



# WEEKLY HANSARD

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## 51ST PARLIAMENT

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## THURSDAY, 25 AUGUST 2005

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. T McGrady, Mount Isa) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 am.

### REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

#### Report

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the 17th report on the Register of Members' Interests.

#### KANE, MR P

**Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to advise honourable members that this Friday is parliamentary attendant Mr Pat Kane's last day with the service. Pat has worked for the service for almost 15 years, and I am sure that all honourable members will join me in thanking Pat for his service and wish him and his family well in their retirement. Pat has also asked me not to mention that there will be a keg on tonight at the Belle Vue Room at the rising of the House. I hope, Hansard reporter, I did not tell you that!

### MEMBERS' ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

#### Matter of Privilege

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the former Speaker received a letter from the member for Burnett requesting that a matter be referred to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. Further details were subsequently requested by the Speaker and supplied by the member. The matter concerns an allegation that, following representations to the minister for education on behalf of a constituent, the constituent was threatened with legal action by the public officer who is the subject of adverse comment.

This is a particularly difficult and complex matter but, after reviewing precedence in the House of Commons, the House of Representatives, the Senate and report No. 60 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, I have come to the conclusion that no prima facie evidence of contempt arises. No issue of contempt arises because, on the evidence at hand, no parliamentary proceedings are involved—that is, the member did not bring the matter to the House or a committee but, rather, dealt with the matter directly with the minister in correspondence.

I wish to stress that nothing I have seen suggests that the member's actions were inappropriate, neither were the actions of the minister in having the matter investigated. However, nothing that took place involved parliamentary proceedings or an impeachment of those proceedings. I am however concerned at the wider policy implications raised by this matter for members and the House. I have therefore decided that I will write to the Premier as the minister responsible for the Public Service Act 1996 and the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 to examine whether there are any changes to policies, protocols or Public Service codes of conduct that may reduce the likelihood of matters such as this taking place again. I undertake to keep the House informed.

### PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

#### *Big Brother*

**Mr Foley** from 71 petitioners requesting the House to immediately withdraw all financial support provided to the *Big Brother* television program and commit to not funding *Big Brother* or similar ventures in the future; immediately cease the promotion of sexually explicit and highly graphic material to children and young people; withdraw all previous public statements of support for *Big Brother*; and take all practical measures to ensure inappropriate material is not made available to children through another medium including internet, mobiles or any other new media, in particular where the alternative medium is promoted to children on television or radio.

#### *Birkdale State School*

**Mr Briskey** from 669 petitioners requesting the House to replace the external roof of the Birkdale State School at the same time as the planned replacement of the internal roof which would decrease the chance of any asbestos powder coming down onto the students of Grades 1 & 2.

**Yeronga TAFE Metal Trade Stacks**

**Mr Lingard** from 145 petitioners requesting the House to prevent further environmental offences by the State of Queensland and immediately dismantle the nine Yeronga TAFE metal trade stacks.

**Water Act and Plumbing and Drainage Act**

**Mr English** from 2,315 petitioners requesting the House to make the necessary amendments to the Water Act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act to require any workers working on water and sewage pipes in the State of Queensland to be licensed by the Plumbers and Drainers Board.

The following honourable members have sponsored e-petitions which are now closed and presented—

**Woolloongabba Busway**

**Mr Choi** from 47 petitioners requesting the House to oppose and quash the TransLink decision to disallow Connex buses to use Woolloongabba Busway.

*An incident having occurred in the public gallery—*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Attendants, remove the lady from the gallery.

**PAPER**

MEMBER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following member's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

The Speaker (Mr McGrady)—

- Report by the then Minister for State Development and Innovation (Mr McGrady) titled Report on the Rail Industry Delegation to New Zealand led by the Honourable Tony McGrady MP Minister for State Development and Innovation, 18 to 22 July 2005

**NOTICE OF MOTION****Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee**

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.37 am): I give notice that I shall move—

1. That a select committee, to be known as the Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee, be appointed to examine a range of issues regarding petrol pricing in Queensland.
2. That the committee will consult with the community, investigate, report on and make recommendations, in particular, as follows:
  - (a) consider the extent to which current petrol price increases the competitiveness of alternative fuel sources such as E10;
  - (b) identify the economic and financial consequences of current fuel prices with a particular emphasis on regional Queensland and outer metropolitan areas;
  - (c) identify practical ways that consumers can reduce their petrol bills, including through considering whether existing information on the fuel efficiency of different makes of motor vehicles is sufficient;
  - (d) consider the extent to which recent fuel increases could be moderated through enhanced domestic competition, including how the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission powers could be strengthened to deliver enhanced competition;
  - (e) examine whether Queensland receives its fair share of road funding; and
  - (f) identify the capacity and benefits of the federal government reducing fuel excise to ameliorate the impact of high fuel prices on families and business.
3. That the committee consist of seven members of the Legislative Assembly with four members to be nominated by the Premier and Treasurer, one member to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition, one member to be nominated by the Leader of the Liberal Party and one member nominated to represent the Independent members.
4. That the committee have power to call for persons, documents and other items.
5. That the committee report to the House by 31 March 2006.
6. That the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they may be inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing or sessional orders.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Health System; Prosthetic Limb**

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.39 am): This morning I received a message from the mother of the teenager who had suffered so much through the loss of his leg following treatment by Jayant Patel. The boy's mum said that yesterday he received the artificial leg that he needs and wants. She was calling to say thank you for helping. My message to her was that I am determined that we will help all of the families who have suffered through this terrible episode, and I am determined to make Queensland's health system better for all Queenslanders. She indicated that she had no objection to me sharing that information with the House.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### North-South Bypass Tunnel

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.39 am): The Queensland government will work with governments at all levels to deliver better roads and transport for Queensland and our visitors. This morning the Coordinator-General approved the environmental impact statement for the Brisbane City Council's north-south bypass tunnel. This is a significant advance for Queensland's first major road tunnel project. The Coordinator-General's approval carries 21 conditions covering matters including noise and vibration, air quality, traffic management, waste management, and ground and surface water. Importantly, a health risk assessment was done as part of this process because air quality in the tunnel and in areas near the ventilation outlets is a concern for some in the community. I can now reassure concerned people that the expert view is that these risks are extremely low. The assessment, which involved extensive public consultation, has also made careful provision for emergency management in the event of an accident or incident in the tunnel.

Provided all of the studies stack up and the right partner is found for a public-private partnership, the Queensland government believes this project can improve transport, lifestyle and commerce in Australia's fastest growing region. It is also expected to generate up to 650 jobs during the four-year construction phase and 50 new jobs when in operation.

In a nutshell, what my government has done is this: the Coordinator-General has approved the EIS. We have signed an MOU with the council to help out with tolling powers, traffic management and land acquisition. We have offered a loan of up to \$450 million. We have offered up to \$16 million towards feasibility studies for the airport link. We have put the tunnel in the SEQ plan and the infrastructure plan, and the federal government and the Queensland Libs have done absolutely nothing. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Liberal Lord Mayor's requests for their federal government funding and moral support have fallen on deaf ears.

I now advise Members that in a new development, the Government will consider more legislative changes to accommodate this project.

As the first major tunnel project in the State, the North South Bypass Tunnel poses new challenges in the approvals regime, which currently requires no approval for most aspects of the project.

Therefore there is no statutory power to ensure that the Coordinator-General's recommendations are enforced.

The Coordinator-General recommends that we introduce a new Environmentally Relevant Activity under the Environmental Protection Act, or amend the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act.

While giving urgent consideration to this recommendation, we will ensure that adequate arrangements are in place well before construction starts.

Other amendments to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act are also proposed.

These would enable the Coordinator-General to revisit his recommendations and to amend the conditions of approval, if the successful private sector proponent improves the project.

These amendments would ensure that any review would be timely but rigorous.

In approving the evaluation of the environmental impact study the Coordinator-General gave thorough regard to construction impacts.

Major impacts during construction that have been identified and addressed include:

- Traffic Disruption around work sites
- Noise, dust and vibrations
- Emergency access to hospitals
- Spoil transport and disposal
- Cultural Heritage issues

While it is never possible to do projects of this scale without some inconvenience to the community the contractor will be required to adhere to a detailed environmental management plan that has quantified criteria for noise dust and vibration impacts.

A public consultation and complaints management system will also be implemented to ensure that the environmental management plan is followed.

As I have said, health risks were thoroughly evaluated and shown to be extremely low.

Installation of an air filtration system on the ventilation outlets was investigated during the assessment process but the conclusion was that these were not warranted given the outcome of the health risk assessment.

However the Council will design the outlets so that they can be fitted later if the air quality presents any problems.

There are 224 places of cultural heritage significance within or close to the tunnel corridor.

The EIS has examined possible impacts to these places and has identified mitigation measures that will be incorporated into a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to ensure they are protected.

A Fire and Life Safety Working Group was established to ensure that emergency management issues were properly addressed in the assessment.

The Coordinator-General has also recommended that this group continue to provide advice to the Council during the detailed design phase of the project.

Once in operation the tunnel security will be in line with the Government's policy on securing critical infrastructure.

Comprehensive Environmental Management Plans will also be put in place for the operational phase of the project.

The Coordinator-General is satisfied that the operational impacts of the project can be adequately managed by implementation of the measures included in these management plans.

As Members would be aware, the central component of the project is a system of road tunnels linking the South East Freeway and Ipswich Road at Woolloongabba to the Inner City By-pass and Lutwyche Road at Bowen Hills.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I also table a copy of my letter today to the right honourable lord mayor with attachments, which are the amendments that we have provided which we believe is a constructive way to resolve these things. I table that. I also table for the House the Coordinator-General's report on the environmental impact statement for the proposed north-south tunnel project dated August 2005. We believe that traffic management needs to be given the sort of attention that both the state government and the Brisbane City Council are providing, and we will continue to work with the lord mayor.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Strategy for Chronic Disease 2005 to 2015

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.42 am): On Tuesday Dr Keith McNeil, the brilliant leader of the surgical team that successfully performed Australia's first two triple organ transplants at the Prince Charles Hospital, told the Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry, 'Prince Charles Hospital probably wouldn't exist if it wasn't for smoking and obesity.' The government's submission to the Productivity Commission's health work force study, which I tabled yesterday, says that health-care experts around the world now recognise that healthier lifestyles have the greatest potential to contribute to better health.

Today I table the new Queensland Strategy for Chronic Disease 2005 to 2015, which cabinet endorsed on Monday following recommendations from Stephen Robertson, the health minister, and which has a strong focus on disease prevention and early detection. It backs up a \$155 million chronic disease prevention package. The strategy targets serious illnesses such as heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes. It will improve early detection of chronic disease and help patients diagnosed with a serious disease to better manage their illness.

It is no secret that Queensland has the highest rate of preventable deaths of any state in Australia. More than one-third of Queenslanders who die each year die from coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, respiratory disease, diabetes or kidney disease, all of which are mostly preventable. We have higher death rates from heart disease and stroke; the highest suicide rate in Australia; the highest rates of overweight people and obesity; the highest smoking and drinking rates for males; and a higher rate of women who report having hypertension. Many of these diseases are the result of smoking, poor diet, lack of exercise and obesity. It is estimated that seven in 10 patients seen by a GP have one or more chronic diseases.

Dr McNeil's message could have applied to any number of hospitals in Queensland. Queensland has higher rates of preventable hospital admissions due to chronic conditions, particularly lung disease, high blood pressure, dental problems, and ear, nose and throat infections. The formula for prevention should be simple: give up smoking, cut down on unhealthy foods, excess soft drinks and alcohol, and get moving. Human nature being what it is, most of us need some prompting to adopt healthier lifestyles. This strategy aims in part to encourage behavioural change. It includes measures such as antismoking initiatives for Indigenous Queenslanders, extending alcohol harm reduction campaigns and increasing the availability of group based healthy lifestyle programs. The health minister, Stephen Robertson, who, as I said earlier, brought forward this submission, recently kicked that filthy habit of smoking. We will have more to say on this strategy on another occasion. I table the report, and I congratulate the minister on it.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Sale of Telstra

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.45 am): Last night this House passed a motion in relation to Telstra when the government, Independent members and the One Nation member voted to protect Telstra. Today I have written to Queensland senators highlighting this decision. I want to table that letter for the House. In doing so, I highlight part of it. I stated—

Dear [Senator]

As you consider the future of telecommunications services in this country I would like to bring to your attention the views of the people of Queensland, as represented by the Parliament of Queensland.

In a vote of 59 to 19, the Parliament passed a motion calling on Queensland Senators and the Australian Government to listen to the people of Queensland and, indeed, a great many people across Australia and retain public ownership of the majority of Telstra in order to better protect equity of service, access and standards for all Australians. A copy of that motion is attached. You will note it expressly calls on Queensland Senators to vote against the proposed sale of Telstra.

I seek leave to incorporate that letter in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

[Qld Senators]  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear [Senator]

As you consider the future of telecommunications services in this country I would like to bring to your attention to the views of the people of Queensland, as represented by the Parliament of Queensland.

In a vote of 59 to 19, the Parliament passed a motion calling on Queensland Senators and the Australian Government to listen to the people of Queensland and, indeed, a great many people across Australia and retain public ownership of the majority of Telstra in order to better protect equity of service, access and standards for all Australians. A copy of that motion is attached. You will note it expressly calls on Queensland Senators to vote against the proposed sale of Telstra.

Before you interpret this motion as purely party political, you should note the motion was raised by the independent Member for Gladstone, Ms Liz Cunningham and amended by the Government with her agreement. The Government's amendment was simply to ask you as a Senator of Queensland to vote against the sale of Telstra.

As you know, the Queensland Government does not support the full privatisation of Telstra, because it is a strategic asset of national importance that can play a key role in unlocking our economic potential.

The Queensland Government has made numerous submissions to the Australian Government on the need to enhance telecommunications services in Queensland. However, it is important at this crucial time to emphasise the key issues once again. During the development of Queensland's Smart State Strategy, access to broadband was identified as a critical issue by the community, particularly the business community. Fast dispersion of information to anywhere in the world is essential to improve our competitive position in the global economy and for the diversification of our economic base.

A massive investment in telecommunications infrastructure is required to deliver satisfactory service levels to both urban and regional Queensland, with affordable access to broadband severely restricted and ongoing concerns with telecommunications "black spots".

Adequate mobile coverage underpins the way we work and live. Mobile phone services cannot be considered adequate until our small communities, major highways and strategic roads have full mobile coverage. Affordable high bandwidth internet connections also need to be made available to businesses and homes in both regional and urban Queensland if we are to address the widening "digital divide". Timely access to maintenance and infrastructure upgrades are also important.

The State Government is currently consulting with regional Queenslanders on the "Blue Print for the Bush". The results of this consultation should prove invaluable in assisting the Australian Government to identify detailed telecommunications requirements and I will undertake to provide the information obtained to the Australian Government to better inform your investment decisions.

The Commonwealth Government has one chance to provide a comprehensive and effective response to address Australia's current and future telecommunications needs. That relies on Telstra being kept in majority Government ownership.

I look forward to your support on this crucial matter.

Yours sincerely

PETER BEATTIE MP  
PREMIER AND TREASURER

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Great Barrier Reef; Sale of Telstra

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.46 am): The federal coalition will stop at nothing to convince the Queensland Nationals to cave in on the full sale of Telstra. It has sunk to using the Great Barrier Reef as a bargaining chip. On Tuesday, Canberra announced a review of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, which is the centrepiece of a successful 25-year partnership between the federal and Queensland governments. It is no coincidence that the announcement came on the eve of National Party federal leader Mark Vaile barnstorming the Queensland Nationals over Telstra. This announcement has its roots in a National Party preference deal with the Fishing Party designed to catapult Barnaby Joyce into the Senate. The Nationals' side of the deal was to call for a gutting of the marine park authority, which recently expanded the marine park protected area. The Nationals even extracted an election promise about a marine park authority review from the federal coalition. We will fight to ensure the protection of the Barrier Reef. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I wrote to the Prime Minister in May outlining Queensland Government concerns about the prospect that he could trash a 25 year joint management arrangement between Queensland and the Commonwealth.

Remember, this deal involved the then Fraser Government and the champion of States' rights, the late Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Queensland contributes \$4.8 million to the partnership, and so does the Commonwealth.

This has served the reef well for a quarter of a century, and in recent years the Prime Minister and I have worked together on a Reef Water quality Protection Plan.

Now we see this spirit of co-operation and the future of reef management jeopardised for the sake of blind dogma.

It's the full sale of Telstra at any price; even the \$1.6 billion-earning Great Barrier Reef is not safe.

Even Nemo is not safe, when the Federal Government connives to stop Senator Joyce crossing the floor.

The Federal Government has given the Queensland Government a background paper and Terms of Reference for this review, but the information is scant and the terms of reference do not indicate how the review components will be evaluated.

Further, little is known about how they plan to consult with the public.

I fear that the agenda is to weaken reef protection, to compromise scientific rigour, to cut Queensland out of management and ultimately to open the door to political meddling.

Knowing some of the real environmental views of North and Central Queensland Coalition Members, I am terrified at the thought that they could take over as the reef managers.

To be fair, they are not all bad on this front.

The Federal Liberal Member for Herbert, Peter Lindsay, says he is very concerned about the review and fears it could take reef policy out of Queensland and put it in the hands of Canberra bureaucrats.

But other Liberals, like Warren Entsch from Leichhardt, have heaped criticism on the Marine Park Authority.

So we now have more factions in the Liberal Party: the killing Nemo faction and the saving Nemo faction.

Where are the Queensland Liberals?

And the Queensland Nationals?

Judging by their vote on last night's Telstra Notice of Motion, it's goodbye Nemo, hello full Telstra sale.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Blue Card Client Satisfaction Survey

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.47 am): The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian aims to make its blue card screening as user friendly as possible. To check the quality of its processes, the commission recently commissioned its second client satisfaction survey. To guarantee impartiality, the survey was conducted outside the commission by the Office of Economic and Statistical Research. The office randomly selected 800 cardholders. I table a copy of that report. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The results showed that 92% of respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the content of the information from Commission staff when they applied for a card.

97% of respondents were satisfied with the staff's courtesy.

85% of respondents were satisfied with the time taken to process the application, which is up from 56% of respondents from the previous survey, conducted in late 2003 and early 2004.

The Commission is continuing to identify ways to improve the system. For example, it is implementing organisational reforms to meet growing processing demands and to improve timeliness.

The Commission is also developing ways to improve access of particular groups to the Working with Children Check, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I congratulate staff of the Employment Screening Services Unit for these results.

They have worked harder than ever in recent months, because our laws to improve the safety of Queensland children have expanded the categories of regulated employment and business.

They work efficiently as a team with members of the Queensland Police Service.

Since the introduction of the Working with Children Check on 1 May 2001, until 31 July 2005, the Commission issued 437,098 blue cards.

During this period, 389 applicants received a negative notice, which means they cannot continue or begin work in child-related employment or businesses. An additional 786 applicants withdrew their applications when challenged about their criminal history.

In 2004-05, the Commission issued 177,185 blue cards.

48,390 were issued to paid employees, 13,535 were issued to self-employed people, and 2 were issued to current employees at the request of employers who had concerns about their eligibility to be in child-related employment.

A further 115,258 went to volunteers, free of charge.

Between April and June 2005, the Commission issued around 66,000 blue cards—a record for a 3 month period.

The blue card is now backed up by state-wide education and training to help businesses meet their legislative responsibilities to have child protection risk management strategies in place.

The Working with Children Check is a significant protection for Queensland children, but it can never replace vigilance by parents, families, and communities.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Importation of Food and Agricultural Products

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.47 am): The federal government is neglecting the national interest in terms of the importation of food and agricultural products. In recent years we have had breaches of national quarantine barriers of citrus canker and black sigatoka disease, as well as fire ants and crazy ants. In each instance my government has had to work very hard to clean up the mess. The federal government and its agency, Biosecurity Australia, are failing our primary producers and Australian consumers. We pride ourselves on the quality of food we produce in this country and that many of the pests and diseases that bedevil industries overseas are not found on our farms.

A Senate committee is unravelling the importation of meat products into New South Wales from Brazil, a nation that has had foot-and-mouth disease. The chairman of this committee, New South Wales Liberal Senator Bill Heffernan, is the Prime Minister's right-hand man. Senator Heffernan is obviously exasperated at the handling of these issues. I, along with all of my colleagues, seek to have a better role played by the federal government in keeping these pests out of Australia and protecting our primary produce. I seek leave to incorporate the details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Like me, Senator Heffernan wonders why the media, other than SBS Dateline Story do not see it as any great deal.

Heffernan told the Committee and I quote: "I am disgusted at the lack of coverage that has been given to this across Australia".

For those members who are not aware of this issue, let me give you a précis.

In November last year, a shipment of fresh meat from Brazil was imported by a major food manufacturer.

The import was under a permit issued by the Federal Government, and they simply checked the status of the area through the World Animal Health Organisation in Paris—the OIE.

The Federal Government did no on-the-ground-assessment.

This Brazilian meat arrived at Tullamarine Airport in Melbourne and part of it was later sent onto Wagga Wagga.

It was then suspected that a case of Foot and Mouth Disease had been detected in the area of Brazil where this shipment can come from.

While this suspected case did not return as a positive, the import permit had been revoked and the meat, unbelievably, had simply been dumped at Wagga Wagga.

I do not need to tell Honourable Members of the importance of the meat industry to Queensland.

Australia has been free of Foot and Mouth Disease for more than a century.

Any detection of Foot and Mouth Disease could cost our country \$13 billion.

The Federal Government's policy of border security is not protecting Australians or Australian interests.

The members opposite should be raising merry hell about this with their federal colleagues about this—but do we hear a peep from them.

Alas I fear that the Nationals have forgotten their roots.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Wine Industry

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.49 am): Last Tuesday I had the pleasure of again visiting Stanthorpe to play a role in advancing the state's wine industry. Education minister Rod Welford and I were on hand to turn the first sod of the Queensland College of Wine Tourism. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In 2004 I created the only wine industry specific portfolio in Australia and the college we launched is an early and significant outcome of the Queensland Wine Industry Development Strategy launched in December last year.

Since then, the Department of Education and the Arts, through Stanthorpe State High School has worked with our government and industry partners to make the college a reality.

So for the first time in Queensland all industry facets—hospitality and tourism operations of a region, accommodation houses, tour operators, gift shops, restaurants and of course viticulture and wine-making will be studied under the one roof.

The \$2.5 million Stage One involves development of the Queensland College of Wine Tourism.

The training centre will operate as a commercial not-for-profit vineyard, winery, tourist centre, seminar and function centre servicing the local community and tourist trade.

This unique partnership between schools—state and non-state—vocational education and training providers (Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and the Dalby Campus of the Australian Agricultural College Corporation), tertiary providers (University of Southern Queensland) and industry (Queensland Wine Industry Association) has set the benchmark in terms of coming together with a common vision and making it a reality.

Construction will be underway next month and will provide a teaching winery, office and administration facilities, interpretive centre, and cellar door and café.

Funding has been provided by the Department of Education and the Arts in partnership with the Australian National Training Authority (now Department of Education, Science and Training), the Department of Employment and Training, Stanthorpe Shire Council and the Queensland Wine Industry.

The first intake of students for the College will be in early 2006.

Completion of stages 2, 3 and 4 is expected to mean more than 500 students, including short-course students, will undertake studies through the college.

I was also delighted to announce that seven south-east Queensland schools will become the Gateway Schools for the College. They are the state high schools of Stanthorpe, Kingaroy, Murgon, Tamborine Mountain and Centenary Heights, as well as Sheldon College and Nudgee College.

This "Gateway to Industry" will allow these schools to develop a wine tourism program which incorporates:

- direct links with the Queensland College of Wine Tourism

- strategies to identify students with particular interest in wine tourism

- integration of elements of the wine industry across the curriculum, including industry-relevant training to Certificate II level

- links with local wine producers and wine tourism industry through work placement, traineeships and cadetships and

- scholarship and awards program.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Convention Industry

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.49 am): New world rankings in relation to the convention industry have been released. The new world rankings indicate a very healthy state for the convention industry in Queensland. By way of report, I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

When Brisbane and Cairns are added together, we hosted more international meetings in 2004 than any other state in Australia. This figure should be even stronger when the next rankings are released because the Gold Coast will also be included.

