowledge that kindergarten participation is at record highs.

I wish to thank my colleagues on the Education and Innovation Committee for their work during this inquiry and all the other inquiries as we come toward the close of this calendar year. It has been a pleasure to work with them and of course the secretariat staff. I thank the minister and his staff for bringing this bill to the parliament.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (12.22 pm): This legislation is the LNP government's stated response to the Queensland Commission of Audit to adopt a strategic direction for education, and somewhat cynically it is not dissimilar to legislation passed by the former Bligh Labor government in the twilight of their governing years in response to what they believed was leading to lesser outcomes in the governance of public schools in Queensland. The LNP response to date has been a mix of jingoistic hyperbole and four-word repetitive statements, including Great Teachers = Great Results, despite the intention, together with autonomous school boards and the CNP version of new school halls sold as infrastructure catch-up or fixing broken infrastructure. The Labor response in their immediate declining days was to divert more authority to principals and back them up, and this is actually a continuation of that.

In fairness, much of this legislation has been really rather elegantly summed up by the member for Mount Coot-tha. I thought she did it very well. I defer to her swift summary and I will not go into the depth that I was intending to after what I have heard her say. I acknowledge her rather considered approach to legislation and the way she presents it. It is a consistent pattern and I would like to say to her, as a first-term member, congratulations and I like the way you balance those facts.

What is really more important than anything else is the production of education. The result of education is the child that comes from it. It is a common thing but we tend to overlook that. The educated child is what we are seeking to achieve as they mature and to give them their best opportunity. This has been one of the major building blocks of Australia to make us a successful nation, and so it is in my electorate of Gaven, not just now but every day of the school year and out of school times as well. I have three major high schools and eight primary schools in my electorate. I would not know what the average is in most electorates but that is a considerable number. A couple of them are private and some of them are public. But all of those children and all of those parents are certainly wanting to see the great outcomes out of learning and education which give you the start in life that you need.

I went to Nerang State High School's awards night last night. The headmaster and his staff asked me to attend as a guest. It was difficult because parliament was sitting, but I went down and I really appreciated the capacity to go. It was a privilege to hear his record of what has occurred in the 2014 school year. For some who may be unaware, this was a school that was severely affected by some of the problems that had occurred with regard to students who were not there to get an education. We had a primary problem with a lot of, sadly enough, New Zealand students who had been excluded from schools over there and had come to Australia and were said to be living with kin or whatever and there were some issues at the school which was making it very difficult. I do not want to blame any one particular area, but those problems were resolved and the school has thrived since that time. It was very interesting to see at the awards night just how successful a year it has been, building on what has occurred over the time post the event that occurred a couple of years ago and, I suppose, since the time that it started.

Parents and students can be very proud of what they have achieved. Many have had great opportunities, receiving bursaries, achievement awards and direct entry to Griffith University, Bond University, Southern Cross University and the Gold Coast TAFE. I congratulate all of those who won

scholarships and awards and those who were just recognised. Special mention, I think, should be made of the Nerang RSL, as they gave a variety of awards as well. I gave a couple myself, but they gave some special Anzac awards. It was very good to see young people coming up and receiving those awards. The school can be very proud of their headmaster Mr Scott Ison and his staff. Mrs Loreen Herlihy is the deputy principal. They are really providing a wonderful environment and certainly the type of environment that gives you a great view that these are young Australians, young Queenslanders, who are going to build a future for themselves, for their families and for our state.

As a former long-serving family GP in the area, I saw many of these children as babies and, in fact, I saw their mothers when they were pregnant and possibly when the children were merely being thought of. It was a very emotionally uplifting time to see these children graduating, as I have done in the past few years. Each year I think it becomes a better memory of the delivery of something that was good and you are seeing these young people getting on with their lives. I congratulate all involved in the whole process of making that happen.

With regard to the various amendments within the legislation that provide everything from giving greater powers to headmasters to those matters relating to the disposal of minor properties which do not fit with the specific needs, I have no concerns that really are worthy of too much consideration. I do have concerns about Education disposing of any properties such as those that have been flagged this year and last year, which were the Everton and Salisbury sites, especially after the sale of the Valley site. I say so because these sites are commercially highly regarded and very much sought after. They are one-offs and they are very difficult to reclaim, purchase back later or be replaced. In general, whilst many are good at reviewing history, they are very poor at predicting history, and that is particularly so with governments. So when we are trying to predict where and when we may need schools on the basis of where there are existing schools, we need to be very careful. We need to maintain what we have. Once a site is acquired after very much thought, to dispose of them for reasons of redundancy, or, even worse, because donors to one party are keen to buy those sites, are very poor reasons to sell or mobilise those assets by even part selling them.

With regards to both the committee's recommendations and the government response, I do not disagree with either the sentiments of the member for Aspley on recommendation 2 or what the committee requested. The government response needs a lot more consideration. It seems to be inconsistent with a modern approach to sharing information and being prepared to share valid information with one another. I appreciate the minister's sensible agreement with the committee on the recommendations. It seems to me in this situation the committee system is far more relevant because of what the minister has written as his response, and I think it is a very good response. This is using the whole parliament—using all the skills of all the members—and on this part alone I say, 'Well done, Minister.' It is a great pity that some of his LNP cabinet colleagues do not share the sentiment and the capacity that he has delivered here.

I do support the legislation. I thank the committee for its considered opinions. The matters, by and large, are very serious and involve minors who are troubled, who come from troubled backgrounds and who have their whole lives ahead of them. When we have a child under our responsibility, we are responsible for everything involving them whilst they are under our care. We need to take the good with the bad. Teachers know this and are excellent at judging these things. I, like the minister, want to always work with them to give them the tools each and every child deserves. We want them to be happy and have a wonderful educational opportunity as a result of what they are offered.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (12.31 pm): I rise to speak to the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Like every speaker who has spoken before me, I am sure the one passion all of us would share is that young boys and girls in our state start off with a strong educational base. No matter what happens to kids into the future, if they have good literacy and numeracy skills they can build on their learning. The buzzword phrase 'lifelong learning' is applicable. If they do not have those good building blocks of literacy and numeracy, then they really are damned for life until they learn how to read and write because those are the basic building blocks for any educational future even in the electronics field. So I support anything that will enhance and improve the educational opportunities for our young people.

In my electorate we have quite a number—around the 30 mark—of high schools and primary schools. We have a mixture of public schools and private schools. They are excellent schools. We use the term 'excellence in education'. I have excellent schools with excellent staff and excellent students. One of the privileges of the work we do as MPs is that we drop into these schools for public

functions, for their presentations and for other school events. We see these kids in action and they are so competent. They lead assemblies, they lead entire programs, and they do it articulately and with confidence. When we see that occurring, we can have confidence in our future because it is in very capable hands.

This legislation also deals with the very small percentile of young ones who struggle with bad personal decision making and with asserting good, basic values they might have in the face of peer pressure. We do have situations where children, either because of their own disconnection or because of the safety of the rest of the student body, have to be removed and educated in alternative places.

When reading this bill and the special education provisions, I note the term 'special-assistance' schools. I think that is great. I have no problem with that term. But it gives weight to my view—and it is my view, but I do ask the minister to consider this—that we should rename our special schools. I have raised this issue before. Special-assistance schools are for those students who are disengaged and who need a lot of support wrapped around them both behaviourally and educationally. Our special schools are for those kids with intellectual and physical disabilities who also need special support. The special school in my electorate since about 1996 to 1997 is called Rosella Park School. I have seen the pride on the faces of those students when asked, 'What school do you go to?' They do not have to say Gladstone special school; they say, 'I go to Rosella Park School.' That has an educational benefit because it is the geographic location of the school but it was decided on by the students, teachers and parents. It is an opportunity to enhance the quality of those students' lives and give them pride in the school they attend. These special-assistance schools are essential. I note that the number has grown from nine to 20. I guess that is an indicator of behavioural issues in our community going forward.

The bill also allows the principal to verbally give what is effectively a move-on direction and an exclusion of 24 hours from a school. I do not think anybody would argue with the proper use of that direction power. I would like to note that the decision about hostility will be a subjective one and that principals need to be careful that anxiety and frustration is not diagnosed as hostility and a parent is excluded rather than dealing with the underlying matters. I know the bill defines hostile as threatening the safety of students, damaging property or disrupting the good order or management of the school. Threatening the safety of students is clear. Damaging property is obviously clear. Disrupting the good order and management of the school is one that could be very subjectively interpreted. I raise that point because there needs to be care that what is regarded by one as hostile could be regarded by somebody else as passionate or fervent behaviour. Parents are very protective and caring of their kids and will sometimes say things more loudly than they intend.

Criminal history information is an issue that in some ways is fraught. We have this philosophy in Australia to protect young people in terms of their criminal history so that their futures are not damaged. That is a sound philosophy. There is nothing wrong with that except that repeat offenders use that either consciously or unconsciously to protect their behaviours and almost to encourage their behaviours because people deciding on their activity often do not know their prior history. I think it is important that pivotal decision makers are appraised of all of the information that is relevant. Principals will no doubt have confidentiality requirements in relation to this information, but anybody who has to manage a student who has a significant and violent history should know that. They should have the ability to deal with that person appropriately, particularly given that history.

I commend the minister for enhancing not the power necessarily of the principal but the knowledge of the principal to be able to make informed decisions. The worst thing that could happen would be for a principal to have to front parents whose children had been harmed and say, 'I didn't know.' At least now they will know and they can make appropriate decisions that reflect that knowledge and that student's decision making in the past. We are all entitled to make a mistake, particularly young ones because they do not always have the life experience to make an informed decision, particularly in terms of consequence. But where there is a pattern of behaviour particularly by a student then that really is an informed choice, and it really is a pattern of behaviour that should be known to those who have to have a direct and repetitive interface with that student. So I commend the minister for that.

The issue surrounding distance education is logical. People choose Queensland's distance education system because of its quality, and I give a big tick to Queensland distance education for making it such a desirable commodity. I think these changes are logical. If an overt decision is made to enrol in distance education in Queensland because of its quality even though there is an offering

close by which is of an acceptable standard, then perhaps there is a very clear argument for that person to contribute to the costs of developing it, maintaining it and disseminating that educational offer.

The only other thing I want to mention in the time that I have left is that the bill amends the EGPA to enable a person's enrolment in distance education to be cancelled if the fee for distance education is not paid. We all know that if you do not pay your bills you get into strife. That is fine. I would ask the minister to comment on whether some consideration will be given to rural Queenslanders who at times face very difficult financial circumstances. Will there be an ability to confidentially consider the financial situation of remote and rural landowners who perhaps have to defer a lot of their payments during drought or even during flood? I would seek clarification from the minister as to whether that consideration can be given.

I end my contribution by saying that our kids are so incredibly important. A good foundation in education—indeed a good foundation undergirding all of that with love and respect in the family—is critically important to develop a strong community and, more importantly, a strong, well-balanced, caring and compassionate person.

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (12.41 pm): I rise in support of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 and congratulate the minister and my fellow Education and Innovation Committee members who held many public inquiries about this piece of legislation. From the outset, I think all members in this House would want to set out to create and foster safe, supportive and disciplined school environments that enhance learning experiences for Queensland students. This bill seeks to accomplish exactly that. The LNP government has now taken the next step to support principals in better utilising the disciplinary powers that were enacted back in January 2014 which gave principals the power to give charge related suspensions and exclusions based on criminal convictions under certain circumstances.

School principals are best placed to make these decisions as their interactions with students and staff affected by any of these decisions are more frequent than at a regional level. Under the amendments, principals will now have the power to give written direction to prohibit a person from the school premises for up to 60 days. Throughout the committee deliberations, there was some pushback on the proposed amendments by the Queensland Law Society. I would like to inform members that the specific cases that would see a principal exercising his or her rights to use charge related suspensions whilst a case is going before the judicial system are not just for a misdemeanour—for example, going down and stealing a few cans of coke from the local corner shop. These charge related suspensions are for crimes that could put students or staff in vulnerable positions whilst the student is awaiting a decision on their trial or an investigation by the Queensland Police Service. Types of crimes that I would perceive a principal would need to exercise their disciplinary actions around would be violent crimes such as rape, murder or assault.

One issue that was raised in the public hearings centred around the use of the Police Commissioner office and widespread knowledge of a student's criminal charges throughout a school community and the reason the police will inform schools of a student's pending criminal trials and/or investigations. As outlined in the public hearing by representatives from the Department of Education, Training and Employment, the principals will have the discretion on how things are told and what is told around a criminal investigation that centres on one of the school's participants. For instance, if there was a severe criminal case pending for a student, one would think the police would inform obviously the principal and the immediate staff who would actually be part of that student's life whilst in the school grounds. As principals are the head of a school community, it is only reasonable that the Queensland police would inform them of a student and/or a staff member's potential criminal conviction, subject to the normal process of investigation and judicial procedures.

Our society is based on a judicial system of innocent until proven guilty and the same principles would apply. However, principals and teachers have to balance this judicial principle with the onus of providing schools that are vibrant learning hubs that help to foster young people in safe learning environments. The community expectation within my electorate, as well as in the electorates of all other 88 members, is that the government should provide the framework for principals and teachers to provide the best possible environments to learn, and this bill does that.

Another point I would like to make centres around school attendance and the prosecution of parents who do not meet compulsory requirements of schooling for their children. To have the best education possible and the best chance of a brighter future, it is important that all school aged

children are enrolled in school and attend on every school day where possible. As they say, every day counts. Parents can be prosecuted for failing to ensure that their child is enrolled and attending school regularly in the compulsory schooling phase or meeting the requirements of the participation phase. The bill streamlines this prosecution process by enabling the Director-General of the Department of Education, Training and Employment to delegate the power to commence prosecutions to an appropriately qualified officer of the department, such as a regional director.

Throughout the committee's deliberations, we had a tour of the distance education facility up at Charters Towers, and that was an eye-opening experience for a city based MP. We learnt about the technology and the ongoing technological upgrades needed to provide learning experiences to regional communities where traditional schooling is not possible, such as rural areas where the distance to go to school is vast. It was also a very eye-opening experience to actually hear that a lot of the students who utilise that facility at Charters Towers are actually from metropolitan Brisbane, from South-East Queensland around Logan and from the Gold Coast hinterland. That was a really worthwhile visit.

Another point I would like to make before I close is that this bill and these amendments really help to provide more framework for the Newman government's election promises which we have adhered to. We are delivering some great choices and some strong decisions to improve education in Queensland. In the Lytton electorate, we have seen so many advancements in education. For instance, Hemmant State School was closed under the Labor government but it has been reopened as a flexible learning centre by the Newman government. That facility is going from strength to strength. I have visited that flexible learning centre on Hemmant-Tingalpa Road many times and I have seen the positive learning experiences that some troubled youths are actually having. In some cases, although not all, they are really turning their lives around and making the best of their circumstances. Some of them are going into TAFE and some of them are even going back into mainstream schooling, which is great to see.

In closing, this bill will ensure that in the small number of cases that proceed to prosecution the process is commenced by the person with local knowledge about the student and their family circumstances. This is about empowering schools, empowering communities and empowering the teachers and principals to get on with the job of providing the best possible learning experience for our young people.

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (12.49 pm): I rise this afternoon to make a very brief contribution to support the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 and to commend, as always, the efforts of the Minister for Education on another fantastic job. I also wish to acknowledge this government's work and the minister's work to create safe, supportive and disciplined school environments, for example, through the Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Act 2013. That act, which was enacted earlier this year, included amendments which enabled state school principals to issue charge related suspensions and exclusions on the basis of a criminal conviction in certain circumstances. Our government has now taken the step to support principals in better utilising these disciplinary powers.

The bill before us today does not change or increase the disciplinary powers currently available to state school principals. What this bill will do is equip principals with the information they need to make the decisions that will keep our students safe. Our principals are best placed to make decisions in the best interests of their students and staff. It is imperative that we enable our principals to make properly informed decisions. I commend the minister for supporting these principals in making our schools as safe as they can be.

I always try to get this point across to my community and to my schools: schools should be more than just a place for education; they should be community hubs; they should be the centre of our community. As a consequence of this being a reality, people come onto the school premises and the school property from different places and from different areas. It is a sad fact, unfortunately, that sometimes principals need to manage the behaviour of these individuals coming onto school sites.

This bill contains amendments that build upon the range of existing powers of state and non-state school principals to deal with hostile persons on school premises who may, for example, threaten the safety of students, damage property or disrupt the good order and management of the school. I again support the amendments contained in this bill, particularly in relation to enabling principals to issue verbal directions to hostile persons to leave school premises for a 24-hour period instead of otherwise having been required to issue a written direction or notice. Principals sometimes

have to deal with difficult situations and it is such a logical move to be able to provide them with the tools they need to be able to promptly deal with escalations. I endorse this amendment and congratulate the minister on its introduction.

Our government absolutely understands that principals are best placed to make decisions to ensure safety in our school communities. In this way this bill aligns itself with the government's Great Teachers = Great Results strategy by placing decision making very firmly in the lap of principals, as a consequence increasing principal autonomy. While the bill contains amendments to various Education portfolio acts, I wish to offer my support for the amendments contained within the bill that relate to the enrolment of mature age students in state schools. These changes in the bill align with broader key Queensland government themes of ensuring school safety, improving education outcomes, reducing red tape and empowering local decision making. The bill removes the mandatory requirement for every state school to accept enrolment from any eligible mature age student who is in the school's catchment area. The explanatory notes for the bill state that Queensland is the only jurisdiction with such a requirement. The bill will restrict mature age student enrolments at state schools to prescribed mature age state schools or state schools of distance education. Not all state schools are able to provide the learning environment that is most appropriate for adult learners. I note the explanatory notes detail that adult learner completion rates are higher in schools specifically set up to cater for adult students.

The bill removes the requirements of obtaining a mature age student notice. Instead, principals of mature age state schools will now be able to access prospective mature age student criminal history—if they do exist—and then consider the applicant's suitability for enrolment, taking into account any criminal history information. Once again, I commend the minister for his efforts in promoting such safe and supportive environments for our students.

The last point I would like to cover off on before I conclude is in relation to the delegation of prosecution powers. Poor school attendance is very often associated with lower academic achievement, early school leaving and future unemployment. Therefore, to have the best education possible and the best chance of a prosperous future, it is important that all school age children are enrolled in school and attend school on every school day. That is to say, as we always say, every day counts. Parents can be prosecuted for failing to ensure that their child is enrolled and attending school in the compulsory school phase or meeting requirements of the compulsory participation phase. The bill streamlines this prosecution process by enabling the director-general of the Department of Education, Training and Employment to delegate the power to commence prosecutions to an appropriately qualified officer of the department such as the regional director. We all agree that prosecution is an action of last resort and is only applied when other strategies, such as ongoing communication with parents and case management, have failed to improve a child's school attendance. This bill will ensure that in the small number of cases that proceed to a prosecution, the process is commenced by a person with local knowledge about the student and their family circumstances.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate the minister once again on his continual outstanding performance. He has been what I consider to be the best education minister that the state has seen. I think there is no better demonstration of that than there being not a single principal in my electorate to whom I speak who does not make continual and ongoing glowing references to the performance of our minister and to the policies and legislation that he has put before this House. Whether it is the Great Results Guarantee, fixing our schools' maintenance, providing proper planning through the Schools Planning Commission, the GRG money or otherwise, our minister has done a sterling job in rectifying the problem areas of the past. Principals right across my community congratulate him, through me, on an ongoing basis. I want to make sure that the Minister for Education is aware of that. I commend him for this bill and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Cavallucci, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 pm to 2.30 pm.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairman

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.30 pm), by leave: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement. I wish to advise the House that late yesterday I received a letter from the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee advising that

the committee had for the second time neglected to reach the requisite bipartisan support for the government's nomination of Mr Paul Favell as chairman of the Crime and Corruption Commission. No reasons were provided as to why the committee had taken the decision that it did.

While this may seem to be little more than a debating point, it goes to the very heart of the task of contributing to a stable and effective Crime and Corruption Commission. The government has a fundamental commitment to the preservation and importance of an independent and accountable Crime and Corruption Commission. We have always accepted the view that such a body is essential in modern society to ensure that the full powers of the state are brought to bear on corruption and serious crime.

In response to concerns raised about the appointment of the CCC chairman, the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 was amended to reintroduce the requirement for bipartisan Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee support for the appointment of chairman, deputy chairman and ordinary commissioners. The amendment took effect from 1 July 2014 so that the appointment of a person as permanent CCC chairman, deputy chairman or ordinary commissioners requires the bipartisan support of the committee.

I note Mr Favell's nomination has proceeded through a transparent recruitment process in response to public advertising in the local and national press. This contrasts with the situation that occurred for the three appointments in 2004, 2009, and 2011, when the successful applicants were not identified through a similarly public process. Had the government decided to proceed with Mr Favell's nomination again or decided to select another candidate, no clue has been provided as to the qualities that would meet the committee's requirements. I am at a loss to understand what additional qualities above and beyond those demonstrated by Mr Favell's extensive curriculum vitae he or any alternative nominee would have to demonstrate to receive the bipartisan support of the committee.

The government believes that Mr Favell possesses the qualities required of the leader of the state's primary serious crime and corruption fighting body. Mr Favell is a practitioner of unimpeachable integrity and reputation, having been admitted to the Queensland bar in 1980. Mr Favell is a sessional member of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal appointed in 2009, a nationally accredited mediator and has practised in all significant jurisdictions from the High Court down. Of even more practical interest is the fact that since 2011 Mr Favell has been engaged as the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner or its predecessor.

For the benefit of members of the House I table a copy of letters received from both the Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association of Queensland with respect to Mr Favell's standing; however, Madam Speaker, I think it important that I read the contents of the letters into *Hansard*. The letter dated 28 October 2014 from the Queensland Law Society states—

Dear Attorney

Reference is made to the nomination of Mr Paul Favell as Chairman of the Crime and Corruption Commission.

The Society is not aware of any matter or circumstance that would preclude Mr Favell's appointment as Chairman.

The Society notes that Mr Favell is a barrister of good standing having been called to the Bar in 1980. We also note that in addition to previously serving on the Queensland Commercial and Consumer Tribunal and Social Security Appeals Tribunal, Mr Favell is a member of QCAT, and a member of the Professional Conduct Committee of the Bar Association of Queensland.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the matter further.

Yours faithfully

Ian Brown

President

I table a copy of that letter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 28 October 2014, to the Attorney-General, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, from the Queensland Law Society regarding Mr Paul Favell [\[6415\]](#).

The second letter, dated 29 October 2014, is from the Bar Association of Queensland and states—

Dear Attorney

I refer to our conversation yesterday in relation to the standing of Mr Paul Joseph Favell.

According to the records of the Supreme Court of Queensland Mr Favell was admitted to practice as a Barrister-at-Law on 22 July 1980.

Mr Favell holds a current barrister's practising certificate issued by the Association with nil conditions, which entitles him to practise at the private Bar in Queensland.

Mr Favell has been an active member in the affairs of the Association. He has assisted over the past ten years as a coach during the terms of the Bar Practice Course and has been involved in the Sports Law Conference held biannually by the Association.

Mr Favell is a long standing member of the Professional Conduct Committee of the Association and is also a sessional member of QCAT. His appointment to QCAT commenced in 2009.

Mr Favell holds a Certificate of National Accreditation as a Mediator issued by the Association, current until 30 June 2015.

Yours faithfully

Shane Doyle QC

President

I table a copy of that letter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 29 October 2014, to the Attorney-General, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, from the Queensland Bar Association regarding Mr Paul Favell [6416].

Madam Speaker, there is a direct line between public confidence in institutions such as the Crime and Corruption Commission and effective leadership. There is no surer way of damaging public confidence in the CCC than to leave it leaderless. Stability is vital, and following the traumas of the then CMC's own making last year one measure of stability is the presence of a leadership team which is able to take the organisation forward.

In light of the events over the past 48 hours and to ensure the stability of the CCC, the government has recommended the continuing appointment in an acting capacity of Dr Ken Levy as chairman and Ms Diane McFarlane as acting CEO until such time as the positions can be permanently filled. The government has also recommended the permanent appointment of Mr Syd Williams QC as deputy chairman. I am pleased to advise that these appointments were approved by His Excellency at Executive Council earlier today. Current ordinary commissioner Professor Marilyn McMeniman AM has indicated a willingness to have her acting appointment extended, and I thank her for that. The government will now commence with a fresh set of advertising pursuant to the Crime and Corruption Act with a view to permanently filling these vacancies.

The government remains committed to the maintenance of a stable and successful Crime and Corruption Commission. We will do everything possible to ensure that the CCC has the experienced and effective leadership it deserves. Queenslanders would expect nothing less.

## ETHICS COMMITTEE

### Reports

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (2.37 pm), by leave: I table report No. 152 titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 28 August 2014 relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the House by the Leader of the Opposition*.

*Tabled paper:* Ethics Committee: Report No. 152—Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 28 August 2014 relating to an alleged deliberate misleading of the House by the Leader of the Opposition [6417].

I also table report No. 153 titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 23 April 2014 relating to an alleged attempt to improperly influence the conduct of a member*.

*Tabled paper:* Ethics Committee: Report No. 153—Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 23 April 2014 relating to an alleged attempt to improperly influence the conduct of a member [6418].

I commend the reports and the committee's recommendations to the House.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Mermaid Beach Electorate, Newman Government Achievements

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.38 pm): I rise in the House today to endorse the positive approach of the LNP government, led by Premier Campbell Newman, to delivering on promises and pushing down cost-of-living pressures that is helping the Queensland community right across-the-board and in particular my constituents of Mermaid Beach.

In the area of health we have achieved enormous reductions in hospital waiting lists, made the ramping of ambulances at hospitals a thing of the past, reduced dental waiting lists in many areas and improved health services right across-the-board. This has been due to effective changes in policy direction brought about by the Minister for Health, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, which focus on patients and patient care rather than piles of paperwork and red tape and delivers direction and ownership of the regional areas back to the local people who know what is best for their communities.

The Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, has travelled 20,000 kilometres across the state to ask Queenslanders what they think is the best way to proceed in tackling the \$80 billion Labor debt that was left to us. The consultation process has never been done as well as this before, and I am sure Queenslanders appreciate that our Treasurer has been open, accountable and transparent in putting forward asset leasing to overcome the horrible debt that was left to us by the Labor Party. The outcome is that people do want assets leased, not sold—and that is exactly what we will be doing.

Our cost-of-living initiatives have been delivered—freezing car registration for three years, restoring stamp duty concessions and reducing public transport fees. That is a first for a government to deliver that in this way. I congratulate the Minister for Transport on his absolute dedication to bringing about cheaper and better public transport the way he has done on the Gold Coast with the light-rail trams.

There has also been a reduction in electricity bills. Queenslanders can use the calculator online to work out the savings they will make—an average of \$577 over five years. That is due to the excellent efforts of Minister McArdle in attacking these very important problems affecting Mermaid Beach residents and all Queenslanders. There is also \$3.4 billion to come, should the asset leasing be endorsed by the people of Queensland some time next year—in March perhaps—to a cost-of-living fund which will help all Queenslanders and drive the cost of living down.

In the area of law and order, the VLAD laws have cleaned up our communities, in particular my areas of Mermaid Beach and Broadbeach. The party house legislation has been an enormous success already, with people getting out of that abhorrent practice already. We are looking forward to those in residential areas being able to live in peace and harmony.

### **Watkins, Ms C**



**Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (2.40 pm): My electorate of Noosa is a community of communities. It is a place where each local community is special. Each has a unique character and each is special in its own way. One thing which each of these places has in common is a great sense of local belonging and a sense of ownership and responsibility for the things that occur there. These places tend to use their initiative and combine community talents to make things hum, to make things happen and to better their own community from within.

The second thing they have in common is that they all have local community heroes, and Carol Watkins is one such hero. She concluded a career in human resource management by branching out to manage her own recruitment consultancy in Brisbane. In a dramatic sea change she moved to Black Mountain on the Sunshine Coast and created a home studio to take up pottery. She also formed Hinterland Ceramics to further her interest in the craft through workshops with visiting tutors to learn new techniques in both hand-building and throwing and to exchange ideas with like-minded artists. She now exhibits, including at the Cooroy Butter Factory exhibition space.

Carol also gives back as a volunteer member of the State Emergency Service. She has just been awarded the minister's cup for Queensland as the State Emergency Service member of the year, the premier award. This follows the distinction of becoming the regional member of the year for Queensland. While Carol's individual effort has been recognised with these prestigious awards, the work she does mirrors that of so many SES volunteers throughout the state. Every member here would be familiar with the orange jumpsuited community members who give so much in times of need and emergency. Whether it is flood recovery, bushfires, car accidents or searches for lost people, SES volunteers give tirelessly and generously of their time.

Carol was appointed as group leader for the Cooroy SES group after only 12 months with the team and only four years later was appointed deputy local controller the SES group. She has demonstrated a distinguished level of service to the SES in Queensland through her eight-plus years of service with the unit. It costs her to spend countless hours away from her loved ones, putting

herself in uncomfortable conditions and at risk, but she does so willingly to support and assist the less fortunate and vulnerable not only in her own community but also in other communities which make up the broader Noosa community.

On behalf of Noosa, thank you Carol. You are what makes our community of communities so great. And thank you to the hundreds of other SES volunteers who have not received an award but whose work is appreciated by the communities they serve.

### Daniel Morcombe Foundation

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.43 pm): As the member for Mundingburra I represent a region that is very proud to call itself North Queensland. Today I wish to make a contribution about a family who live more than a thousand kilometres to the south but who have captured our hearts and our minds in recent years. I refer to the Morcombes. This Friday I will be attending the fifth annual Walk for Daniel in our part of the world with my good friend Sam Cox, the member for Thuringowa. It is in his electorate. That is one of a series of events that the Morcombe foundation is running in my city. The other night with the member for Townsville I went to the third annual Dance for Daniel and we have been having Day for Daniel for eight years.

I am so passionate about this cause because, as someone with two young children, I have seen the difference this charity has made to the awareness of child safety to my own children. The pain that Bruce and Denise Morcombe have gone through is immeasurable. None of us could ever imagine what it has done to them and to their family. But through their grief and through their heartache there has been a message for each and every one of our families. They are people who have used their very difficult situation to benefit a wonderful cause across the nation.

I want to talk about some of the local heroes in my city who have grabbed this charity and made it their own. I refer to people like Acting Senior Sergeant Bernadette Strow, Senior Sergeant Janelle Poole, Emily Osborne and Daniel Radford. And there are sponsors who have backed this for a number of years. I do not refer just to the Queensland Police Service but also to BHP Billiton; Jupiters; the Reclining Rockers, one of the great bands in our part of the world; the Rowes Bay Golf Club; the *Townsville Bulletin*; and also my friends at Zinc FM Radio, people like Karina and Scotty—I know that Karina has hosted the walk for many years—and Wildy in the afternoon. They are all fantastic supporters.

What this charity has done is twofold. First, it has raised valuable funds. The stories about helping young people get an opportunity to pursue their dreams are very special. But I believe its greatest achievements have been in the area of awareness. The way it has empowered non-government organisations, foster carers and people right across the community to feel passionate and to feel as though they have a voice when it comes to child safety is indeed a remarkable achievement of this charity. It is Daniel's legacy. If one family so far away can capture the hearts and minds of North Queensland, I believe it is capable of capturing the hearts and minds of the nation.

### Aspley Hornets Football Club

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (2.46 pm): The Aspley electorate is home to many wonderful sporting clubs. Today it gives me enormous pleasure to congratulate the Aspley Hornets Football Club on their incredible victory over the Sydney Swans during this year's competition grand final. There were 14 clubs in the competition—from Canberra, Sydney, South-East Queensland and the Northern Territory. They played 21 rounds of very hard-hitting AFL throughout the year. It was an outstanding achievement on its own for the Aspley Hornets to in fact make the grand final.

The grand final was held last month at our local AFL grounds, at the Hornets club on Graham Road at Carseldine. The passionate crowd of Aspley residents and fans ensured that every last drop of home-ground advantage was used. As it happens, it is just what the Hornets needed. The game itself was an amazing team effort throughout all four quarters and ended with Daniel Smith taking a mark on the final siren. With the score at Sydney 100 and Aspley 96, Daniel kicked a goal in the dying seconds to see the Hornets win by two points. It was an absolutely sensational moment.

A grand final win is a momentous occasion for any sporting team, but for the Aspley Hornets it is particularly special because it comes during their 50th anniversary celebrations. I do not think you could have written a better script: 50 years after five dedicated locals met at Sitz's Paddock on Graham Road to establish a junior AFL club going on to win the premier sporting competition, defeating—at home—one of the biggest AFL clubs in the nation.

Earlier that morning, though, I was delighted to take part in the Aspley Hornets Youth Football Presentation Day. While many were understandably very eager to get to the final as quickly as possible, particularly the parents, as always it was really great to see so many of our talented youngsters receive the recognition they deserve, not only for their sporting achievements but also for getting out there and just having a bit of a go.

I once again offer my sincerest congratulations to all of our Aspley Hornets Football Club members and family, from the junior teams all the way up to the NEAFL, and wish them every success in the upcoming 2015 season.

### Newman Government, Performance

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (2.49 pm): We have seen yet another week of arrogance and outright deception from the Newman LNP government. I cannot let the opportunity pass without picking up on the Premier's inane answer to a question this morning when he talked about what cars opposition members drove. The irony here is that I actually lease my ute but at the end of the lease period I will own that vehicle. In the case of my ute and of those assets on offer by the LNP, just like the head of the ACCC said when asked the difference between a lease and a sale, they are one and the same! Despite Queensland Treasury and now Standard & Poor's saying that a lease is a sale, the LNP is still spending millions of taxpayers' dollars to say the exact opposite. If we applied this 'lease is not a sale' logic to the Bligh government, it sold some above-rail assets—nothing more. Apparently, the Port of Brisbane, Abbot Point, the coal rail network and Forestry Plantations Queensland are all still controlled by Queenslanders and were never sold!

The Strong Choices political propaganda campaign is the most deceptive campaign I have ever seen. It would be like if John Howard's *Unchain My Heart* ads said that there would be no GST. Of course, then he introduced one. That is what this government is doing. It is spending our money to say 'no asset sales' while undertaking the largest asset sell-off in our state's history. If the LNP wants to run a dishonest advertising campaign, then it should pay for it, not Queensland taxpayers.

The Standard & Poor's report that the Treasurer so gleefully read from yesterday also included commentary that that 'small man's ego' tower at 1 William Street is a 'contingent liability' for the state and that a return to a AAA credit rating is unlikely over the next few years, even factoring in the Newman government's asset sales. This contradicts the Premier's claim that a AAA credit rating would be delivered from asset sales over the next few years. However, I should forgive the Premier for his lack of knowledge about the state's finances. After all, the Premier did say that his LNP colleagues in Western Australia were the doyens of fiscal management before their credit rating was downgraded—funnily enough, investing in infrastructure. I table a letter from the Premier who, as Brisbane Lord Mayor, wrote to the former Labor government begging it to borrow money and to disregard the state's credit rating. He was happy to take the state's money to rebuild Brisbane while condemning the debt used to fund that assistance, just like this government cuts the ribbon and smiles for the cameras when opening Labor infrastructure projects but decries the manner in which they were funded. What did Standard & Poor's say about the former government in September 2011? It said—

Queensland's financial management is excellent, in our view.

In June 2010 it said—

Although the rating remains on a 'stable' outlook, an upgrade may be possible ...

As Standard & Poor's noted in 2011, unprecedented natural disasters prevented a credit rating upgrade. Taxpayer funded ads that tell Queenslanders 'no asset sales' must stop immediately. If a private company were engaging in the sort of deception that these ads are, they would be legally liable for misleading advertising. Surely this government is not only breaching its own code; it seems to be breaking every other code as well.

*Tabled paper.* Letter, dated 14 April 2010, to Hon. Anna Bligh, then Premier, from the South East Queensland Council of Mayors regarding a state budget submission [\[6419\]](#).

(Time expired)

### Buderim Electorate, Cookbooks

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (2.52 pm): Today I rise to pay tribute to the great community of Buderim and in particular eight of my constituents—Jenny Cant, Carol Coggan, Jill Cunningham, Winn Davey, Robyn Edwards, Jeanette Gerhard, Jan Jackson and Ros O'Brien—who have recently contributed to and released a cookbook called the *Essence of Buderim* which celebrates the spirit of Buderim through food, history and local yarns. The planning and development for this book began after the South-East Queensland floods. Friendly conversation led to how a small group of individuals can assist a community when an urgent need arises.

The committee of eight was established and the decision reached to assist the Buderim Foundation to raise further funds to build up its own core strength and also mark its 10th anniversary. The next dilemma was how to raise substantial funds from a philanthropic community which already generously supports numerous schools, welfare groups and charities. Some of this group had previous experience with publishing cookbooks—namely, the *Flavours of Buderim* and *A Table in Buderim*—so the decision was made to create yet another book. The two books were very successful in raising much needed funds, enabling the renovation of the Buderim War Memorial Hall to be carried out. So another book challenge began, with all funds raised to go directly to the Buderim Foundation. From this point, *Essence of Buderim* was born.

Before I go on, let me tell members a bit about the good folk of Buderim. We are a humble bunch. It is really a great place to live, work and raise a family. Locals are community minded who enjoy living on the Sunshine Coast, with its easygoing lifestyle and wonderful weather, and enjoy giving back to their supportive communities. The recipes included have been provided by a generous cross-section of our community—from young children to some of the more senior residents—with local stories that profile Buderim's way of life, the history of the area and give further insight into our great community and what it represents. The aim of the Buderim Foundation is to establish a strong, robust base for this community and so, in keeping with the philosophy of the foundation itself, it has indeed been encouraging to receive a wide variety of healthy eating recipes. Everyone in this House knows that the food we eat has a significant effect on our physical health and general wellbeing and we are keen to encourage healthy eating habits in our young to ensure that they have the best opportunity to remain strong and vital into the future.

I table the *Essence of Buderim* for the benefit of all members, and it would make a great Christmas present if you want to pass on a great eating recipe. There is great stuff in this book. Tell your friends and family, and the money goes to a fantastic cause—another community looking after itself. If this book could make its way into the Parliamentary Library, I would greatly appreciate it.

*Tabled paper.* Book titled 'Essence of Buderim' [\[6420\]](#).

### Broadwater Electorate, World Teachers Day

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (2.55 pm): Ahead of the celebrations tomorrow for teachers right across Queensland for World Teachers Day, I want to put on the record my great appreciation for the fantastic teachers in the electorate of Broadwater. I am very blessed to have five fantastic schools in my electorate and I want to pay tribute to those principals and their teams.

I start by thanking the principal of St Francis Xavier school, Mr Peter Anderson, and his team for the fantastic work they do. I also want to acknowledge and thank Mr Chris Kern, the principal of Coombabah State High School, and his team for the fantastic work they have been doing. I want to thank Val Faulks from Biggera Waters State School and her team for the fantastic work they are doing and Murray Gleadhill from Coombabah State School for the fantastic work he and his team are doing. Last but certainly not least, I want to thank Brian Ragh and his team from Labrador State School.

We all know just how important good teachers are to making sure that the next generation of leaders not only have a quality education but also enjoy school. Tomorrow morning I look forward to delivering cakes and certificates of appreciation to these schools and these teachers to show just how much my community appreciates the great work they do.

All members in this House would agree that education is one of those areas where as a government we must continue to invest, and there have been some really significant investments locally in Broadwater schools. Just to touch on a couple of the significant achievements that we have seen over the past 2½ years or so, there has been in excess of \$1.5 million in maintenance backlog funding alone, and this has been really significant. Of course, I have also been successful in my

campaigns to see flashing lights installed at Coombabah State High School, Coombabah State School, which had been waiting nearly four years, and of course most recently I announced flashing lights for Biggera Waters State School. The additional funding for schools right across my electorate has been welcomed by all and sundry, but I particularly note some of the comments that I have received from Brian Ragh from Labrador State School who described it to me the other day as an absolute godsend.

I quickly also thank and pay tribute to those who took the time to come to the Queensland Education Accord with me: Brian Ragh, who, as I mentioned before, is the principal of Labrador State School; Jill Warr, the deputy principal of Coombabah State School; and in particular Carmen Barbitta, a parent at Coombabah State High School. They all appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the future of education in our state.