The Queensland Government built those three convention centres for about \$400 million.

And we have invested about \$2 million a year every year since we came to government into business events through conventions marketing.

In return we have generated billions of dollars of economic growth and created hundreds of new jobs.

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, now 10 years old has hosted eight million visitors, eight thousand events, provided 12 million meals, 26 million hours of employment and more than \$1 billion in economic benefit for Queensland.

And it has won more industry awards than any other convention centre in Australia.

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre is ranked 34th in the world according to the newly released world rankings for 2004 by the International Congress and Convention Association.

This is an improvement of some 16 positions and puts it just behind Sydney which is 30th and Melbourne 29th.

This puts Brisbane ahead in popularity of such famous and established destinations as Montreal, Tokyo, Brussels, Chicago, Venice, San Francisco and New York.

Brisbane is ranked second behind Sydney in the number of delegates hosted for International Conventions in Australia.

While Melbourne was ahead on the number of meetings, Brisbane recorded a higher delegate attendance with 25% more delegates visiting Brisbane than Melbourne.

2004 was a record year for international business, with Brisbane hosting 17 international conventions.

In the 2004/05 Financial Year, the Centre has achieved record results, delivering record profits, generating a record \$214 million economic benefit according to KPMG for Queensland and hosting a total of 857 events—the highest number of events ever held at the Centre in a single year.

During the same financial period the Centre's sales team won an additional 57 conventions for the Centre with an estimated value of \$97 million to the city of Brisbane.

The Centre continues to receive an average of 30 new bookings each week.

Cairns Convention Centre is increasingly making its mark on the global convention market. It was the winner of the prestigious 'World's Best Congress Centre' AIPC Apex Award in 2004 and followed this up by being named in the World's Top 3 Congress Centres in AIPC's 2005 survey.

The Illinois-based, International Society for Stem Cell Research announced its 2007 annual meeting will be held in Cairns, the first time this event has been taken outside North America.

This significant win places the spotlight on Queensland's Smart State research capabilities among the global stem cell research community and will boost tourism for Queensland.

The Centre's Managing Director, Geoff Donaghy, has been elected to the seven-member Board of the International Association of Congress Centres and is Chairman of the Business Events Council of Australia.

After more than 200 events, 251,000 visitors, and approximately 80,000 meals the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre celebrated its first birthday on the 29th June 2005.

It has attracted more than 9,500 international delegates, almost 50,000 national delegates and thousands of local visitors.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Infosys Technologies

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.49 am): This evening I will be hosting a reception in the Annexe for one of the world's most respected entrepreneurs, Mr Narayana Murthy. He is the founder and chairman of global information and communications technology leader Infosys Technologies. Last year I met Mr Murthy in Bangalore, Karnataka, as part of our IT strategy. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Infosys has its international headquarters in Bangalore, Karnataka.

There are a number of parallels between Bangalore's high technology boom and Queensland's Smart State industries.

Mr Murthy is here today as a result of an invitation from the Queensland University of Technology to address the Business Leaders' Forum which QUT's Faculty of Business has organised.

In 2003, he was voted World Entrepreneur of the Year and he's been named by Time Magazine as one of ten leaders who is helping to shape the future of technology.

Karnataka's emergence as a world power in the ICT industry owes a great deal to the decision by Mr Murthy and six colleagues to set up Infosys in 1981.

In addition to his work with Infosys, he is on the board of India's Reserve Bank and a member of the Indian Prime Minister's Council on Trade and Industry.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### National Identity Card

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.50 am): The Prime Minister has written to me asking the Queensland government to support a national identity security regime as part of our fight against terrorism. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

He has also put consideration of a national identity card on the table for next month's Council of Australian Governments' meeting, which he convened after a request from State and Territory leaders.

I am delighted that the Prime Minister agrees we need a rational, considered debate about this.

Personally, I hate the fact that we need to have this debate, but we cannot pretend the events of 11 September 2001 never happened.

Any move to an identity card would require privacy safeguards.

We can never guarantee against terrorist plots on Australian soil, nor that would-be terrorists will be barred from entering Australia.

But when combined with other concerted measures, a national identity card has merit.

It would also help stymie identity crimes.

These are some of the reasons I sought to return this issue to the national agenda in mid-July.

The Queensland Government will work with the Commonwealth and other states and territories on national identity security, because a state-based system would be virtually useless as a deterrent to terrorism or identity crime.

I welcome Mr Howard's entry into this debate, and his assurance that there will be intensive work on a strategy to combat fraudulent use of stolen or assumed identities.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Leadership Retreat, Hayman Island

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.50 am): Tomorrow night I will be attending the annual Australian Leadership Retreat on Hayman Island. Its theme this year is 'Future Prosperity—Taking Responsibility to Make a Difference'. These meetings always attract a very impressive list of Australian and overseas dignitaries. The guest list indicates that this year is no exception. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In my address, I will be providing examples of issues in Queensland which have required a very clear and courageous response from Government.

We have not been afraid to show leadership and the actions we have taken have made a difference.

The most obvious case is the Bundaberg Hospital issue, which prompted me to establish the Morris Commission of Inquiry and the Forster Review.

While both investigations have the potential to be politically damaging, they are the investigations that I felt we had to have.

They will deliver to the Government a blueprint for re-building the health system in a way that better serves the Queensland public.

Previously, we have had the Forde Inquiry into child abuse in institutions.

The lasting legacy of that inquiry is that Queensland's child protection professionals now have the best laws in the country.

We had the Shepherdson Inquiry into electoral rorting and the lasting legacy of that is that we cleaned up the pre-selection process.

We had an inquiry into the causes of crime in Cape York Indigenous communities.

We still have a long way to go, but one lasting legacy of that was the introduction of alcohol management plans, which have had a very positive impact in most of the communities.

I will also be talking about our reasons for developing the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2005-2026, which maps out projects worth \$55 billion to meet the needs of our growing population.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Investor Trade Mission

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.50 am): In my capacity as Treasurer I will next month lead a delegation representing the Queensland Treasury Corporation and the Queensland government to a selection of international finance capitals. Sir Leo Hielsoher, the head of QTC, of course will be with me as well as the head of Treasury. These are crucial markets for Queensland Treasury Corporation, which sources more than 40 per cent of its funds from overseas. These funds are used for investment and infrastructure and as Treasurer I will be driving that. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard* of the reasons for the trip and the benefits from it.

Leave granted.

Queensland Treasury Corporation invited me to lead the Queensland team, which will comprise the Under Treasurer, the Corporation's Chairman, CEO and General Manager, and an advisor from my Office.

The mission is part of Queensland Treasury Corporation's offshore investor and financial markets relations program.

Between 12 and 22 September we will meet with key institutional investors and financial intermediaries in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Beijing, Zurich, and London.

These are crucial markets for Queensland Treasury Corporation, which sources more than 40% of its funds from overseas.

The objectives of the financial markets/investor relations program are to:

- explain to the corporation's 11-member Australian Dollar Distribution Group Members and to offshore institutional investors the government's approach to fiscal and economic management and how that provides for Queensland's future prosperity;
- emphasise Queensland's investment potential by highlighting our financial and economic performance and the underlying economic indicators;
- reinforce Queensland's commitment to maintaining sound relationships with global institutions;
- develop a greater appreciation of the major political, economic, credit and other factors affecting investment fundamentals and world markets, particularly those that shape the Australian markets and Queensland's borrowing costs;
- provide an update on the Corporation's operations, borrowing philosophies and strategic direction;
- ascertain demand for Australian dollar investments, market the Corporation's Global Bonds and other Funding Facilities (e.g. Euro Commercial Paper) to prime Asian, European and UK based institutional investors, and obtain feedback on their investment criteria;
- discuss the Distribution Group's capital market activities and approach to marketing Australian dollar fixed income products to foreign investors; funding opportunities; the market's direction and the drivers of the Asian and European economies; and
- canvass funding opportunities for Queensland.

Queensland Treasury Corporation's Aussie dollar Bond and Commercial Paper programs are essential to the corporation.

Eleven leading global banks make up the Global Australian Dollar Bond program, and regular contact at senior and operational levels ensures that they give maximum support to Queensland and Queensland Treasury Corporation.

Past years saw a move by investors away from the Australian Bond Market.

The corporation has since observed renewed interest from offshore investors for Aussie Dollar denominated investments and Queensland Treasury Corporation Aussie dollar Bonds in general (particularly from the Japanese retail investment sector).

The delegation will reassure the Distribution Group and institutional investors that Queensland is a worthwhile investment.

In this context it is important to note that:-

- Queensland can often access money in the international market more cheaply than domestically, and it broadens our capacity to raise money and globally diversify its funding approach and relationships;
- Queensland, notwithstanding its economic and fiscal strength, is relatively small in world markets and needs to keep its name (and its strengths) regularly displayed;
- due to Queensland's ongoing direct contact and marketing of our economic and fiscal position, investors have a strong preference for investing in Queensland bonds over other States and in some cases, over the Commonwealth; and
- the factors underlying Queensland's attractiveness as an investment location—i.e. low taxation; a history of balanced Budgets; and the growing economy—need to be continually reinforced with the investment and finance communities.

I will report to the House on the outcomes of the program on my return.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Asbestos

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.51 am): I want to deal with the issue of asbestos. The Liberal leader has been making some comments in relation to it. I have done some research about his contribution on it and I think it should be shared with the House. I seek leave to incorporate this research in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Liberal Leader Bob Quinn has made it very clear that he does not believe that anyone is at risk from asbestos in Queensland State Schools.

And yet he has been responsible for a five-month campaign to frighten people into believing that their lives—and the lives of their children—are at risk.

Let me read to you what Bob Quinn has said about asbestos roofs.

Mr Quinn is on record as saying that the need to remove residual asbestos from schools was not unduly pressing because most was safely contained or quite stable.

Mr Quinn is on record as saying: "The more dangerous material was removed many years ago, so the health risk is virtually nil."

In case that wasn't clear enough, Mr Quinn put it a slightly different way by saying that the more hazardous material was removed from state schools many years ago and what remained was safely contained and very stable.

Mr Quinn is on record as saying: "What I find really unpardonable is the way some Opposition politicians have cynically manipulated the community's natural but unwarranted anxiety about asbestos in our schools."

Mr Quinn's opinion is the same as mine when he says: "...what everyone seems to forget is that there are many thousands of houses, units, supermarkets, office blocks, cinemas, restaurants and other post-war buildings right around Australia, which also contain asbestos products such as 'Super 6' roofing.

Mr Quinn has emphasised: "Again, these are quite safe provided they're maintained in a satisfactory condition."

I agree with Mr Quinn when he said: "I really think we've had enough hysterical scare-mongering for one year."

I call on the Liberal Leader to apologise to all the people who have been frightened by this disgraceful campaign.

Could there be anything more despicable than a leader who deliberately and cynically sets out to terrify people for his own gain when he knows there is no substance to what he is saying?

He must tell people the truth and let them sleep peacefully tonight.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### World Expo 2005

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (9.51 am): Queensland continues to make an impact on World Expo 2005 in Japan, this time in environmental technologies. I seek leave to incorporate details of this success in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Two Smart State companies, Molecra Technologies and Biolytix™ have each been awarded a Global Eco-Tech Award. Representatives from these companies will attend the award ceremony in Japan on 1 September. Each company will receive Yen1,000,000 (AUS \$13,000), a certificate of commendation and a commemorative gift.

These awards were established by the Japan Association for the 2005 World Exposition to complement the overall theme of Expo, "Nature's Wisdom".

They are awarded to 100 companies from around the world to recognise outstanding achievements in environmental technologies that contribute significantly to the resolution of global environmental problems.

Congratulations to Molecra Technologies and Biolytix™ for their outstanding achievements.

The Biolytix™ Waste Treatment System converts sewage, wastewater, and waste products into clean irrigation water onsite. Biolytix™ invested \$3M in Research and Development, and achieved the best results in the world for the most compact biological system.

It is also the most greenhouse friendly treatment system in the world. Biolytix™ Systems use soil organisms and microbes to convert waste into humus.

The systems can also be networked together for housing developments, called Biowater™. This costs half as much as conventional sewerage infrastructure, as well as recycling water on-site. This will be the way for new developments.

A completely different environmental problem is the 1.2 billion discarded waste vehicle tyres which worldwide create an ever-increasing problem.

The vast majority are stockpiled, landfilled, burned/incinerated or dumped illegally. Molecra Technologies, based at the Gold Coast, has developed a revolutionary, unique, sophisticated, patented technology for extracting lucrative materials from waste tyres.

The process reclaims all of the components that make up a tyre cleanly and efficiently without waste, residue or emissions. The process is completely unique and the recovered products include crumb rubber, carbon black, activated carbon, hydrocarbon gas, jet-fuel, diesel oil, steel and plastic fibres.

This technology is patented in 39 countries and Molecra is currently marketing the technology worldwide by attracting investors and other third parties to take up a licence to the technology.

World Expo 2005 continues in Aichi Japan until 25 September.

By the beginning of August over 15 million people had visited Expo with the Australian pavilion attracting approximately 15,000 people per day.

The Queensland Government's participation in Expo through the Australian pavilion is providing an outstanding platform to strengthen and extend relationships and progress trade opportunities with Japan.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Smart State Research Facilities Fund

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (9.51 am): I am very pleased to advise the House about the success of our Smart State Strategy and the inroads that Queensland government investment is making into this success story.

The Smart State Research Facilities Fund has allocated \$170 million to 26 projects, through four funding rounds, since it began in 2001-02. Together, these 26 projects are valued at \$574 million. Queensland's \$170 million investment has therefore resulted in the successful leveraging of an additional \$404 million from other sources including the Commonwealth. These projects will make a real difference to the health and quality of life of all Queenslanders. Almost 60 per cent of the funding has been committed to medical research projects, ranging from trials for cancer drugs and therapies to promoting bone regrowth and the discovery of new therapeutic drugs from Queensland's diverse flora and fauna.

For example, yesterday I signed two funding agreements with Griffith University under the Smart State Research Facilities Fund. Some \$12 million was to support the ESKITIS Institute for Cell and Molecular Therapies and \$3 million for equipment in the new Queensland Microtechnology Centre. The ESKITIS facility will enable Griffith University's world-class team, led by Professor Ron Quinn, to carry out research in the related fields of neurobiology, molecular, cellular and chemical biology and natural product discovery in order to develop new therapeutic products. This research is one of the most exciting areas of biotechnology and will act as a significant drawcard to attract and retain world-class scientists, commercial interests and venture capital in Queensland. ESKITIS also offers new opportunities and strong incentives for collaboration. For example, ESKITIS will allow continued collaboration between Griffith University and such companies as Astra Zeneca, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. Astra Zeneca focuses on discovery and knowledge, turning good ideas into innovative, effective medicines for important areas of health care, such as Tamoxifen for the treatment of breast cancer.

The second agreement I signed yesterday with Griffith University under the fund is for \$3 million to provide equipment and clean bays to be installed in the new Queensland microtechnology facility, currently under construction on site at the university's Nathan campus. This funding will enable Griffith to create prototype silicon carbide microchips which are destined to spark a revolution in the development of computer memory chips.

It is exciting to hear of future plans and the contribution that this centre could soon be making to the global integrated circuit industry. It is this type of cutting-edge research to be conducted at Griffith University—made possible by the Smart State Research Facilities Fund—that will contribute to the growing reputation of Queensland as a centre of excellence in biotechnology and biomedical research. To the critics of our Smart State Strategy, many of whom are on the other side of this House, I can only say it is working and those critics should go out to Griffith University and have a look.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Green Paper

**Hon. TA BARTON** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.55 am): Queenslanders have responded in their hundreds to the government green paper, 'Queensland's proposed responses to the challenges of skills for jobs and growth'. More than 1,500 employers, union representatives, tradespeople, training providers, teachers, and other interested community members have attended 25 consultation sessions across the state. In August, for example, community forums have been held in Gympie, Mount Isa, the Sunshine Coast, Maryborough, Brisbane north, Toowoomba, Dalby, Roma and Ipswich. In addition, more than 70 responses to the green paper have been received in writing.

The government released the paper in June outlining 24 proposals to canvass better ways to align the state's vocational education and training system with the changing needs of the Queensland economy. It looks to build on the success of our training system and carry it forward to meet future demands of industry and students.

Our consultation process was designed to create debate and discussion on how we could best achieve these outcomes, and that is exactly what has happened. The feedback to date has been wide and varied but in the main extremely positive. Among the submissions we have received are those from Australian Industry Group; Motor Traders Association of Queensland; RACQ; Master Builders Association of Queensland; Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia; Engineers Australia; and Logan, Tara and many other local councils. We are fortunate that so many Queenslanders who have a stake in our vocational education and training system are as committed as the state government to overcoming skills shortages. It will take both the public and private sectors to get it right.

I can report there has been significant support for reviewing wages and industrial arrangement for apprentices, including adult apprentices. People have also backed stronger promotion of trade careers, particularly in schools, and in consultation with trade industries. They also want to see TAFE's infrastructure upgraded and its resources used more effectively across the state. Other proposals, such as the shortening of apprenticeship contract times for some trades and establishing centres of excellence, have created more discussion.

All feedback, both positive and negative, will help inform a white paper to be drafted by the end of the year. Establishing a modern, responsive vocational education and training system for a skilled and educated work force is important for all of us. With the implementation of the green paper reforms and other Smart State strategies driving our economic growth, Queensland industries will be better placed and our workers suitably skilled to meet increasing competition in the marketplace. I encourage Queenslanders to continue sending in their responses to the green paper until 31 August by emailing [skillsreform@det.qld.gov.au](mailto:skillsreform@det.qld.gov.au).

While referring to TAFE facilities, I would like to take a moment to advise the House that the concerns raised by a member of the public earlier have already been addressed. They have been the subject of litigation over recent years and TAFE was required to cease certain training operations at Yeronga by 1 July this year. TAFE has complied and, while the stacks referred to are still in place, the equipment is not in use so there are no emissions impacting on Yeronga residents.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Rewards for Unsolved Murders

**Hon. JC SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.58 am): I am pleased to announce that the government is to boost the reward money on offer for six unsolved Queensland murders. Last year the police commissioner undertook to review all existing rewards for murder and other serious offences, with the intention of increasing the amount and enticing those with information to finally come forward. In November I announced that the rewards for information that leads to the apprehension and conviction of those responsible for 22 unsolved murders and other serious offences over the past decade had been increased from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

Today I am announcing that another six unsolved Queensland murders will also attract this maximum award for information. An amount of \$250,000 will now be offered for vital information that can solve the following cases: Julie-Ann Gallon, who was murdered in Brisbane in 1990; Kenneth Elwyn Charles, who was murdered in Calamvale in 1997; Rachel Joy Antonio, who was suspected murdered in 1998; Nam Van Tran, who was murdered in Inala in 1989; Phillip James Carlyle, who was murdered in Robina in 1997; and Patricia Anne Riggs, who was suspected murdered in Brisbane in 2001. Police desperately want to solve these crimes, and the victims, their families and friends deserve justice and closure. As well, I can announce today that Queensland will also join New South Wales in posting a reward for the murder of Boggabilla woman Theresa Binge. This 43-year-old woman was last seen alive around midnight on 17 June 2003 as she was leaving the Victoria Hotel in Goondiwindi with a man. The woman's body was found 10 kilometres south of the Queensland border on Boomi Road. However, forensic evidence indicated that the crime was committed elsewhere and the body was dumped. New South Wales has posted a \$100,000 reward and has asked us to offer a reward. We will post a reward of \$250,000 for information that can help solve this crime.

All of these cases remain unsolved, and that presents a difficult situation for the many victims, families and friends who would like to see justice and some closure. By increasing the rewards and once again highlighting these cases, we hope that someone will come forward with the vital pieces of information police need to solve these crimes. An added incentive is that police also have the capacity to offer a limited indemnity from prosecution to someone who, until now, has been withholding information. This strategy is aimed specifically at finding and prosecuting the perpetrators, and I can assure the House that indemnity from prosecution will not be offered to anyone who actively participated in the crime.

It is important that our rewards are substantial enough to entice those who have information to come forward, and police considered the seriousness of these offences and the value of rewards posted interstate before recommending that I lift these rewards to \$250,000. Anyone with information on these and other unsolved crimes in Queensland can call Crimestoppers on 1800 333000. I seek leave to incorporate the list of cases which have now been increased to \$250,000.

Leave granted.

#### CHARLES

At about 2.30pm on Monday, 10 November 1997 police located the body of Kenneth Elwyn Charles at his residence of 2195 Beaudesert Road, Calamvale. A Post Mortem revealed that death was due to a number of blows to the head with a heavy blunt object. Mr Charles' red Daihatsu Hi-Jet panel van Registration No. 482-EBY appears to have been stolen at the time of his murder. This vehicle was located in the Landsborough State Forest area, off Old Caboolture Road, on 27 May 1998.

#### GALLON

On Thursday, 2 August 1990, between 5.30pm and 6.00pm Julie-Ann Gallon, 27 years of age, left her place of employment at the Queensland Museum, intending to drive to her place of residence at Karrabin. She was last seen at about 6.30pm on this date, standing beside her motor vehicle, a Torana sedan, registered number ONX-801, outside a Church situated at 35 Brisbane Road, Riverview. Clothing worn by Julie-Ann Gallon and a set of car keys to her Torana sedan, were located on 15 December 1990 in the Brisbane River, under the Kholo Bridge, by youths snorkling in the river. Gallon to date has not been located.

#### ANTONIO

At about 6.00pm on Saturday, 25 April 1998, Cheryl Antonio drove her 16 year old daughter, Rachel Joy Antonio to the "Summer Garden" Cinema at the corner of Beach Avenue and Murroona Street, Queens Beach, Bowen. As the movie did not commence until 7.00pm Rachel intended to walk down to the 'stinger nets' at the end of Beach Avenue, some 200 metres from the Cinema. This she did and was seen leaving the beach by a number of persons at 6.45pm. She was seen walking on Queens Beach Esplanade shortly after, but has not been seen since.

## TRAN

At about 10.25pm on Saturday 5 September 1998 the body of Nam Van Tran was located in the yard of his residence at 86 Abelia Street, Inala. A Post Mortem revealed that the victim had suffered a stab wound to the left side of his chest. A search of the yard located a large quantity of blood at the rear of the residence and a blood trail to where the body was located. The victim had earlier in the night attended a party at 44 Southgate Drive, Woodridge. He is believed to have left this location at 10.00pm to return home. A witness reported that a person of South East Asian appearance had been loitering in the yard and it is believed that this person may have attacked the victim on his return.

## CARLYLE

At about 8.00pm on Sunday, 13 April 1997 the body of Philip James Carlyle was located in the plant room of the business office of Atnet Pty Ltd situated at Suite 4/34 Glenferrie Drive, Robina, Gold Coast. Carlyle was a 47 year old married man residing at Tallai who was employed as a marketing manager at this computer/internet business. A Post Mortem revealed that the victim had been shot in the head four times. The ammunition used in this crime was identified as Norma brand .32 ACP 77 grain, manufactured in Sweden, an uncommon brand for Australia.

## RIGGS

Late on the evening of Sunday 30th September 2001 Patricia Riggs walked out of her home at Janet Street, Margate after an argument with her husband. Her husband reported her as a missing person when she did not return home by Wednesday 3rd October 2001. He stated that at the time of her disappearance she was in possession of a mobile phone, a credit card and a set of house keys. Police are treating the disappearance of Patricia Riggs as suspicious as it is uncharacteristic for her to not contact her children.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Supreme Court Application, Release of Paedophile**

**Hon. LD LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (10.02 am): I inform the House that the Queensland Supreme Court last week blocked the release from jail of an 84-year-old paedophile after an application by the Queensland government. The application was made on the grounds that he was considered an unacceptable risk and likely to commit further offences against children if released. He is being kept in prison under the Beattie government's Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003 which blocks the release of sex offenders who pose an unacceptable risk of reoffending. This case demonstrates that laws to protect the public against habitual paedophiles are working.

Despite his advanced age and ill health, I am advised that this offender is still considered to pose a high and unacceptable risk of reoffending. Unfortunately, some people cannot or will not control their impulses against children, and for these reasons they should not be released from jail. A self-confessed paedophile, he has admitted to sexually offending against children since he was 22 years of age. He was sentenced in May 1997 to nine years imprisonment after pleading guilty to 38 sexual offences against children. He was due for release in May this year. However, an interim detention order kept him in jail until the application to the Supreme Court was decided last week. He displayed no empathy for his victims and no evidence of remorse or feelings of guilt about his sexual offending.

As members are aware, the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003 permits the Attorney-General to apply to the Queensland Supreme Court to continue the detention of an offender. The Attorney-General is advised by the Serious Sexual Offenders Review Committee which considers the cases of prisoners serving time for serious sexual offences who could be a danger to the community on their release. The committee has members from Corrective Services, the Queensland Police Service and Justice and Attorney-General. The committee refers any offenders who could qualify under the act to the Crown law office and then in turn Crown law advises the Attorney-General on whether an application under the act should be made. It should also be noted that, if a continuing detention order is made, it is reviewed by the Supreme Court every 12 months.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Ambulance Service, Rural and Remote Communities**

**Hon. PD PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.04 am): In answer to a question from the member for Darling Downs in relation to an injured person waiting '22 hours before arriving at the treating hospital', I can provide the following information. The premise of the question was that the Queensland Ambulance Service took 22 hours to respond to and deliver the injured person from the site of the accident to the treating hospital. The facts are that on 30 June 2005 the Queensland Ambulance Service responded to a call for assistance on a property 38 kilometres outside Greenvale, which is 208 kilometres north of Charters Towers. The Queensland Ambulance Service received this call for service at 5:18 pm, with the patient being delivered to the Charters Towers Hospital at 12.34 am—seven hours and 16 minutes later.

Given the distance travelled and the travel time to attend this remote location, this is a remarkable effort. The officers involved travelled down rural roads frequented by livestock and native fauna during dusk and night and should be commended for their efforts. Anyone who travels in the bush would know

how dangerous that can be. On arrival at the scene, a telephone hook-up was conducted between the incident scene, the Queensland Ambulance Service, the clinical coordinator of Queensland Health and a senior doctor at the Townsville Hospital. The clinical coordinator instructed that there was no requirement for the patient to be transported to Townsville or for urgent aerial evacuation. I repeat that: there was no requirement for the patient to be transported to Townsville or for urgent aerial evacuation.

The clinical coordinator directed that, on arrival of the ambulance crew, the patient was to be transported to the Charters Towers Hospital. The decision of the clinical coordinator was in no way influenced by the availability of the Queensland Rescue helicopter at Townsville. The decision was made the next day by medical staff at Charters Towers Hospital to transport the patient to Townsville by the QAS Patient Transport Service. They left Charters Towers at 11.57 am and arrived at Townsville's Mater Hospital at 1.24 pm. The Queensland Ambulance Service's total retrieval and transportation time was eight hours and 43 minutes. Two hours of this time was spent at the scene of the accident treating and stabilising the patient for transport in consultation with doctors. If you take another two hours off that, it took six hours and 43 minutes in total to get there and to transport the patient. The patient was delivered to the Charters Towers Hospital at 12.34 am and left the hospital at 11.57 am—a total of 11 hours and 23 minutes in care in hospital. So he spent 11 hours and 23 minutes in care in the hospital. The Queensland Ambulance Service provides coverage to the Greenvale area through its Volunteer Ambulance Attendant Program, commonly known as ambulance honoraries, with the aid of community first responder groups.

The current case load for the Greenvale community is approximately two cases per month. This case load is extremely low and does not warrant the establishment of a full-time Ambulance Service. The current coverage of the Greenvale community is appropriate. The Queensland Ambulance Service has also advertised in Greenvale for people to volunteer as additional honorary officers and first responders with no interest from the community. I have some anecdotal information that there may be a couple of miners who would like to be honorary officers, and we are looking into that. I thought the member was interested and concerned for the patient, as I was, when I responded to the question on Tuesday. However, it now appears that the member was more interested in running down the Queensland Ambulance Service and the marvellous job that it does in the bush and remote areas of this state.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Government Building Projects 2005-06 Industry Guide

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (10.08 am): The Beattie government has a proud record of building Queensland. In this year's state budget a record \$8 billion has been allocated for new capital and infrastructure projects throughout the state. This funding will be spent on building new roads, ports, schools, prisons, dams, public housing, hospitals and power stations. I am pleased to launch today the Queensland Government Building Projects 2005-06 Industry Guide which catalogues around \$2 billion of this work to be managed by the Department of Public Works. Introduced by this government in 2000, the industry guide is a smart and easy way for private sector firms to learn about upcoming government projects. It helps businesses plan for potential future work. It includes construction projects right across Queensland, ensuring the sustained development of our regions, delivering new jobs and training opportunities.

By using the guide, contractors can be very selective about the work that they are looking for as they can search according to regions, agency, when the job is scheduled to start and what it involves. This makes it an essential industry planning tool. It includes all building projects over \$250,000 and ranges from minor school upgrades to the construction of the \$100 million Women's Correctional Centre in Townsville. So the guide is useful for small, medium and large Queensland businesses right across the state.

This is a practical way for Public Works to support our private building industry partners who play a major role in delivering the state government's multibillion dollar building program. The guide has been posted to all members and will be distributed to prequalified contractors and consultants throughout the state. I table a copy of it.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Seniors Council

**Hon. FW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors) (10.09 am): Thirteen older Queenslanders are about to influence the way the state government shapes seniors' policies over the next few years. I have great pleasure this morning in announcing the foundation members of the new Queensland Seniors Council. The Seniors Council will provide an important forum for the exchange of information and views between older people and the Queensland

government. This advice will assist me and the government to develop policies, programs and services that improve the lives of the state's older people.

By 2021, the number of Queenslanders aged 65 years or over is projected to double from 407,000 to some 825,000, or about 18 per cent of the state's population. The rapidly ageing population will mean significant changes and challenges for both government and the community. That means members of the Queensland Seniors Council have a big task and responsibility ahead of them. I look forward to them advising me on current and emerging issues at state, local and regional levels, and to supporting and monitoring the development and implementation of policies related to older people.

The inaugural council chairperson is Maureen Palmer from Clayfield in Brisbane, with Sunshine Coast region representative Pearl Maud Duncan from Bongaree, Bribie Island, as Deputy Chairperson. The other councillors are, representing Aboriginal people, Mr Kevin Bond of Inala; a dedicated Torres Strait Islander representative, Mr Francis Tapim of Kirwan, Townsville; from far-north Queensland, Mrs Joan Moore of Mareeba; from north Queensland, Mr Garth Brimelow of Thuringowa; from Mackay/Whitsunday, Mrs Lynn Smart of Mackay; from Fitzroy/central west, Mrs Myra Pincott of Emu Park; from Wide Bay-Burnett, Mrs Enid Cullen of Bundaberg; from Darling Downs/south-west, Mr Ted Long of Meringandan; Ms Veronica Somerwil-Nord of Goodna representing Moreton; Mr Choe Lam Tan of Sunnybank Hills representing greater Brisbane; and Ms Marianne Gevers of Southport representing the Gold Coast.

It was encouraging that interest in the Queensland Seniors Council was strong, with 91 older people from throughout the state being considered for membership, all of whom were more than qualified to take on this challenging role.

## **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

### **Membership**

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (10.11 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the member for Rockhampton be appointed a member of the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **Annual Report**

**Mr FENLON** (Greenslopes—ALP) (10.12 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Public Accounts Committee annual report for 2004-05. I would like to thank all of those who have assisted the committee with its work program during the year. I also thank the committee members for their input and support and the committee staff for their assistance. I commend the report to the House.

## **PALM ISLAND SELECT COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (10.12 am): I lay upon the table of the House the report of the Palm Island Select Committee. I also table submissions to the committee's inquiry that the committee has authorised for publication and tabling.

The select committee has investigated a range of issues concerning Palm Island and in its report makes 65 recommendations about matters, including ways to improve governance and the provision of municipal services on the island; reform to land tenure and housing delivery arrangements; and a range of issues that particularly relate to young people on the island, such as education and training, employment, leadership development, sport and recreational activities, community and cultural enhancement, health, law and order, child safety and alcohol and drug abuse. I commend the report to the House and give notice that I intend to move that the House take note of the report.

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **Beattie Labor Government**

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 am): In parliament this week the government has refused to confront the issues which are crucial to Queenslanders—the issue of the health system, the issue of asbestos in our state schools, the issue of our declining water supplies right across Queensland and the government's neglect in that area. When it comes to

important issues in this parliament this week all we have seen from the government has been diversions onto issues for which it has no direct responsibility, such as Telstra.

Is it not interesting that at a time when on the Capricorn Coast in central Queensland we have a community which is almost in entire meltdown about the government's handling of the debacle with the Yeppoon Hospital redevelopment that the member for Keppel comes into this place and talks not about the Yeppoon Hospital but about Telstra? He does not talk about issues relevant to his electorate but talks about Telstra, only to be outdone by the ripsnorter of them all, the member for Toowoomba North. His community is facing a water crisis, yet he comes in here and talks about Telstra at a time when the member for Toowoomba South delivers for the people of Toowoomba some security and certainty in getting the Minister for Primary Industries to fast-track two bore licences for artesian bores. Not to be outdone, when the electorate of Toowoomba North has other problems such as a meltdown in child safety—a debacle in child safety on the Darling Downs—which has resulted in two young people who were under the watchful eye of Child Safety taking their own lives, the member comes in here and talks about Telstra! Again, the member for Toowoomba South has to sort those problems.

What do we have from the silent six on the Gold Coast? They have not talked about anything. We have a hospital system on the Gold Coast in which oncology services are no longer available. We also have the government talking about closing down and selling off the existing Southport Hospital, but nary a word do we hear from the members on the Gold Coast. The silent six cannot even bring themselves to talk about Telstra. We have a government that is not interested in the important state issues.

### **Sale of Telstra; Joyce, Senator B**

**Ms MALE** (Glass House—ALP) (10.15 am): We have just heard the ramblings of the Leader of the Opposition. We have also heard several months of rambling from Barnaby Joyce, the new National Party senator, who was going to listen to the Queensland people and cross the floor on the sale of Telstra if necessary and, thus, protect our access to decent telecommunication services. Barnaby was not only going to stop the sale; he was going to get improved services.

So what actually happened? He went in to the negotiations with a handful of aces and came out being trumped by John Howard and the Liberals. He lost big time and so did all Queenslanders. All Barnaby has accepted is a couple of billion dollars to keep telecommunication services at basically the same level. Let me say that again: in reality, the funding will only keep services at the same level. What does that mean for my Conondale residents? Located just an hour and a half from Brisbane, they do not have access to broadband internet. According to the local Telstra office, they will not be getting it ever. They do not have access to the mobile phone network and again, according to the local Telstra office, they will not be getting it ever. In short, Telstra says there are not enough people there to warrant a service.

Telstra also advises that the Conondale community cannot argue that there is a safety issue in not having access to mobile phone coverage because it does not apply. I am going to find it very difficult to tell the Kenilworth First Responders and my many rural fire brigades and SES volunteers that their safety is not a concern to Telstra or the Howard federal government. In fact, the Queensland Ambulance Service has just funded two satellite telephones for the Maleny ambulance vehicles at a cost of over \$14,000 to ensure that our paramedics are able to be in touch with residents, other emergency services, the doctors and the hospital all because Telstra cannot provide decent mobile phone coverage in that area.

The Queensland Nationals and the Liberals let us all down last night with their vote for the full sale of Telstra. They have stopped listening to Queenslanders. So today I have to call on the federal Liberal member Peter Slipper and that Queensland senator whom we all have nicknamed 'Backdown Barnaby' to stand up for rural and regional Queenslanders and keep Telstra in our hands for all time.

### **Disposable Sharps**

**Mr CHRIS FOLEY** (Maryborough—Ind) (10.18 am): Diabetes is a very concerning issue in our community. I have been approached by a person who is a diabetic and a pensioner. She lives on the Bruce Highway and was unfortunate enough to find a full sharps container that had been thrown from a car and burst open. Fortunately, it had been raining so her grandchildren were not outside playing. She eventually had to collect them and dispose of them as a safety measure for her grandchildren. As a diabetic user of sharps, she has to pay \$6 for a disposable container whilst illicit drug users get them for free and appear not to care what they do with the sharps containers. She has also advised that when she resided at Baffle Creek she used to receive free sharps containers through the council which were collected at the Agnes Water Medical Centre.

I am wondering—and I am rather perplexed—about the government's priorities when pensioner diabetics cannot get sharps containers for free but illegal drug users can. I support the concept of illegal drug users getting these containers for free to keep needle-stick injuries and so forth off the radar

screen. But surely to goodness, giving these sharps containers to diabetics for free would also be very appropriate for our community. I call on the government to really show some leadership in this area and extend to diabetics the same privileges that are extended to illicit drug users.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, you are sitting there talking at the top of your voice. I cannot hear these people who are making addresses to this parliament. Please keep your voice down.

### Fuel Prices

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (10.20 am): In 2003 this House passed a motion calling on the Howard government to establish a national inquiry to ensure that fuel pricing is fair and transparent. The Howard government has failed to act on the Queensland parliament's resolution, but with petrol prices hitting nearly \$1.20 a litre in Brisbane the public deserves an answer.

The Howard government is collecting a whopping \$900 million in revenue from the excise on petrol. Is this money coming back to Queensland? No, it is not! Although the Howard government is happy to collect the taxes from the vehicles that use Queensland roads, it is unwilling to invest in these roads.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I rise to a point of order. We have a motion before the parliament which broadly covers these issues and which is to be debated later today. I would have thought—

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. If you do have a point of order, stand up and raise it. All you have done all morning is sit there and talk at the top of your voice. I cannot hear these members make a contribution.

**Mr REEVES:** Mr Speaker, they do not want to hear the facts. Queensland road users are getting a raw deal. People should not just believe what we are saying. Even the Liberal lord mayor has been saying it loud and clear to the federal Liberals. The local residents are feeling the pinch at the pump and the Howard government is preoccupied with its own political agenda.

Ordinary Australians will feel the sting of high petrol prices even more when the Howard government attempts to rob hardworking employees of penalty rates. Market forces have resulted in petrol prices increasing threefold in the past decade. Are we to expect the same increases in the price of local telephone calls when Telstra is privatised? I think so.

I am proud to be a member of a Queensland government that has worked hard to ensure that Queenslanders do not feel the pinch of the increase in petrol prices as much as motorists in other states have. In addition to the 8.3c per litre petrol subsidy, the Beattie government is going all out to develop Queensland's ethanol industry. Fuel with a 10 per cent ethanol blend will help reduce greenhouse gases and tailpipe emissions and lead to cleaner air.

Enough is enough. The federal government must act now. I congratulate the Premier on his notice of motion. It is a pity that the federal government does not have the same guts to hold a national inquiry into the price of petrol.

### Beattie Labor Government

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 am): Anyone would have thought that, owing to the by-elections that were held on the weekend, the Beattie government would have learned that it cannot run and it cannot hide. But for the whole of this week in parliament once again we have seen the government trying to run and trying to hide. It is trying to run away from its responsibility to be accountable to the people of Queensland and it is trying to hide from its atrocious record of failure.

This morning we saw the member for Glass House stand up here and talk about anything but the issues that her constituents want to know about. She did not talk about the Nambour Hospital or the failure of the mental—

**Ms MALE:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, you were here listening this morning. I was clearly outlining the issues that affect Conondale residents and our ambulance committees.

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr SEENEY:** We did not hear the member for Glass House talk about the health issues that affect the Nambour Hospital or the Caloundra Hospital. We did not hear her talk about the mental health problems. We did not hear her talk about the VMOs. We heard her try once again to use the distraction that the government strategists thought of earlier in the week. They said, 'We'll run a bit of a diversion and then we won't get any scrutiny of our failure in the health service. No-one will notice health. No-one will look at our record in health if we can think of a big enough diversion.' That has been the strategy here all week.

But it has not worked and it will not work. The people of Queensland deserve to have their government scrutinised in this place, because that is the core role of this parliament: to scrutinise the performance of a succession of ministers who have failed and to scrutinise the performance of a Premier who has failed to deliver the core services that Queenslanders believe they deserve to receive from the state government.

The opposition leader talked about the member for Toowoomba North. No greater example exists in this House than this member, who should be scrutinised for his record in representing his constituents. It is a government that has failed and it will continue to fail.

### **Fuel Prices; Raceview State School**

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.24 am): Last month the *Bulletin* magazine predicted that the increasing price of oil will soon mean that in Australia people will be paying \$2 a litre for their petrol at the bowser. Already, owing to the current high price of oil, families in Ipswich are talking to me about the enormous pressure that is putting on their household budgets. The worrying issue is that the price hikes that we are seeing now are the result of increases in demand, not OPEC limiting the supply of oil. That means that, unlike earlier oil shocks, these price hikes will not be turned around easily. We need to look hard for ways in which we can reduce our reliance on oil. The Beattie government has already done some excellent work on that with TransLink, which revolutionises public transport so that we can take cars off the road.

I suggest a new way through which we can go further. When I was a girl, kids walked or rode their bikes to school. That does not happen anymore. Now the vast majority of kids are driven to school. While the school bike racks lay empty, a quarter of the kids at school are overweight and the streets outside schools have become zones of dangerous traffic chaos.

Raceview State School in Ipswich has the answer. There is a walking bus program at that school which means that volunteers walk a set route, picking up kids along the way to school. The walking bus creates a community. It ensures that kids get to school safely and it means that they get to school alert as a result of the walk with their friends and with a responsible adult. The walking bus program cuts the amount of traffic around schools and, in doing so, it saves parents money on their fuel bill.

Raceview State School's walking bus program is a great idea that has been enormously well received by the school community. As petrol prices increase and as all of us start to hear concerns from our constituents about their children's health and the financial pressure on them from rising petrol prices, I suggest to all members that they look at ways in which they can set up walking bus programs around their own local schools.

### **Gold Coast Hospital**

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.26 am): I was very interested to learn that the six silent Labor MPs who represent Gold Coast electorates will meet with the health minister to discuss the crisis at the Gold Coast Hospital. That certainly begs the question: what have they been doing for the past 4½ years? What were they doing when the hospital was on bypass and patients were being diverted to Brisbane or interstate, or at times told to keep driving? Where were these members when ambulances were turned into mobile wards on the driveway at the Gold Coast Hospital? Where were these members when mental health patients were turned away from Gold Coast Hospital and given cab vouchers or simply released prematurely, resulting in incidents that have threatened the lives of the mentally ill, their families and other members of the community? Why is this a meeting—a meeting on a subject that, to use the words of the member for Mudgeeraba, has frustrated us all—to which only Labor MPs are invited? Why is it that those who are least active on the subject are the ones who get to talk to the minister about these problems? Is it that the government is going to continue to play politics with this issue rather than fix the problems at the Gold Coast Hospital?

I encourage the new health minister to be open to bipartisan support for fixing the problems at the Gold Coast Hospital. I am eager to help, as are the members for Robina and Currumbin. For too long on the Gold Coast there have been problems with our hospital. They affect people up and down the coast. This is a chance for the health minister to show that he is not going to get sucked into petty politics and play games with people's lives. Let us see him do the things that are required to fix this mess and, while he is about it, reassure the people of the Gold Coast that the existing hospital will not be removed. Let us see this government get its priorities right. Let us not have the same federal blame game that the government plays in relation to IR and Telstra. Let us fix the health system.

### **Logan District, Transport; Fuel Prices**

**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (10.28 am): The state government has committed in excess of \$400 million to projects that will directly benefit Logan motorists. Last year the state government announced that it would spend \$300 million to upgrade the section of the M1 that runs through Logan

City. The state government has asked the federal government to contribute to this project, and the people of Logan are still waiting for the federal government to support this project.

Last year the federal government's AusLink transport package and the billions of dollars spent on election handouts, especially through regional grants, contributed nothing to this project. It was not that long ago that the federal government decided to throw around \$660,000 for the Beaudesert tourist railway, even though it was insolvent and had already received \$5 million of federal funding.

As we go around our electorates our constituents talk to us about the out-of-control increase in the price of petrol. When the price of petrol at the pump goes from 90c a litre to \$1 a litre, consumer spending decreases by 0.4 per cent. That may sound insignificant, but it is a lot to a family that is on the average wage. Based on the price of petrol being \$1 a litre at the pump, the federal government will raise an additional \$690 million post GST. So what are those families getting back for that additional \$690 million post GST? That money is certainly not going into roads, it is not going into supporting grandparents raising grandchildren and it is not going into health. Where exactly is the money going?

Premiers around the nation have called on the federal government to join them in a national approach to improving our public health system. Stakeholders in health will need to work together with the state governments and the federal government to ensure that the community needs are met, along with their professional needs.

Yet another major road project is the Loganlea Road interchange in my electorate. I know that the federal government still has not come out with any support for that. I call on the federal government to start supporting the people of Logan and distribute the money which the people of Logan are putting in through the petrol bowlers and which is going straight into federal government coffers.

### **Sale of Telstra**

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (10.29 am): What a great job the Nationals and Barnaby Joyce have done with the Telstra deal. They have done an absolutely fantastic job.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** Look at them over there screaming. Who is going to have their hands out when the money starts to roll in? When the money comes in those fellas will be saying, 'We want some of that as well.'

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I know it is the last day of sitting. Please, I want order in this place.

**Mr HOBBS:** What about the Commonwealth Bank and Qantas? Who sold them and what happened to that money? Where is the future fund from the proceeds of that? It is not there because the Labor Party did not have the brains to put in place a future fund. We have a future fund with Telstra. The money will be there. Mobile phone towers will be going up everywhere. At least there will be a service out there. Those opposite have provided nothing—nothing at all. They had the opportunity to roll out some telecommunications, and Queensland was the last state in Australia to get that package out.

**Mr Mickel** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister for Energy, I warn you under standing order 253.

**Mr HOBBS:** The sale of Telstra is the biggest investment in Australia's history in communications, and those opposite are opposed to it. Why are they opposed to the biggest single contribution to communications in Australia?

**Mr Horan:** Ever.

**Mr HOBBS:** Ever.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Toowoomba South, I warn you under standing order 253.

**Mr HOBBS:** Broadband services are going to be rolled out out there. Are those opposite going to be opposed to that? Are they going to say, 'We don't want to have broadband services out there'? What about videolink? What about schools, education and health? Do they not want to have those services? This package will roll out and those people will have their hands out saying, 'We want some of it, too.' But it was the National Party and Barnaby Joyce who did this for them. It is out there for Queenslanders. We will have one of the best packages this country has ever seen for communications, and those fellas opposite have done nothing.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Department of Child Safety

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.30 am): My question without notice is to the Minister for Child Safety. I refer to the latest example of the ongoing problems in the minister's department where an independent external reviewer has found that decisions have been made that were not in the best interests of the children involved, and this is the executive summary of that report. The minister has said that this report was leaked and was incomplete. Can the minister explain why this letter, which I now table, from the Director of Complaints, Case Review and Investigation Branch of the minister's department, refers to the report as being the final version of the report and that it was released by the minister's department, not leaked?

**Mr REYNOLDS:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. As Minister for Child Safety, I stand in this parliament today very proudly able to say that the Beattie government, in terms of the reforms we have effected over the last 18 months, has brought in very rigorous procedures with regard to complaints and not only with regard to complaints. I would like to read to the Leader of the Opposition our newly endorsed complaints management policy and procedure that has been adopted by this new Department of Child Safety. It states—

People who are involved in the child protection system must be able to participate in, influence, add value to, and question the decisions the Department of Child Safety has made, the service it has provided, and the behaviour of its employees. Because the department is committed to protecting children and young people and continuous improvement it invites enquiries, expressions of concern, and complaints about these issues. When dealing with these issues, protecting the safety, the rights, and best interests of children and young people remain its primary concern.

I do not resile in any way, shape or form with regard to the open, transparent and accountable model that we are putting up in this new Department of Child Safety. I will not resile from it one way or another. If a report has been leaked, it has been leaked. Let me say this: the process is ongoing. I say to the Leader of the Opposition today that it is a shame that the opposition has decided to go down a partisan track in this regard. If the Leader of the Opposition was fair dinkum, as he has been in the past—and he knows this; he has come to my office on many occasions, and I have briefed him and I have briefed his principal senior adviser on these matters—rather than playing the shabby trick he is playing today, why do we not go back to having bipartisan support? I say to the Leader of the Opposition that I am still willing to extend that bipartisan approach.