### Healthy Waterways

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (2.58 pm): It is a great privilege to rise to speak after the member for Broadwater. I refer to the Healthy Waterways report card 2014. The Broadwater gets a mention in this document.

**Miss Barton:** The Broadwater is amazing.

**Mr RICKUSS:** It is at a B. It is at a very high standard. The Healthy Waterways report states that a B is—

Good: Conditions meet all set ecosystem health values in most of the reporting region. Most key processes are functional and most critical habitats are intact.

So the Broadwater gets a good rap in the Healthy Waterways report. I would like to highlight—and I congratulate the environment minister for this—that, according to this report, the estuaries have improved and the marine flora and fauna have improved. Fresh water is on a bit of a decline. I struggle with some of the reporting, but I will go through the ratings in the report. The estuaries have improved around Deception Bay. Overall, Moreton Bay has improved from a rating of a C to a B, eastern bank estuaries are at an A, the central banks are at a B and Waterloo Bay is at a B. That is a very good result for a lot of the estuaries and a lot of that downstream area. That is as a result of the hard work undertaken by the environment minister and some of the river catchment groups.

There are over 500 stewardship groups undertaking action under Healthy Waterways. I know that there is a bill before the House that highlights some of the issues around river trusts and that sort of thing. I will not debate a bill before the House, as I am sure Madam Deputy Speaker knows that we should not do that.

In this report the upper Brisbane River is rated as a C. It has stayed steady at that level. The mid-Brisbane River is at an F, down from a D, which is a bit disappointing. The Lockyer is at a D.

The real difficulty I have with some of this reporting is that at the moment a lot of the Upper Lockyer is dry. The central Lockyer is supplemented by dam water. I have never seen the central Lockyer and probably the lower Lockyer looking better than it does at the moment. That central and lower Lockyer area is in very good condition simply because there has been water there for a number of years. We had the floods in 2010 and 2013, but even prior to that there had been reliable rainfall and there had been water in that mid-Lockyer area for a long time, so I struggle with how Healthy Waterways has come up with some of these assessments. The Bremer has gone from a D to a C—

**Ms Trad:** Poor science, Ian.

**Mr RICKUSS:** I take that interjection from the member for South Brisbane. Yes, but with some of the pseudoscience that is being used it is a bit difficult to work out how they are making these ratings. As I say, some of the central Lockyer has been in the best condition that it has ever been, but the Upper Lockyer is dry, so I struggle to see how—

*(Time expired)*

### Milton State School; Children's Week; McHappy Day

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (3.01 pm): I am always very pleased and proud to stand in this place and speak about the wonderful activities that are happening in my electorate and, most importantly, the amazing people who make these wonderful activities happen. I would like to highlight

the wonderful work of students, teachers and staff, but particularly the parents of Milton State School, who recently held their annual Fair on the Green at Gregory Park. This year's fair was very special, because it celebrated the 125th anniversary of Milton State School, which is of incredible significance in my local area.

This year's Fair on the Green was also very special for another reason and that was it was opened by His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Paul de Jersey AC. His Excellency was the special guest for Milton State School's 125th anniversary not only to celebrate his recent addition to my local neighbourhood at Government House but also because his mother was a teacher at the school and, therefore, contributed to the rich history of Milton State School. To mark the occasion His Excellency, together with the principal, Paul Zernike, sealed the time capsule to be opened by students in 30 years time. The contents included things such as a T-shirt, stories, photographs, artefacts chosen by classes to represent 2014, an iPod, handballs, Minecraft figures and loom bands—all the things that very much represent our time now. So I can only imagine how that is going to be viewed in 30 years time.

Overall, the fair was a fabulous success and the dedicated parents who made it all happen should certainly be congratulated. There were themed events, performances by some very talented students, awesome rides and, given that it was also Bledisloe Cup night at Suncorp Stadium, the fair continued into the night with a disco, a beer tent and even a fireworks demonstration.

I would also like to note that last week was Children's Week. I was also very pleased to be the guest emcee and sponsor of the Children's Week Festival that was held on Sunday, 19 October, at the botanic gardens at Mount Coot-tha to kick off the week of celebrations. Each year Children's Week highlights an article from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This year's theme was based on article 12, which is about children having the right to speak and be heard. The nation's patron of the Children's Week Council of Australia, His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia, said that this is a wonderful and inspiring theme, and I certainly agree. He said further—

We must ensure our children have a voice. We must listen to them. We must learn from them. In doing so, we empower them, give them confidence, and teach them it is safe to express their fears, share their dreams and ask questions.

Once again, the festival was a fabulous success, bigger and better than last year. I would particularly like to acknowledge and congratulate local resident Dr Cass Zervos for her hard work facilitating the event. Equally, I would like to take this moment to acknowledge and congratulate Leigh Shenfield, who is the President of the Queensland Children's Week Association and has been for 40 years. He has given an incredible service to our young people and the organisation. Leigh has made an outstanding, selfless contribution to our community.

I close by also acknowledging that recently I was proud to support McHappy Day at Milton Maccas. I congratulate all the staff for their fundraising efforts that day and, importantly, all the patrons who drove through the drive-through and unloaded their spare change into my donation bucket. I thank them very much. I feel very fortunate to be part of and representing such a wonderful and generous community.

*(Time expired)*

### **Crime and Corruption Commission; Member for Mermaid Beach**

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.04 pm): This government will go down in history for many things, but the way it has demolished the anticorruption watchdog in this state will take the cake. The bungling of the process lies squarely at the feet of this incompetent Attorney-General. The fact that it has left the anticorruption watchdog leaderless falls at the feet of this incompetent Attorney-General. This is another bungle when it could have been sorted out over an 18-month period.

Today, what have they done? They have snuck through Executive Council and put in place their tainted person, who does not have bipartisan support, to continue to lead the anticorruption watchdog in this state. It is not acceptable to me, it is not acceptable to the other members of this opposition and it is not acceptable to Queenslanders. Under the act, there were provisions to make Sid Williams the acting chair. That was the right course of action whilst this government undertook a fresh application process.

But this bungling Attorney-General has got it wrong again. This is what they always wanted. They wanted their own man to stay in the job and that is exactly what they have got. Dr Ken Levy will remain in his job right up until the election. This is the man who is still under police investigation—

unless the government knows something that I do not know. Does the government know something that we do not know? The Attorney-General is smirking and smiling over there. They are patting each other on the back. This is one of the most important appointments in this state. The government needs to get it right. The appointment needs to have bipartisan support.

After the 18 per cent swing at the Stafford by-election, Queenslanders were told by Campbell Newman that there would be bipartisan support. There is no bipartisan support, because this government does not understand the word 'bipartisan'.

Whilst I am talking about transparency and accountability in government, does the member for Mermaid Beach want to be a businessman or does he want to be a member of parliament?

**Mr Stevens:** Both.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** He should release the Integrity Commissioner's advice. He wants to be both. We know that he registered Ruray on 19 September and that he registered Gold Coast Skyride Pty Ltd in August. What does the member for Mermaid Beach know and why is he pushing forward a process that his own government will make a decision on? That is not transparent and it is not accountable. He must release the Integrity Commissioner's advice today. Today is a dark day for the anticorruption watchdog in this state.

*(Time expired)*

### Toowoomba South Electorate

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (3.08 pm): I want to share with the House some issues of significant interest in my electorate across a range of topics. The electorate of Toowoomba South is a magnificent place to live and raise a family. I am very pleased to represent the LNP government, with its focus on creating jobs and making Queensland a safe place to live, work and raise a family.

From an agricultural perspective, I want to mention Homestyle Bake, which this month celebrates 25 years in business. That is a huge milestone for a family business, which makes millions of cakes, pies and biscuits that are sold in national and international markets and has been doing so for 25 years, employing hundreds of local people. I certainly congratulate the directors, Lindsay Weber, Brett Pascoe, David Nichol, and the whole team.

The agriculture sector continues to thrive throughout my region. I acknowledge AACo, which won the agribusiness award at the recent Premier of Queensland's Export Awards as one example of an agricultural operation. Also, Toowoomba based company AgBiTech won the health and biotechnology award at those same awards two weeks ago.

It is a thrill to see agribusiness thriving in Toowoomba. That could not have been more evident to me than when I opened Feed Central's quality assurance centre in Toowoomba where growers can get visual assessment and grading of their hay and grain assisting them in international marketing purposes, amongst other things. Feed Central is based at the Charlton Wellcamp Enterprise Area, now referred to as the Toowoomba Enterprise Zone, and is typical of the sorts of agricultural developments in that industrial area. Ill-informed observers from afar, including some ill-informed members of this House—or at least one—do not understand that that is of agricultural significance and they question why I as agriculture minister would mention that part of the world. It is a very significant development indeed.

We have to educate for the future. Another eight schools in Toowoomba South are scheduled to receive flashing lights in 2014-15: Glenvale State School, St Anthony's School, Concordia College, Harristown State High, Centenary Heights State School, Sir Thomas More Primary School, Darling Heights State School and Concordia Lutheran College, to mention just a few.

We need to stop and remember those who have passed and on Sunday, 19 October it was an honour, alongside members of the Darling Downs branch of the Naval Association of Australia, to join in a memorial service recognising those who have given their lives to serve in both war and peace times from a naval perspective. It is a privilege and an honour to represent Toowoomba South in this House. I am pleased to be doing so as a member as well as the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry because it is a particularly important area.

### Fuel Prices

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.11 pm): It seems that if you are the government in Canberra you can do what you like. I bring to the attention of the House and many other people that the federal government sees it as its right to increase the price of fuel across the nation by 0.5c a litre. This is an irresponsible action at this time. It is irresponsible management because the economy of this country cannot sustain any sort of an increase in fuel at all. It is an impost on industry, business, the family budget and on everything that moves. We should be encouraging productivity. I encourage the federal government to take a leaf out of the Queensland LNP government's book and take a long hard look at the financial situation of the nation, as we did here in Queensland, before any knee-jerk reactions about how to address the issue at hand.

Many people in Canberra who represent electorates around the country do not represent large country electorates. Members of the federal cabinet do not travel hundreds of kilometres; they do not have to spend huge dollars to pay for the transportation of goods. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry spoke about the agriculture industry. It is one of the most important industries in this country. It is a very important industry to the economy of the state of Queensland, as is the mining industry which is currently in a downturn because of the international market scene. I know we are price takers and I know we have to manage the best way we possibly can, but at the same time the federal government has to show leadership and responsibility by putting in place proper taxation after full consultation with the whole nation. We have to slow down the impact on businesses across the state. People who travel long distances, be it by road or rail, will pay. It will be the rural producers and the mining companies. It will not go up half a cent a litre; it will probably go up 2c a litre to cover the cost of transportation. Fuel is the life blood of this nation and in particular this state. I ask Joe Hockey, Tony Abbott and the federal cabinet to please show some consideration and some compassion as they levy these taxes on the economy of Queensland, Australia.

### Road Summit

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algeria—LNP) (3.14 pm): I am convening a local road summit for my electorate of Algester. It is important to me, and I believe to my constituents, that the major managers of the road network in the electorate are talking and working together to deal with the growth in vehicle numbers and a number of important road projects proposed or approved. I wrote to the Minister for Transport asking for Department of Transport and Main Roads involvement. I wrote to Queensland Motorways, as the Logan Motorway runs across the electorate. I also wrote to Logan and Brisbane City Council as they manage the majority of the road network within the electorate. I am happy to say that the Department of Transport and Main Roads has agreed to attend. Queensland Motorways has responded that it will be attending and Logan City Council will be sending the local councillor and deputy chair of roads, Councillor Laurie Smith. I am still to receive a response from Brisbane City Council, but I am hoping that it will take part as it manages up to 80 per cent of the roads within the electorate.

The summit, as I have said, will get the major road managers in the same room to discuss future strategies to deal with growth but also, importantly, the implications of proposed network upgrades such as the future of Johnson Road. For the information of the House, Johnson Road is a boundary road between Brisbane City Council and Logan City Council. It is not a state government road, but it is a road that concerns my constituents and I continue to lobby both councils for the upgrade of the intersections at Stapylton and Johnson roads and Woogaroo and Johnson roads. The summit will also consider council's plans to upgrade Paradise Road and the traffic plans around it as that happens. I welcome the upgrade to Paradise Road but want to ensure that there is a plan to deal with the traffic while that upgrade takes place, which may take up to a year. With the council continuing to approve industrial developments along Johnson Road, the implication is for increasing traffic numbers on local roads, particularly Johnson Road. I want to ensure that both Brisbane and Logan council are continuing to plan to deal with this traffic increase. I also hope that Queensland Motorways can develop a strategy to encourage more vehicles, particularly trucks, to use its network.

I also refer to the proposal of the Department of Transport and Main Roads concerning the dangerous right-hand turn off Beaudesert Road onto the Logan Motorway. This interchange is dangerous not only for turning traffic but also for the through traffic to Brisbane. Nearly 3,400 vehicles proceed through this interchange towards Brisbane in peak hour compared to just over 100 vehicles using the dangerous turn to access the motorway. The former Labor member had nearly 12 years to deal with this dangerous interchange and failed to do anything. I set up a Facebook page, 'Don't Stop—Beaudesert Road/Logan Motorway Onramp', to gather information about incidents at this

dangerous interchange. I would like to read to the House a number of comments that have been placed upon that page. Gail Maree posted, 'Every morning I see near misses.' Warren posted, 'CLOSE IT', and that it was the worst intersection in the world. And Brian posted, 'A serious accident waiting to happen.' This interchange is dangerous. I stand for the safety of all drivers. The Labor Party had 12 years to fix it and it did nothing.

### Public Hospitals, Emergency Departments

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.17 pm): The Auditor-General's report on emergency department performance tabled earlier this week has brought into question the veracity of the statistics published by this government on the efficiency of our hospitals. The evidence is clear that the four-hour ED discharge or admit rule is being 'gamed' in some hospitals to ensure the Newman government gains the reward funding under federal Labor's National Emergency Access Target Agreement. As well as gaming the emergency department target, it has become clear to me that any reduction in elective surgery waiting lists, again using targeted federal funding, has been at the expense of people trying to get on this waiting list. Yes, this is the waiting list for the waiting list that this government does not want to talk about. People are contacting my office every day telling me that they cannot get an initial appointment in many hospital outpatient clinics despite having a referral from their GP.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order!

**Mrs MILLER:** Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. Officially today there are 239,000 Queenslanders waiting for an initial specialist outpatient appointment and most of these people are waiting to get on the elective surgery waiting list. These people are not just statistics; they have lives that are dramatically affected by their illnesses. Some cannot work. Steve Anderson from Mackay has a category 1 referral to the Mackay Base Hospital for an urgent colonoscopy essential for potentially life-saving surgery. While Steve is stoic about his wait, his GP and his wife are getting desperate. What prompted Steve to contact his local MP Tim Mulherin was his anger on hearing the Premier on SEA FM breakfast radio on Thursday, 23 October telling him how rosy local hospital waiting lists were. Steve's wife called the hospital to check if he could get an urgent appointment. The staff at the hospital advised—

They were furious at Campbell Newman's interview and inaccurate quotes, they said none of the figures were true for Mackay.

The hospital staff confirmed Steve is a priority No. 1 patient for a very simple procedure but that his wait could be around eight months.

There are hundreds more of these stories about real people being denied timely hospital care by this LNP government. I would encourage them all to contact the Health Ombudsman to complain because the LNP does not care.

Talking about Mackay, perhaps the minister would like to come in here this afternoon and explain why earlier today an ambulance was ramped outside the hospital and told there was a woman inside being treated for ebola. They rang the communications centre and found out it was a training exercise. Perhaps the minister would care to explain how there can be a training exercise without telling the Ambulance Service.

*(Time expired)*

### Agriculture Industry

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.20 pm): I was contacted yesterday by the President of the Bowen Gumlu Growers Association, Carl Walker, who was extremely disappointed and angered by comments shadow environment and heritage protection spokesperson, Jackie Trad, made on the ABC program *Country Hour* yesterday. Those comments are cruel, shallow and offensive to the farming sector. Farmers are guardians of their land and they do their utmost to preserve its integrity to pass on to the next generation.

Carl Walker is passionate about the sustainability of his land where he implements best management practices. He also cares about the district and is a member of the Don River Improvement Trust. In times of flood, the Don can decimate local farms by breaking the river banks, silting and eroding all in its path which is then taken out to sea. Under the previous government Carl

lamented that the river had been left unchecked, exacerbating the flooding and run-off. Under this government he is gaining confidence that plans are being formulated and ministers are putting their limited but valued funding in place to manage the river, within its banks' confines as much as humanly possible.

Today's farmers and graziers are acutely aware of the important role they play in ensuring the water quality of run-off into waterways that make their way onto the reef. It is a geographic reality that additional land for increased agricultural production will potentially come from reef catchment areas. The shadow minister was quick to make the assumption that agricultural producers are not up to the task at hand of putting land into production in a sustainable manner. The shadow minister gives little credit where credit is well and truly due in relation to our agricultural sector.

Just last week Minister Powell and I visited the Bowen based grazing property of Steve and Del Norman at Mount Aberdeen. They have recently been accredited under the grazing best management practice. This encompasses aspects such as reviewing stocking levels, grass cover, the spelling of land and flagging revegetation work around gullies to reduce sediment run-off. This is just one example of what this government is doing in working with graziers to achieve better productivity in a more sustainable manner.

Growers are thankful for the ongoing support provided by this government. The sugarcane industry has publicly welcomed the sugarcane BMP initiative endorsed by the Queensland government, saying it will provide a watertight assurance to the community that the Australian sugarcane industry is leading the world in environmentally sustainable farming. The Reef Rescue Package funded federally has also made a huge difference.

Agriculture is proudly one of the four pillars of this government. I am proud to have farming sectors in my electorate embracing the Reef Rescue Package and BMP practice models. They know that it will improve not only their economic outlook but also their environmental footprint into the future.

I would welcome shadow minister Trad visiting the Burdekin electorate to see firsthand exactly what farmers are doing, see how hard they work and see that they really are the guardians of the reef, not the so-called greenies who waste everyone's time mouthing off about saving the reef.

*(Time expired)*

### **Cleveland Electorate, Harry Atkinson Artificial Reef**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.23 pm): Today I announce more good news for the recreational fishers of Cleveland and the Moreton Bay region, with the LNP can-do government's decision to provide additional artificial reef at Harry Atkinson reef in the form of a decommissioned boat that will be scuttled next week, weather permitting.

In my speech in the budget debate for the 2014-15 financial year I stated that the current budget would continue to deliver for the recreational fishers and boaties in Cleveland, Redland city and the Moreton Bay region. This announcement today continues to deliver on that commitment.

I said that we would continue to provide better and more sustainable fishing experiences for everyday anglers. We have done that to date through new boat ramps and other marine infrastructure and through the provision of more artificial reefs, including reef ball material and other approved materials of opportunity. So, today, it is my pleasure to deliver again with this decision to extend Harry Atkinson reef in this way.

Yesterday I visited the Port of Brisbane operations office together with Minister Steve Dickson and the parks and wildlife staff to check out the new boat. This 60-tonne, 26-metre delivery boat, donated by the Port of Brisbane, has been degreased and steam cleaned by a professional contractor and has also had additional approved materials of opportunity added to provide extra shelter for fish.

It will be scuttled next week, weather permitting, and form part of the 34-hectare Harry Atkinson Artificial Reef, located seven kilometres east-south-east of St Helena Island. This artificial reef was first established in 1975 by the coalition government and has been built up and extended since then to be what it is today. It is a great inshore fishing spot that can be accessed by boats, big and small alike. Next week it will be further extended due to the good work of this LNP government.

This decision is a good one for the environment too. It supports our objective to support sustainable and responsible recreational fishing. It is a sustainable measure in that creating new reef provides shelter for fish, contributing to their adult longevity, and taking pressure off existing natural reefs. This measure helps to replenish our fish stocks. This decision also comes on top of the extension of artificial reefs earlier with artificial reef balls that have taken place at Peel and Coochie reefs in the Redland city area.

The addition of the artificial reef is good for the marine environment also as it creates new reef ecosystems to help support the broader marine life in Moreton Bay. In conclusion, this decision to extend the Harry Atkinson artificial reef of Moreton Bay in this way shows that the LNP can-do government continues, like no other government, to deliver sustainable and responsible fishing opportunities for the recreational fishers of my electorate and across the state.

### **Toowoomba North Electorate, Health Services**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.26 pm): I rise to talk briefly about the revitalisation of health front-line services in my electorate and surrounding area of the Darling Downs. I thank the hardworking nurses, doctors and hospital administrators who have achieved so much in such a short space of time after being left such a derelict mess by Labor. I also want to congratulate former member of this House Mike Horan, who chairs this board, and his board of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service. It has been a wonderful outcome for us locally, but on a state-wide basis there has been an over 18 per cent increase in Health funding. That is leading to some really good outcomes on the ground. The pay of nurses is up by more than 10 per cent, with a further increase due next year.

As a result of the savings made by the board there will be a \$2 million expansion of the endoscopy unit at the Toowoomba Hospital. This will mean a doubling of the capacity to deal with people who are waiting for that service. At a state-wide level there is \$23.4 million to bring much needed relief to the eye surgery wait list in Queensland. Locally we have 361 residents on the long wait list for eye surgery. I look forward to those people getting the operations they so desperately need. They have been waiting far too long.

At the Toowoomba Hospital there has been \$2.2 million of funding for an external makeover and to clear the maintenance backlog that was left. All of a sudden, when nurses and doctors go to work they can be proud again because they have a clean and tidy environment in which to work and all of the maintenance backlog has been cleared up.

It is very pleasing for me to be part of a government that is delivering so much for our region. I will give people a couple of other examples. Our surgery long wait list has gone from 319 in March 2012 to just two in September. Our dental long wait list was 7,222 and it is now sitting on zero. In terms of surgery patients being seen on time, 100 per cent of urgent patients needing to be seen within 30 days are being seen in that time. The number of semi-urgent patients—that is, those needing to be seen in 90 days—is currently sitting at 97 per cent. I commend the hard work of the doctors and nurses. I am sure we will see that get to 100 per cent. The number of non-urgent patients—that is, those who need to be seen within a year—is currently sitting at 97 per cent. I look forward to that being 100 per cent. In terms of emergencies, we have gone from 65 per cent being seen within four hours to 80 per cent now. These are great outcomes for front-line services in my region. If anybody wants to challenge the veracity of the facts, the opposition can make me withdraw them in the House.

*(Time expired)*

### **Gold Coast, Health Services**

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (3.29 pm): Yesterday in this parliament I asked the health minister a straightforward question on what funding pool would fill the gap when the National Partnership Agreement on the Elective Surgery Waiting List money expires for the Gold Coast public hospital. His answer was silent on this. He elected, however, to criticise my support for the much needed construction of the newly delivered Gold Coast University Hospital and the expansion of the Robina Hospital. These two health structures were 15 years too late but brought Gold Coasters into the 21st century. By what the minister said, he begrudges Gold Coasters this hospital. He said—

One can only imagine what that \$2.2 billion would have done ...

Minister, for whom do you refer? Residents of Brisbane maybe? Ashgrove? Maybe even Yelarbon? The minister claims I was not standing up for my electorate. I can clearly see who he was standing up for. He said those funds would have funded 'the needs everywhere else in Queensland into the future'. I ask the minister: does he mean 'everywhere else' but the Gold Coast and my electorate of Gaven? In terms of what he said with regard to my suggestion that it was indeed a brave decision not to lose money but to commit to this hospital, that is what I did say—I said it was a brave decision to build that hospital and he supported that when in coalition, with all the agreements that were done, and when he was initially in the National Party and then in the LNP. I now have to say to him: what is he saying?

For his information the end cost is consistent with the final updated business case, with the extra \$200 million of new equipment, and it is within five per cent of the final business case that was announced, and it is in the QAA figures itself. So whatever he is talking about has nothing to do with what was going on on the Gold Coast. We as parliamentarians worked so hard to get that hospital at Parklands built. It was a triumph for the parliament as a whole, as all hospitals are. For the health minister now to misuse selected parts of the Auditor-General's report in such a base mischievous way, particularly for a veteran politician, is political hypocrisy at its worst. Hospitals are by convention funded in the commitments model and then the final business case. This is what occurred in this case. It was done properly. Grow up, Minister. For your knowledge, that hospital was the right thing to do at the time.

*(Time expired)*

### Larter, Mrs J

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.32 pm): It is with sadness that I speak about the passing of Jean Larter. Jean Margaret Kathleen Sergeant was born in Liverpool on 25 January 1928. Her father was a ship's captain who made two landings at Gallipoli. Jean lived a relatively quiet life in England. In 1961, at the age 35, Jean came to Australia and was soon followed by her parents. Jean worked as a stenographer at this phase of her life. She met the love of her life, Bob Larter, in 1968 when both were studying art classes together. Bob thought he had no chance, but always one to punch above his weight imagine how he felt when the feeling was reciprocated. They soon married in 1969 and in 1972 they holidayed in Hervey Bay. They liked it so much that they decided to move there for health reasons.

They bought a home in Charles Street and opened a small souvenir shop. Unable to find suitable items, they designed and had printed their own tea towels and photographs. They maintained the shop until 1985 when they retired. Jean and Bob had many interests in the Hervey Bay community. They helped to start the Hervey Bay soccer club, and Jean was the secretary for many years. They also joined the Hervey Bay writers group and they stayed in that for many years. Bob was always a fantastic writer and Jean was always there with him by his side. And of course there was Bob's poetry. Between them they contributed to newspaper and magazine articles, with the highlight being around the 1980 bicentenary when many articles flowed. On Wednesday, 22 October at the Hervey Bay Hospital Jean passed away, and we give thanks for her life.

### Men's Shed

 **Ms MILLARD** (Sandgate—LNP) (3.35 pm): I rise today to talk about a community group that are making a difference in the lives of thousands of Australians each and every day. Many of my fellow MPs will be very familiar with this group in their electorates and acknowledge the contribution they make. The group I am talking about is the Men's Shed. It is all about mates helping mates and standing shoulder to shoulder to overcome any hardships they may have.

I am sure that many of us can recall the backyard shed being dad's sanctuary, where he would go to relax, talk with friends and occasionally, perhaps, put all those tools to good use. The concept of the Men's Shed is the same, providing a friendly and inclusive place for men of all ages to come together, make new mates, chat and put their knowledge and skills to good use by building, restoring or fixing anything from a cubby house to a bicycle. Additionally, many members use their time at the Men's Shed to pass on their trade skills and knowledge to younger community members and apprentices or to learn new skills and knowledge themselves, such as cooking or computer literacy.

Behind the hands-on work, the Men's Shed organisation performs an important health and social role in our communities. Emotions and feelings can be a taboo subject for men, as they are often taught to show a stiff upper lip and get on with things. Yet emotions and feelings affect men just

as much as they do women. Not talking about one's emotions or feelings can lead to drinking, substance abuse, poor general health, isolation, loneliness or depression. It is estimated that one in eight men will experience depression, while one in five men will experience anxiety in their lives. Often these personal issues, emotions and feelings will be hidden, and there is little or no help for people in genuine need until it is too late. Of the 2,200 recorded suicides a year, a staggering 80 per cent are men. The serious side of the Men's Shed is about providing the positive environment and mateship for blokes to open up and talk about these problems, encouraging them to take an active interest in their health and to connect with the necessary support services.

In my electorate of Sandgate we are lucky to have a fantastic Men's Shed. The lads from the Sandgate Men's Shed are not only very supportive of each other but also very active participants in our local community. They have built a range of items. They help the local schools. They help different organisations like All About Living. They help families in need, and countless people turn up to the Men's Shed and ask them to fix bits and pieces or to make certain things. I would just like to say thank you to the Sandgate Men's Shed for being such active men in our community.

From small beginnings the Men's Shed organisation has grown nation-wide, with thousands of active men and groups in every Australian state. You will also find Men's Sheds in Ireland, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. I cannot offer enough praise for the valuable contribution made by the Men's Shed organisation towards breaking down emotional barriers, advancing men's health and wellbeing, helping mates through their troubles and giving back so much to their local communities.

### Mitochondrial Disease

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.38 pm): Today I would like to use my time to talk about the Bloody Long Walk. Before I do, I need to go back to a speech I gave in this House earlier in the year, in about February or March, when I talked about a young boy named Ari Rotolone, who passed away from mitochondrial disease a couple of days before his fourth birthday. I talked about him because he is the son of Mark and Vanessa Rotolone, friends of my wife and I. They are also local business owners of the Vine Restaurant in New Farm.

Since Ari's passing from the disease—and the whole family and the community were totally unaware that he had the disease until only a couple of weeks before he passed—his family have gone through quite difficult and tough times. The community has rallied around them. But what they have done in that time has been truly amazing. They have not rested on their laurels. They have done everything they can to raise awareness about the disease and to raise money for the MDF, the Mitochondrial Disease Foundation. To date they have raised about \$35,000 through a variety of means which is truly extraordinary.

That culminated last Sunday in the Bloody Long Walk, which is an initiative of MDF. It was a walk which I believe started in Redcliffe and finished at Albion Park, just on the other side of Brisbane Central in the Clayfield electorate. It was a 35-kilometre walk to raise awareness and funds for mitochondrial disease research. In that walk alone they raised over \$11,000 from community members and friends—people like Matt Lancashire from Ray White New Farm. He got married two months ago, and at his wedding he undertook a bidding auction to bet on the sex of their first child. In that process alone he raised \$2,000 at his own wedding for research into this disease. I want to congratulate guys like Matt.

I want to pay tribute to Vanessa—the strong woman that she is, the mother of Ari—for the walk she undertook alongside her two friends Sara and Tina. They took the walk together in a demonstration of what strong-willed young women and mothers they are. It goes to show that despite the difficulties we face in our lives you can achieve some incredible things. I pay tribute to them today. I will do what I can in this House to continue to raise awareness for mitochondrial disease and support my friends, the Rotolone family.

### Lytton Electorate, Events

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (3.41 pm): I rise to speak about a few special events that have occurred on the bayside since the last sitting which should be noted in the House. Last Friday evening I had the pleasure of attending the Quota Club of Wynnum-Manly's 50th anniversary dinner at the Wynnum-Manly Leagues Club. The function was sold out, and this is a real testament to the hard work that the ladies from this group have accomplished throughout the community. It was great to see past, present and future members of the association, and members of local community service clubs such as Rotary, Probus and Lions to name a few.

President Beryl Vayro and her committee did an excellent job in organising the event. It really captured the role which the Quota Club of Wynnum-Manly provides to the bayside area—that is, service to country and community. Throughout the year I have supported the group in my role as the local member, be it at the annual Hear and Say auction raising much needed funds for a worthy cause or at the monthly cake stall in Edith Street. I do not eat the cakes; I give them to other community groups that need them more than I do. It was great to see one of the stalwarts of the quota club, Gloria Davey AOM. She was one of the founding ladies. She has been in the club for 50 years. It was great that she could be there to celebrate. She is affectionately known around Wynnum-Manly as 'Lady Jazz' for the other hat she wears, which is to do the annual Wynnum-Manly Jazz Festival, which is always highly anticipated. I want to take this time to congratulate the Quota Club of Wynnum-Manly, Beryl Vayro and the rest of the ladies in the organisation on their 50th anniversary. I look forward to supporting the group into the future.

Two weekends ago we had the annual Wynnum Relay for Life event in Wynnum, hosted by the Wynnum Vikings AFL Club in conjunction with the Cancer Council Queensland. As cancer touches nearly every Queensland family, it was a proud moment to see so many locals participating in the two-day event which saw both community organisations and local businesses put teams together. The event in 2014 raised \$33,000 and still counting. This is nearly a \$10,000 increase from the 2013 inaugural event. The organising committee must be commended for improving its media presence and promotion of the event throughout the electorate. Special thanks must go to my fellow Lions Club members for putting on the barbie.

### Condamine Electorate, Local Contractors

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (3.44 pm): This morning we heard the Premier tell the House to shop locally. I note that the member for Hinchinbrook is in the House. The Skyrail in North Queensland just lost its contract to New South Wales company Rex Air as a result of a decision by this government.

Talking about contracts, I would like to bring to the attention of the House some of our smaller contractors who build roads in South-East Queensland electorates. In the electorate of Condamine the Western Downs Regional Council has signed a contract with Ardnox Group from Harlin. Craig Eastment is the owner of this group. Twenty-four people are working for this company at the moment. He employs up to 70 people. Somerset Regional Council has not given any jobs to Craig, and I would really like to ask that council why. He is a really good road builder. There is no doubt about it. He did a hell of a lot of work for the Toowoomba Regional Council with all the flood money, right through Crows Nest and into the Brisbane Valley. Recently I contacted him to do some work for me. He shifted 1,200 tonnes of gravel and built roads on my property. He runs an extremely good company. Craig is accredited with Local Buy. The accreditation to become part of that group is very strict.

Councils and government must look at small business. At the moment big business is invading this market. There are a lot of small businesses that simply will not survive unless they get contracts. We talk about shopping locally. We certainly have to look after our smaller contractors who actually do a better job than big business. They know their men, they know their machines, they know the country, they know where they can get gravel and water, and they know the local areas. That alone saves money. When a contract goes out, up to 18 or 20 people tender for those contracts. Sometimes you are better off not looking at the cheapest person. You have to look at the people in the company who do the best job.

There is a lot of pressure on these people. Craig pays \$16,000 a month in registration on his vehicles. Imagine keeping a company going when it is very hard to get contracts and when your local council is outsourcing away from council. I call on these councils to have a serious look at the local companies within their councils that do a better job than the big contractors and look after people like Craig Eastment from Ardnox Group at Harlin.

### Coorparoo Junction, Development

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.46 pm): Over the past week the final stages of planning approval went through Brisbane City Council for the new transit oriented development at Coorparoo in the area which is known to locals as Coorparoo Junction. I attended the committee meeting at which the DA was passed unanimously. It was a great day for our community: the culmination of six years of campaigning on my behalf and the support of many locals. This is a \$232 million state government initiated project and is perhaps the most important in the Greenslopes electorate for generations.

Finally, after many years of languishing on the backburner after the previous government could not deliver, my community will see this long-awaited project going ahead. No more will we be forced to look at the derelict old Myer building and mall when passing along Old Cleveland Road. No more will local businesses suffer because of a lack of action on this site, and no more will the community of Coorparoo lack a place to gather together, do their shopping, enjoy entertainment and just catch up with friends.

With demolition work beginning early in 2015, this development will bring much needed construction jobs to my electorate. This development will include a vibrant retail and restaurant precinct, cinemas, an open plaza for community gatherings and residential units where occupants will enjoy two swimming pools and a tennis court.

Throughout the consultation process I worked closely with the developer Honeycombes, the Department of Transport and Main Roads, community groups and individuals to finetune the plans. From the original schematics submitted to council, we were able to include a cinema complex, improve building height and design, and additional car parking. It has meant a great deal to me to see the community empowered, to help them in the consultation process, to hear about all the things they wanted in their own community hub and to play a part in that process. There were some robust opinions offered along the way and some challenges to be overcome, but I think we have worked together to bring about the best possible result for our community.

For many years the people of Coorparoo have been forced to gather outside their community. As the consultation process gathered momentum, the people of Coorparoo have pulled together, united in their desire to lobby for the things they wanted to see at the junction. That is what community is about: people from all walks of life coming together, working towards a common goal—the enhancement of our local area.

There will be some discomfort during the construction process, but I am confident the developer Honeycombes has worked hard to minimise the inconvenience to local businesses and residents. I also acknowledge Honeycombes for its commitment to working with the community through information sessions. I cannot wait to see what our brand-new community hub looks like. From the plaza to the shopping and residential precinct, I know it is going to be a fantastic place to live, work and play for my community. I would like to thank the Premier, Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport and Main Roads for their assistance with this project. Most of all, I congratulate the locals, who will be the big winners in this project.

Coorparoo deserves the best, and this project will deliver it. My first job at high school was pushing trolleys at Coles Coorparoo at the junction. I remember the icon that Coorparoo Junction used to be on the south side. I am proud to have been able to achieve this major infrastructure project for my community.

### **Capricorn Coast, Community Centre**



**Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (3.49 pm): For 25 years the Capricorn Coast's community centre has been a valued meeting place where community members have learnt new skills, shared their knowledge, met, chatted and, most importantly, forged strong bonds and made lasting friendships. Now is the time to honour its humble beginnings, remember great events and celebrate the milestone with a fantastic, fun and entertaining street party. That street party and celebration is going on as we speak—I wish I was there.

The community centre has been the heartbeat of the community, having nurtured many community groups over its amazing 25 years of operation. There have been many success stories for not-for-profit groups that had their humble beginnings at the community centre. The former Keppel Community Care—which is now known as Excelcare, having extended its service to include Rockhampton and the wider region—is a fine example, along with Strengthening Family Connections, which provides services for youth at risk and counselling. Radio 4NAG and Landcare have found permanent homes at the community centre, and groups including everything from embroiderers to the University of the Third Age utilise the facility to share their areas of interest. There are few people within our community who have not had some experience with the community centre. It is a venue that brings people together, and the milestone birthday is certainly reason to celebrate. I wish them well.

The centre has enabled the bringing together of many diverse groups and agencies to work together within our unique community. It presents a central place to find information and support. This afternoon the coast community celebrates its history with a walk down memory lane with old photos and stories. I will list a small sample of the diverse groups that meet there—felting, Tai Chi, Get Connected, baby betz, belly dancing, mahjong, senior citizens, Toastmasters, ratepayers association, the University of the Third Age, forum speakers, the Capricorn Coast Multicultural Group, Envirolink, Landcare, Grow—which is a mental health, anxiety and depression group—a women's health group and a disability access group. That is just a sample of the groups.

On a daily basis, the community centre is an important central hub for the Capricorn Coast community, offering services ranging from lifelong learning opportunities to outreach services. The centre provides residents with a public place where they can meet, access supportive information, learn different skills and share their knowledge. I commend the Livingstone Shire Council for their continued support for the centre. I mention former Livingstone shire councillor Mrs Desley Rial, who has been an integral part of and a strong advocate for the centre right from the beginning.

### Moggill Electorate

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (3.52 pm): Recently, along with local Councillor Margaret de Wit, I did one of my mobile offices in the wonderful community of Mount Crosby and Karana Downs. This is an historic community on the banks of the Brisbane River with around 10,000 people. Three issues emerged that are important to that community, and I will pursue them now and also if I happen to be here in the next parliament.

Firstly, nearby on the banks of the Kholo Creek is a memorial to Alison Baden-Clay. I have met with all of the people involved in that particular issue and I understand their grief. Locals, however, are concerned about the traffic hazard as traffic slows to view the memorial and they are also concerned about the reduction in the speed limit in that area, so I have written to the Minister for Main Roads and asked that the memorial be screened from view from the road with vegetation to reduce that hazard and give a more satisfactory outcome to the community of Mount Crosby and Karana Downs. I do not think that would detract in any way from the solemnity of the place, but it would make it safer. The speed limit on that very steep country road is inappropriate at 60 kilometres an hour; it needs to be raised immediately to 70 kilometres an hour.

The second issue that came up is the regular flooding of Colleges Crossing, which is the main link between this community and nearby shopping centres et cetera. With an expectation that flood mitigation will allow an increase from Wivenhoe Dam, I have written to the Premier because this particular crossing at Colleges Crossing needs to be raised to reduce the disruption to the community when it floods. The third issue involves the schools. Mount Crosby State School, which is very much the centre of this community, has done wonderfully well under the LNP government. It has received over \$1.1 million from two years of the Great Results Guarantee, \$200,000 for maintenance backlogs and \$500,000 to complete the school hall that shamefully was uncompleted under the previous Labor government. But there is one issue that does stand out, and that is the lack of a high school. With 700 students at Mount Crosby and another 700 at Karalee, this issue will not go away. In a reply I recently received from the minister, he pointed out to me that there is a very low enrolment of students in government secondary high schools from this area. The reason for that is there is no high school for them to enrol in and they are outside the catchment for Kenmore State High School. They have no bus service. If we surveyed how many bus passengers there were, we would get a similar result. This is badly flawed thinking. The need for this will continue. Perhaps a PPP with the private sector may be an answer.