Departmental reviews and external reviews will continue. If a complainant has a concern that goes back to 2001, with the former department of families, I am not going to sweep it under the carpet. Whether or not reports are leaked, we will in a very rigorous and methodical way look at the concerns that the people of Queensland have with the Department of Child Safety or the former department of families. We will be open—unlike the National Party, which swept it under the carpet. By the way, we have increased the staff by 400 per cent from the days when he was a minister. Looking at the Toowoomba office, there were six people there when he was a minister. We have multiplied that number by four. We hear a very hypocritical stance. I am not going to sweep things under the carpet. We will be open, transparent and accountable. That is the way that I will do my job.

### Hospital Waiting Lists

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My second question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the minister's belated admission yesterday in the face of evidence presented to the Morris inquiry that there is a waiting list to get on the waiting list. He further stated that Queensland Health has not systematically kept this data. How does the minister explain that disgraced former minister Edmond told parliament on 18 July 2003—

All specialist outpatient referrals received by hospitals can now be entered onto an electronic waiting list register to enable hospitals to manage their workload in a more effective manner.

Who has misled parliament—the current Minister for Health or Wendy Edmond?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I stand by the statement that I made yesterday in answer to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. The information that has been provided to me is that those statistics were not gathered in a systematic way and that they were not gathered centrally. Therefore, the advice I have provided to the Leader of the Opposition is, as I understand it, absolutely correct.

Since we are talking about what the opposition leader and other members of the opposition have been saying, what has been concerning me over the last number of days has been some of the more outrageous comments that have been made in this place. On this occasion I would like to refer to the situation of mental health services in Toowoomba, which has been raised by the member for Toowoomba South and the member for Cunningham over the last couple of days in their ongoing scaremongering campaign. There is nothing that these people will not say to bring down public confidence in our health system, including in their own electorates.

In the case of mental health services in Toowoomba, there is no downgrading of services. There will continue to be mental health services provided in Toowoomba. In fact, recruitment is continuing. We hope to have one of the vacancies filled very shortly. Interviews are under way for the other two vacancies. But, in terms of the director's position, I have to put on record the disgraceful campaign waged by the member for Toowoomba South, who has made a number of allegations publicly about that director. On 4 August, he claimed on ABC Radio 612 that the acting director was often away as he is also the acting director for Queensland Mental Health and has a private practice in Brisbane. So concerned was the acting director with the comments made by the member for Toowoomba South that he actually went to see the member for Toowoomba South to correct the record, including the fact that he was no longer practising in Brisbane and that he was working full time in Toowoomba. Despite that doctor going to see the member for Toowoomba South and telling him that, the member for Toowoomba South then subsequently went out in the public domain and repeated the lie, further bringing down confidence in mental health services in Toowoomba.

**Mr HORAN:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that comment offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Withdraw.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker. I now call on the member for Toowoomba South to stand on his feet in this place and apologise for misleading people in his own electorate about the work being performed by that acting director. It is only when he corrects the record, because it was as a result of the member saying—

**Mr Welford:** Defaming him.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Basically defaming him; Mr Welford is quite right. It is as a result of the member for Toowoomba South's actions that he then resigned from his position. One of the vacancies is a direct result of his actions and it is time that he apologised.

**Mr HORAN:** Mr Speaker, I find that comment absolutely offensive and an effort to stop members of this parliament speaking out, and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, withdraw.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I withdraw.

### Sale of Telstra

**Ms JARRATT:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Thousands of Queenslanders in rural and remote areas risk a downgrading of services if Telstra is sold to become a totally commercial company intent only on profits. As this issue lies at the very heart of what the Nationals stand for, I ask the Premier: what sort of leadership is being offered by the Queensland Nationals' leader on the sale of Telstra?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Speaker—

**Opposition members:** Ha, ha!

**Mr BEATTIE:** Those opposite may laugh about this because they do not care about the bush, but we do.

**Mr Copeland:** You don't care about hospitals.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Cunningham under standing order 253.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The answer to the question is that they are showing no leadership at all. At least when Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen was Leader of the National Party, they stood for something. We may not have agreed with him, and on many occasions I did not, but at least Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen stood for something. These days the Nationals stand for nothing but 30 pieces of silver.

We have had only five years in the new century and this vote by the National Party last night in this parliament and elsewhere has to be the sell-out of the century. Where does Mr Springborg stand on all of this? Look at the dishonesty on this. In this morning's *Australian* the question put was: should Telstra be sold? The article states—

Fourteen members of the Queensland Nationals management committee support the sale; five are against; 10 are undecided; five refused to answer; seven weren't available.

What happened when they rang Mr Springborg? What is his view? Parliamentary leader Lawrence Springborg says, 'No, I don't support the sale.' Can we ever trust anything this man says? I went back and did some research. Two years ago Mr Springborg promised this—

What I can tell you today is that the Queensland National Party remains absolutely, 100 per cent, unequivocally, opposed to the sale of Telstra.

Can we ever believe this man? We talk about leadership; there is no leadership. He sold out the bush for 30 pieces of silver. Last night he came into this parliament and he voted for the sale of Telstra. I notice this morning that Barnaby 'Backdown' Joyce said on *AM* that he took into account a number of

things, including that state parliamentarians are in favour of it—that is, the National Party. So last night's vote by the National Party has influenced Barnaby Joyce's decision. In other words, what they have done is they have sold out the bush.

The member for Warrego needs to explain to members in his electorate when they get a bad service exactly why he supports the sale. Every National Party member is on record as selling out the bush and the regions. How about this? We heard the member for Warrego this morning talking about this \$3.1 billion profit. Do members know what last year's profit for Telstra was? It was \$4.45 billion. So they have sold out for nine months profit.

**Mr Rowell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Hinchinbrook, I warn you under standing order 253.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Those opposite have sold out the bush for nine months profit. They are pathetic.

### Health System

**Mr SEENEY:** Despite the desperate diversion, I have a question for the Minister for Health.

**Mr Beattie:** Is that the question? I take it that that is the question.

**Mr SEENEY:** I said, 'Despite the desperate diversion, I have a question for the Minister for Health.'

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you will be taking a walk. You direct your question to the appropriate minister.

**Mr SEENEY:** I am asking; the Premier is interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! You direct your question to the appropriate minister.

**Mr SEENEY:** I am asking a question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Well ask it now, then.

**Mr SEENEY:** I am asking a question of the Minister for Health, who is the appropriate minister to explain the health crisis in Queensland. Minister, I table a leaked document which outlines how the district manager at the Princess Alexandra Hospital has prepared a plan to replace clinical and medical positions with a non-medical corporate management group focusing on management instead of patients. How many other Queensland hospitals have prepared plans to replace doctors with bureaucrats?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I have not seen that document and the honourable member would not expect me to have seen that document if it is an internal hospital document. But if his allegation, as I understand it, is that we are reducing the number of clinical staff at the PA Hospital or any other hospital in Queensland then he is simply incorrect. He has not been paying attention to the announcements that we have made over the last number of weeks for 20 additional or new registrars being employed in Queensland public hospitals, not just in south-east Queensland but right up the coast. He has not been paying attention when we announced upgrades to clinical services in hospitals like Redcliffe and Caboolture.

He has not been listening to a whole range of other announcements including the budget—and we have had an exhaustive budget debate—about \$240 million extra being invested in Queensland Health this year alone. He has not been listening when we have talked about the \$5.3 billion that we currently invest in health services in Queensland, and he has not been listening, clearly, over the last year as we have rolled out a whole range of new initiatives to meet the challenges that we face in Queensland Health.

As I indicated in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, they will say anything to bring down confidence in Queensland Health. In fact, we had the opposition spokesman just this morning saying publicly that Queenslanders should be terrified of going to a Queensland Health facility. How irresponsible is that! We have seen that level of irresponsibility by the member for Toowoomba South in saying anything to bring down confidence in mental health services and actively reducing staff numbers in mental health in Toowoomba. We have heard no apology. They will say anything and they will do anything to bring down confidence in our health system.

But today, as yesterday and the day before, 35,000 procedures are undertaken by Queensland Health facilities—35,000 each and every day; over eight million procedures year in, year out in Queensland public health facilities. If we are to have a balanced debate, and I think we should—because, yes, we do have problems and we are facing up to those problems and we are developing a road map forward—then let us put aside this nonsense that Queenslanders should be terrified. What an absolute load of nonsense. That is grossly irresponsible and it is time that the opposition was held to account for its current level of irresponsibility in saying anything to attack doctors and to bring down confidence in our health system for purely base political purposes.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the member for Keppel, I welcome to the gallery three teachers from Mirani: Cath Jeffrey, Yvonne Lee and Lyn Egan. These three teachers have recently won the smart women award for excellence in the public sector. On behalf of all the members here, congratulations and welcome to the parliament.

### Health System

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Thousands of Queenslanders believe that they are at risk from a downgrading of the public hospital system as the result of publicity relating to the Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry and the review of health systems. As this issue lies at the very heart of what Labor stands for, I ask the Premier: what sort of leadership is he offering on the future of the public hospital system?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for the question because it is an important one. My government is committed to ensuring that we have the best public hospital system in Australia. My government is also committed to ensuring that we have the best telecommunications system in Australia.

When the incident involving Dr Patel was first raised in parliament on 22 March, I indicated that I believed the Crime and Misconduct Commission had the power to conduct a full investigation and that I would support it doing that. The member for Stafford supported that. After a two-week trade mission I returned to Queensland. On 18 April, Steve Austin reported how, since my return, the government had been bending over backwards to show that it had nothing to hide and that it would tackle this issue fully, even to the point of making a surprising move in allowing Toni Hoffman, the intensive care nurse from Bundaberg Base Hospital, authority to speak publicly about what she did. I said—

We've also got to ensure that we do have a full examination of what happened and put measures in place to make sure that it does not happen again.

In other words, I confronted this issue head-on. That is what leadership is about. We appointed an inquiry with a fiercely independent head—a royal commission—to get to the bottom of what happened. We did not run away from it. We accepted that there were problems. I also accepted, by appointing Peter Forster, with the support of my colleagues, that we would look at systemic issues in the health system. What did we do? We actually took the issue of health head-on to resolve the problems. We did not hide it. Yes, we have taken a lot of pain and it cost us two by-elections on the weekend, but why did we appoint the commission and the inquiry? It is because it is the moral thing to do; it is the right thing to do. It is the thing that leaders do. When you are actually confronting a problem and you represent people, you tackle the problem head on.

Mr Speaker, I know that those opposite have played their political games, and they continue today, as you can see, to try to undermine the health system. But that is fine. That is politics; I understand that. But let no-one miss the key point: when we were challenged with a major issue like this we faced up to it head-on, and we did not run away from it.

On the other hand, let us look at the next issue of Telstra. What happened with the National Party? The National Party did not face up to it. Mr Springborg did not face up to it. He did not stand and say, 'I'll fight for the bush and fight for the region.' Where is the Bjelke-Petersen steel? Look, they laugh. The Leader of the Opposition laughs and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition laughs about the bush.

**Mr Hobbs:** We are laughing at you!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Warrego under 253.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Members opposite do not want to talk about Telstra or communications. If we went the way the National Party is going no-one would be able to ring a doctor in the bush because they would not get anyone because the sale will destroy the Telstra system.

**An opposition member:** Where are you going to get the doctor from?

**Mr BEATTIE:** There will be doctors there, all right. They will be doing their job, but no-one will be able to ring them because of the National Party's sell-out of the bush. Let the record show that the members opposite think it is funny. They do not care about the bush. We do.

### Health System; Buckland, Dr S

**Mr COPELAND:** My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the statement of counsel for sacked director-general Steve Buckland at the Morris inquiry yesterday in relation to the attempted cover-up of details surrounding Vincent Berg. Dr Buckland's lawyer advised Commissioner Morris that Dr Buckland was 'subject to political direction about what could be or could not be done'. Who gave this political direction? Will the minister now table all the documents relevant to this matter?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** It is not appropriate for me, nor is it appropriate for the member opposite, to comment on matters that are before the commission of inquiry. It is, however, appropriate for the commissioner, based on any evidence he is presented with—

**Mr COPELAND:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, would you rule whether it is sub judice to speak about matters in relation to the inquiry?

**Mr SPEAKER:** It is not sub judice, and the minister never claimed it was sub judice.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is not appropriate, so I will not be making comment. It is, however, appropriate for Commissioner Morris to make any investigations or ask any further questions that he may wish to ask in relation to evidence that is presented before him.

**Mr Johnson:** You're trying to shut him down.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Gregory, I warn you under 253.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Having highlighted the gross irresponsibility of the member opposite this morning by calling on Queenslanders to be terrified, I have yet another example of irresponsibility in terms of things the opposition has been saying. This time it relates to the Gold Coast Hospital and ward 14.

Certain members opposite have made allegations that ward 14 of the Gold Coast Hospital is being closed and that it is an operating theatre that is not used. There is actually a good reason for that which, unfortunately, the *Gold Coast Bulletin* did not check with my office about. I take the opportunity today to correct the record. The main reasons ward 14 cannot become a patient area are: one, it has not been refurbished since 1972 and is due for demolition; two, it is very isolated from the main building on the site, causing concern for patient and staff safety, particularly at night; three, it is not airconditioned, it is very close to the road, and fumes and noise throughout the ward result in many complaints; and, four, the building would require major reworking of all the electrics and a total renovation of the bathroom facilities. This is not an area that members would like one of their family members to be placed in.

Ward 14 was last refurbished in 1972. Since 2000 the building has been identified for demolition. The ward was of particular concern due to its isolation from the rest of the hospital. The need to replace this ward was identified during the 1990s and resulted in the replacement of ward 14 with a new rehabilitation building, which was opened by the Premier in 2002.

If we are to have a balanced debate we need to ensure that what is reported is accurate. The headlines in today's *Gold Coast Bulletin* do not reflect the facts. If we are to have a balanced debate—and we need to have a balanced debate if we are to address all of the serious issues we have in health—then let us have a bit of accuracy and let us have a bit of honesty from members opposite.

### Sale of Telstra

**Mr MULHERIN:** My question without notice is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation. In this increasingly globalised world, business depends on strong telecommunications links. What will be the impact of the full privatisation of Telstra on Queensland businesses, particularly regional businesses?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for Mackay for his question. He, unlike many others opposite, has a deep concern for business prosperity in his area, and I wish that more people shared that concern. Queensland business depends on good telecommunications. Increasingly, telecommunications are a link with customers. They are a vital link with suppliers, a link with other businesses and increasingly, for the many Queensland businesses who are exporting or looking to export, it is a link with the world.

The sale of Telstra inevitably means a loss of control over service levels and a loss of control over telecommunications in rural and regional Queensland. It is simply inevitable that shareholders will demand that unprofitable areas are abandoned. Anybody who thinks otherwise should remember what happened when the Commonwealth Bank started to close down regional banks. Those who doubt that Telstra will close down some of its services to regional Queensland are kidding themselves.

Regional services are already unreliable. Regional businesses—businesses in regions up and down the coast of Queensland, let alone west of the Great Dividing Range—already have poor internet access. They already work with poor mobile capability, long delays for the connection of services and long delays for repairs when they break down. There are many places where no broadband access is available beyond four kilometres from the exchange. This affects businesses in places such as Dalby and Mount Isa, to name just two.

All of these failures in systems cost these businesses money. In the meantime, their competitors in better serviced areas have the advantage. This is the standard of service delivered by a publicly owned enterprise with community service obligations. Anybody who thinks that will be matched or bettered by a privatised entity, which is only driven by the bottom line, is, as I said, kidding themselves.

I think one of the biggest flaws of the Joyce package is that it has no guarantees. For the bush, at best the package is a wish and a prayer. But make no mistake: for major regions where business is inevitably concentrated it is not even a wish and a prayer.

I listened to some of the speeches from members opposite earlier this morning condemning members on this side of the chamber for talking about Telstra. Government members should make no

mistake: they do not want us to talk about Telstra. Watch them squirm. There is nothing that is making them more uncomfortable. When they condemn the member for Toowoomba North and the member for Glass House for talking about Telstra, it is because they want us to stop talking about it. Members should make no mistake about that.

It is little wonder that the member for Maroochydore came in here yesterday asking questions about the Gold Coast. She does not want to be talking about Telstra, and she does not want to be talking about what it means for businesses and for domestic consumers in her own electorate. This is, and has been, absolute core policy for the National Party for as long as I can remember. It has been core policy in National Party heartland, and the National Party has vacated the field. It has walked right off it.

### **Ambulance Service**

**Mr McARDLE:** My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. In recent months there have been many cases of ambulances being unable to discharge patients at overcrowded emergency departments. Given the imperative of ambulance staff being back on the road as quickly as possible rather than being left in hospital driveways, I ask: why has the minister not put in place adequate procedures to enable paramedics and other officers to manage the ongoing care of these patients who cannot be discharged from the ambulance vehicle?

**Mr PURCELL:** I thank the member for the question. At the moment some of our services are under a lot of stress. With VMOs resigning at various hospitals some of our patients in ambulances are put at risk. I know the Premier will be looking, along with paramedics and nurses, at what extra training is needed in the future to assist hospitals that are under pressure and how that pressure can be relieved. At this stage that is in the future. We are waiting on reports from two inquiries that are being conducted.

I would like to say that paramedics are working very, very hard under very difficult situations. As I said in this place this week, I was at two functions where paramedics had to be called. They were very professional; they arrived very quickly. I just happened to have a word with them as they were leaving and they reported to me that they were very, very busy. We will be doing everything that we possibly can to see that patients in our care in ambulances are given the best care that they can possibly be given.

### **Sale of Telstra**

**Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM:** My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Housing. I refer to the National Party decision to abandon its constituents and support the sale of Telstra. I can understand them feeling very touchy about it. I ask: what will this mean for rural and regional Queenslanders?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the member for being part of a team that stands up against the Commonwealth government's view of selling Telstra, unlike her colleague the member for Burnett, who sat over there mute and absurd last night. The member voted the right way and if she had her way Telstra would not be sold. The truth is that earlier this week we outlined exactly what our blueprint is for the bush in terms of ICT services. As the minister responsible I am delighted with the vision that we have extended in that regard because what it does is recognise the fact that telecommunications are the cornerstone of development in regional and rural Queensland. We understand that on this side of politics.

Unfortunately, the National Party died last night—the old Country Party that used to exist that looked after people in the bush, that cared about them. Members opposite ought to get a few history books out and read why the Country Party was set up in the first place. The member for Lockyer was here last night, but his predecessor, who was an old mate of mine, would roll in his grave as a result of him sitting there and backing down like he did last night. Bill Gunn would certainly not have supported the sale of Telstra. Neither would people like Bjelke-Petersen, even though I do not like to quote him very much as being an authority or somebody that I particularly like, but the reality is that he did have the country at heart.

The fact of the matter is that the backdown by Barnaby Joyce and the muteness and absurdity of members of the opposition last night, who did not even have the courage to turn up to the debate, really show where their leadership is in terms of these issues in the bush. I heard the member for Warrego this morning defend the senator who has betrayed the bush. That is a interesting one to send back out to his people when they will not be able to get decent telephonic, broadband or wireless services in those areas. Because the man in the moon is not going to do it and private enterprise is not going to do it unless it is forced to by some means or another. I do not know how a great capitalistic party would do that.

The fact of the matter is this: this is about leadership. The Leader of the Opposition ought to resign his position. He can laugh because he is embarrassed. The old saying is that you always know which stone hit which dog because they yelp the loudest. The reality is that he is yelping because he was caught out in his cowardice last night; he backed down on behalf of the people of the bush. He

ought to be ashamed of himself. Each and every one of the members opposite have had too much blue water and too many soft seats, as far as I am concerned. The member for Callide can laugh because he does not care about the people in Monto. I was talking to one of them last night. The member for Callide rarely visits there, apparently. He prefers to stay out here at The Gap. The services at The Gap, of course, are much better than they are in Monto. We know that. The reality is this: those opposite can all run, vote and laugh, but they know deep down that they have betrayed their constituents. When they go back out of this place they have to face them. I know that the member for Callide will not do that because he is never in his electorate.

### **Pacific National**

**Mr CHRIS FOLEY:** I seek leave to table a non-conforming petition.

Leave granted.

**Mr CHRIS FOLEY:** My question is for the minister for transport. In his absence I will direct the question to the Premier. I have been told that about two weeks ago a Pacific National goods train almost ran over a gang of Queensland Rail workers between Isis and Goodwin. I am alarmed by reports of near misses involving Pacific National trains and I have heard a number of reports of Pacific National drivers isolating the automatic train protection devices on their trains. I am also informed that a Pacific National train went through a red light at Maryborough West, recently stopping only 27 metres from a stationary train. Apparently this train—

**Mr SPEAKER:** What is the question, member for Maryborough?

**Mr CHRIS FOLEY:** In light of these disasters, apparently QR investigators have been refused permission to interview the driver. What will the Premier do to ensure that Pacific National trains running on our infrastructure are going by the same set of safety rules as Queensland Rail?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I do not know whether the detail that the member has provided to the House is correct or not, although I am quite happy to ensure that it is appropriately investigated and responded to. Let us deal with that up front. The second point is this: as we all know, under third party access rules that came in as a result of COAG decisions years ago, well before my government was elected, Pacific National can have access to tracks in Queensland. From QR's point of view, and the government has spent a lot of time on this issue, and for commercial reasons I do not intend to be any more expansive than what I am about to say, we are obviously trying to ensure that QR is as competitive as possible with Pacific National and other links. We are doing that to protect our own work force as well as drive commercial opportunities for QR. One of the things that QR has to do, however, is go national. QR has tried to do that. We have seen a number of initiatives involving coal in the Hunter and we have seen it in terms of access to Melbourne. We are doing what we can to give QR a future. We are required, under the COAG rules and third party access decisions made many years ago, to allow Pacific National into Queensland.

My understanding of the position, and I will double check this, is this: they have to comply with the same safety requirements and rules as everyone else. CTC, for example, which controls the train network, sees trains; they do not see whether those trains are Pacific National or QR. CTC, which is the electronic train control system that replaced the old STA system that some members will remember, actually operates trains. They would be the ones determining signalling, and they would be the ones allowing or disallowing access by a train to the next section. That is the way it works. In essence, I think the CTC control system will ensure uniformity and standards.

The second thing is that, in terms of any particular breaches that the member referred to, I believe that they would need to be assessed and investigated. I will ensure that I get a report from Transport via the minister and that the minister communicates the outcome to the member.

### **Telstra**

**Mr McNAMARA:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs. On 17 August the federal government announced a package called Connect Australia. Will this package ensure appropriate service delivery for Queenslanders and in particular those living in regional areas?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, you have sat there all morning yawning. I think you have been quite disrespectful to this House. Can I suggest that you have a good night's sleep and come back again.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I would like to thank the member for the question. Yesterday I attended the 12th online council meeting in Perth and very clearly indicated the Beattie government's position on this package which we refer to as Connect Australia. Connect Australia is clearly no gift to the citizens of this state, especially Queenslanders living in the bush, while it is conditional upon the full sale of Telstra. In fact, it is a package that reminds me of pass the parcel: you keep unwrapping it and unwrapping it and at the end there is no substance, no substantial offering; it is just a game.

But we know that the sale of Telstra is no game. Unwrapping this parcel is no fun. It is very serious business. In this package, Connect Australia, which is subject to the sale of Telstra, the Howard government has offered \$1.1 billion of targeted funding to address identified gaps in the current service—\$1.1 billion targeted funding to address identified gaps in the current service. However, the new Telstra CEO has raised the question that, if there is a need to fill a \$1.1 billion void to bring adequacy to existing services, then surely the Commonwealth should be spending that money right now irrespective of any proposed future sale. I fully agree, and I put that proposition very clearly to the federal government representatives at yesterday's meeting—the minister for communications, Senator Helen Coonan, and Special Minister of State, Senator Eric Abetz. Telstra is currently not providing adequate services and is not ready to be sold. Telstra in fact should never be sold.

There is another part of the package—that is, the proposed \$2 billion communications fund—to further finance improvements. As we realise, this is far too small an amount when one considers that the cost of universal service obligation, which is absolutely essential to maintain phones in non-metropolitan Australia, is already estimated by Telstra to be over a billion dollars a year. But the federal government has capped funding for the universal service obligation to approximately a quarter of a billion dollars a year when it now needs over a billion dollars a year. We on this side of the House can do the maths, and it does not add up. There is no detail in its announcement on the operational separation of Telstra into wholesale and retail in keeping with the Beattie government's recommendations to the numerous Commonwealth inquiries. This issue should be open to public input and scrutiny. The federal government is arguing that changing Telstra's licensing arrangements and legislation will be able to influence—

Time expired.

### Housing Commission Tenants, Chinchilla

**Mr HOBBS:** I have a question for the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, and this one is no yarn. Certain housing commission tenants are terrorising an entire street in the Chinchilla community. I have complained twice in writing to the minister's department and residents have complained in writing on a monthly basis to his department. It is alleged that death threats have also been made by the commission tenants to neighbours. Can the minister give an assurance that he will fully investigate why his department has not taken action to deal with these tenants so that the whole street can resume a peaceful existence without constant verbal and physical threats? I do have details for the minister.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I am happy to receive those details. On a general principle, let me say that there are three rules that bind people who live in Department of Housing houses that I established seven years ago. The first is to be a good tenant, and that involves them paying their rent. The next is to be a good neighbour and the third is to be a dutiful person around the house—in other words, do not smash the house up. If people follow those three rules, then they can stay there for as long as they like. But the reality is—I agree with the honourable member here—that that type of behaviour is not to be tolerated. These people are in taxpayer subsidised accommodation and we have every reason to expect the highest standards in return, and I do not resile from that and I will ensure that that matter is taken further.

However, I would say that we are bound by the Residential Tenancies Act to ensure that when people are evicted we have to go through due process, so those people should have contacted the police because police reports certainly assist in that regard. We do not always win in the courts in evicting people, but I was brought up by a mother who came from absolute dire poverty. She always said to me—and she maintains this view—that just because someone is poor does not mean that they can be badly behaved.

### Gold Coast Hospital

**Mr LAWLOR:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. In view of the concerns about the long-term future of the existing Gold Coast Hospital at Southport, can the minister please inform the House what steps are being taken to ensure the existing hospital building will, under the new master plan, continue to service the health-care needs of the people of the Gold Coast?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I thank the honourable member for the question and acknowledge his ongoing activities in this regard, and other Labor members on the Gold Coast have been very busy in terms of addressing a range of health issues on the Gold Coast. This provides me with another opportunity to once again highlight the dishonesty of the opposition. In this case, it happens to be the member for Currumbin, because she was quoted in Wednesday's *Gold Coast Sun* as saying—

Now she says—

that is, the member for Currumbin—

the State Government is 'hoodwinking' people into believing it will retain the old hospital once the new one opens.

Basically, the member for Currumbin is alleging that the hospital will close. The short answer to the member for Southport's question is that we plan to continue to provide health services out of the existing Southport facility once the new hospital is completed in approximately 10 years time.

**Dr Flegg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Moggill!

**Mr ROBERTSON:** However, the kind and level of services need to be determined as part of the master planning process.

**Dr Flegg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Moggill, I warn you under 253.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** That is what we have been saying all along. A master planning study is under way to inform the government and Queensland Health what types and levels of health service need to be provided on the Gold Coast, not just for the next five years or 10 years but 15 and 20 years as well. This information will be used to inform the planning for the design and function of the new hospital. Because the planning is still under way, it is too early to comment in detail on the types of services that may remain at the existing Southport campus. That is currently being discussed by the experts, by the people who should be discussing these issues—senior clinicians and administrators on the Gold Coast. This includes consideration of safety in the provision of care, the need to increase the capacity of some services to meet the increasing needs of the community, and the provision of services in an efficient and sensible way.

I have, I hope, provided the level of certainty the people of the Gold Coast want with respect to the future of the Southport hospital site. I noted the call by the member for Surfers Paradise for a bipartisan approach to be taken with respect to health planning on the Gold Coast in the House just this morning. The secret to adopting a bipartisan approach is to stop telling untruths. He should stop bringing down confidence in his own local health system. Be positive and those opposite will be brought on board every day of the week. That is the simple answer. That is the simple answer, member for Surfers Paradise, to your call this morning.

While I have the opportunity, we have yet again caught the opposition out with gross distortions again here this morning tabling this document, as the member for Callide did. No doubt his spin doctors are probably up in the gallery at the moment saying that this proves that there has been a 132 per cent increase in District Wide Corporate Services. I encourage the media to read the whole document, because if they do—in fact, the paragraph up the top—they will find that it says that there has been a 132.8 per cent increase in District Wide Corporate Services—

Time expired.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before I call the member for Moggill, I welcome to the gallery teachers, parents and students from the Gympie South State School in the electorate of Miss Roberts. Welcome to Parliament House. I certainly hope—

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, can I draw your attention to standing order 244 which states that members will only refer to other members by their electoral title or district.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Gympie.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Thank you.

### Emergency Departments, Delay in Admissions

**Dr FLEGG:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Noting the frequent incidents of patients being left on trolleys in emergency departments awaiting admission—notably in Townsville, Princess Alexandra and Gold Coast hospitals and other hospitals—what does the minister consider is the cause of this access block in our emergency departments, and what action does he propose to fix the problem?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** In global terms, it is obvious that the reason we established the Forster inquiry was to get to the core of those issues that the member has brought up, including at the PA Hospital. I refer again to this document that was tabled by the member for Callide with respect to the PA Hospital. As I was saying, no doubt his spin doctors are up there working with—

**Dr Flegg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Moggill, this is your final warning!

**Mr ROBERTSON:** No doubt his spin doctors would be highlighting the fact that, according to this document, there has been a 132.8 per cent increase in District Wide Corporate Services. But what this document also says is that that amount of some \$13.7 million is allocated to the district contingency fund and district management. It states—

A material portion of these funds may be reallocated to other operative areas based on service requirements.

So, yes, that particular section of the budget has increased, but the local management has the ability, based on the operating priorities that it has at its hospital, to allocate it appropriately. So let us not

have any of this nonsense about spinning that increase. If the honourable member goes two pages on in this document that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition tabled about the PA Hospital he will find that, with respect to the six months to 31 December 2004, the total average monthly full-time equivalents—that is, the number of employees at that hospital—has increased by eight per cent. A notable increase by staffing category is medical, which has increased by 15 per cent; nursing, 7.4 per cent; and professional staff, 13.6 per cent. So the very document that—

**Mr Mickel:** Another tactical lie.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Another tactical lie. My reading of this document proves that the increase in the budget for the PA Hospital that has been provided by the government has actually been going into those very areas that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition alleges is not the case. Caught out once again! As I said—and I will say repeatedly—if we are to have a balanced debate about health services in this state—

**Dr FLEGG:** I rise to a point of order. The minister is answering and addressing an issue raised by another member and not the one I asked him.

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** So I can help the member opposite, he mentioned the PA Hospital in his question. He talked about the level of services provided by the PA. I suggest that he actually have a look at the document tabled by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It actually indicates a significant increase in budget and a significant increase in clinical staff, professional staff and medical staff for the six months up to 31 December 2004. It can be no clearer that what we have been trying to do as a government is increase the performance of hospitals such as the PA Hospital and we will continue to do so.

### Sale of Telstra

**Mr PEARCE:** As an elected member in this place representing a large rural electorate, I know that the people in the bush have just about given up their expectations for genuine representation by the coalition in Canberra. Now that the National Party has sold out on the bush by agreeing to the sale of Telstra, could the Minister for Energy tell the House what the federal Liberals could have learned about innovative use of communication technology from the Queensland government?

**Mr MICKEL:** I commend the member for Fitzroy for standing up for his electorate. I can assure him that the Telstra services are not just bad in the bush. As somebody who represents an outer metropolitan area, I can assure him that there is an urgent need for upgrade in mobile phone services right throughout the outer metropolitan areas and also a need to increase broadband services.

The member for Fitzroy can go and tell his constituency that when Mark Vaile flew up here yesterday for the last supper on Telstra, the Queensland National Party did not have the fortitude last night to even get up and speak on the motion moved not by the government but by the member for Gladstone. It was not part of a government strategy; it was moved by an Independent. Let the National Party this morning try to drag down the member for Gladstone as being part of a government strategy.

We often hear about the silent members. What about the 14 silent coalition members in south-east Queensland who never, ever stand up for their constituencies when it comes to broadband services and mobile phone services? I will point out what we are doing to improve services through my department, through Powerlink and Ergon Energy. They have entered into an arrangement with the Australian University owned corporation which utilises part of Powerlink's spare Brisbane to Townsville telecommunications capacity to supply much-needed broadband services to James Cook University and to the Central Queensland University in the electorates of Fitzroy, Keppel and Rockhampton. Ergon has also arrived at agreement with BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance, which provides them with access, through the retailer Equant, to spare capacity which allows them to link their 14 Bowen Basin mine sites to Brisbane and Melbourne. We are doing something about it within our jurisdiction.

One of the things we have heard this morning, in that give-up of the member for Warrego, who gave up on this strategy of trying to run away from Telstra, is that we are going to get a whole lot of infrastructure. Honourable members have all heard of the regional grants. Let me tell them how that was apportioned. Last year the *Australian Financial Review* interviewed the Eidsvold shire CEO, Peter Anderson. He said—

We applied through Paul Neville, our local member, prior to the election. We had discussions with him and we also had discussions with Liberal senators Ian Macdonald, George Brandis and Brett Mason.

This is on the regional grants. He continued—

We haven't put an application in yet, but we sent a letter to the deputy Prime Minister John Anderson requesting funds.

Guess what? They had the funds before they even put in the application. That is the National Party tort. You put both trotters in the trough and away you go. There will not be any fair distribution of funds—

Time expired.

### Foster-Carer Allowance

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Child Safety. I have been advised that past departmental policy provided a defined allowance to foster-carers to cover items such as travel up to 50 kilometres per week and certain chemist treatments. Have these allowances now been made discretionary for approval by the area managers, and are area managers eligible for bonus payments if they come in under budget?

**Mr REYNOLDS:** First of all, the answer to the second part is no. I also indicate that child related costs that are the costs that are added to the foster-carer allowance are an extraordinarily important part of the support we give to the very valuable role that foster-carers play. In answering the question of the member for Gladstone today I say first of all that we committed, as part of the CMC reforms, to have an independent expert—a consultant hired by the government—to actually examine the true cost of caring. We have appointed that independent expert. He is due to come back to the government by the end of December. That report, of course, will be examined by the government at that time. That is a commitment that we made as part of our implementation of the CMC reforms. We have hired the consultant, and that report is due by the end of December this year.

With regard to child related costs, there has been no change in policy whatsoever. Let me say that quite categorically today as minister. I say in the same breath that we want to ensure, with regard to the applications for the reimbursement of child related costs, that it is a vigorous and accountable process. We are working with our zonal directors and our managers and saying that the child related costs that are being reimbursed to foster-carers must be vigorously examined. We are bringing in some very effective provisions. For example, rather than a foster-carer applying for reimbursement of \$12 or \$13 we will only process those child related costs once they reach a minimum of \$50. Of course, if someone needs their money urgently they will get it. We need to ensure in this reformed Department of Child Safety that we are able to manage the very generous money they are getting from government—the 45 per cent increase we have applied—effectively and efficiently.

I assure the honourable member today that there has been no change of policy with regard to our child related costs for foster-carers. However, we are going to be vigorous and rigorous with regard to the payments and make sure that accountability is very much there at the zonal and the local level as well.

### Caboolture, Police Resources

**Ms MALE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I know that the minister takes a keen interest in policing issues in my electorate, and I was very pleased with yesterday's announcement about additional police for Bribie as that will reduce the load on my Caboolture police officers. Will any additional police officers be allocated to the Caboolture Police Station?

**Ms SPENCE:** Before I answer the question, I would like to acknowledge and welcome the Islamic leaders from the Mount Gravatt electorate who are in the parliament today.

The member for Glass House is a very strong campaigner for police in her electorate. In particular, she continually reminds me that the Caboolture area has experienced rapid population growth and corresponding commercial and industrial growth and there is a need for more police there. I would also like to acknowledge that the Queensland Police Union has campaigned very vigorously on the need for more policing resources in Caboolture. Last year president Gary Wilkinson facilitated a meeting so that the commissioner and I could visit the Caboolture Police Station. The union put on a barbecue to enable us to meet the officers there. I think the member is well served by having a very good senior sergeant at Caboolture in Patrick O'Loughlin. The Caboolture police have been well served by the member's vigorous representations over the last few years.

Since the Beattie government was elected we have increased police numbers in Caboolture from 35 officers in 1998 to 64 police officers now. But today there is even better news for the police and the people of Caboolture, because I announce that we will station 14 extra police officers at the Caboolture Police Station this year. As well, an extra marked car will be allocated to that police station.

That means that there will be an increase in police officer numbers at that station from 64 to 78. I am told by the commissioner that those police should be on line in the next six months. Two of those 14 extra police will be new traffic police assigned to the area. The other 12 extra police will be general duties police, which means that the Caboolture area will have an extra two-officer car on the beat 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

That is certainly good news for the Caboolture Police Station. I would also like to add that these police will not be taken from any other area; they will be extra police as a result of the increased Police budget this year. I know that the police in Caboolture have done it tough over a number of years, but this will certainly be good news for them.

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

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.30 am): I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 1 to 13 be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

## SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (11.31 am): I move the notice of motion standing in my name, which will be seconded by the Deputy Premier—

That the House—

1. notes the Regulatory Provisions of the South East Queensland Regional Plan (the plan) that was tabled in the Legislative Assembly as part of the Plan on 11 July 2005; and
2. ratifies the Regulatory Provisions of the Plan under section 2.5A.17 of the Integrated Planning Act 1997.

I believe that the South East Queensland Regional Plan is one of the most important legacies created by my government. About 55,000 people a year are moving to this region. By 2026, it is projected that about one million more people will live in south-east Queensland, bringing the population to 3.7 million. To put this into context, more than one-quarter of all population growth in Australia over the next 25 years is expected to occur right here. This rate of growth presents major challenges for all of us. We need to provide enough land to use wisely whilst also protecting our regional landscape that we all enjoy so much. The regional plan identifies sufficient land to accommodate growth to 2026 whilst also protecting the regional landscape.

As the House would already be aware, the regional plan protects more than 80 per cent of south-east Queensland from future urban development. Water catchments are protected, as are open space, conservation areas, areas of scenic amenity and agriculture land. In doing so, the regional plan lays the foundation for safeguarding our environment, managing development and retaining the very qualities that attract people to this region in the first place. It is an exceptional model of Smart State planning that will help build a sustainable future for this region.

In conjunction with the regional plan, my government has also developed the \$55 billion SEQ Infrastructure Plan. It provides a strong platform to help achieve the goals of the regional plan. For example, one key area will be the provision of a sustainable water supply. That is why we have identified approximately \$2.3 billion in initiatives to help ensure future water supplies in south-east Queensland. This investment will be directed at a number of strategic priorities, including increasing the supply of water, diversifying water supplies and ensuring the more efficient management and use of water. This is the first time that in Queensland we have had a comprehensive water strategy like this. This will work.

Some of the identified projects include \$149 million for the Wyaralong dam near Boonah. The members opposite were having their usual whinge. They whinge; we work. They were asking, 'Where are the dams?' There is one. There is \$149 million for the Wyaralong dam near Boonah; \$399 million for water mains and water treatment works; \$107 million for water recycling; \$90 million for new weirs and water storage improvements; and \$23 million for upgrades to the Hinze, Wappa and Ewen Maddock dams. That is a very significant investment in water infrastructure. It is unprecedented. So let us not hear any more nonsense from those opposite about 'Where is the infrastructure for water?' There it is in bricks and mortar.

In addition to new dams and weirs, we will also encourage the use of water from a range of alternative sources, including rainwater tanks, stormwater, recycled water and possible ground water resources. By working in partnership with the South East Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, we also expect to finalise the regional water supply strategy next year. The strategy, among other things, identifies how much water will be required through to 2026 and how best to provide it.

I reiterate what Henry Palaszczuk, the minister for natural resources, and I said this week about water in the south-east corner, our strategy to deal with it, and enhanced powers. I want to highlight the fact that we need to encourage people to use water more wisely. Frankly, although a significant section of the community has responded in a positive way, more needs to be done. Yes, we have used sensible, low water-pricing strategies to actually encourage people to treat water like it is liquid gold. We are an arid nation. Water reform is one area where I thought—naively I must admit—one day we could have received some bipartisan support. I would have to say that the National Party has consistently sought to undermine long-term strategies for sensible water use. It simply cannot continue its Luddite approach. The fact is that, yes, we will build new dams. Yes, we will build more water infrastructure. Yes, we will try to save water. Yes, we will try to get industry to play a more constructive role. But we have to get everybody to be more sensible. Part of the difficulty is that we were settled by Europeans and we have brought that European culture here to the extent that often we have plants in our gardens that use an enormous amount of water. We have to systematically change our approach.

In the corrupt days of the National Party government, it used to allocate water allocations in some river systems where if they were all used, there would be no water left in the rivers. We cannot operate a corrupt water use arrangement, which is what the National Party government used to do. We are trying to get some honest, sensible planning both in terms of the infrastructure and in terms of getting people to value water so that we can recycle it and we can do all of the things that earlier this week Henry and I said we could do.

I want to talk about the recycling of water. In places such as London, water is used many, many times. When it comes to the reuse of water, Australia has a poor track record. Frankly, we need to lift our game. We cannot continue to go down this road. It does not matter what the politics of the government of the day are; that government will be confronted with this problem. We are the first government in Queensland's history to tackle the management of water head-on in a realistic way and we are determined to ensure that we do everything we can to enhance our water credibility and our water supplies. But we need to continue to make changes.

In terms of local authorities, I say to our council friends that we will work with them and that we need to plan with them, which is what we have been doing. I want to thank the Lord Mayor, Campbell Newman, and all the SEQROC councils in the south-east corner for working with us on the SEQ Infrastructure Plan. But we need to continue to plan in areas such as water. We need to overcome the inconsistencies that I talked about earlier this week, which I will not go through again. They are the things that will give us the guaranteed water supply for the future that we need.

Water is just one of the key areas addressed by the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan. We have also identified \$24.5 billion in road and public transport projects, \$72.5 million to investigate another possible \$11 billion worth of road and public transport projects, \$3.3 billion in social and community infrastructure and an expected \$13.4 billion on energy networks. Implementing the infrastructure plan and the regional plan will involve both state and local governments with the support of the community, industry and regional stakeholders.

However, this kind of certainty does not happen by sheer goodwill. The regional plan includes regulatory provisions that support its intent. In other words, it is enshrined in law. These laws prevent urban development on land that the regional plan categorises as regional landscape and rural production area. The law also directs that the minimum lot size for reconfiguration in this area will be 100 hectares unless local governments have undertaken detailed studies to demonstrate that smaller lot sizes are viable. Those key parts of the regulatory provisions hold the key to preventing the further expansion of ugly urban sprawl and helping to preserve and protect our wonderful lifestyle. The regulations also consolidate rural residences into the specified rural living areas, define and protect investigation area sites for possible future urban development and sustain an 18-month moratorium on developing land in the Mount Lindesay-North Beaudesert area whilst investigations determine the best possible future use of this land. These regulations are a crucial element of the plan.

I know that some members, and perhaps some more than others, will be approached by all sorts of people who want to see lines on the map changed. People will put pressure on the government and they will try to use the opposition or the non-government members to bring those changes about. I appeal to all members of parliament that if we are going to have sensible planning to protect the lifestyle of Queenslanders we have to hold the line on this plan. That is why we have enshrined this plan in legislation, to protect it. I notice that there is debate about the Gold Coast City Council, the Redlands council and the issue between developers and local authorities. Members will get developers through their doors trying to persuade them to pursue their self-interests. I urge members not to do it.

Developers are an important part of the future of this state. The major organisations and the major developers, frankly, have been very good. They understand what this plan is about. They understand that it is a key part of their future as well as the future of south-east Queensland. But there will be rogue developers who will want to pursue greed, the dollar signs, in their own interests and not in the interests of the community. I want to be very clear: I will always talk to members of parliament about these things. I will talk to developers. I will talk to councils. I will talk to environment groups. But everyone needs to clearly understand what I am saying today as the relevant minister: we will not be changing this plan in the interests of self-interest or greed. It is very simple. And no members here should allow themselves to be compromised or put in a position where they can be compromised because, if they are, I will come into this House and I will share that with everybody, and I will not care whether they are government or non-government members.

I make it absolutely clear that we will not be compromised on this plan. We are going to stick to it because it is the future of the lifestyle of Queenslanders in the south-east corner. This is about the quality of life in Queensland, and we will not compromise on it. Members will be fêted—they will be winned and dined by some. I suggest members pay for their own hospitality and that members should make it clear that their souls are not for sale because when members come to see me to try to change this, to try to undermine what the community wants, they will be wasting their time.

There are a couple of issues with people who have put in prior applications. We will look at all of those and make decisions. But those people who have been through this process understand how

transparent it has been and how firm those lines on the map are. Outside those couple of exceptions I have referred to, everyone needs to understand clearly what the rules are, and they are the rules. Let me come back to the set script. There is nothing like a bit of adlibbing!

After all, my government made an election promise in 2004 to ensure that growth is managed sustainably in the region for the next 20 years. We met this commitment by developing the South East Queensland Regional Plan. We recognised that, whilst the previous non-statutory regional planning framework helped guide development in south-east Queensland, a new approach was needed. Unfortunately, we needed to have the force of regulations, and we needed to have a very clear plan which was going to deliver. We had a plan but, unfortunately, not everyone was doing what they should have been doing. Previous regional planning documents relied on a consensus approach to implementation. I do not mind consensus, but self-interest is sometimes very hard to get around the consensus table. This approach helped integrate the state and local government planning processes across south-east Queensland but was unable to deliver on a number of significant issues, including protection of environmental and natural resources values in the region.

We needed a plan with legislative teeth to tackle some of the significant challenges facing the south-east corner. The regional plan now has these teeth as it is a statutory plan, meaning that both state and local governments must take account of it when preparing or amending a relevant plan, policy or code. That is the key to it. Development applications must be measured against the regional plan, including the regulatory provisions. Under section 3.5A.17 of the Integrated Planning Act 1997, these regulatory provisions must be tabled in parliament within 14 sitting days of the making of the regional plan in order to have effect. Why did we do that? Because it is about being transparent and then the world can see it. There will be no backroom deals and no sleight of hand. It is all going to be tabled in parliament so that everybody can see exactly what is going on in a transparent way.

The regulatory provisions must then be ratified within 14 sitting days after the plan has been tabled. We do not get a more accountable system than that. I warned everyone earlier, but I warn members again: whenever these things happen, the world will know how we vote. The gallery will see it. There will be a public register of it. Everyone will know exactly what is going on here. I ask the House to support the South East Queensland Regional Plan and help safeguard the future of this wonderful region.

I want to make a few points in conclusion. We are lucky. We have actually got the planning right just in time. We need to know that. If we look at what has happened in Sydney and in places like Los Angeles, we can see that they waited too long and they got it wrong. Sydney has a great harbour and wonderful people but, frankly, its planning has been appalling. We do not want to make those mistakes here and nor do we want to make the mistakes that Los Angeles and other places have made. We have got the planning right just in time. That is the first point I want to make.

I know that there is a list of people who want to speak on this today, and I am encouraged by their support. I have no doubt that the wisdom of this plan is so strong that all members will be supporting it. I also know that, because this plan is linked to the \$55 billion infrastructure plan, there will be the usual cheap shots we get in politics: 'You should do this and you should do that.' So my second point is that no government in the history of Queensland has ever planned so precisely or funded so precisely the future infrastructure plans for the south-east corner of this state. It has never been done before. So we can have cheap shots about this or that, but the facts are that there is unprecedented investment in water, unprecedented investment in roads, unprecedented investment in a range of transport outcomes, including rail—

**Mr Cummins:** And hospitals.

**Mr BEATTIE:**—hospitals, schools, power and the list goes on. So that is the second point that I wanted to make. I will let the cheap shots wash over me because I know that they will come, politics being the way it is.