*(Time expired)*

### Queensland Rail, The Inlander

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (3.55 pm): I rise to speak about the Inlander train service which is currently under threat. The Inlander is a passenger train completing two return journeys between Townsville and Mount Isa weekly. It will celebrate its 62nd year in February 2015. The Inlander is one of only three modes of public transport offered to residents along the north-western line from Townsville to Mount Isa—those who live in Cloncurry, Julia Creek, Richmond and Hughenden—but one of only two offered to residents at Torrens Creek, Pentland and Duchess.

In the south-east, people are afforded options—City Rail, long-distance rail services, the Gold Coast trams, the TransLink bus services, domestic flights, the TransLink CityCats, cruise liners, taxis and limousines. There are many more modes of transport offered in Brisbane—which is understandable and it is a good thing—but we have very limited modes of transport out in these areas and they are vital if any are removed.

Total payment to Queensland Rail by government in 2012-13 was \$1.75 billion. It costs the government approximately \$12.5 million a year to cover the subsidy of the Inlander, and I think it is \$110 million a year for the subsidy on passenger rail in Brisbane. The subsidy on the Inlander is less than one per cent—it is 0.71 per cent—of the total amount paid by the state government to Queensland Rail annually. There has been a 61 per cent increase in the subsidy by the government for some public transport services in the south-east since 2008-09, and it is believed that this will increase a further 35 per cent by 2015-16. Yet the government is unwilling to commit a minute slice of funding to continue this Inlander service.

A lot of people out there have helped to build this state. They have lived out there in that heat and under those conditions. Yes, they have chosen to live out there, but they deserve some rights for doing that. These people have helped to build this state. They choose to live out there but they should be afforded some rights. This is a small sum. It is why the government is here—to be able to deliver those sorts of services to people in need. It is not used a lot—the usage is not great—but those people who do use it critically rely on it. They are older people and low-income workers. I have used it a few times myself and it is a good service. A lot of work can be done, and I am happy to work with the minister and the government to improve on that service. There are some tweakings that can be done right now.

We have the minister saying he wants to improve public transport, he is going to increase the off-peak frequency of public transport in Brisbane and he is going to increase the services in Brisbane to make more people use them. But at the same time in Mount Isa they are saying that if fewer people are using it then the service should just be removed altogether. This service has been there for 63 years, but they just want to remove it because it is down in numbers a bit. People who use that service deserve it. It is a right that people have in those western areas. We need to protect them. It is a vital service that must remain.

*(Time expired)*

### Redlands Community

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (3.58 pm): Today I rise to recognise some of the champions that go to make up the glue that is our community. First of all, I mention those who support our youth—people who work within the school P&C framework, the teachers, the teacher aides, the classroom readers. On the eve of World Teachers Day, I think it is rather appropriate that we recognise them for the work that they do with our young people. I wish to recognise all of the many volunteers, coaches, managers and clubbies at every one of our sporting codes right across my community.

I also recognise the youth workers, the chaplains and the Christian and church based organisations. One in particular I would like to mention is that of The Cage run by Peter and Linda Grieve. They are a new addition to my electorate and I thank them for their support. Then there are the many charities that make up a community—those people who add to the work of government and who make our communities more liveable and support one another through activities like the Cancer Fund, the Heart Foundation and the Leukaemia Foundation. Diabetes Queensland held a breakfast here this morning. There are also organisations like St Vincent de Paul, Lifeline and the Salvation Army.

Then there are the groups who look after the elderly, those carers who go out to the home and look after elderly, the church and Christian outreach organisations, the health and hospital workers, the nurses, the ambos and the people who deliver Meals on Wheels for those people who just enjoy some company and a conversation when the meal is delivered. I enjoyed my time as a Meals on Wheels delivery guy.

Then there are also the many service clubs which, again, make up part of the rich fabric of any community and, more specifically, my community. I speak of organisations like the senior citizens clubs; the Lions Clubs; the Quotas; the Zontas; the Rotary; the Inner Wheel, which is the lady's Rotary; RSL clubs, Probus, Apex and the Vietnam veterans. They all provide the wonderful glue in our community that makes our society the rich tapestry that it is.

I would also like to thank those who keep us safe: the firefighters, the rural and auxiliary volunteers who give up their time every weekend whenever there is a crisis or a fire, the police and organisations like VMR and Coast Guard who put their lives on the line to help us when we are in trouble. Being a coastal community, that is particularly valid in my neck of the woods. There are organisations like Surf Life Saving and the SES, who come out in storms, flood, fire, crashes and when people are lost. I spent some time with the SES on Mount Tamborine. Whenever the phone rang on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon we could guarantee that someone had turned an ankle or was lost.

I take this opportunity to thank them all, and this is not a complete list of all those organisations, but merely a cross-section. I suggest that God bless them all and keep them safe. It has been an absolute privilege to work with each and every one of you.

### Ferny Grove State High School

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (4.01 pm): I rise this afternoon to inform the House of the great work being undertaken and rewarded through outstanding results at the Ferny Grove State High School, where last night I enjoyed their awards night presentation. Ferny Grove State High School Principal, Mr Mark Breckenridge, began the formalities. He appeared justifiably proud of his school over the past 12 months, beginning with the outstanding achievements of the cohort of 2013, with 92 per cent of eligible students receiving an OP of 1 to 15, and nine OP1s. Of the tertiary bound graduates, 97 per cent received a first round offer in the university admissions.

The school has enjoyed steadily trending improvement over past years, a fact that provides evidence of the outstanding and dedicated effort of the teaching staff and the willingness of students to engage in the learning provided. Mark went on to outline how numeracy and literacy are the cornerstones of success in any subject and acknowledged the contribution the state has made through the Great Results Guarantee in 2014 and its continuation in 2015. Mark outlined they have used these funds to identify ways to further improve, enabling more students to reach national benchmarks and, he went on to say, 'increasing their opportunities for success ...'

The Ferny Grove State High School has become a well-recognised provider of exceptional education in the north-west Brisbane area and is held high through their outstanding music, arts, language immersion and agricultural programs. These areas of excellence are only further enhanced by the school becoming an independent public school at the commencement of this year. During the principal's address, he outlined that—

The IPS initiative has enabled our school to attract and retain quality staff as soon as the need arises. We have been freed from layers of bureaucracy at both the regional and central levels of our department and our decision making has been enhanced at the local level where it is best placed to provide for our students and community. IPS will see even greater opportunities become available to our school in the future.

Of course, I cannot speak of the awards night without mentioning the outstanding work of the student leaders throughout the year. I have had the great privilege of interacting a number of times with school captains Max Crane, Abbey Pearson, Brayden Eckert, Amy-Louise Stay and the SRC President, Ashleigh Shea at the future leaders event and school leaders luncheon here at Parliament House. They are a truly remarkable cohort of young, able adults that instil great confidence in our state's future. I look forward to working with the new leader body of Ferny Grove State High School next year, Josh Colledge, Evie Woods, Jimmy Beeley, Madison Coonan and Ashley Dierens. I wish them every success throughout 2015.

### Meier, Mr R and Mrs C

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (4.04 pm): It is with pride and pleasure that I rise to speak about Reginald Wilfred and Catherine Mary Meier, who married 60 years ago, on 23 October 1954. Last Sunday I was invited to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary with them, their family and friends. It was certainly a pleasure for me to be able to do that. Along with their two children, Rodney and Debbie; Rodney and Chris's child, Jody; and the grandchildren, Angus and Amelia; and with Renee's children, William, Nicholas and Jessica, we all enjoyed a very festive and joyous occasion. Reg was one of those people you could call a jack-of-all-trades. He was born in Murgon. As the young boy of a large family, he moved to the Coleyville area where they became dairy farmers on a 40-acre lot. They harvested wheat but also ran a dairy farm. They called it cream money; the cream was sold to the local milk factory. Ultimately they had to leave there because in 1943 there was a flood. It was one of those floods like the one experienced in 2011 where the water just came through and completely wiped them out. They then moved to Ipswich for which I thank them. It was during that time after they

moved to Ipswich that Reg met his now wife, Catherine Mary Spall, a girl who lived in Ipswich, had gone to Silkstone State School and was an only child. They met at Sherwin's pharmacy where she worked as a shop's assistant. One can only say that, having been married for 60 years, it must have been love at first sight. They courted, married and lived happily ever after.

Their involvement in community life, for which we thank them, has been extensive. They were in the brass band and they celebrated with the Ipswich model band. Reg played with the French horn—at least that is what Rodney thinks he did. Stewart, the eldest son played the euphonium. I wish I could spell it but I cannot. I do not even know what it is, but I am sure it must be very musical and must have had something to do with brass. They lived in Booval Street, incidentally, a home that Catherine's parents had built from the original holding. I wish to express my sincere thanks for having been invited to such an occasion and to see so many family members celebrate something so important. Reaching an anniversary of 60 years is one of those important events in life that we cannot all necessarily experience. I say to them that it is important for *Hansard* to record a story about these people because this generation and previous generations have gone through the hardships that have made my life and that of other Ipswichians and other Queenslanders reasonably comfortable. I say to them: thank you very much. It was an honour and a pleasure to meet them.

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

## EDUCATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3795, on motion of Mr Langbroek—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (4.07 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I acknowledge the work of the committee through our chair, Rosemary Menkens. I thank the committee for their work and all those who contributed throughout the inquiry in that space.

In previous discussions we have gone to quite some lengths to talk about the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and what it is trying to achieve on the back of the government's direction around education. The key thing is the role of principals as decision makers and enhancing their ability as part of the Newman government's push to improve student outcomes. For some time now the Newman government has been indicating that it is our belief that there is a great need to empower our schools and the people who work with our children in that space to be able to deliver on good quality education and manage the needs of our communities. It is something I have spoken about at length previously. It is something I feel strongly about. Certainly these amendments go a long way to continue to deliver on that policy.

It just makes good sense—good, solid common sense—to allow principals to do the job that we expect them to do in that space. I note that there was some controversy around giving principals the authority or the opportunity to make a decision around the appropriate attendance of students who may have been charged with a serious offence. I acknowledge the contribution by those who attended the committee meeting and gave evidence in this space, particularly the Queensland Law Society.

When we think about this issue and some of the emotive points around it, I would ask people to bear in mind that there comes a time when we have to stop and take a good look at the situation as a whole. We have to understand and acknowledge that the role of principals in schools is not just to provide an education, but to provide a safe place for students to gain an education and a safe workplace for teachers. I feel quite strongly about giving our principals the opportunity to make these sorts of decisions and the need to understand what it is they must consider when determining whether or not a student may pose a risk to fellow students or teachers in the school.

When considering these sorts of issues, I would ask my fellow members to consider that sometimes we need to consider the broader community in general—be that the school community or the greater community around it—before we consider the rights of the individual. I feel quite strongly that it is okay to stand up for the rights of the individual, but it is not okay to lose sight of the obligations of the individual. There are obligations on individuals in our society, in our community and in our education spaces to participate in the right way and not get involved in the sorts of issues that

may bring them to the attention of the principal or lead to them questioning the risk that that student may pose. It is very sad when these are the sorts of things that we have to consider. Naturally it would be my preference—and no doubt the government's preference—that we did not have to do what we are doing in this bill to try and protect the safety of the community and assure people that we are looking out for them. But the sad reality is that things do happen and our principals really do need to have the ability to make judgement calls, especially when there is such an obligation on them to provide that safe space I mentioned before.

I will talk a little bit about what I have been noticing in my space on the back of the direction that this government has taken in education, particularly around empowering schools to make decisions and act in appropriate ways for our communities. As has been stated previously, I acknowledge the work of the Premier and the minister and the work that is occurring at Loganlea State High School. I note that the principal there, Belinda Leavers, has been doing an incredible job in terms of managing behaviour in the school. In the early days I noted the fear and concerns that were raised concerning the principal's ability to suspend or exclude children if necessary, but let me talk about the flexibility that that has given principals like Ms Leavers to manage the sorts of behaviours that are of concern and to make kids accountable for what they are doing.

Instead of suspending them outright, these students have to accept a level of responsibility. For example, if they are spray-painting or damaging school property, public property or even private property, then take those children in hand and put them in a situation where they have to make good the damage that they have created. For students who may have created some damage to an agricultural school, how about putting them on the farm to do the duties that the farmhand would otherwise be doing but cannot because the farmhand has to rectify the damages. That would give them some perspective of the impact that their perhaps thoughtless actions have had on the school. I think that that level of justice goes a long way to teaching these students some of their responsibilities in line with some of their rights as well, and I think that is a great thing.

I would also acknowledge the work that is going on in other schools in my space. I was very fortunate in the last week or so to attend awards nights at Trinity College and to see the work that is being achieved there through the academic awards and the merit awards. It was great to listen to the teachers and observe their passion. Last week I became aware that former Melbourne Storm football player Matt Geyer is now a teacher at one of my schools, and that excites me because it just goes to show the diversity in schools. By giving schools the ability to manage their space, they can target the needs of their community. Whilst this particular bill does not really say a lot with regard to who might be in the schools—in fact, that is not in this particular bill today—I will say that those sorts of actions are in line with the government's direction in terms of giving our schools the ability to manage their own space. And who better to do so, because they know it, they understand it, they work with our community and they are best placed to decide what is necessary in that area.

Returning to the amendment and the bill at hand, I have made my feelings rather well known when it comes to the subject of discipline in schools. I would like to suggest to the minister that I think this is a great thing, a common-sense thing and I think we are heading in the right direction.

Special-assistance schooling provides the ability to work with children who perhaps have a need beyond what mainstream schooling can supply, creating a situation whereby we ensure that that safety net is in place as well. I note that some of these schools are in existence already and they have been doing a great job, but to recognise them in this legislation and to promote those opportunities where they are absolutely necessary is a good thing. I think it is wise to include this in the work that the government is doing at the moment.

I recently had the opportunity to put aside three days out of my busy schedule to spend time in one of my high schools and get a good, solid grounding in a walk-a-mile-in-my-shoes kind of sense by spending time at the Beenleigh State High School. On the first day, the school prepared a diary for me and sent me to various classes throughout the school to give me some perspective and understanding of what the students have to put up with. On the second day I spent a bit of time on an off-site campus attached to the school, the Eagleby Learning Centre, which is one of the special-assistance schools, to get an understanding of the challenges there. I had an opportunity to work with Libi, the principal there, and to speak with her and her team and to see the great work that goes on there. There are very creative ways of dealing with education and working with children who do not fit mainstream schooling needs. I believe that that school is also one which is earmarked for adult education opportunities, which again is very important. I think it is proper and appropriate in this bill that we take measures to create specialised learning opportunities for adults.

I do not think that it is appropriate for adult learners to be integrated into all mainstream schools. Indeed, as an adult learner at this point in my life I cannot imagine that it would be a conducive environment in which to build up my education if I were surrounded by youths or teens. Certainly those who may be considering adult education as an option would want the sort of environment which would enable them to gain an education without having to deal with those considerations as well, so that is again another common-sense approach to some of the issues in education.

Returning to the Beenleigh State High School, on my third day at the school I spent a lot of time with the administration team and the teaching staff understanding the finances of the school and some of the implications that that presents in terms of funding for the school. I also had the opportunity to have a good solid look at education in terms of the need or the push for technology in education.

I have previously been of the view that perhaps there may have been too much of a push for the latest and greatest in tools and technology, not the least of which are iPads. Perhaps it is fair to say that I have been a little bit against that sort of push in schools. I felt that we should be looking at good old-fashioned teaching and perhaps going back to basics. While I can say that I am not alone in those sentiments—certainly not from what I hear in terms of my engagement in the broader community—I have to say that I was put in a position where I had to eat a little bit of humble pie. When I had the opportunity to look at technology and how it is being utilised, more so as an engagement tool, I could not fault it. In fact, I was greatly impressed with the use of technology in that space and how the school is using that tech to engage with youth and to promote better learning opportunities and greater education.

This piece of legislation creates an opportunity and further fosters our belief in empowering schools and principals to deliver the education needs of the community and in tailoring the delivery of those education needs for the community based on what they know. I think it is an outstanding principle. It is something that I have been very pleased to work with this government on delivering. Also, the provision of school environments that cater for youth who may be disengaged from mainstream education as well as adult learners is in line with delivering great education, which is what this government is all about.

I will finish my contribution on that note. May I say again that this education minister, Minister Langbroek—I have said it before; I will say it again—is delivering on good, solid, common-sense approaches to education. I think he is doing a wonderful job.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.21 pm): That is a bit of a hard act to follow. The member for Waterford has covered most of the bill. I will make a brief contribution in support of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. First I would like to thank the minister for visiting my electorate recently for a roundtable discussion with principals. I believe that was a great success. I have spoken to several principals since who expressed appreciation of the minister taking the time to listen to their input and to their positive concerns about what he has done and what he has brought to this portfolio since the LNP formed government. I heard nothing but praise for someone who looks at things from the point of view of not only a minister but also a parent who is interested in the education of their child, as most parents are.

Schools are a vibrant hub within a community and, as such, often have visitors come on to school premises. However, it is a sad fact that sometimes principals need to be able to manage behaviour on the part of visitors that should not happen in schools. The bill contains amendments that build upon the range of existing powers of state and non-state school principals to deal with hostile persons on school premises who may, for example, threaten the safety of a student at the school, even their own child, damage property or generally disrupt the operation of the school, which should be a safe environment where our kids go to learn.

The bill also contains amendments to various education portfolio acts. I offer my support for the amendments in this bill that relate to the enrolment of mature age students in state schools. These changes in the bill align with broader Queensland government themes of ensuring school safety, improving educational outcomes, reducing red tape and, as we have heard here already, empowering local decision making on the part of our local schools. The bill removes the mandatory requirement for every state school to accept the enrolment of an eligible mature age student who is in the school's catchment area. The explanatory notes to the bill state that Queensland is the only jurisdiction with such a requirement.

I would like to focus on these two matters in relation to the bill today. These directly assist the schools in Thuringowa and their hardworking principals. They give the right to education to all but in the most appropriate environment that gives assurance to parents about their child's safety. I support the amendments contained in the bill, particularly the change to empower principals to issue verbal directions to hostile persons to leave school premises for a 24-hour period—a cooling-off period, I guess you could call it—instead of having to issue a written direction. This may reduce red tape but, more importantly, it is just common sense.

Principals sometimes have to deal with difficult situations on their school premises. It is therefore logical that we provide principals with the tools to promptly respond in these unfortunate situations. Just last week I was at a school function at which there was an incident. If the principal had these powers at that time, the situation could have been addressed much more easily and quickly.

I also endorse the amendment to give to principals the power to issue a written direction to prohibit a person from school premises for up to 60 days. The government understands that principals are best placed to make decisions to ensure the safety of our school communities and the students and staff within them. The dedicated principals in Thuringowa are no different in this case.

This bill aligns with this government's Great Teachers = Great Results strategy, which previous speakers have already mentioned. That is part of increasing our principals' autonomy. I refer to schools prescribed to accept enrolment of mature age students and schools of distance education. This is about the safety of our children and about providing the best learning environments for both children and mature age students to get the best results. Not all state schools are able to provide the learning environment that is most appropriate for adult learners. I note that the explanatory notes detail that adult learner completion rates are actually higher in schools specifically set up to cater for adult students.

The bill removes the requirements of obtaining a mature age student notice. Instead, principals of mature age state schools will now be able to access a prospective mature age student's criminal history, if there is any, and then consider the applicant's suitability for enrolment, taking into account any criminal history information. I think that is part of our government's and part of the principals' duty of care: to ensure a safe environment for both the students and the teachers within that school. Again, I think that is common sense.

I commend the Minister for Education, Training and Employment for the bill, which creates safe, supportive disciplined learning environments for all students in Thuringowa such as at Kelso, Rasmussen, Kirwan, The Willows and Weir state schools and, of course, Thuringowa High, Kirwan High and Northern Beaches High.

I commend the minister and the department on their work. While we thought there was nothing left that could be done in relation to education—we have done amazing things since we came to government, with maintenance, with looking after our teachers and with the environment our kids learn in—bills such as this just use common sense in giving power back to principals and the community. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (4.28 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. With over 10,000 students enrolled in schools in my electorate, education is understandably one of the most important issues for the families in Sunnybank. While this bill is largely administrative in nature, it will have a positive effect on the lives of children and families in my area. The bill supports schools by enhancing school autonomy and localising decision making. By doing this we will greatly reduce the regulatory burden on our schools and improve educational outcomes.

Schools are not simply educational institutes; they are vibrant social, cultural and community hubs. Teachers and especially principals perform a vital function of educating our future leaders and giving them not only a well-rounded education but also a moral compass and the tools to be good citizens.

I very much share the belief that a child's education starts in the home and that as a parent we are our child's first and most important teacher. We are responsible to ensure that they have the best start in life, that they have the best opportunities that we can provide for them, and that we continue teaching them important life skills throughout their life. As a parent not only do we have the moral responsibility to ensure our children attend school every day; it is also a legislative requirement that every Queensland parent ensures that their child attends school on every school day. In fact, a parent

may be prosecuted for failing to meet this obligation. This of course should only be a last resort and only applied when all avenues of communication and case management have failed. I do, however, understand that there are times when a student may not be able to attend school and it is times like these that we hope that parents will make the right decisions for the future of their child. In this situation, and to avoid prosecution, it is necessary for parents to seek an exemption from the requirement that they attend school.

Currently for students who attend a state school, the principal has the power to grant the exemption. However, for students attending non-state schools, the application for exemption must be made to the director-general of the Department of Education, Training and Employment. Across government we have made it abundantly clear that we want to ensure that any red-tape reduction will achieve real change in improving efficiencies by removing the unnecessary bureaucratic processes while ensuring that important processes and approvals remain in place. These measures across government have reduced the administrative burdens in all departments.

The amendments in this bill will allow a non-state school principal to grant a student an exemption for up to 110 school days in a calendar year—that is, approximately two terms—and I support this change because I believe that local principals are best placed to make this decision because they know the students, the families and the circumstances for the absence. By allowing our non-state school principals to make this decision on short exemption requests, we will be reducing red tape and in turn expedite decisions on these approvals. There are five non-government schools in my electorate and I know that they are ready for this and would support most decisions that would give greater local decision making at a school level. I support these streamlining efforts which are consistent with our government's aim of reducing the red-tape barriers that strangled the government and the private sector alike under the previous Labor administration. By removing the unnecessary forms we will let schools get on with the important job of providing the best education they can and giving our children the best start in life.

This bill continues our efforts to empower school principals to be strong and effective decision makers for their local schools. We have seen previously through the Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Bill 2013 that our government is determined to cut red tape and give principals stronger disciplinary powers in their schools. That bill gave principals more power to manage behavioural issues quickly and effectively without having their hands tied by bureaucratic red tape. Importantly and especially relevant to today's debate, that bill also allowed principals to discipline a student for actions outside the school that would impact other students or the smooth running of the school or that would pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the school community. This was not to establish overly draconian school punishments. In fact, the changes were made to give principals flexibility in taking disciplinary action and to be able to make fast decisions in the best interests of the school and the community. Similarly, this bill also reflects the fact that school principals are entrusted with establishing and maintaining a safe, secure and well ordered learning environment. It will allow principals to obtain information about whether students have been involved in a serious incident, as well as allow principals to give verbal directions to hostile persons to leave school premises.

One of the non-state schools in my electorate is Carinity Education—Southside, known to many as Southside. This is a great school that started in 1997 as a small school to educate young girls from troubled circumstances and it finally became an approved school three years later. The curriculum is set up specifically to help students deal with problems that have held them back in traditional school environments. This school supports its students with a free crèche, providing child care, early education and family support services to young mothers and pregnant students attending school. This crèche is generously provided by Search Light and provides a vital service to support students to continue with an education while pregnant and when returning to school after the birth of their child. Schools like Southside are badly needed in our community and provide an alternative environment for children and young people who are not participating in any form of education, training or employment to re-engage with their schooling. With only 20 other schools like this in Queensland, many of which have growing waiting lists, it is important that we look to the future and support the growing demand for this type of school.

Special-assistance schools are generally created to meet the identified need in a local community, and importantly these amendments will enable special-assistance schools to operate from temporary sites under strict conditions. This will allow them to respond in a more timely and effective manner to a community's identified needs. By providing for the temporary sites, these amendments will provide greater opportunities for disengaged children and young people to

re-engage with their schooling at a temporary site, allowing administrators to respond to an emerging need while they consider the merits of applying to establish it as an accredited special-assistance site.

As a government we are committed to enhancing student learning experiences and to give them the best opportunities to reach their potential. Our strong record in investment in quality education is to be commended. Locally, in the Sunnybank electorate \$4.1 million has addressed the backlog of school maintenance left by the previous government. A further \$8 million is enhancing student literacy and numeracy standards in Sunnybank through the Great Results Guarantee. We are a government that has recognised that a very important determinate of school success is the quality of principals and the teachers standing at the front of the classroom. Finally, independent public schools are an initiative that has been tremendously well received in my electorate. Four schools currently are proud independent public schools, with several other schools in my area waiting to seize the opportunity to take over the direction of their school and tailor internal school policies to the specific needs of their students and staff.

Schools need the freedom and autonomy to make decisions in the best interests of their local school communities. We have seen the success of this through the gradual expansion of the decision-making powers of principals under this government. The Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 is the next progressive step in driving the independence and authority of school principals. This bill is necessarily about giving school principals the authority to make the necessary decisions and reduce red tape. I know that this bill will be supported by the principals in my electorate of Sunnybank, and it has my support also. I thank the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, for introducing a bill that will further promote local decision making. I support this bill and hope other members of the House show their support for their local schools by doing the same.

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (4.37 pm): On behalf of the great people of Murrumba, I rise to speak in support of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. Murrumba is the Aboriginal word for good place. Each day my objective is to continue to make sure that it becomes a great place, and part of that is the Great Results Guarantee that the minister introduced. I thank him for the \$2,456,669 he has kindly given the teachers and principals in my electorate and, more importantly, for giving those principals great flexibility to spend those resources where my community has the greatest need. I also note that there was no hair cut on the way through in that all of the federal funding that was given to our state was handed over completely to each of our schools.

There are some great state school principals in my electorate such as Katrina Larsen, Del Latemore—I note that Del gave my wife a great teaching experience when Jodi was working with her at Deception Bay North State School—Lorna Coghill, David Friis, Leann Griffith-Baker, Jeff Rose, Brad Roberts and Tracey Egan. Each of these state school principals has used their money well, and there is a recurring theme here: literacy, numeracy, early years and quality teacher training.

I would again like to refer to the quality of the principals in my electorate. The bill contains several quite diverse amendments. I would like to start by talking about the mature age schools. During my research for this speech I was struck that no other state in Australia allows mature age students to rock up to any old state school to be educated. So I compliment the department and the minister on the introduction of dedicated mature age schools. I go back to my own high school experience. I spent year 12 at Hervey Bay Senior College. That was a dedicated school for years 11 and 12 students only. It taught a combination of TAFE and board subjects. Several mature age students took advantage of, dare I say, a mature age student environment to continue and finalise their education rather than being in a year 8 to year 12 environment. So again I thank the minister for this reform.

I turn to the power to give a direction to hostile persons. Other speakers have talked about verbal directions and directions in writing. I would like to note that in most instances a hostile person being at a school revolves around family law issues, domestic violence issues and people taking advantage of the school environment to access their children in contravention of the Family Law Court. For four years I was employed at a school. My office was three or four doors down from the school reception. On several occasions I was called upon to provide a physical male presence to remind unwanted people, usually fathers, that their presence at the school was not lawful and not welcome. Certainly, it was amazing how a school badge and being six foot one sent a message to many of those fathers. They usually knew very quickly that the game was up, that they were not going to get access illegally to their children then and there and the issue was resolved, fortunately in each case in a very gentle, passive manner.

On a humorous—but then serious—note about hostile persons, I want to tell the story of a ‘tractorjacking’ that occurred during my tenure at the school. One day the groundsman, Bevan Rudolf, was happily on the tractor mowing the school oval. He was confronted by a clearly drug affected man who threatened him with violence if he did not hop off the tractor. After crashing his car, this drug affected gentleman decided that his getaway car should be the tractor. Much to the entertainment of the school that day, there were plenty of police cars with their sirens going. I can confirm that the police Commodores were faster than the school tractor. I believe that the offender is currently serving time at Her Majesty’s—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr GULLEY:** The tyre track was quite humorous, yes. I move now to the power to obtain information about a student’s criminal history. In such instances there is always a delicate balance between the individual’s right to have their criminal history remain private and the principal being allowed to have that knowledge. I would say that in this bill that delicate balance has been achieved with the principal being allowed to have that knowledge. After all, the wider community should have the right to be able to send their kids to school confident that their kids are in a safe and secure environment. I believe that the local management, having knowledge of a student’s prior history, certainly enhances that environment.

I move on to the delegation of the director-general’s power to commence proceedings. This delegation of power to regional director level is appropriate. One of the school principals in my electorate has recently been promoted to regional director. I have great confidence in the likes of Tracy Corsbie in being able to administer that responsibility with all due process.

Special-assistance schools are schools that are close to my heart. There are three special-assistance schools within the state seat of Murrumba that serve the broader Moreton Bay Regional Council district. Those schools are Arethusa College; the Deception Bay Flexible Learning Centre, which is part of Edmund Rice Education Australia; and also starting next year will be the Kairos Community College. At this point I would like to congratulate the Reverend Mark Cornford, the chairman of that school, which commences on 27 January next year. That school will start a year late owing to the complexity of the accreditation process, what is an appropriate location for a school and whether or not sport and recreational buildings are an appropriate place for educational activities. That process cost that school community a year. That process cost 60 kids a year of being able to be educated in a special-assistance environment.

I compliment the teachers at the special-assistance schools within my electorate. They all deserve gold stars, if that is the right word. They are big people, great servants who deal with kids who need a second chance—sometimes a third chance and, dare I say, sometimes a fourth chance. These special-assistance schools provide a compassionate environment. Many times they provide one-on-one education. Often the state school system and the non-government school system do not cater for kids in need of special assistance. Often the state system is a one-size-fits-all model. These kids are well served by special-assistance schools.

I turn now to miscellaneous amendments that reduce red tape. I thank the minister for any red-tape reduction in schools. The reduction of anything that stops teachers and school business managers from getting on with the job is welcome.

In conclusion, I commend the bill to the House. I congratulate the minister. I do not know that the next comment has to do with education, but the Dutch word for ‘long pants’ is translated as ‘Langbroek’. I just could not help myself. I had to make that comment. Having a Dutch mother, I feel obliged to translate words from the Dutch language. I compliment the minister and commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (4.47 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I, too, add my congratulations to Minister ‘Long Pants’. I am afraid that is a name that can really stick. I congratulate the minister and his team on delivering yet another election commitment and that is about cutting red tape and empowering people who are highly skilled and highly trained to do the job that they were skilled and trained to do. Those people are the principals of our schools. I know that the principals across my electorate are all dedicated, committed hardworking professionals. They do a fantastic job. It is good to empower them to do that job.

Obviously, this bill is about driving improved outcomes. That is the key, that is the catalyst, that is what we are all about. When we invest so much time and effort in training not only our teachers but also our school leaders and principals, it seems only fair, right and fitting that those same people in whom we have invested so much time and money are empowered to do that which we taught them to do or which they have been trained to do.

I have mentioned how this legislation addresses a commitment that we made to the people of Queensland to reduce red tape. This bill is about localised decision making. I find it interesting that all too often we try to control things from afar but, in many circumstances, when you get down on to the paddock, as it were, and into the location, the decision making becomes much more localised, much more relevant and valid. This legislation to empower principals is absolutely essential in delivering better outcomes.

Turning to enrolments, it is a step forward to where principals can manage that process better. In relation to establishing special-assistance schools, in my community, as I am sure in other communities, there are young people who disconnect and disengage and it is important that we provide as many opportunities to get those young people back on the straight and narrow, back into the groove, and educate them because without the ability to read, write and add up they clearly will struggle for the rest of their lives. Once we have empowered them with those basic skills there is nothing they cannot access.

This legislation is commonsense. That has been the hallmark of this government. When I cast my mind back on the suite of legislation that we have introduced as a government it has all been about empowering, cutting red tape and delivering good, commonsense outcomes. This legislation sits very nicely with that. The minister and his team are to be congratulated. What a refreshing contrast.

When I go to Mount Cotton State School, the principal James Forrest skites about the money being spent on fixing up his school and that he is looking forward to being empowered to do the good work that he needs to do with the students of Mount Cotton. Kim Egan at Carbrook State School does a fabulous job. It is a beautiful school on the edge of a busy road. Can I digress and put on the record my concern that that is not one of the schools that got the flashing lights. I have written to the minister in that regard to see if we can get that rolled out on the school flashing lights program. It is a busy road in front of that school. It is a beautiful country school and Kim is doing a fantastic job there. There is a new principal on Russell Island not long appointed. I have not had a chance to meet the principal and I am looking forward to that in the balance of this term to introduce myself. Principal Gaynor Brennan on Macleay Island is doing the hard yards out there. It is a tough little isolated community. We have seen significant investment into that school with covered walkways, paths and maintenance work that has been so neglected. Redland Bay State School principal Lex Bowden is doing a fantastic job. He is one of the more experienced school principals across the state. He is a really good operator and very much appreciative of the work and investment this government has put into this school. Esta Thiris is a relatively new principal at Victoria Point State School who is settling in nicely and slowly putting her mark on the school and getting it to run the way she wants it to run. We look forward to a very prosperous future helping the school improve its scores. Last but not least I mention high school principal Scot Steinhart at Victoria Point State High School. I thank him for his work there. They have just got a brand new building. It has come on in leaps and bounds. It is about to be open for the transition of year 7.

Coupled with other investments we have made in schools, it is a fabulous partnership with our community, our P&C associations and with our teachers and principals being empowered. All this on the eve of World Teachers Day. In conclusion, I congratulate Minister Langbroek for the work he and his ministry have done in this space.

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (4.53 pm): I rise in support of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I am a great believer in the saying 'education fixes everything'. Firstly, I would like to commend the minister and his department's efforts to create safe, caring and disciplined school environments. As a former police officer I attended schools regularly and had many interactions with schools dealing with a variety of incidents as well as the Adopt-a-Cop program. Apart from my current role as an MP, my time in the police force gave me a valuable insight into the operations of schools and the challenges they face.

This bill continues our commitment to support principals in their roles and using these disciplinary powers. The bill does not alter or escalate the disciplinary powers currently available to state school principals; it is about providing principals with the information they need to make our

schools not only a safe place to educate our students but also keep our school employees safe. Principals are in the best position to make decisions on the welfare of students and staff and we must empower our principals to make properly informed decisions. Schools are important parts of any community and have many visitors as part of their day-to-day operations. Unfortunately for a variety of reasons some of those persons choose to behave badly. The bill contains amendments that build upon the range of existing powers of state and non-state school principals to deal with hostile persons on school premises who may, for example, threaten the safety of students, damage property or disrupt the good order and management of the school. The change to enable principals to issue verbal directions to hostile persons to leave school premises for a 24-hour period, instead of having to issue a written direction, is a commonsense approach. I also commend the amendment to move to principals the power to give a written direction to prohibit a person from school premises for up to 60 days. Our government understands that principals are best placed to make decisions to ensure the safety of our school communities. In this way the bill will align with our government's Great Teachers = Great Results strategy by situating decision-making with principals to increase principal autonomy.

I would also like to take the opportunity to touch on a couple of other points, particularly the overwhelming positive comments that I have received from principals and teachers about the Newman government's programs such as the Great Results Guarantee and our program to address the \$300 million maintenance backlog. These programs are making a massive difference to the schools in the Greenslopes electorate. It is enabling our teachers to do what they do best: teach and support students without having to worry about the school falling down around them. Schools are able to use the Great Results Guarantee money to make a real difference to their students and staff. Principals are revelling in the ability to take more control over their school communities. Yes, I do trust our principals to do what is right.

Finally, I had the pleasure to attend four awards nights for high schools in my electorate over the past two weeks. These included Mt Gravatt High, Cavendish Road High, Holland Park High and Coorparoo Secondary College. I am so very proud of all the achievements of the students in my electorate and these awards nights showcased just how good these schools are. I would like to thank all the principals, teaching staff and support staff for their tireless work and wish them all a happy World Teachers Day for tomorrow. I would also like to thank the minister personally for attending the electorate on numerous occasions and also conducting a principals' round table in the electorate. It has always been very well received. I support the bill.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (4.56 pm): The Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill brought to the House by the Minister for Education, Training and Employment continues strong reforms introduced by this government in this term in our education sector. It focuses on high achievement, teaching quality and providing communities with the ability to direct educational resources in the way that they see to be most effective. This is consistent with the Great Teachers = Great Results and also the Advancing our Future Schools Maintenance initiatives where maintenance funding for schools has been increased to the tune of about \$300 million over the last couple of years and local schools have been given the ability to go to market locally with this funding. The evidence that I have heard from principals around my electorate is that this enables five maintenance jobs to be done for the price of four previously. That is certainly a great benefit to many schools that have not kept up maintenance over the last decade or so. Those registers are being worked through very well.

The bill also deals with opportunities to further the objectives of supporting school autonomy, in particular in the realm of strengthening the power for schools to deal with hostile persons, restricting mature age student enrolments to age appropriate settings, permitting the chief executive of the department to obtain information from the QPS about charges and convictions to assist principals with disciplinary decisions and also looks at enabling the chief executive to delegate power to commence prosecutions against parents for offences of failing to comply with compulsory schooling and participation requirements. As many other members have noted, many of these reforms are commonsense decisions to enable more localised and more decentralised decision making in our schools: taking power away from the department—bureaucrats in Brisbane or in regional offices—and enabling more localised decision making. That can be likened to a lot of the initiatives rolled out in the Great Results Guarantee. This is an initiative to direct funding to schools that was utilised last year in prep to year 2 and this year, with a greater focus on high school funding, to enable principals and school communities to direct that funding to address the needs of students in the way that is most appropriate for their school community. I know that principals in my electorate are very happy with that autonomy. In particular, the principals of my high schools are very happy with that autonomy.

Last night I had the pleasure of attending the awards night for Beaudesert State High School. It was noted at that ceremony that next year their Great Results Guarantee funding will be approximately \$420,000 as opposed to approximately \$140,000 this year. I have sat down with the principal on a number of occasions and discussed how his school is using that funding. He has explained to me that they are targeting that funding to year 8 and 9 students who have been identified as having skill gaps in literacy. He has noted that in some cases the literacy skills of students are several years behind where they should be at that age. He is of the opinion that in year 8 and 9 there is still an opportunity for students to be brought up to speed. If it is left much longer than that the opportunity for those skill deficits to be remedied is lost. This is a great initiative that has been undertaken at Beaudesert State High School. Those students will get one-on-one teacher or teacher aide attention to address those literacy and numeracy deficits.

There are a number of other schools that are receiving significant boosts through the Great Results Guarantee funding. They are using that money in the way they consider to be most appropriate for their community. Boonah State High School will receive approximately \$177,000 next year as opposed to approximately \$60,000 this year. Tamborine Mountain State High School will receive nearly \$200,000 next year as opposed to \$68,000 this year. The funding for Jimboomba State School will go to \$207,000 next year as opposed to \$160,000 in 2014.

This funding is very much welcomed by the schools. More than that, it is the autonomy to do with that funding what is most appropriate for that community that is welcomed by principals, welcomed by parents and welcomed by P&Cs. It is that autonomy that will benefit our students most in the future.

Tomorrow is World Teachers Day. I take this opportunity to wish all of our hardworking teachers—my mother was a teacher so I know how hard they work—a very happy Teachers Day. I know the member for Burdekin was once a hardworking teacher. Now she is the very hardworking member for Burdekin. It will be sad to not see her here in the House in the next term of parliament. The insight that she brings to this House as a former teacher is very much welcomed by all of us here. Happy World Teachers Day for tomorrow to you, member for Burdekin.