The third and final point I want to make is about the funding of this plan. I indicated to the House earlier that, as Treasurer, I will be undertaking a Queensland Treasury Corporation roadshow where I will be meeting with key bankers from around the world. About 40 per cent of QTC's funding is raised by this means. That money is used for infrastructure investment. I said that we would fund this infrastructure plan in one of three ways or two of three ways or three of three ways: firstly, we could fund it off the budget bottom line; secondly, we could borrow and then service the interest off the bottom line—both of those are very sensible; and, thirdly, we could fund it by possible public-private partnerships.

Every week or so the *Australian Financial Review* asks me about my view on public-private partnerships. To save them asking me today, I make it clear that I am happy to support public-private partnerships provided that they stack up. I have said this to the business community and I will say it again: philosophically the Labor Party is supportive of public-private partnerships. We have argued it at Labor Party conferences and people support it. However, we are not running a charity. Our responsibility is to represent the people of the state. There will be no dud deals. We are not going to enter into an arrangement with a private company simply because it wants to put money into infrastructure and get a

return. Our shareholders whom we represent are the people of Queensland. My obligation and the government's obligation is to make sure that we get a good deal.

I put on the record again for the business community, the financial writers and the gurus who think they know better that Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) invests an enormous amount of investment in Victoria. It invests in Victoria's public-private partnerships, and the QIC is doing very well, thank you very much. So we know how this works. We are not stupid. We know exactly how it works because we know how much return QIC is getting. We are not mugs. We will use public-private partnerships if they work and if they are in the interests of taxpayers. If PPPs are not, we will not. So do not try it on. That is the message. If PPPs have a good deal, we are all ears. If they do not, PPPs should not try it on. I cannot be more specific than that, and I cannot be more direct than that.

I conclude by thanking Terry Mackenroth, my former deputy, who did a marvellous job in preparing this plan. He and I worked on aspects of it together, but largely he did it. I acknowledge today in this debate that he made a very significant contribution. My new deputy and I have spent a lot of time working through this, and we are going to continue with the same zeal that was shown by Terry and me. Anna and I will continue with the same zeal to complete this plan. For anyone who knew exactly where Terry and I stood on this, Anna and I stand in exactly the same place. So it is business as usual.

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation) (11.49 am): I rise today to second the motion moved by the Premier to ratify the regulatory provisions of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. It is these regulations that will ensure we manage growth here in south-east Queensland rather than simply respond to it. I endorse the comments of the Premier that this plan provides a great vision for the future of this rapidly growing part of the state. I also join him in paying tribute to the previous Deputy Premier, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, for his vision and, frankly, for his tenacity in developing this plan.

Inevitably, when pulling together a plan like this, there are many competing interests and resolving the inevitable conflicts took real resolve. I have no doubt that after years of working with the previous planning arrangements, as minister for local government and planning, and after years of wrestling with infrastructure decisions as Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth had a unique background and experience to bring that resolve to this project. We can all be very grateful that he did bring that experience to bear on this project in such a forceful way, because we will all benefit as this project strikes the balance between supporting the expected population growth and protecting our environment.

In short, it is these laws that will help build a better future for south-east Queensland, and the future for south-east Queensland is very bright. In recent years, the economy of the region has been growing faster than the Australian average, driven mainly by consumption as a result of its high population growth. However, we recognise that in order to sustain living standards it is necessary to strengthen and diversify our region's economy and to raise productivity. Accordingly, we know that we will need to create around 425,000 new jobs in this region over the next 20 years. It is an extraordinary undertaking, and to achieve it the regional plan focuses on our region's competitive advantages and concentrates on high value add and knowledge based industries.

Specific subregional strategies and initiatives will focus attention on encouraging skills to support industry and regional growth. It will focus on developing a more outward-looking entrepreneurial culture. It will continue to provide land for industry and economic activity that creates employment close to where people live. It will preserve the region's natural economic advantages and it will diversify the region's economic base.

The regional plan also recognises that providing infrastructure and services such as transport, freight networks, educational, scientific, health and technological institutions as well as water and power are vital if we are to support continued economic growth and development here in the south-east. It also recognises that networks between business, industry and research institutions are an important means by which to diversify our economy and to stimulate investment in this region. As such, the regional plan places an emphasis on planning and designing mixed use developments that foster these sorts of collaborations.

The continued movement of people into the region will drive consumption related jobs and provide employment in emerging residential areas. Current and impending skills shortages are recognised as critical issues. Attractive living environments and lifestyle opportunities are therefore an important way to attract and retain skills in a competitive environment. Variations in the economic base in the south-east corner are also recognised as critical issues requiring much more detailed subregional strategies. These strategies will address local issues such as reliance on one or two industry sectors, specific skills shortages and infrastructure needs.

Naturally, the Queensland government's Smart State Strategy underpins all of the economic development initiatives reflected in the regional plan. It drives our vision for south-east Queensland as a region where knowledge, creativity and innovation will drive economic growth to improve the prosperity and quality of life of those who live here, and it is this quality of life that is so important to us all. After all, it is why we have chosen the south-east corner of Queensland to live in, and it is why so many more are choosing to make the same decision and to make this corner of the world their home.

The South East Queensland Regional Plan, including the vitally important regulatory provisions that we are considering here in this debate, provide an excellent blueprint to enable all of us to pass on to succeeding generations the lifestyle and prosperity that we already enjoy here in the great south-east.

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.54 am): I rise to make a contribution to the consideration of this motion before the House. In so doing, I want to make the House aware that I am speaking first on behalf of the opposition because our shadow minister, the member for Maroochydore, has unfortunately had to attend a funeral this morning and that is the reason she is not delivering this response on behalf of the opposition. Hopefully the member for Maroochydore will be able to be back in the House this afternoon to make a contribution to the consideration of this motion.

The National Party opposition certainly supports the need for a planning process like the one that is before the House and recognises that that planning process is long overdue. The motion that we are considering today notes and ratifies the regulations that were attached to the SEQ Regional Plan. The Office of Urban Management was the body that was given the task of drawing up the SEQ Regional Plan. It was established in February 2004. As the mover and seconder of the motion indicated, that body had the job of reporting to the then Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Mr Mackenroth. I join with both of those speakers in acknowledging the amount of work that the former member for Chatsworth did in doing something that probably had not been done before and needed to be done.

The SEQ region has been attracting an average of 55,000 new residents each year for the past two decades, and a million more are expected to settle in the region by 2026. Concerns have been expressed over a period of time about the situation we would end up with, with a 200-kilometre long city from the Sunshine Coast to the New South Wales border if that inevitable growth was not properly planned. The Office of Urban Management's main task has been to develop a plan to control that growth. Essentially, it needed to come up with a growth management strategy. The growth management strategy covers a region that extends from Noosa in the north to the Gold Coast in the south and west to Toowoomba. It covers a wide range of existing uses. It covers well-established and long-established urban areas and it covers rural areas that many people had hoped would develop into urban areas in the future as the need for land grew.

The draft regional plan was released on 27 October 2004 and it was open for public consultation until 28 February 2005. There were many public meetings and forums held. There was a web site set up. There was an advertising campaign, and there was a very extensive briefing undertaken here for members of parliament. More than 8½ thousand public submissions were received by the Office of Urban Management in that consultation phase. I think that indicates the degree to which the consultation was carried out.

The infrastructure plan outlining what infrastructure was required in the form of dams and roads et cetera was also identified as a need. The state government recognised, hopefully, that it would need to fund over the next 10 to 20 years a massive infrastructure boost to cater for the needs of the inevitable development that the plan sought to control. That infrastructure plan was released in April 2005 and the final regional plan was released on 30 June 2005.

I was almost amused to hear the Premier mention in his contribution the infrastructure plan and the fact that the government had delivered the necessary infrastructure. We in the opposition have been highlighting what everyone in south-east Queensland knows only too well—that there has been no infrastructure delivered now for five or six years. There has been no necessary infrastructure delivered by this government from the time it came to power. That backlog is starting to have an effect on everyone who lives in south-east Queensland.

The biggest issue that south-east Queenslanders are facing now is that of water supply. Nothing has been delivered in terms of water infrastructure over the term of this government to ensure that there is an adequate water supply in south-east Queensland. The point to note about that is that it is not something that can be fixed overnight.

In common with almost all of that type of infrastructure, there is a long lead time. There is a lead time that is necessary for planning and construction before the infrastructure can deliver that for which it is designed—in this case to deliver an adequate water supply for the people who are moving to Queensland. If there is a five- or six-year gap, as we have seen in south-east Queensland, by the time the problem becomes as apparent as it is now, the catch-up phase is never going to be able to be completed fast enough to solve the problem as it emerges. That is the problem that we are facing in south-east Queensland. For five or six years this government has delayed, procrastinated and philosophised about all sorts of things rather than build the water infrastructure that is necessary. That delay is going to have an impact on the people in south-east Queensland for the next five or six years, no matter what the best intentions of the government are now, because of the time lines and the time lags that are necessary and inevitable in the delivery of that infrastructure.

I think the people of south-east Queensland will have to get used to struggling with an inadequate supply of water simply because the infrastructure has not been delivered. It has not been delivered. It is not bricks and mortar, as the Premier said. I only wish it were. The Premier said, 'There it is in the plan; it's bricks and mortar.' If it only were bricks and mortar, but it is words on paper. Words on paper do not

deliver services to Queenslanders. Words on paper in glossy plans, photographs and pretty pictures do not deliver an adequate water supply to south-east Queensland. Bricks and mortar, concrete and earthworks are what is needed. Where is the concrete and earthworks? There has been none in the last six years.

There have been heaps of glossy publications, heaps of plans, reams of paper, lots of figures and lots of projections, but that does not deliver anything. So it is with this infrastructure plan that the Premier spoke about this morning that is an essential part of this. The plan itself does not deliver anything to people. The plan is useless unless it is acted on, unless money is spent to make the plan a reality. Nothing has been done for six years. That is the problem. Water infrastructure and the provision of an adequate water supply for south-east Queensland is the most pressing problem.

However, there are other problems. Certainly the House does not need to be reminded about the problems with the electricity supply because it, too, suffered from the same lack of management, planning and foresight that we are seeing now with water infrastructure. The same situation was allowed to develop—money was not spent on it and capital expenditure on the necessary infrastructure was not allocated. When the problem became apparent the government had to play catch-up. It is still playing catch up, and it will be playing catch-up for a number of years, because the situation with that infrastructure is exactly the same—it takes a long time to fix. Once responsibilities are ignored and once there is a failure to plan for the future, it takes a long time to correct the mistakes. It takes a long time to cover all the inadequacies when the government fails to provide infrastructure for these essential services for south-east Queensland. South-east Queenslanders need to see something more than an infrastructure plan before they can accept the Premier's assurances that he gave in the House this morning that bricks and mortar are involved. There are not any bricks and mortar.

Similarly, the same applies to the road situation in south-east Queensland. Everyone who lives in south-east Queensland knows only too well the gridlock situation that exists on so many of our transport arteries. It, too, is an area that has lacked funding over the five- or six-year period that has led up to the release of this infrastructure plan.

While the work that has been identified in that infrastructure plan is welcome, it is overdue. At least a proportion of that should have been done by now if the development that is the subject of this whole South East Queensland Regional Plan is going to be properly catered for. If that development is going to be properly catered for, then some of the infrastructure should be in place. Putting infrastructure in place should proceed ahead of the need rather than waiting for the gridlock to develop, rather than waiting for the water shortages to develop and rather than waiting for the lights to go out before money is spent on infrastructure. It is an issue of proper planning and making the commitments rather than relying on ridiculous philosophies and nonsense arguments to avoid the government's responsibility to proceed with the planning and the delivery of that type of infrastructure.

The regional plan is a statutory instrument that has a direct effect in its own right, while the local government planning schemes and the state plans and policies are required to adhere to the regional plan. It is necessary that there be a good level of cohesion and cooperation between those planning instruments.

Let us look at the regulations that are attached to the plan because we are noting and ratifying those regulations today. The regulations allow development applications made before 27 October 2004, which was the date that the draft plan was to be released, to be unaffected by the regional plan. That is important because it recognises the rights that existing users have. Unfortunately, it does not address the expectations that existing land-holders have. I know that there has been a degree of angst in the community generated amongst those people who had an expectation that at some time in the future they would be able to make a development application and that they had an expectation that that development application would be successful.

Unfortunately, in this type of planning process there has to be a time when these new regulations come into place. I do feel for some of the people who have contacted me about the way in which their expectations can no longer be fulfilled because of those lines on the map that the Premier referred to earlier. Whenever lines are drawn on the maps—and they necessarily have to be in a planning instrument—they create winners and losers. The Premier made the point this morning that we, as members of parliament, should not sell our souls to people who want to move those lines and shift those lines for their own benefit. However, I think that we have to be cognisant of the fact that when those lines are drawn, as they necessarily must be drawn, winners and losers are created. We should be sympathetic to that and feel for those people who have had their expectations dashed, and we should feel for those people who, while they have not lost any legal rights—as the former Treasurer was fond of saying when I argued this with him—have certainly lost the valid expectation that they would be able to undertake a certain development or undertake a certain subdivision at some time in the future.

I agree on one level with the Premier—that those lines that are necessarily part of the planning process have to have a certain integrity—but I also make the point that we should be able to understand the extent to which those lines create winners and losers. We need to be absolutely sure that when we insist somebody loses because of where those lines are drawn it is absolutely necessary for the integrity of the plan.

I think the only way to do that is to consider situations on an individual basis—to listen, properly examine and consider the case of people who feel aggrieved. I urge the Premier and the ministers who will have that task to do that in a caring and fair way. In saying that, I recognise the difficulties of it.

The government received submissions complaining that it was unfair that there was a cut-off date for applications. It received submissions complaining that it was unfair on people who had development applications that were in an advanced state of preparation but not lodged. It is good to see that the final regulations have recognised this by allowing the minister to exempt development applications that are almost ready to be lodged.

The regulations set out the regional land use categories. The regulations identify regional landscape and rural production areas, land with conservation significance, koala conservation areas, good quality agricultural land and a range of others. Urban or rural residential development is not allowed in these areas. However, there is a two-year window, until 27 October 2006, for rural residential development to occur if the council believes it is appropriate for its area.

There has been a long-running issue in relation to protecting good quality agricultural land. There are always the conflicting needs of good quality agricultural land and rural residential development. That is something that also has to be sorted out, I believe, at very much a local level—by local councils who understand the local needs of their communities.

The plan identifies urban footprints, which includes land already developed and earmarked for future urban development. It identifies rural living areas—areas currently designated for rural residential development and earmarked for future rural residential development. It includes investigation areas, which are a series of sites that provide a potential land bank for future medium- and long-term urban development. The main areas being investigated are the Mount Lindesay and North Beaudesert areas.

The regulations the subject of our consideration also provide that subdivision of land in regional landscapes and rural production investigation areas should not be less than 100 hectares. However, there is an out for subdivision in rural precincts, which can be created by councils in accordance with guidelines set by the state government. The minimum size only exists in the absence of other planning documents. So other council planning documents can allow for that minimum size to be varied. This particular provision only applies to the Mount Lindesay-Beaudesert study area until 26 April 2006 as the government is still determining what development it will or will not allow in those investigation areas.

The National Party has continually made a number of points since the plan was released. The first point that we make continually and that I have tried to stress here today is that infrastructure needs to run ahead of the need in any planning process. No greater example of that exists than the current water crisis in south-east Queensland. Earlier this week the Premier admitted that the dams in south-east Queensland could run dry by as early as December 2006. Unfortunately, all of the water infrastructure that has been proposed in these plans is still subject to plans, investigations and land purchases. There is no indication that there will be any actual construction work for years to come. That is a major fault; it is a major problem with the whole approach to planning for urban development in south-east Queensland. The needs have been identified in these documents, but the lead times are such that it is going to be a long time before any of the solutions that are proposed actually deliver for the people in south-east Queensland.

This certainly is an opportune time for this parliament to consider these regulations that are part of the planning process. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, we certainly support the need for a planning process in south-east Queensland. We strongly urge the government to change its approach to the provision of infrastructure to ensure that there is bricks and mortar, concrete and earthworks—that something is actually done rather than there being just words on paper, pretty pictures, glossy brochures, plans and continual talk. There has to be some action on infrastructure.

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (12.14 pm): The Liberal Party has been a strong supporter of the concept of a South East Queensland Regional Plan aimed at containing the urban development and sprawl within an urban footprint to achieve efficient provision of services and preserve a green, environmentally valuable space around urban areas. It was, in fact, the Liberal Party that first proposed such a measure prior to the 2004 election. In fact, the Liberal Party created a shadow portfolio for urban development when there was no government portfolio equivalent to shadow. The then shadow spokesman for urban development, the present Liberal leader, Bob Quinn—

**Mr Cummins:** ‘Present’? What does that mean? That was a Freudian slip.

**Dr FLEGG:** He was not Liberal leader then; he is now. At the Tall Buildings Conference, Bob Quinn proposed an office of urban development and proposed that this office of urban development should be attached to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer in order to ensure that funding was available for the supporting infrastructure, that it should be a master plan for the whole region, that it should be backed up by state legislation, which we are debating here now, and that it should override and require councils to abide by it.

Then Treasurer, Mr Mackenroth, said, ‘Thanks very much, Bob,’ and took the ideas on board lock, stock and barrel. We are glad that he did because Queensland, and in particular south-east Queensland, needs to have careful long-term planning if we are to avoid what has happened, as the Premier said earlier, in cities such as Los Angeles and Sydney.

I would like to make some observations on the plan as it has turned out, on both its strengths and weaknesses. The restriction on development into an urban footprint focuses attention on the greatly increased density that will be required within established suburbs, especially hubs such as Indooroopilly, and the provision of services to those as-yet undeveloped areas that have been earmarked for development as part of the urban footprint such as the western corridor. I note, in particular from the form of the documentation associated with the South East Queensland Regional Plan, that the form has changed dramatically from the original draft plan to the final plan that was presented recently. This has actually made comparison of the original draft with the final form of the South East Queensland Regional Plan very difficult and, in the minds of some people, it has raised suspicion as to whether this was designed to obscure some of the changes that were made to the draft plan before it became the final plan. Certainly those changes that have been made in relation to the urban footprint and some control on development appear to have been in response to concerns expressed by the development community, whereas there does not appear to have been significant response to the thousands of submissions put by ordinary residents of south-east Queensland.

Earlier the Premier spoke of being wined and dined by members of the development community. Well, it looks like he must have been because he has certainly taken on board the concerns of the development community in the changed plan. That is not to say that some of those changes to the draft plan were not necessary, desirable and have our support, but it would be nice to think that the concerns expressed by mums and dads and ordinary residents across the south-east would be given as much weight and as much consideration and not paid mere lip-service.

I note particular concerns around the Redlands shire and the potential impact of changes on the Redlands shire koala habitat. It is evident that the vast areas of the western corridor that have been left available for development will become Brisbane's affordable housing region. Given the fact that the traditional areas that new arrivals have favoured are along the coast, these areas are set to become much more expensive because of the now limited availability along the coast, creating a price differential that will drive development to the western corridor. The Achilles heel of all of the planning and the supporting infrastructure is that we are still confronted with enormous population growth. The plan is not designed to particularly alter the flow of people to Queensland, although it may have that effect if property prices are forced upwards in the areas that people wish to move to. But we are still expecting with the plan a million people or more—and many estimates put it at more than a million people—over the next 20 years. The plan will fail to achieve its objective if the neglect of infrastructure to support that urban development that we have seen over recent years is continued.

Certainly, if one looks at the suburb of Indooroopilly, just as an example—a suburb which is already gridlocked by traffic, has severely limited river crossing capacity, poorly designed roads and public transport activity—it is developed with the sort of density that is envisaged in the plan. However, the infrastructure is simply not in place to support this development. Also with other roads in the western corridor, there is nothing in the infrastructure plan that suggests the planned roads and transport will be adequate for the massive growth envisaged.

No discussion of the South East Queensland Regional Plan would be complete without a reference to the vague western Brisbane bypass study which is partly funded under the plan. This particular proposal is an ill-fated one given that the indicative route for it through western Brisbane carves up long-established and settled residential areas and clearly ignores the shift in population density west as the Ipswich and western corridors develop. The proposal appears to have been deliberately left vague and details, such as the terms of reference of the study, have obviously been withheld from public scrutiny.

If this concept of regional planning is to be successful, the government must be more open about its intentions and allow full discussion to take place. In fact, the consultation for such a major regional plan has been abysmal. There was in fact no public consultation process for the infrastructure plan, arguably the most vital element of planning. We are still going to have the population growth. The issue that confronts all of south-east Queensland is how do we provide adequate infrastructure to support that growth, and in recent years we have been building up an infrastructure deficit and yet the infrastructure plan was not even put out for public consultation. There were no meetings or no information programs conducted. It was just handed out to the people of south-east Queensland as a fait accompli. This is not good enough, and in many respects the infrastructure plan is more important and has more impact on the daily lives of south-east Queensland residents than the planning changes in the regional plan that were put out to some limited sort of public consultation.

While I am mentioning the limited public consultation for the planning document, I want to emphasise that it was just that—it was limited public consultation. It was conducted over a short period of time during the holiday season. Certainly, western Brisbane did not even have an information evening and, to my knowledge, the only meetings conducted in western Brisbane in relation to getting information out to residents of that area were the three public meetings that I myself convened in the electorate of Moggill. Certainly, neither the government nor any members of parliament, to my knowledge, conducted any other information meetings at all anywhere in the western area of Brisbane.

The investigation areas which have proliferated in the plan at various sites around the south-east appear to be a bit of a two-bob-each-way bet as the government has had difficulty establishing what population densities are actually achievable and it has in fact left itself an out in the event that it has misjudged badly. In fact, there has been a lot of comment from the development industry and from local residents in relation to the proposed developments in two areas in particular—the greenfield development areas such as the western corridor, where targets of 15 houses per hectare are going to be very difficult to achieve in traditional type subdivisions, and more particularly within established urban areas, areas such as Indooroopilly and Chermside and other areas around Brisbane where we are looking at population density build-ups that will mean substantial high-rises and substantial strain on local services. Clearly, the government has not had confidence that it has judged these densities accurately and has left itself a significant list of areas around the south-east for investigation as a bit of an out in case it has misjudged the densities.

I want to place on the record some concerns I have about koala conservation as it appears in the plan. As members know, the koala is threatened by urban expansion in the south-east and there are widespread predictions that it will disappear from what was once the centre of the koala's thriving habitat and population. There are classifications of koala areas within the south-east Queensland plan. In the interim plan—the original plan—there were two areas: koala conservation areas and koala sustainability areas. But in the final plan we have seen a change in that we still have koala conservation areas, we still have koala sustainability areas, but we now have the designation of the urban koala area. 'Urban' and 'koala' are two words that are not normally regarded as compatible for this vulnerable and wide-ranging species.

In fact, some of the constituents have suggested that the South East Queensland Regional Plan envisages a rapid evolutionary change in the koala as it evolves to cope with the stresses of modern urban living. Some people even speculated as to what an urban koala would look like. But if we think that we are going to preserve koalas in urban areas as urban areas stand at the present time, then I am afraid that we are kidding ourselves. This is a very vulnerable species. The general reaction of those who are involved in koala conservation is that the South East Queensland Regional Plan is somewhat soft on koala preservation, and certainly the suggestion of having urban koala areas really defies any logic. Koalas have proved to be unsustainable once urban development reaches reasonable intensity and, although koalas are still to be found in some urban areas in Pine Rivers shire and Redlands shire, it is more a function that development in these areas is relatively recent and the decline in koala numbers, though continuing, is not yet absolute.

Other areas of infrastructure that deserve mention in this discussion include water, which has already been mentioned extensively by earlier speakers. I want to make particular reference to hospital infrastructure. The south-east Queensland plan has some information about hospital infrastructure, or I should say the infrastructure plan has information about hospital infrastructure. It is proposing in the long term to look at new hospitals in the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast areas.

In relation to hospital infrastructure it is important to note that this infrastructure is needed now; it is needed today. The time lines that have been detailed in this plan are absurd. It is totally unrealistic to look at waiting a decade before we see new hospitals in these critical growth areas. The Gold Coast in particular has only 750 public beds for half a million people and an average 200,000 visitors at any given time. This would be regarded as an absurd ratio of beds to population. In fact, the situation on the Gold Coast is an embarrassment to the state of Queensland.