In closing, I point out that on Saturday I will be representing the minister at Roadvale State School for their 125th anniversary. Roadvale is a small school in my electorate, but it is a great school. It has about 30-odd students and two teachers. The principal has just recently been made permanent after a number of years of not having a permanent principal at that school. The school community has welcomed having a permanent principal in place. Due to the complexities of employment arrangements, for a number of years it was not possible to have the principal made permanent. The stability and certainty that comes with that will be most welcomed. I know she is doing a great job in that community. Happy Teachers Day to all teachers. Happy 125th anniversary to Roadvale State School. I will certainly be looking forward to supporting this bill in the House this evening.

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.05 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the bill before the House. I want to start, as other members have, by congratulating the education minister on the great work he has done with this bill and the other work he has done in his portfolio. In fact, the minister and I came into parliament together in 2004. He has certainly become a very strong minister in this portfolio. He has overseen the delivery of great outcomes for students, for parents and for teachers. In speaking to teachers and parents in Caloundra they have noticed dramatic improvements in their schools. I put that down to strong leadership and a desire to get positive outcomes. I again say to the minister, well done.

It is always important to acknowledge the role that schools have in developing our young people and our children into the leaders that we want them to be. I want to read into the record the schools that are in the seat of Caloundra. They are: Currimundi State School, Currimundi Special School, Caloundra State High School, Caloundra State School, Our Lady of the Rosary School, Golden Beach State School, Unity College, Caloundra Christian College, Beerwah State School, Beerwah State High School, Landsborough State School, Glenview State School, Mooloolah State School, Caloundra City Private School and Glasshouse Country Christian College. All these schools provide an education and leadership skills to the students who go through their doors over a number of years. In meeting these students, I have seen some wonderful ambassadors for Caloundra and the Sunshine Coast. I have no doubt in time to come they will lead exciting lives either here in Australia or overseas or both.

I think it is also important to acknowledge the teachers in our schools, whether they be state, private or otherwise. I had a number of uncles who were teachers many years ago. They would talk to me about the great joy they got teaching young children to attain the best they could. We always hear the story of the one student who has an impact upon a teacher in their career. It is true. There is no doubt that there are always one or two students who stick in the minds of teachers and provide them with their best outcomes, their most adventurous challenges and personal satisfaction as well.

In addition, we must also express our gratitude to the parents who do wonderful work with their children. Reading to children at home at night is always a very important function of a parent. The joy that one sees on a child's face when they start to understand the story and become enthralled in what is being read to them is a feeling one does not readily forget. Many parents tell me how much their children enjoy going to school and how they enjoy learning at school and the difference they have noticed in the last couple of years with regard to the outcomes their children are achieving.

The bill before the House does many things. I think it is right to summarise it by simply saying it empowers schools, teachers and headmasters to do what is right for their school, their locality and their children. Let us be quite clear, it is always important to understand that on the ground one gets the best advice as to what is best for the children. By listening to parents, the P&Cs, even the children themselves and those around them, teachers can formulate ideas, concepts and plans to deliver strong, effective outcomes.

I think the Great Results Guarantee campaign has been an enormous success. It has been a catalyst to engage teachers and parents in driving strong outcomes for children. On the ground, schools have put in place plans to effectively drive the outcomes they need for the children who attend their schools. It is much appreciated by parents.

In the bill there is a right to control the enrolment process with regard to children who may have criminal records and the right to control visitors to the school who may cause problems. The government sees the role of the individual, the role of the locale, the role of the local population as important in delivering effective and strong outcomes with regard to children's education.

At the end of the day, deriving the outcome that we want for our children is what we all use as the gauge of success. When I was growing up my parents had great aspirations in terms of what they wanted me to achieve. They worked very diligently to help me achieve that. The parents in Caloundra work very hard to assist their children. The government and the schools working in unison to derive one goal and one direction can only be of benefit to all concerned. Again, I congratulate the minister on the great work he has done and commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (5.09 pm), in reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate on the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I especially want to thank the members of the Education and Innovation Committee for their considered report and support for the bill.

At the outset I want to point out that there has been considerable praise for my department and my role as minister. I want to draw the attention of members to the fact that this bill is a product of a definite strategy from the Commission of Audit, commissioned by the government when we became the government, making sure that we had a strategic direction for education in Queensland. It has involved making sure that we focus on high achievement and enhancing student performance in every school, including supporting school autonomy to generate innovative school based solutions balanced by strong accountability frameworks.

We have said that with autonomy comes responsibility, but we have also looked at legislation, such as the education acts that are relevant to my portfolio, to make sure that we could review opportunities to make sure that we support school autonomy, enhance local decision making, support school safety, improve educational outcomes and reduce red tape. That is what I think members have seen over the last 2½ years of this government, evidenced by significant maintenance funding and the Great Results Guarantee, which has had the most significant response that I have seen in my time in this place from schools in terms of their appreciation for the government of the day acknowledging these areas and making sure that they are supported to be able to deliver the services to their parents, students and teachers to make sure that we do get great results in our schools.

At the outset I think it is important to mention that it is a team effort by the government. The Newman government commissioned the Commission of Audit and then this department has said, yes, we are going to increase spending because we are always going to be employing more teachers

based on enterprise bargaining negotiations that have class size targets and the whole department focuses on our mantra of 'from crayon to career'. That means reducing red tape where we can but also making sure that we supply resources into schools so that people can use them at their discretion to make sure that we do get the focus on getting the best results.

I want to thank members for their contributions. I am going to go through some of those now before we come to consideration in detail. I thank the honourable member for Stafford, the shadow minister. It is his first bill. I am sure it is a rather daunting process to come in and do your first bill, so congratulations and thank you for your support and that of the opposition. I know he made a statement of reservation, but I also want to acknowledge his acceptance of my explanation in the second reading speech for the queries that he raised in the statement of reservation, and that is appreciated. I am glad that he can see that the verbal command provisions will enhance school safety. He is satisfied that they are reviewable and subject to proper process. I also welcome his support of the removal of chapter 18, after an explanation from the Department of Education, Training and Employment officials that children would only be able to be taught as an addition to properly accredited schools, or for a short time. As the member mentioned, this is part of the Newman government's red-tape reduction agenda.

I would like to reassure the member that special-assistance schools are only used in the most serious circumstances. It is an important part of the third tranche of our policies that involve teacher quality, autonomy and discipline measures. The discipline measures specifically are not just punitive measures. That is what we have said. For students who are disengaged at a particular time in their lives—and, as I travel around to principal round tables, members here will confirm that it is the principals who raise this point—often the issues that lead to disengagement are a consequence of things that those particular students are not themselves responsible for. It can be to do with drugs and alcohol and unemployment in their families. It can be to do with other issues to do with communities and housing. They are things which I have committed to working on with our principals in our schools, which are seen as community hubs, and to try to work on with other ministers.

If schools are seen as community hubs and the community goes there, we need to be able to work with those students if at times they are disengaged. We are increasing support for special-assistance schools. I want to reject the member for Stafford's assertion that we are cutting resources to support these children. I visited many special-assistance schools. Arethusa is one that I know in the member for Murrumba's electorate. There are 150 alternative programs in state schools. Just last week I signed off on capital assistance grants going to the provision of more special-assistance schools—some in the non-state school area, where we have dozens of programs delivered at dozens of campuses where we can hopefully get these students back into mainstream schools.

The special-assistance schools are committed to ensuring that these children who face, as I have already mentioned, many difficult life experiences remain engaged and participate in education. It is particularly reassuring when we see students who sometimes will come and give us their testimonials about what state they were in when special-assistance schools have led to them successfully returning to school and completing school, and we want to make sure that happens. We do have positive learning centres throughout the state and they have had mixed results. That is why, as part of us looking at how we are providing these services, we want to make sure that we provide these services as efficiently and effectively as possible in this portfolio. We continue to give serious thought to making sure that we cater for disengaged children.

I thank the member for his acceptance of the regulations for mature age students attending state schools. I also want to reject his assertions though concerning a lack of options. There remains the possibility for mature age students to access free distance education. If they choose to pursue their studies at TAFE, they be may be eligible for the Queensland government's certificate III guarantee. I was looking at some notes here about the number of schools that were anticipating having mature age students enrolling and the numbers are quite large.

We understand his concerns about the suspension of students facing serious charges. We will be providing mandatory training for principals to ensure these provisions are clearly understood. Of course I have heard the argument of the Law Society and their concern for civil liberties. We do not apologise for making sure that parents around the state can be absolutely confident in the safety provisions for their children in schools attended by those students who may have faced serious charges, and we will make sure we are very discreet through the director-general with that information.

I want to thank the member for Burdekin, the chair of the Education and Innovation Committee. I know that she started with an assertion that when you educate a woman you educate a generation. I think there is no doubt that in the modern world it is mums who are often the ones who are discussing these issues, from early education all the way through to what schools we are going to send our children to. Fathers can be involved as well. But there is no doubt that, from speaking to mums, they are the ones who are often making these decisions in conjunction with their husbands. It is an acknowledgement that, whether it is mums or dads, it is important for us to work together to make sure that we get the best outcomes for our students. I know that, as a former teacher, she has already been wished the best for World Teachers Day tomorrow by the member for Beaudesert. So that is certainly acknowledged, too—someone who came in with me and the member for Caloundra in 2004, and I know we are going to miss her in this place after the next election.

I thank the member for Mount Coot-tha, my assistant minister, for her contribution. This bill is all about making schools the safe and welcoming places for all students including those who find it difficult to cope with mainstream schools. I am sure the member is celebrating the lavish praise heaped upon her by the member for Gaven in his contribution.

As the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and member for Toowoomba South pointed out during his remarks, this bill is aimed at ensuring that all students, no matter where they are, have access to a first-class education in a safe, welcoming environment. And may I wish his wife, Anita, a happy World Teachers Day for tomorrow, as she sets out for her classroom in Toowoomba.

I want to reject the member for Gaven's assertions that the reform agenda by the LNP for education in this state is a 'jingoistic' regurgitation of the previous government's work. This government is unreservedly about improving outcomes for the children of Queensland. We know education is the foundation of opportunity, and I am glad the member did agree with me on this important fact. Let me reassure him that this bill is about giving principals and school authorities the support and capacity to provide this first-class education to all students, no matter where they live or what their family situations are.

I must reject his assertions made during his incoherent remarks about school closures. We are the first government to actually appoint a Schools Planning Commission to carefully and assiduously assess demographic information to decide where schools are needed. These decisions are based on facts, on population figures, not on donations as the member implied. I want to point out that the previous Labor government closed 140 schools over nearly 20 years—an average of seven a year. This is something that governments have to do, even though they may be difficult decisions. It is important to note that six schools were closed last year but we are planning for 10 new schools. Because of the poor planning of the former government, no state schools were opened this year in 2014. That is an indictment on a state with 4½ million people and with growing figures in the state school sector.

I want to thank the member for Gladstone. She mentioned the schools in her electorate, of which there are about 30 or so. Her commitment to excellence in education is commendable. She made comments about principals managing hostile people on school grounds and asked for a comment. I would like to assure the member that care will be taken in assessing whether people are judged as hostile and that all principals will be given training in the procedures to be followed and the required documentation for giving a direction to a hostile person. It is a measure of last resort and there are serious consequences if principals fail to comply with departmental policy and procedures.

I would also say to parents that it is part of their responsibility and part of the respect they should have for principals and schools that they should maintain decorum when they are in schools, no matter how frustrated they may be. I get to see those incident reports every day. While parents may be passionate, there is no reason for them to deal in disrespectful ways with anyone in an area of responsibility—be it the police, teachers or emergency service workers. They are public servants doing a job and they deserve our respect.

I would also like to reassure the member for Gladstone that the cancellation of enrolment for the nonpayment of fees for distance education is a measure of last resort. I do understand that many Queenslanders are facing difficult circumstances in this current drought and with other adverse conditions. My department works with any students or families who are facing financial hardship through the negotiation of payment plans to ensure that schooling continues. The chief executive of my department also has the capacity to waive fees.

Other members made contributions and I have not mentioned them, but I can see them here—the member for Greenslopes, the member for Waterford, the member for Albert and the member for Caloundra, whom I did mention. I know these members all share the same passion that I would like to think all of us as legislators do. We want to make sure that those of us who have had the benefit of an education that led us over time to this place realise that this is something that Queenslanders do not want us to be partisan about. That is why we had the Education Accord Summit just a few weeks ago. Out of that came the sense that it is so important for the future that all of our future leaders and all of the future citizens of Queensland deserve the best chance. No matter what their condition and no matter where their location, we should be able to support them—whether they are in a small or remote school, whether they are Indigenous or have a disability, whether they speak a language other than English or whether they have other issues that affect them and their socioeconomic status. That is something that we on this side of the House are committed to. We want to make sure that we provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment so that students have the best possible opportunity to learn and thrive. The Newman government firmly believes that this bill helps deliver on those aims. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): I note the Attorney-General's amendments Nos 1 and 2 propose to amend clause 2, which relates to proposed new clauses in other amendments. Therefore, consideration of clause 2 is postponed until after the other clauses and schedules have been considered.

Clause 2 postponed.

Clauses 3 to 139, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (5.25 pm): I thank the education minister for allowing me to move a few amendments with respect to different acts of parliament but having the carriageway through his particular bill that we have just debated. I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Mr BLEIJIE**: I move the following amendment—

3 **After clause 139**

Page 103, after line 17—

*insert—*

**Part 7A           Amendment of Industrial Relations Act 1999**

**139A   Act amended**

This part amends the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*.

**139B   Amendment of s 287 (General rulings)**

(1)   Section 287(1)(a), 'a pre-modernisation'—  
*omit, insert—*

an

(2)   Section 287—  
*insert—*

(10A) This section applies despite chapter 5A.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendment.

*Tabled paper*: Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes to Hon. Jarrod Bleijie's amendments [\[6421\]](#).

I note that the opposition received a briefing earlier today on these amendments.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I wish to speak to amendment No. 3, but before I do make comments on the amendment can I say how nice it is to see the Attorney-General on his feet. It has been a while since we have seen him in any press conferences or debating any substantive legislation. I think it is twice in one day today that we have heard the Attorney-General.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Redcliffe, we are talking about something very specific. If you wish to continue on the specific matter, you do have that imprimatur; otherwise I will have to ask you to sit down.

**Mrs D'ATH:** In relation to this amendment, the opposition will not be opposing it. It must be said that this is another reminder of what happens when an inexperienced Attorney-General, with the full backing of an arrogant Premier, pursues an extreme ideological approach to legislation in general and industrial relations in particular.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Redcliffe, I will say this for the last time. If you want to speak to the clause then please do so, but what you are talking about is outside the clause and I will not tolerate it for a third time. Could you please direct your comments for the balance of the time to the clause.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, my comments are going specifically to making amendments to the industrial relations legislation and that these amendments—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Then please do so. You were not speaking about that; you were talking about the arrogance of the Premier and the Attorney-General and that is not within the clause. If you are now going to direct your speech to the specific matters, I will allow you to proceed but only on that basis.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am speaking to the industrial relations amendments and the fact that these amendments should not have to be brought to this chamber and that these amendments are a consequence of an inexperienced Attorney-General who should have made sure he was doing his job in the first place. Once again, we are here dealing with amendments that have nothing to do with the education bill before this House. We are having to make corrections because the Attorney-General did not do his job in the first place.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Let me explain to the member for Redcliffe why this amendment is necessary. I am not sure if she knows of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. It is a little body and Supreme Court Justice Glenn Martin is the part-time president of that Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. This amendment that we are debating—this technical amendment—is here because the matter was raised by the full bench of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission in the 2014 State Wage Case about whether a State Wage Case general ruling could apply beyond pre-modernisation awards. The amendment will ensure that the State Wage Case can apply to employees covered by the modern award. From time to time, the Industrial Relations Commission, courts in each jurisdiction, the Magistrates Court, the District Court and the Supreme Court may make commentary on certain matters. That is their job and it is the job of this parliament to make those matters—

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. We take that advice very seriously and at the first available opportunity it is the responsibility of this parliament to have those amendments put through—hence why we are moving those amendments to the first available bill we could.

Amendment agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Mr BLEIJIE** (5.29 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I move the following amendment—

**4 After clause 139**

Page 103, before line 18—

*insert—*

**Part 7B Amendment of Property Occupations Act 2014**

**139C Act amended**

This part amends the *Property Occupations Act 2014*.

**139D Amendment of s 114 (Revocation of appointment)**

Section 114(4)—

*omit, insert—*

- (4) Subsections (5) and (6) apply to an appointment, that has not been assigned, of a property agent for a sole or exclusive agency for the sale of residential property for a term of at least 60 days, other than a commercial scale appointment.

Amendment No. 4 deals with part 7B in relation to the Property Occupations Act 2014 and consists of proposed new sections 139C and 139D. New section 139C provides that part 7B amends the Property Occupations Act. I note on this particular matter that today was an important day because, come 1 December, real estate agents and consumers in Queensland will have a reduction of 44.3 per cent of government paperwork when buying or selling property in this state. I was pleased to—

**Mrs D'Ath:** That's got nothing to do with you.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am pretty sure that the Property Occupations Act has a lot to do with me as Attorney-General with responsibility for the Property Occupations Act. As a member of the executive, the minister who attended with His Excellency the Governor in the Executive Council today, I had the pleasure of watching the Governor sign the deletion of 44.3 per cent of regulation created by the Labor Party. So it is a good day for real estate agents. It is a great day for consumers as there will be an almost 44 per cent reduction in paperwork when buying or selling property come 1 December due to the amendments in relation to the Property Occupations Act.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the Attorney-General for well and truly going off point in relation to the debate on that amendment. I rise to speak on amendment No. 4. The Attorney-General introduced—

**Mr STEVENS:** I rise to a point of order. That is an absolute reflection on the chair. She is advising you, in her backward manner, that you were supposed to keep the Attorney-General on the debate, and he certainly stayed on the debate.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry):** Order! I am going to allow the member for Redcliffe to proceed.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I rise to speak to amendment No. 4. The Attorney-General introduced the Property Occupations Bill in this House in 2013. That bill was drafted after exhaustive consultation with stakeholders and following the introduction of other legislation by the previous Labor government. One might think that after extensive work and consultation it would have been right.

The bill was assented to on 21 May 2014 and now, before the act has even commenced, amendments have had to be made. The explanatory notes describe this amendment as addressing a minor drafting omission. The clause being amended changed the method of revocation for an appointment of a property agent for a sole or exclusive agency. There was no restriction on the purpose of the agency. The explanatory notes say that the intention was that it be restricted to appointments for the sale of residential property that are not commercial scale. There is some concern that the appointment of a sole or exclusive agency relating to the sale of commercial property or the sale of a business might be included in the act as it currently stands.

This substantially alters the operation of the provision from all such appointments to only sales of residential property. We have been advised that the amendments were at the request of the REIQ. The consultation paragraph of the explanatory notes states that targeted consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders and that the key stakeholders were consulted and supported the amendment. However, we have not been told who those stakeholders are. So we do not know whether it is representatives of all groups likely to be affected by the amendments. I would appreciate it if the Attorney could advise the House who are the parties who were the subject of the targeted consultation. The opposition will not be opposing this clause, but we are disappointed we are in this position so soon after the passage of the bill. At least the provision being amended has not yet commenced, so there will not be too much inconvenience to the industry.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Lots of organisations were consulted. Based on that consultation we are moving the amendment today.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 140, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The House will now consider postponed clause 2.

Clause 2—

**Mr BLEIJIE** (5.33 pm): I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 2 (Commencement)**

Page 12, line 7, before 'The'—

*insert—*

(1)

**2 Clause 2 (Commencement)**

Page 12, after line 11—

*insert—*

(2) Part 7A is taken to have commenced on 1 December 2013.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

### Third Reading

**Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (5.34 pm): So much for the Attorney! Thankfully, we know where we are going now. 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. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.35 pm): This is what they call teamwork, because we on this side of the House can work together on these sorts of things. I move the following amendment—

**5 Long title**

Long title, 'and the Further Education and Training Act 2014'—

*omit, insert—*

, the *Further Education and Training Act 2014*, the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* and the *Property Occupations Act 2014*

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (5.36 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 25 November 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (5.36 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

## Broadband

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.36 pm): For some time I have received complaints about broadband services within my electorate. That has increased since the LNP government came to power, both federally and in Queensland, because they have introduced 'fraud band' to replace the NBN. Residents who move into some areas within my electorate were promised a level of service would be available to them in the area they wished to move to only to find an inferior service at a higher cost being their only option. Areas announced to be getting the NBN are now on the never-never. Suburbs like Bundamba and parts of Bellbird Park were announced as such areas long ago, with residents waiting not months, but now years for a promised service with no end in sight. Some residents were given time lines of 10 weeks but are still waiting despite being told that in October 2012. Others are waiting to even see lines be laid—over a two-year wait.