In the last two days we have had a bit of a discussion about the Gold Coast Hospital. The Premier confirmed yesterday that the Gold Coast would have two world-class hospitals—Robina and the new hospital to be built. He certainly left the Gold Coast Hospital out of that statement. I am not sure whether he was concerned about calling it a hospital or whether he was concerned about calling it world class, but he was certainly unwilling to call it a world-class hospital. We heard today the health minister again unwilling to call the existing Gold Coast Hospital a hospital.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lee): Order! The honourable member will confine his remarks to the substantive matter being debated.

**Dr FLEGG:** The hospital infrastructure and the new Gold Coast Hospital are part of the plan.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I can understand the member's confusion, but if he would confine his remarks to the matter that we are debating today that would be appreciated. There has been a lot of latitude granted so far.

**Dr FLEGG:** We heard an earlier speaker refer to some of the infrastructure issues relating to roads as being overdue. Certainly residents of Brisbane, particularly Brisbane's west, could well and truly agree with that comment made by the member for Callide. We have seen absolutely no action at all on Moggill Road, which is servicing one of the development areas around Bellbowrie. We have seen absolutely nothing at all on the Western Freeway, which at half past six this morning was banked back to Moggill Road. Under the plan, the Western Freeway is to be extended out to Ripley and Springfield to service the new growth areas, yet it is unworkable as we stand here today.

In the area of education we have been told that we will have 62 new schools, and that has been touted as some sort of advance. We are looking at a million people. Unless my demographics or mathematics is a bit thin, 62 schools is not going to be an adequate response for one million extra people. I note particularly that within the growth area in the plan around the Ipswich area the education department has sold off a potential high school site in the suburb of Chuwar that could have serviced these new areas. However, it has been sold off to private interests for development instead of providing for the education needs of those people.

In summary, the Liberal Party supports the concept of urban planning. In fact, the Liberal Party was the first to raise it, the first to create a member of parliament responsible for urban planning, and we have certainly welcomed the concept. There are some things about which we have reservations, in particular the inadequate public consultation, the clearly inadequate infrastructure proposals to support the envisaged development and the feasibility of some of the density targets contained, particularly in areas such as Indooroopilly and Chermside.

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (12.33 pm): I rise to support the South East Queensland Regional Plan. I believe the plan will provide the Mansfield electorate and the whole of south-east Queensland with valuable infrastructure for the years ahead. At current estimates, over the next 20 years an extra one million people will make their homes in south-east Queensland. The plan ensures that these new Queenslanders will have, amongst other things, a world-class public transportation system, electricity network and water management system. I am also very proud to be a member of the Beattie government which is thinking about the future for our great state today.

However, there is one small aspect of the plan that has caused concern amongst a small number of residents in the Mansfield electorate. The aspect which has caused the concern is the inclusion of the northern Grieve Road area—bounded by Gardner Road, Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road, the Brisbane landfill and just east of the Grieve Road in Rochedale—into the regional landscape and rural production area of the south-east Queensland urban footprint. After over 18 months of consultation and countless representations, the Brisbane City Council's Rochedale Master Plan had this area included as bushland housing. It was to allow only two houses per hectare. Some of the properties already have two houses. However, they were not on separate titles. The Brisbane City Council proposal would have allowed this to happen. I believe this was a commonsense approach.

This area was not included in the regional plan on the grounds that it has been classified as a koala conservation area under the koala planning policy and also as the new south-east Queensland plan does not allow for the proposed 'bushland housing', previously known as 'rural res' under the Brisbane City Council's Rochedale urban village draft plan. I believe that in the future we may need to have a different zone, for want of a better name, within the regional landscape rural production area to allow for circumstances like this.

At their own expense local residents have engaged koala experts to investigate the area, and these experts believe that the classification of the area is incorrect. Recently, I met with concerned local residents Murray Michael, Neville Schatz and other long-term residents of the area and representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, the BCC and the Office of Urban Management. I thank Mr Michael and Mr Schatz for making their representation to me regarding their local community. I also believe that the wrong decision was made with regard to the omission of this area. I trust that this situation will be rectified when the plan is reviewed in the next few years. In the meantime I will continue to make representations on behalf of concerned residents such as Mr Michael and Mr Schatz with the aim of rectifying this situation.

As I said at the start of my speech, with the exception of the Rochedale situation, I support the south-east Queensland plan. It is great to be part of a government that is planning well beyond the next election. This plan will give this part of Australia the best chance of coping with this growth.

While talking about planning for the future, I point out that one of the great pieces of infrastructure that we have is Suncorp Stadium. Part of the reason for the increased growth is our great lifestyle as well as the opportunities for people to participate in and watch great sporting events. Many of them do so at the Suncorp Stadium. On Sunday one of the new leaders in sports—I think for the next 20 years—in south-east Queensland, the Queensland Roar Football Club, will play its inaugural game against New Zealand in the Hyundai A League at Suncorp Stadium.

**Mr Cummins:** Knights.

**Mr REEVES:** They will play against the New Zealand Knights. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Lawrence Oudendyk, Gary Wilkins and the team at Queensland Lions Soccer Club for having the vision to drive this. I also wish John Ribot, chair of Queensland Roar, all the best for Sunday and beyond. No doubt they will have success and make Queensland an even greater place to participate in and watch sport at the highest level. Before closing, I, too, would like to wish Pat Kane all the best in his retirement. I would particularly like to thank Pat for the work he did in his previous role of looking after the school tours. He was excellent. Whenever there was an issue or a problem we rang Pat and heard the smile in his voice over the phone.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.38 pm): In rising to support this motion before the parliament, I would ask for similar latitude to that which was extended to the honourable member for Mansfield. It is a very significant day and a day of sadness that we lose Pat Kane, a person who is a great friend to many of us on both sides of this parliament, a person whose smiling face is something we have grown to appreciate. Nothing has ever been too much trouble for Pat when it comes to dealing with any issue, whether it is a school tour, helping us sort out our gift needs in the Parliamentary Gift Shop or generally attending to our requirements as members of parliament, which can sometimes be difficult. I will not have the opportunity to enjoy his keg night. Even if I was able, I do not drink. So Pat will have to have my share as well. Pat, I say again on behalf of my colleagues and many of their families: all the very best to you and your family. We are certainly going to miss you, but you leave this place having made a lot of friends and, no doubt, with a lot of very, very fond memories and also a lot of fond memories and affection on the part of this parliament.

In rising to support this motion, it is fair to say that it makes a lot of sense to have a regional plan, particularly when that regional plan covers one of the fastest growing areas not only in our country but also in the world. A lot of people do not realise that on a proportional basis south-east Queensland, which this motion deals with, is one of the fastest growing areas in the world. The other day I was talking to the Deputy Prime Minister, Mark Vaile, about this issue. Certainly in the background briefings that he has been provided that point has been made. I think we all appreciate that we need to consider south-east Queensland in the context of fast-growing regions not only in our country but also around the world.

This area of the state has grown very quickly not only in the past couple of years but also probably over the last generation or two. Certainly, back in the 1980s there was a very, very fast period of population growth for Queensland, including south-east Queensland, after the announcement of a number of policy decisions, including the abolition of death duties. That population growth tapered for a while in the 1990s. But certainly that growth in population is now back to the very, very high levels that we saw in the past. Therefore, it stands to reason that any government, any parliament and any opposition worth its salt should put in place a plan that stands the test of time and designate in that plan the types of development and the type of community that they want in the future. I also think that many of us would realise that in some areas the horse has bolted. We are probably chasing the wild horse down the paddock and trying to grab it to put it back in the stable. That is not an easy thing to do when development has occurred on prime agricultural land. Some of our bushland has been developed in a fairly ad hoc way.

This plan is not the first planning attempt. In the early part of the Goss era we had SEQ 2010. In the past quite a few plans have been released. But it is probably fair to say that this is the first time we have had such a comprehensive plan that seeks to look at issues of development, green space, how to protect that green space in the future and how to designate and steer development. It also seeks to put in place over and above that a regional infrastructure plan. I note that today there has been some debate on both of those issues. They are important and they cannot be divorced, because the success of this plan is going to depend very much upon the government's capacity to deliver in the area of infrastructure, particularly for south-east Queensland. Unless the government deals with social and physical infrastructure, then the plan is doomed to failure in the immediate rather than the medium to long term.

I listened with interest to the contribution made by the member for Moggill, who referred to the need for planning. I remind members of parliament that when Bob Quinn and I put in place our first coalition shadow ministry after—

**Mr Lawlor:** Oh, those were the days.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** After May of—

**Mr Lawlor:** Memories, memories.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Talk about memories! I can hardly remember the honourable member talking in parliament this week about health or any issues that are relevant to his electorate. If there are any matters that relate to the internal machinations in the Liberal Party, I am sure the member is the person to deal with them. He has taken up the cudgels from the honourable member for Logan. He is not quite there yet in terms of theatrics, but it is a bit of fun to listen to some of what he says, even if it is a little bit off beam.

When Bob Quinn and I put together our coalition shadow ministry, one of the things that we considered was extremely important in terms of planning for the future was the need for an urban planning and infrastructure portfolio. Around that time, I addressed the UDIA in Queensland and talked about the need to set down a clearly defined set of regulations for developers and for the community with which they could manage the growth expectations and requirements for south-east Queensland. For that purpose, we regarded the south-east Queensland area as stretching south of Noosa right down to the southern part of Queensland, including Currumbin, and inland to the Great Dividing Range. It was a number of months before the state government decided to follow that initiative.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It was. The member cannot rewrite history. It was not until about nine or 10 months later that the Beattie government announced that Terry Mackenroth would be put in charge of a new super portfolio that would deal with planning matters. There was a lot of hyperbole about that, which built up the expectation that the portfolio was going to be greater than it turned out to be. It turned out to be a planning division of Terry Mackenroth's department rather than a fully-fledged portfolio, which was the expectation of many people. Nevertheless, that occurred almost a year after the then coalition had put in place some very, very significant guidelines and expectations in this area. I think we can take credit for making planning an issue and pushing the government into following suit with what we were wanting to do.

At that stage I said that we needed to tell developers not only where they can develop but also where they cannot develop. A lot of people might find that to be somewhat strange, because inherent in that statement is that, if a developer can develop in one area, that developer cannot develop in another area. That logic does not always follow. It really depends upon whether there are some grey areas in the plan.

We are dealing with the prospect that possibly one million people will move to south-east Queensland over the next 15 or 17 years. Therefore, we have to have a plan like this one. That population growth is going to change the lifestyle of Queenslanders who live in this part of the state and the type of community and the type of environment in which they live. I was not born in south-east Queensland. I did not become terribly familiar with south-east Queensland until just short of two decades ago. In that time I have seen some dramatic changes. A lot of people came to Queensland for the lifestyle if offered. They came to Queensland because the property prices were lower. They also came to Queensland because in this part of the world they could have a great big backyard. They came to Queensland because it was the Sunshine State. Those people were prepared to subjugate the opportunity to earn more money in the rat-race down south to come to Queensland. Maybe those people would not earn quite as much money, but in Queensland the housing was cheaper and the lifestyle was better.

We have to ensure that that lifestyle is preserved for the future. Those people who came to Queensland came to enjoy our lifestyle. If another half a million people or a million people also come here, then the lifestyle that is developed as a consequence of that extraordinary population growth becomes a deterrent and an exodus will begin. I think there is already some evidence that some people—not only from Queensland but elsewhere—are relocating to Melbourne. I know the climate is not as good down there, but Melbourne property prices have levelled off. Actually, in some areas property prices may be declining. So it does not automatically follow that the rate of population growth that we are trying to cater for is going to continue. That will depend upon lifestyle, relative property price advantages and opportunities in jobs and industry for people in Queensland and south-east Queensland in particular.

Whilst the opposition supports this plan in principle, it will be interesting to see how it operates in practice. The opposition will be keeping a very, very close eye on this plan, as I am sure will all members of parliament. The principle of a piece of legislation or regulation is something, but how it is actually implemented, its processes and its procedures are just as important or even more important.

As part of this planning process we have had to confront issues of densities and the notion of urban infill—terms that have been somewhat alien to what we have had to deal with in south-east Queensland. People might have a quarter acre block or slightly less or they might have half an acre. But when we are talking about new developments which might have 16 housing blocks to the hectare, that is certainly going to change the way we live. We have grown up enjoying a large backyard. But it is also true to say that the expectations and the requirements of people change. Personally, I could not think of anything worse than walking out of my backdoor and seeing my neighbour's fence just two metres away. But that is the sort of situation that we may end up confronting in the future if we have densities of up to 16 housing blocks per hectare.

The issue of infill is going to change the way we live. I think, ultimately, we will see situations along the lines of Sydney with regard to densification. Every community develops its own culture in the way that comes about. What we are going to see here as a consequence of this necessary planning instrument will be similar to places such as Sydney and other communities not only in Australia but also throughout the world. That in itself is going to be interesting. It will be interesting to see how the culture of our state and the people who were born and bred here, the people whose families have been here for generations, acclimatise to that and what sorts of things people will need to adapt to to accept that lifestyle.

The issue, too, is that when we start to favour an area and develop it, say, Ipswich and beyond—Ripley and those sorts of areas, and I think that will create a great opportunity—it will be interesting to see how people adapt because people like to live where they want to live. But if that is the development opportunity, then that is where people will go. That creates a range of issues with regard to climate—potentially from the point of view of energy because those areas are hotter in summer and colder in winter. So that lifestyle creates energy issues in the way in which housing is designed to be energy efficient and to take account of other energy and electricity requirements along the way.

I would like to spend a bit of time talking about the infrastructure requirements that plug into this regional plan. This regional plan is going to fail if the infrastructure plan that accompanies this plan is not properly implemented or if the money is not there. We have seen in recent times the government announce a \$55 billion infrastructure package to accompany this plan and ensure the growth needs of south-east Queensland into the future. If we look at the budget, not the current year but from the previous financial year, and extrapolate that with the current rate of CPI, we will see that what is expected to be spent in south-east Queensland over the next 20 years is some \$90-odd billion. The government is assured that the \$55 billion is going to be over and above what the accumulative figures would have been as of last year. Certainly from the Nationals' perspective, we will be watching that. We will be making sure that that is the case because it is vitally important that we have that infrastructure in place to make sure that the regional plan itself is going to be successful in the future.

The member for Moggill talked about the traffic issues of the western suburbs of Brisbane. They are diabolical. I go out that way quite a bit. Frankly, it does not matter what time of the day now one drives along the Centenary Highway heading towards Ipswich Road but there will be a kilometre or more of traffic lined up as people try to either go over or get onto Ipswich Road. This is the growth we are seeing. Our capacity to deal with that is so important. That is why public transport and the way that public transport is put in place is vitally important. That is why we need that investment.

There also needs to be a cultural change in the way that people adapt to public transport. There is a different culture in the way in which we deal with public transport in Queensland from the way in which other places might deal with it. In Zurich the trams come on a regular basis, and when one jumps off the tram there is some other public transport option available. I know we have TransLink, but there are missing links, missing opportunities. Whilst the plan tries to dovetail trains, buses, taxis and ferries, for public transport to be completely integrated and completely accepted it requires greater ease of operation, greater reliability and more regularity than what we are able to offer people at the moment to encourage people to get out of their cars and to get on to public transport. So that is the work that needs to be done for the future. It is going to require quite a major change in the way we think.

I saw some interesting figures last year which indicate that the Brisbane tram system in the last year before it was taken out actually carried more passengers than Brisbane City Council buses carried last year. That is an interesting figure when we consider numerically the growth in population in that time. Whether those figures have been audited, I am not sure. But it was put by a public transport expert on one of the radio stations that I was listening to.

The other issue that has a real capacity to strangle us other than transport infrastructure and other than social infrastructure is the lack of water. It really concerned me that we had a regional infrastructure plan that was released in line with this plan which gave no definitive time frames for new water for south-east Queensland. The building of the most likely dam, which is the Wyaralong dam in the Boonah shire, is on a time frame from now to 2026. I suggest that the only reason the time frame does not go beyond 2026 is that there is no room over the page. The issue of water has been absolutely neglected by this government. The decision to disband Wolffdene dam without viable alternatives has basically left this city and this part of south-east Queensland in a diabolical situation.

The other day we heard the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines stand in this place and talk about the need for greater water restrictions and the need for more water-use efficiency. In a time of drought we certainly have to look at water restrictions. No-one argues that. Water-use efficiency issues such as fixing up leaking water mains and depressurisation are all important. But, with a population growth as fast as south-east Queensland's, it is more than that; it requires hard core investment in infrastructure. After a while, we may be making water savings of 10 or 15 per cent and water can then be spread to increasing industrial needs or urban needs as a consequence of population growth—whether naturally or by immigration—but if the population is increasing at the rate that south-east Queensland's population is then, frankly, that overtakes any water savings.

So we have to have a real commitment to investment in new water infrastructure in south-east Queensland in the form of new dams—and we cannot get away from the need for new dams. We might not like the environmental issues but we cannot get away from that need; people cannot go thirsty. Desalination is another issue. People say that there has been no rain. We know that rain is a problem. I have a rainwater tank that holds 20,000 gallons. There is no sense trying to run a household on 1,000 gallons; there needs to be storage as well.

Time expired.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lee): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Redlands, I welcome to the gallery students, teachers and parents from San Sisto College in the electorate of Chatsworth.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (12.58 pm): We are debating this motion this afternoon because of the failure of councils in south-east Queensland to look forward and plan for the long-term future of their respective areas. Councils have approved development after development after development. This short-sighted approach has left us with suburbs of houses upon houses, with little public space and little community infrastructure. The state government could not stand by and allow councils to continue this

damaging approach. I am proud that this government has stepped in to give all councils in south-east Queensland limits and directions in how future development can occur.

I believe that this regional plan provides a balance between meeting the growth needs of our region and protecting the environment of south-east Queensland. It should be noted that 80 per cent of south-east Queensland has been protected from urban development. I would, however, be remiss if I did not inform this House that residents in my electorate have some concerns about specific aspects of the plan. Some residents in the regional landscape and rural production area are disappointed that they cannot subdivide and develop their blocks. Whilst we are not taking away any existing rights, they are disappointed that future gains may be compromised.

The planned development for southern Redland Bay has the support of many local residents and the support of the Australia Koala Foundation. If development is to occur it would be better for it to occur on clear farmland rather than compromising existing koala habitat. Many residents are also concerned about the increase in the urban footprint. I have informed residents that land being in the urban footprint means that the land may be developed; it does not mean that it must be developed. Any development that councils approve will have to comply with all state government planning policies such as the koala conservation policy, the coastal management plan and our waterways protection policy. I urge the Redland Shire Council to speak to and listen to the local community when planning any future developments.

I support the development of local jobs and a public university for local students. I know that both the member for Cleveland and the member for Capalaba also support the development of a university for local students in the Redlands. It should be noted that public universities are fully funded by the federal government. I believe that our expanded urban footprint allows ample land for the Redland Shire Council to find suitable sites for these important developments.

This plan that we are debating today needs to meet the competing demands created by southerners moving north and protecting the environment that attracts people to this beautiful region. We do not want to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. This plan strikes that balance. It would be foolish to think that this plan is 100 per cent perfect. This plan is looking out to 2026. We will need to make changes, and I will continue to bring the thoughts and concerns of my residents to the attention of the government.

Sitting suspended from 1 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Ms Nolan, adjourned.

## IMPACT OF PETROL PRICING SELECT COMMITTEE

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (2.30 pm), by leave: I move—

1. That a select committee, to be known as the Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee, be appointed to examine a range of issues regarding petrol pricing in Queensland.
2. That the committee will consult with the community, investigate, report on and make recommendations, in particular, as follows:
  - (a) consider the extent to which current petrol price increases the competitiveness of alternative fuel sources such as E10;
  - (b) identify the economic and financial consequences of current fuel prices with a particular emphasis on regional Queensland and outer metropolitan areas;
  - (c) identify practical ways that consumers can reduce their petrol bills, including through considering whether existing information on the fuel efficiency of different makes of motor vehicles is sufficient;
  - (d) consider the extent to which recent fuel increases could be moderated through enhanced domestic competition, including how the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission powers could be strengthened to deliver enhanced competition;
  - (e) examine whether Queensland receives its fair share of road funding; and
  - (f) identify the capacity and benefits of the federal government reducing fuel excise to ameliorate the impact of high fuel prices on families and business.
3. That the committee consist of seven members of the Legislative Assembly with four members to be nominated by the Premier and Treasurer, one member to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition, one member to be nominated by the Leader of the Liberal Party and one member nominated to represent the Independent members.
4. That the committee have power to call for persons, documents and other items.
5. That the committee report to the House by 31 March 2006.
6. That the foregoing provision of this resolution, so far as they may be inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing or sessional orders.

I want to highlight that the Howard government has turned a blind eye to rising fuel prices. I have repeatedly called for a national royal commission to address this nationwide problem. I have even tried to get the ACCC to have a look at it, yet Mr Howard has refused to act and so has the Treasurer, who is the minister responsible for the ACCC. Meanwhile, Queensland families continue to be hit hard by steep

price rises at the bowzers. Data on the RACQ web site reveals that unleaded fuel prices jumped, on average, by close to 11c in Brisbane in the past six months from February to July, and it is a similar sorry tale all around the state. For example, over the same period petrol prices rose by around 10c in Cairns, 13c in Charleville, 10c on the Gold Coast, 14c in Goondiwindi, 15c in Mackay and 14c in Toowoomba. These price rises are unsustainable for the average Queensland family and something must be done. That is why I am moving for the establishment of a select committee to be known as the Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee.

The select committee will examine the following issues: the extent to which the current petrol price increases the competitiveness of alternative fuel sources such as E10; the economic and financial consequences of current fuel prices with a particular emphasis on regional Queensland; practical ways that consumers can reduce their petrol bills including consideration of whether information on the fuel efficiency of different makes of motor vehicles is sufficient; and the extent to which recurrent fuel increases could be moderated through enhanced domestic competition. This includes how the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission powers could be strengthened to deliver enhanced competition. I say that because that is one of the excuses that is always used as to why the ACCC cannot investigate these matters. If the ACCC do not have the powers, let us give them the powers. It is very simple. The select committee will also identify the capacity and benefits of the federal government reducing the fuel excise to ameliorate the impact of high fuel prices on families and businesses.

The committee will consist of seven members of the Legislative Assembly, with four members of the government, one member to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition, one member to be nominated by the Leader of the Liberal Party and one member nominated to represent the Independent members. They will have powers to call for persons, documents and items that can help shed light on this complex issue. It is my hope that the work of the committee will provide further impetus for Mr Howard to finally call a national royal commission to look at the issue of fuel pricing.

It is also my hope that something can be done to help people such as a Rockhampton mother of six Gayle Sunderland, featured in the Rockhampton news bulletin this month. The bulletin reported that Mrs Sunderland estimates she spends more than \$190 a fortnight running her children to school, sports training and events, and other extracurricular activities.

**Mr Cummins:** Just in Rockhampton?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Just in Rockhampton. Between her and her husband, that represents eight per cent, or more than \$5,000 a year, of the family's single income. It is people like Mrs Sunderland and her six children who are the human face of the fuel pricing issue. It is people like Mrs Sunderland and her six children whom Mr Howard is turning his back on.

I am keen to ensure that this is a sensible and constructive debate. I know that establishing a select committee is not something that has happened on a regular basis in the Queensland parliament, if we look at the history of this state. I have to say, though, it was an experiment, to some extent, that we tried by appointing a select committee into Palm Island. I think that Palm Island inquiry handled itself very well. I want to congratulate the member for Southport, the chairman of the committee, on the report which he tabled today. I want to congratulate all members of the committee for having done an excellent job. The performance of that committee has convinced me of the merits of select committees. The member for Southport should go down in the history of this parliament as having been instrumental as one of the major reformers, because I have now become a fan of select committees. When there are sensitive and difficult issues—and Palm Island proved it—it shows that all sides of politics can play a constructive role. I thank the departing Leader of the Liberal Party—departing in more ways than one, Bob—for his support because he was a member of the Palm Island committee.

If we look at a *Queensland Country Life* article titled 'Under the pump: Why petrol prices are heading even higher' and have a look at the figures there, we understand why this is not just an issue for regional Queensland. It is an issue for the bush; it is an issue for all Queenslanders. I would hope that the opposition would be constructive. We can see from *Queensland Country Life* that a lot of their constituencies are concerned about it.