It is simply not good enough in a modern economy, in a modern world for small business, IT people working from home and students to have no options other than expensive and slower services. Some residents are even being refused services completely by some service providers and it is impossible to even get ADSL services. This then forces families onto expensive 3G services. This is a disgraceful situation for people in some suburbs in the electorate of Bundamba. They have sought advice and assistance from the federal minister only to receive standard letters back from the department. These letters were clearly written by someone purporting to be Sir Humphrey Appleby.

It is a very brave minister who ignores the views of the people in my electorate, the issues they have genuinely raised and the needs of our community in such a way. Residents in Ipswich want to be able to access the best possible services available for their small businesses, for their jobs and also to enable their children to undertake their schoolwork, which is so heavily reliant on internet services these days. Our kids in our electorates should not be disadvantaged because the LNP dismisses them because of their postcode. Students in my community deserve the same access and the same services as any other student across Australia. My advice to those buying a house is to doorknock their neighbours and ask them about their internet service, ask them which service they use and how much it costs, and do this before signing a contract to purchase a house.

## Molhoek, Mr D; Queensland Health

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (5.39 pm): I rise this evening to speak a little indulgently about my eldest son, David, who is a health student and trainee doctor with Griffith University as part of the world health program and who has worked also extensively on their Hope for Health program. It is with great pride that I share with the House that he will graduate on 16 December, but today he returned from Papua New Guinea where for the last six weeks he has been working as a trainee doctor in the Fly River district in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea.

I thought it would be appropriate to share a little bit of one of the emails he sent while he was away, because it is an incredible contrast to the wonderful health system that we have here in Queensland, and I will turn to that in regard to my electorate in moment. David makes the comment that the hospital in Fly River is modest by Australian standards and in fact makes Australian hospitals look a little like Versace. He wrote—

It has an Outpatients/ED area which is full on arrival each morning, a pathology and radiology department, operating theatre, new (and unopened) surgical ward, general ward, maternity and isolation ward (for TB patients). Where do I start. Outpatients is poorly resourced, mostly of expired stock. Dressings are made from a big pile of cotton and covered with micropore tape, oxygen is available for the sick (not!), temperature probe is old glass mercury stick, medications dispensed in little plastic bags, and hand hygiene, forget about it. Use the communal soap bar and towel to wash your hands.

He goes on to talk a little bit about the experience and he says—

I have learnt plenty about medicine here and probably have seen more sick kids ...

in my first three days—

... than I saw in all my studies in Australia (and probably the sickest kids I've seen too). A case that comes to mind was on my first day when a young kid came in with respiratory distress. He had all the clinical signs that I only read in textbooks, tracheal tug, accessory muscle use, subcostal retention, and a gravelly sounding chest. In Australia, I would hit the emergency button and several seniors would ride in on white stallions to save the day. But this was for me to diagnose and manage. That was scary. We did a malaria test, commenced him on antibiotics and admitted the patient ... However, amazingly at ward round the following morning, he was markedly improved and was discharged in three days.

Madam Speaker, that is quite a contrast to what we are seeing here. I am very proud to be part of a government that is so committed to improving health standards here in Queensland and on the Gold Coast. It is great to see that for the first time we have cancer care on the Gold Coast at the Gold Coast University Hospital. I was there with the Premier when we announced that services for women and newborns would be expanded in terms of specialist services for high-risk pregnancies, and the achievements of this government in terms of reducing health waiting lists has been outstanding.

*(Time expired)*

### **Pine Rivers Electorate, Education**

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (5.42 pm): There are few things that are more important than to ensure our children receive the best possible education. As a parent, I want to ensure all children in Pine Rivers receive an education that prepares them for a lifetime of achievement and excellence.

I am an advocate for a strong state school system. I spent my 12 years of schooling at state schools, and I want to ensure that every child at every one of the seven state schools in my electorate has every opportunity to succeed and develop their skills and abilities. I want to ensure that our state schools are well resourced and that our state school teachers also have the resources they need to be great teachers. I also believe that it is important for Pine Rivers to have strong private schools, and I am proud of the results that have been achieved recently by our local private schools in Pine Rivers.

Our government has been revitalising our education system in the past 2½ years, and Pine Rivers schools have been benefiting from our government's commitment to the education of our children. One of the best demonstrations of this commitment to quality education is the \$2.6 million that has been delivered to Pine Rivers state schools to fix building maintenance backlog issues. No longer do students need to leave classrooms with leaky roofs when it rains. Amenity blocks have been repaired and upgraded. Worn-out carpet and rusty fences have been replaced. Our children deserve a safe learning environment, our teachers deserve a safe teaching environment, and our government has delivered that for Pine Rivers' schools.

The first years of schooling are critical, and our government recognises this and is resourcing schools accordingly. Pine Rivers state schools across 2014-15 will have received \$2.3 million in literacy and numeracy funding which is being utilised by schools to employ numeracy and literacy specialists, updating reading resources and providing further training for teachers and parents. Pine Rivers schools are also benefiting from our government's increases to prep teacher aide hours with three schools in my electorate, Strathpine West, Lawnton and Bray Park state schools, all being allocated additional prep teacher aide hours—Strathpine West from this year and Lawnton and Bray Park from next year.

With tomorrow being World Teachers Day, it is appropriate that I place on record my thanks and appreciation for every teacher and every staff member at our nine Pine Rivers schools. I hold teachers in the highest esteem. Having spent some time over this term of parliament in classrooms with teachers and assisting with various school activities, I cannot thank them enough for the commitment that they show to our children and for the passion they display in educating our children.

I am working closely with all of our Pine Rivers schools to ensure that they all have the resources and facilities they need. I will continue to work with all of our schools to secure the upgrades that they need and whatever else they need to continue developing our leaders of tomorrow.

### **Woodridge Heroes**

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (5.45 pm): My 30 years working in Woodridge with and for the people there has been an absolutely remarkable experience. The community there has changed and is constantly evolving. Today we see a strong community with the colour and diversity of our entire world. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of volunteers throughout the area augment our workers in many of our services and departments. While we have felt funding cuts very acutely, nonetheless massive efforts go into supporting our community. I just wish to mention some individuals and organisations that have made a huge impact on my electorate.

Senior Sergeant Michael Pearson has been a leading light not only in policing but also in so many coordinating efforts over more than 20 years. Few have his depth of understanding, his complete devotion and passion for this community. While he has been seconded to Roma Street headquarters, we hope to welcome him back.

Within policing I would also like to mention the fantastic leadership of Rachel Whitford at our PCYC. Rachel has guided so many important programs and, along with her team of workers and volunteers, has made such a difference in the lives of countless young people and many others in the community. The Braking the Cycle program, which enables young people to reach the 100 hours of driving to obtain their driver's licence, thus improving their job prospects, has now been nominated for a national award.

Bill Richards, President of the Logan Chamber of Commerce, has been the driving force within our business community for many years, but he has defined his role in the way that the chamber has worked so closely with our schools and community in general. It is that close alignment of community, schools and business which is so important to bring a community together. Logan's Dream it Up event to inspire our year 10 students has been Bill's vision, and each year hundreds of our students from many of our high schools come to hear inspirational speakers and to have their attitudes changed or enlivened with a new vision for their future.

Gail Ker commenced working in a Skills Share program well over 20 years ago, progressively seeking to serve the changing needs of the community. Gail is now the driving force and CEO of Access Services, Australia's foremost settlement agency for people arriving from troubled lands seeking refuge in our peaceful country where wonderful opportunities are on offer for them and their children and for those who come as unaccompanied minors.

This week I saw the new dux of Mabel Park high's awards night—a young man from Burma who has been in Australia with his family for just over three years. He came with a moderate grasp of English, and that is a wonderful triumph for him. Woodridge is an amazing area and every day we meet and work with so many heroes—

*(Time expired)*

### **Curran, Mrs M; Dams, Recreation Review**

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (5.48 pm): I would like to start my speech today by congratulating a young lady who is having her birthday tomorrow—Mrs Margaret Curran, who is actually in the chamber here today as an attendant. Margaret has provided wonderful service here for many years to many members past and present. I wish her all the very best and her embarrassment is certainly a sufficient outcome.

**A government member:** She is flying to Melbourne!

**Mr McARDLE:** Flying to Melbourne! Well done, Margaret. Have a great weekend and all the best!

I rise to speak about the government's dam recreation review for South-East Queensland. Yesterday I was on the Gold Coast, at Hinze Dam, for the delivery of the last of the 20 new guides covering 20 dams across the south-east corner. The idea behind the recreation review is to encourage greater tourist activity around the dams but also to encourage families to attend the dams and enjoy the pleasures of being on the dam and using the facilities around it in a very hospitable nature.

There has been incredible interest in expanding and improving the dam facilities. In fact, I can advise the House that over the past 12 months or so some 3,700 persons have been involved in actually looking at what the dams can be used for and providing submissions, taken up by Seqwater and sorted into what can and cannot be achieved. There are clearly real benefits for families in using these facilities, in particular for young children spending time with their parents in the outdoors enjoying fishing, enjoying barbecues and spending time with other family members.

For example, at Lake Wivenhoe small boats can now be used on the dam to get around and go fishing. At lakes Moogerah and Atkinson there are now new swimming areas, and a swimming area at Lake Dyer will open next month. Also, new multiuse trails being laid out around Lake Wyaralong and new boat and paddlecraft launch points have been put in at lakes Somerset and Maroon. Paddlers and anglers can now use Lake Clarendon in the Lockyer Valley, and at Lake Kurwongbah in

Brisbane's north the local ski club has agreed to share the lake with paddlecraft users. At Hinze Dam, for the first time dog owners can now walk their dogs on leads in many areas designated as such around the lake.

There is something here for everybody to continue to use our dams. In the 2013-14 year some 2.6 million people did visit these dams—an increase of 100,000 on the previous 12 months. These are tourists and people who live in the area. Tourism will benefit and so will the family unit from using these waterways to the best advantage.

### Calliope State School

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (5.51 pm): As we approach World Teachers Day I congratulate all of our teachers. They work with and speak into the lives of young people. The investment they make—not just in weeks or years but also generationally—is something we need to appreciate. Overwhelmingly, I have the most wonderful teachers in my electorate who care for and nurture the children in their care. I certainly commend each and every one of them.

Our principals and HoDs also do amazing work. I also thank others who work in our schools—the volunteers, the cleaners, the teacher aides, the people who work at the crossings, those on the P&C and those in the tuckshops. All of those incidents where they show kindness, interest and concern for our students are investments in their lives into the future. They will not forget their kindness. Equally, they will not forget when they feel they have been dealt with unfairly. So those roles are so important as children develop over the years.

The Gladstone electorate has a lot of wonderful schools, but I wish to focus on Calliope State School. I have talked about the high school site, which the government is proposing to dispose of. Calliope State School currently has 87 prep enrolments. Next year 101 grade 6s and 7s will leave the school and move into high school. There are 110 to 150 children—I think the number would be higher now, because these statistics I got from the P&C a couple of weeks ago—on the waitlist for prep next year.

So a solution for the problems at Calliope—the school is growing exponentially with the population coming in, with young families moving into Calliope—would be to build a new P-10 on the high school site which the government currently owns. It is central. It is above any flooding problems. It has good routes for children to both walk and bus to school. There would be no interruption to schooling because the school could continue where it is on the current site and when construction of the P-10 is finished it could move the students up to that new site and then roll them through into the high school as the demand occurs. Once all of that construction is completed, the old site could be sold. It is central to the business area of Calliope.

The community there is a very progressive community. They want solutions. They want good results for their kids. I believe that this suggestion that has come through from P&C and parents is one that will readily address the needs and concerns of that community.

### Flying Foxes

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (5.54 pm): I rise to speak on a subject that is causing great consternation for residents of Loganholme living between Bryants Road and Redland Bay Road. Just imagine: you have invested half a million dollars on a home on a large residential lot with space to spare, with beautiful vegetation around your home. You have enjoyed your serenity for many years when massive and invasive disruption begins and then becomes permanent, year after year. Your lifestyle has been destroyed. No matter what efforts you go to, the problem is not altered one iota. Clothes drying on your outdoor lines are destroyed. The daily noise is intrusive. The paint on your car has spots etched back to metal. Your young children must not use the patio outside until it has been scrubbed daily. When rains come, the stench is unbearable. A roost of flying fox has moved into your neighbourhood. They have settled in permanently. No-one will help. After all, in this particular case we are talking about private property.

In the electorate of Springwood this roost includes grey headed flying fox with a one-metre wing span which are considered a vulnerable species and are regulated by the federal government. It includes the black headed flying fox and also the little red flying fox, which are regulated by the state government. To further complicate matters, it is the local government that has traditionally carried responsibilities as the level of government closest to the action, but council feels that it is not appropriate to spend public funds on private property. Because not all of the private property owners are in a position to contribute financially to an effort to regain a peaceful lifestyle, nothing happens.

For many, this is an unbearable existence through no fault of their own. However, earlier this week we passed the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, which has cut more green tape for local governments grappling with the management of flying fox roosts. No longer will local governments have to apply to the state government for an approval to manage by non-lethal means urban roosts of flying fox. The minister will have authority to require councils to prepare a statement of management intent for as-of-right activities involving protected wildlife. These statements will allow community members to be informed about their council's management policy in dealing with roosts of flying fox.

Having served as a councillor for the City of Logan, I certainly understand that many responsibilities have been devolved to local government and that this particular matter will require councils to carefully research potential actions and funding mechanisms before they begin implementing management plans in their respective local communities.

### **Rural and Remote Queensland, Teachers; Retail Trading Hours**

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.57 pm): As we approach World Teachers Day I rise to highlight an issue raised recently with the minister. With the introduction of independent public schools there are now fewer placements available for teachers who have done their remote placements and who wish to relocate to Brisbane. That is a very big issue for us in remote areas. Over the years a culture has developed whereby teachers were prepared to do a stint in the remote areas. One of the incentives was very affordable housing for a couple of years, but one of the biggest incentives was the points system whereby they got a greater number of points if they lived in a remote area. That positioned them well to get a good placement back in a city area after they had done their time in a remote area. It has been a good, effective system that has worked.

Unfortunately, with the introduction of independent public schools, many schools have been removed from the system and it has very significantly reduced the opportunities for people working in remote areas to move. It has created a big problem that we now need to address. I look forward to continuing to work with the minister to resolve that, because it is a big problem. People will be increasingly less inclined to go out and serve in remote areas if there are no opportunities for them to come back to Brisbane afterwards. That is, unfortunately, the reality of how it happens, as much as we would like to keep them out there. That is a big problem we need to address.

The second issue I want to raise is seven-day trading in Mount Isa. There is a commission hearing coming up and, quite surprisingly to me, the giant retailers—the supermarket duopoly—have put in an application to open seven days. All of the convenience stores in Mount Isa and many small suburban shops are very scared in that they know that there is absolutely no doubt that they will go out of business. It might take a few years or it might take five years, but those older people and low-income earners who do not have a car walk to the shops to get food and if those smaller businesses go out of business, they will not have that convenience. I want to table a petition of 1,985 signatures. That is an enormous response because, to be honest, we have hardly pushed this petition. The response has just been overwhelming from local people who want to preserve their local convenience stores and shops. We do not need those big retailers open on a Sunday. It does not make a lick of difference to the community. Rather, we want those smaller retailers available to us because they form a very valuable part of our community and involve people like our coaches and our mums and dads. They are part of the family fabric. They donate much more to the community than the big retailers do. They are a very important part of the local fabric.

*(Time expired)*

*Tabled paper:* Non-conforming petition regarding restricted Sunday trading [\[6422\]](#).

### **Murrumba Electorate, Events**

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (6.00 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of Murrumba. As members know, it is the Aboriginal word for good place. On Sunday, 25 October my wife proudly hosted an afternoon tea at North Lakes for the lovely ladies of the Moreton Region Breast Cancer Support Group and also for the Down Syndrome Association of Queensland. We heard from Cathy Watson, a committee member of DSQ, share her story of being the mother of a Down syndrome child called Lilly, or 'Lovely Lilly' as she is usually known. We also heard from Jan Jorgensen of the Moreton Bay Breast Cancer Support Group and the great work it does in supporting the ladies of the Moreton Bay region who suffer from breast cancer. The House should note that the Monday following that event—

Monday, 26 October—was Breast Cancer Awareness Day in Australia. At this point I want to acknowledge some of the ladies who attended, including Jan Jorgesen, Rosemary Donoghue, Colleen Miller, Darlene Burton and Gai Rutter.

I also confirm that a business in my electorate was recently a finalist in the International Tannery of the Year awards, and I table a media release that further details that this great tannery was one of 16 winners of the prestigious 2014 Premier of Queensland's Export Awards. I congratulate Lindsay Packer, Graham Packer, David Packer and Andrew Luke.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 17 October 2014, titled 'Local Narangba exporter receives prestigious award' [6423].

It was somewhat interesting to be with my parliamentary colleagues on the morning of Friday, 24 October braving our fears and participating in the Queensland Save the Children bridge swing. We joined scores of Queenslanders to swing off the city's Goodwill Bridge over 24 and 25 October. It was part of an adrenaline-pumping event to raise vital funds for Queensland kids. All funds raised help Queensland Save the Children programs, which include intensive supported mobile play schemes and domestic violence refuges, and some of these services are provided in and near Murrumba. Monday night was the parliamentary touch football City versus Country game with all funds raised—over \$2,000—being donated to Bravehearts. For the record, at half-time City was down four to one and with just minutes to go—I note that Minister Mander is listening to my commentary, so I am a bit embarrassed—the scores were six all but, alas, a late try was awarded incorrectly to Country.

**Mr Mander:** Suspect?

**Mr GULLEY:** Yes, a very suspect try was awarded incorrectly to the Country team. Being more formal, I congratulate Hetty Johnston on being awarded Queenslander of the Year and note that generations of children will benefit from her work and advocacy. Murrumba—a great place.

### Rural and Remote Queensland, Financial Counsellors

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (6.03 pm): It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise to speak this evening. At the moment right across rural and remote Queensland many people are in a very poor financial way. They are businesspeople, they are farmers, they are graziers, they are pastoralists and from many other walks of life. Tonight I want to speak about those who prey on the vulnerable—those people who have no respect for anybody else, and they have none for themselves either. I would say that there are better people in jail than those people that I am referring to. They are making themselves available to vulnerable people saying they are financial councillors who can help them through their financial plight by selling their operation or helping them refinance and charging exorbitant fees to do so. People know what interest rates are at the moment, people know what debt is at the moment and they know what the return on investment is at the moment in rural Queensland. Those taking advantage of those people are nothing short of armed robbers at worse. I will be writing to some of the banking institutions in respect of some of those people concerned to ensure that those institutions are aware of what is going on out there.

The thing that hurts me greatly is that many people in rural and remote Queensland are very vulnerable. They have had enough—three years of drought in many instances, low commodity prices and nowhere to go. Some cattle farmers are even at the stage now where they are selling off their female breeding herds, and that is an absolute last resort. I know for a fact that after this drought breaks—and please, good Lord, it is going to happen very shortly—we will see a stemming of that flow of female stock through the abattoirs. However, I hope that the financial institutions show some leadership and some understanding and some compassion for these people in their time of need. It certainly is a time of need and it upsets me greatly to think that those people who prey on these vulnerable people are not going to be found out. Whilst I have anything to do with it they will be found out and I certainly will be reporting them to the police and the appropriate authorities. I say this to any other member of this parliament who has had this issue levelled at them through their offices: please report them because those vulnerable people need professional help in terms of financial care and financial planning to take them forward and out of this situation, not some evil cur that will destroy them and ruin them forever.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.06 pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, D'Ath, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, 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, Young