Too often in this place we do not have enough of a commitment to bipartisanship. Too often in this place we end up with simply cheap political points being scored. I would hope that we could encourage the opposition to play a constructive and positive role in this so that we can identify those areas that need to be assessed. The last thing we want is some silly political game being played. That is why we have ensured that the National and Liberal parties are both represented. That is why the Independents are represented as well, and I thank them because I think we need to make sure that all sides of this parliament and shades of view are represented.

I am delighted to see that Liz Cunningham, the member for Gladstone, has been nominated as the Independent member on the committee. Mr Fraser, the member for Mount Coot-tha, will be the chair. Members of the committee will comprise Mrs Liz Cunningham, the member for Gladstone; Mr Finn, the member for Yeerongpilly; Dr Flegg, the member for Moggill; Mr Horan, the member for Toowoomba South; Ms Nolan, the member for Ipswich; and Mr Wallace, the member for Thuringowa. I think that is a very representative committee. I would urge them, however, to follow the precedent of the

Palm Island committee and act in a bipartisan, non-political way to get to the source of the issue. I would hope that there would not be any silly attempts at amendments by the opposition to try to turn this into a political game, because that is the last thing we want. Let us hope that we can face up to this and face up to it in a non-political way.

I want to make two other points in conclusion because we do not need a protracted debate on this. In many ways, petrol is about quality of life. If it seriously impacts on the family budget, as I have indicated with that Rockhampton family, then it is a quality of life issue. As we know, with rising interest rates it is difficult for many families to make ends meet and they struggle to do it. Petrol prices are a key part of that. But, as members will notice from this motion and the terms of reference, what we have sought to do is look at some broad issues as well. I think that is important. Members will notice that we have looked at E10. We have tried to get the ethanol debate up, and we have done a number of things to encourage the development of the ethanol industry, but we need to look at that. That is why, as I have already indicated, the committee will identify the economic and financial consequences of current fuel prices, with a particular emphasis on regional Queensland and non-metropolitan Queensland—that is, the outer suburbs and the communities who live in cities nearby like Ipswich, the Pine Rivers—

**Mr Cummins:** The Sunshine Coast.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and all of those areas.

It also talks about the identification of practical ways that consumers can reduce their petrol bills including consideration of whether information on the fuel efficiency of different makes of motor vehicles is sufficient. That would obviously involve looking at things like public transport and encouraging people out of their cars. It is one of the reasons why we have supported the Goodwill Bridge in Brisbane; it was to encourage people to walk or cycle to work. We have plans to build two more pedestrian bridges in the city to encourage those changes of behaviour. Also, as I said, there would be consideration of the extent to which recent fuel increases could be moderated through enhanced domestic competition.

Part of the difficulty is that outside Brisbane and the south-east corner there is not enough domestic competition in fuel prices. That is one of the problems. We have seen Woolworths enter the market. It is obviously trying to encourage people to use its stores to get petrol vouchers. That sort of competition may spread to regional Queensland but, frankly, we still do not have enough competition in regional and rural Queensland. We need to have more competition. That is one of the reasons why, when there are price wars on—if that is what they are called—the so-called competition does not spread beyond Sydney, Melbourne and the south-east corner of Queensland.

There are other challenges. For example, we have to talk about the environment. Renewable energy sources have to be considered. That is one of the reasons why we have been so strong in supporting ethanol. I understand the member for Hervey Bay's interest in this area. I look forward to there being a public meeting in Hervey Bay of this committee and him making a submission to it, because I know the member for Hervey Bay is particularly interested in this subject. However, as he has pointed out quite rightly, part of the difficulty is that we have had an easy time with oil; that is, if I understand the member's argument, the wells have not had to be that deep. It has been easy to take the oil reserve. However, as time goes on, the reserve is deeper and deeper, and it gets more expensive to take the oil out. It is pretty simple.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** And of course it requires, as the Leader of the House just said, more energy to extract the oil. In a sense the heyday has become a problem. So what do we do? We look at ways of sensibly—

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** No, that is the member opposite. The member opposite is on this committee.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I say to the member for Hervey Bay that he had better go and educate the member opposite, because what happens when the top is taken off? The pressure reduces. If the pressures reduces, it means that there is less pressure to lift the oil. It is called the forces of physics.

**Mr Cummins** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Exactly, thank you. It is called physics.

**Mr Cummins:** Simple physics.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Simple physics. It is called basic physics, actually.

**Mr Cummins:** For simpletons.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member is not in his seat, so he should not interject. It is basic physics.

**Mr McNamara:** It is actually the second law of thermodynamics.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Okay. There you go. By the time this is finished, I expect the honourable member for Toowoomba South to know the first and second law, not just the second one.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is how it works. He is quite right. What does it mean? This is not going to get any easier. We have to get serious about ethanol. We have to get serious about public transport. We have to get serious about the taxing policies that exist at a national level because, as members know, the Queensland government invests just over 8c a litre to keep fuel prices down. We had an assessment a few years ago as to whether that system was efficient, and we found that it was. I have not included that in the terms of reference. It would be a waste of time and pointless, and I think party political, to include it because it has been a levy supported by both sides of politics.

I have just been handed the member's amendment. One of these days, I say to the Leader of the Opposition, he will actually think about Queenslanders instead of National Party politics. We will not support the amendment because, in my view, it is just simply political point scoring.

In conclusion, petrol pricing is a very serious issue, and petrol prices have a serious impact on the average family. Some time ago I said that we needed an inquiry. I have talked about the national inquiry. To date I have resisted establishing a state inquiry because, frankly, I have been worried about its limitations. However, the situation has got serious now with petrol at \$1.20 a litre. There will be limitations on a select committee of this parliament. We will not be able to subpoena information from the federal government unless it is prepared to be cooperative. Today I urge the federal government and the federal departments to cooperate with this inquiry and to provide it with the information that will necessarily be sought by the committee to get to the bottom of the issue.

However, notwithstanding my concerns about the limitations of a state inquiry, with petrol costing \$1.20 a litre it has got to the stage where there needs to be an inquiry. This is about the mums and dads, this is about families, and this is about Queensland because we are the most decentralised state in Australia. We have to do something about trying to protect family living standards.

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.44 pm): I second the motion on the basis that this is long overdue. For a long period of time my electorate has suffered the highest fuel prices in Queensland. That has continued. The Premier outlined a case in point this morning.

We want to get the debate finished today. If members want to sit tonight, I am quite happy to do that. However, we have a big speaking list for the SEQ Regional Plan. I will defer to that. I urge members to keep their contributions brief, otherwise we will be sitting tonight and possibly tomorrow.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.45 pm): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the Premier and seconded by the Leader of the House, and in doing so I move the following amendment—

I move that the following words are inserted after section 2(f) and before section 3 of the motion—

"(g) Identify whether Queensland motorists are receiving the full benefit of the 8.35 cents per litre refund of state-based excise resulting from Queensland previously not having a petrol tax and examine the efficiency of administration for the bulk end users scheme."

I would like to think this motion is genuine, but it is about politics. It is all right for the Premier to stand up and pontificate, as he does with such regularity, about his desire for bipartisanship and his pretended genuineness about getting to the core of this issue. I say that the Premier should be judged on what he has failed to do in the past. When it comes to this man opposite, basically it should be a case of 'Look at what he does, not at what he says'. That should be the yardstick by which he is judged.

Let us go back to the year 2000. On 14 June 2000 Mr Beattie said, 'If, after 18 months, we find that the prices are unfair'—that is, the prices of fuel in Queensland—'we will hold a royal commission into the oil industry.' It is some 1,889 days since the Premier promised to do that, and he has not done anything. All he has ever sought to do is to divert attention from this issue and away from the responsibilities that he could take as the Premier of Queensland if he were genuine about fixing the problem on behalf of all Queenslanders.

We know that it is not an easy issue for any government to deal with because a lot of the matters surrounding this are international issues which are simply to do with the amount of hydrocarbon that is available, international demand and those sorts of things. Certainly there are taxation issues, and there may be some federal issues; we have always said that. However, rather than try to duckshove issues, look at what can be done in the state of Queensland. We have an 8.35c a litre petrol subsidy in this state, which is very important. It has been upheld to date by all sides of politics in this state. We also know that being able to dissect and understand the reasoning behind fuel pricing in this nation, and the oil industry and how it goes about setting prices is something that a state based royal commission can find out because it has the full power to be able to subpoena documents, to be able to call witnesses and to be able to get people to come forward from the BPs, from the Caltexes and from the Mobils and give a full explanation and a full account of themselves. That has always been the case. It is a furphy and a nonsense to say that it has to be a national royal commission.

In 2000, with his hand on his heart, the Premier said that he was going to have a royal commission into petrol pricing in Queensland. He never did it; it was a PR exercise. Then what did the Premier do? He put the former member for Woodridge in charge of a petrol price watch committee. We used to get these little things that would come out occasionally and tell us that petrol prices had gone up. That was about it. Now we have the member for Hervey Bay who has been sitting on some sort of petrol price watch committee over a period of time. All of those things have been window-dressing.

Members opposite should cast their minds back, because many of them actually voted against the establishment of an almost identical select committee. It was cheap politics at the time. In actual fact, that was a fairer committee than this because it had the capacity, under government control, to investigate issues to do with petrol pricing in Queensland and how it was to be dealt with. There were none of these charades about duck-shoving, casting bits and pieces and selectively choosing, as the Premier has done today.

In June 1993 at a shadow cabinet meeting in Roma I stated that a coalition government at some future time would establish an all-party parliamentary select committee to inquire into the disparity of fuel pricing across Queensland and to make any recommendations necessary to ensure transparency and fairness in Queensland fuel pricing. So what did we do? On 4 June 2003 we actually moved a motion in this parliament. Do members know what it said? The Premier is going to run away because he is embarrassed by this.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. That is not true and it is offensive. I ask for it to be withdrawn. I am going to talk to my advisers.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** If he says he is not embarrassed by it then I withdraw. I will read the motion that was moved in relation to a committee to be controlled by the government. It states—

That this Parliament supports the establishment of an all Party Parliamentary Select Committee to enquire into the disparity of fuel pricing across Qld and to make any recommendations necessary to ensure transparency and fairness in Qld fuel pricing.

What was wrong with that? That gave broad terms of reference for a parliamentary select committee to inquire into the sorts of issues which the Premier says today he is interested in. The Premier would have been able to do it in 2003—some 27 months ago or thereabouts—but he chose not to. The Premier chose to come into this parliament and be partisan and play politics. That select committee would have been in his control and would have been able to get to the bottom of things.

Do members know why we proposed this select committee to be controlled by the government? Not only does it make sense that the government should have control of a select committee in numerical terms; it is also cheaper than a royal commission. There are the resources of the parliament, there is the expertise of committee officers and there are members of parliament able to do it. It seems that the Premier has come to the same conclusion some 27 months later and he is now going to have a parliamentary select committee. In June 2003 he was not prepared to do it because the political heat was not as great and he did not need the diversion in this parliament. I think the Premier speaks with a forked tongue on this issue and if he was serious he would have done it way back then. There are many and varied issues and that is why, in the motion which called for the establishment of a select committee, we left it up to the parliament and the committee itself, which would have been dominated by the government, to basically decide the appropriate terms of reference.

The Premier could have done it in 2003 but he chose not to because it did not suit his political agenda then. We have had a lot of prattling on from the Premier since 2000—as I said, some 1,889 days ago—when there was first some muted comments by the Premier on this issue. Why was the Premier not prepared to support the principle then and establish terms of reference for a select committee? The problem is not new. The problem has not arisen today and it did not arise yesterday, last month or last year. It has been around for a while. The issues are many and varied. There are a whole range of issues including rack pricing and transparency in the way that the oil industry actually operates. There are a range of other issues that are beyond our control.

I do agree with what the honourable member for Hervey Bay said on the radio the week before last about there being a finite amount of hydrocarbons in the world and about there being increasing problems with price pressure from now on. We know that; that is commonsense and logical. We also know that we are now probably at maximum production in the world. The reserves are running out and that is going to create a range of other issues. We have the matter of growing consumerism in China, India and possibly other places around the world. In China, for example—it has a population of more than a billion people—to date only 200 million people have reached consumer status. The other day there was an interesting segment on one of the television programs that in Shanghai, which has undergone the most extraordinary process of urban renewal, people are choosing not to ride their bikes to work, or take whatever other form of transport may exist, but to drive a car, even though it is taking longer, because they can actually do it in this growing era of consumerism. Also in China, in the last six months the number of mobile phones has gone from 150 million to 200 million. So members can imagine what is going to happen when the number of consumers capable of consuming more petrol, more diesel fuel oils or whatever the case may be, doubles what it is today. That is going to put more pressure on reserves. It is only possible to see a northward advancement of petrol prices, not a southward decline.

Those issues have been emerging for some time. We have seen missed opportunity on the part of government as it has chosen to play politics on this and not accept a reasonable idea from the coalition at the time to establish an all-party select committee for which the government could have established its own terms of reference. We did not put forward terms of reference; we moved a motion to establish an all-party select committee to look at the issue of fuel pricing in Queensland and at ways of dealing with disparities and inequities. That is absolutely crucial. There are many issues here.

The Premier has talked about ethanol in his motion moved here today. That is an important issue. Instead of talking about ethanol, why does the Premier not move to mandate ethanol? We know that there is resistance from other people to mandate ethanol, whether it be in other states or around the nation. The Premier can actually do that here and now today. There is nothing stopping him, constitutionally or otherwise. It would be great to see that encouragement amongst motorists towards the greater consumption of ethanol. But that is not necessarily going to happen. Investment has to be encouraged in the industry. The only way to do that is to have a guaranteed market at the end and that means there has to be some form of mandate. Certainly the Commonwealth has mentioned there will be excise advantages for those wanting to invest in ethanol in Australia but we need to go further than that. We can go further than that at a state level starting with an ethanol mandate as they have done in states around the United States. The Premier should not dilly-dally on this.

The Premier has not even considered what we are talking about with regard to looking at the 8.35c per litre refund of the state based excise. It is only appropriate that we look at this issue as a part of it, because how do we know that that particular scheme is working effectively and efficiently? We do not know that until it is reviewed. We have to take on board what the government says about the efficiency and the effectiveness of that scheme. That is what we have to work on. The government changed the scheme a number of years ago based on what it said were certain rorts within the scheme. There was not one piece of hard evidence given at the time that there were any rorts going on that necessitated the change to the scheme. That change actually tightened up licensing requirements for bulk end users, many of whom had been doing the right thing all the way through.

**Mr Reeves:** They went straight down and over the border.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The member for Mansfield makes an allegation that they were going over the border. Not one prosecution was able to be brought. There was some hyperbole from the then Treasurer that this was happening, but no hard evidence was provided to this parliament that that was happening. If it was happening then it should have been fixed. We were never against any decent sorts of changes, but there was not an evidentiary base for it.

In tightening up that scheme the government has made it more difficult for those people who have always properly complied with the bulk end user schemes. I will give members an example. The farmers and graziers of this state who had a bulk end user licence used to get their fuel, which they used to use on-farm. Now, they are required to have a logbook and make entries in it if they go across the road, go here and go there. The government itself knows that that particular process has provided a great deterrent to those people legitimately claiming because the paperwork burden is so extraordinary. This government is pocketing potentially tens of millions of dollars, if not more, because of the bureaucratic nightmare which that bulk end users scheme is for people who have complied with that particular scheme. It is such a bureaucratic hurdle and such a bureaucratic burden. If it is not, then it is up to the government to prove it.

What is the government scared about exposing with regard to the fuel subsidy scheme in Queensland? Even the Premier has said in the past that maybe we need to look at getting rid of this scheme and giving a rebate on registration because that might be a better and fairer way of delivering this scheme for the people of Queensland. He himself has said that in the past. So he was prepared to get rid of at least some of it because he said that it was not working well enough. Make no mistake about it: the Nationals support the absolute retention of the fuel subsidy scheme. However, we do have some concerns about its efficiency and administration, and those things do need to be looked at.

What is the government scared of in looking at this? Is it scared that maybe that 8.35c a litre is not effectively filtering down and providing a price bonus to the people of Queensland, a differential to our motorists' advantage in this state compared to other Australian states? What is it scared of finding out? That there are some problems with the scheme? If there are some problems with the scheme, surely they deserve to be solved and if there are not any problems with the scheme, as the Premier said today, then there is no point changing anything and there is no point looking at it.

What we have here is a bit of a pig in a poke. We have a Premier who is prepared to put up issues for political reasons, but he is not prepared to accept something as legitimate as looking at the fuel subsidy scheme which is the one, effective, efficient tool that we have in Queensland to provide a price advantage to our petrol consumers. This is something that no other Australian state or territory has. There is effectively no fuel tax for Queensland motorists, yet this government is not prepared as part of its inquiry to look at that scheme to see if it is providing the advantage to Queensland motorists that it should be providing. This is the only real effective tool that this state government has to provide what should be an 8.35c a litre equalised price advantage to Queensland motorists and fuel users. It is running scared for some obvious reasons.

We are happy to be bipartisan in this and will be supporting this motion, because it is built on the previous motion that we moved in this parliament. We moved a motion to establish a select committee in 2003, but the government politically repudiated that motion and voted it down. We support this in principle. All we are saying is that the government should not leave out the most crucial element and the efficiency of it, and that is the Queensland fuel subsidy scheme. We look forward to participating on that committee. We hope that it is as genuine and as bipartisan as the Premier says, and we hope that it provides some decent recommendations that might be able to reduce this increasing burden on Queensland motorists.

I acknowledge what the Premier said about the Palm Island Select Committee report. I myself believe that there is a greater role for select committees and even bills committees along the lines of the New Zealand model. I simply say that those reports are going to have to go further than just saying, 'The minister for public works should review' or 'The minister for transport should review' or 'The minister for something else should review', because at the end of the day we have to make some hard decisions. There is some pretty good stuff that is contained in the PISC report, but it now relies on the government's commitment and support to see if it is going to have any great effect for the people of Palm Island.

We have to have committees that are prepared to make hard and fast recommendations and they need to oversee those recommendations and benchmark the government's performance against those recommendations. Otherwise, there will be reports saying, 'Review, review, review, review, review,' and one or two years down the track nothing really changes. That is something that this committee has to deliver for the people of Queensland—hard and fast recommendations and a process of oversight to ensure that benefits are there for Queensland motorists.

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (3.03 pm): I rise to second the amendment to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. A leopard never changes its spots, does it? The very first words that the Premier uttered when he started his speech on this debate was about the Howard government turning a blind eye. Right from the outset he set out to politicise this particular committee and to politicise this debate. As I said, a leopard does not change its spots. He then went on to say, 'Oh, we want this to be bipartisan and we want all of the people to cooperate and we want this to work. Don't bring politics into this.' Then he had another go at the Howard government and then he said a little later on that he did not want us to bring politics into this. He claimed that we were bringing politics into this issue simply because we have proposed an amendment to include the most glaring exemption in the motion moved by the Premier this morning.

We have decided amongst ourselves to give this committee full support. I am honoured to be the representative of the National Party on this committee. I will work faithfully and hard to do the best that I can for Queensland motorists. All of the issues which the committee will look into are worth while, but there is the one big political glaring omission of the 8.35c that can make such a difference to Queenslanders. Historically, we were the only state that did not have a petrol tax. When there were High Court rulings on the charging of excise relating initially to tobacco which meant that the federal government had to take over the excise collection from all states under our Constitution, it meant that in order for Queensland to maintain our advantage of the 8.35c subsidy the federal government had to collect an 8.35c tax and rebate it to Queensland.

It is so important that we in Queensland and the people we represent do not lose that particular advantage. How many times do people go over the border and go further down into New South Wales so they are not right near the border and see New South Wales prices that hardly vary from our prices? I was recently 50 or 60 kilometres below the border with my wife and we noticed prices that were the same as the prices we were paying in Toowoomba. I said to my wife, 'Where's this 8.35c?' If New South Wales can price its fuel at that price in an area that is not highly populated, why can we in Toowoomba, just an hour and a half west of Brisbane, not see that proper 8.35c differential to fuel prices in New South Wales? It should be an easy thing for us to examine if, as the Prime Minister said, he has looked into it before. So the information should be there. We need to know that that is still working.

If the Premier does genuinely feel for the motorists in Rockhampton that he spoke about paying \$190 a week to run their kids around to sport, school and so forth and all of the other people in our electorates around Queensland, he will not deny Rockhampton motorists or the motorists in our electorates the opportunity to know that they are honestly and correctly and accurately getting their 8.35c. What if this committee resulted in achieving a half a cent or a cent or more per litre reduction in the price for people around the state but missed out on the chance to deliver them possibly the same amount of reduction by checking any deficiencies that may be there in the rebate system that exists?

It is a glaring, shocking omission. I am absolutely disappointed that the Premier has not had the bipartisanship and the will and the genuineness to accept this particular amendment that we have moved. It gives a sour taste to the start of this select committee which we are all willingly becoming a part of. We are prepared to give of our time and energy to try to make it work, yet something that is such a significant component has been taken out of the terms of reference.

The other aspect of the amendment we have moved relates to bulk end users. As the opposition leader correctly and technically pointed out, there are people in Queensland who are not achieving the 8.35c that they should be able to achieve because of the difficulties and the red tape involved with the system for those people who are bulk end users. It is important that fairness prevails right across the state and that all Queenslanders can have access to the full 8.35c rebate. It is a proud history of our state that we have been the only state in Australia that has not charged a petrol tax. The fact that we have not had a petrol tax is due to the fact that we had the good governance of the Nationals and the coalition over the last few decades of the last century. We should not lose it. It should be available to everybody, and everybody should be able to get it in full.

I ask the Premier and the Labor members opposite to reconsider this. It is not going to take much time or effort on our part to make sure that is retained. Unless we have this select committee, our deliberations and final decisions will be incomplete and some Queenslanders will be paying more for their fuel.

This committee is going to have to look at a number of issues. One important issue is that of ethanol. I hope that this committee will bring forward some resolutions that clearly demonstrate that if, nationally, Australia will not go with ethanol, we in Queensland can be the leaders. We in Queensland can introduce legislation to mandate that in very practical ways. Initially, we do not have to go for the 10 per cent. Previously, we have introduced private members' bills relating to ethanol. Whilst they called for a 10 per cent mandate, they were structured in such a way that it did not have to reach 10 per cent until production reached a particular level. We could have a graduated system. It could be half a per cent, one per cent—whatever we like. Let us keep it simple and practical. We can do it under Queensland legislation. The two related issues of the Constitution and of cross-border trading do not prevent us from doing it here in Queensland.

We in Queensland have the greatest advantage in that our sugar industry and dryland tropics areas such as the Burdekin, which has an almost unlimited water supply from the Burdekin River, result in massive volumes of sugar production. We also have the advantage in our grain industry of the technology that exists and the number of people who want to establish ethanol plants. We have the most wonderful opportunity. Considering the price of oil per barrel and the price of fuel, surely it is logical that the production of ethanol is becoming more and more economically viable.

The issues that this select committee will look at include production, the world market, the wholesale retail market, the various taxes charged such as the fixed excise of 38c and the GST that is charged, and the various supermarket discounts that apply. People might believe they are getting a discount of a full 4c, but how do we know that that is not recouped further up the chain perhaps by a 0.1 per cent on prices across the board? People may get their 4c at the pump, but they may be losing their 4c back there on their loaf of bread, their fruit and vegies, their meat or something else. They are the sorts of issues we have to look at to ensure that this is a genuine thing.

I turn now to the worldwide production of oil. We know about the pressures placed on the production of oil by the booming economies in places like China, India, Brazil and so forth. North America places intense pressure as well. If we look at the wholesalers and retailers, everybody has to have a modest margin of profit or they will not be in business. No-one is going to operate a service station or a refinery unless they can make a modest amount of profit either for themselves as owners of the business or for their shareholders as managers of a publicly owned company.

The committee also needs to look at the issue of taxation. Back in 2001 the federal government stopped the automatic CPI rise that was put in place by previous Labor federal governments because it was blowing our petrol price through the roof. That was happening every quarter—every three months—as I remember. There was an automatic CPI increase.

**Mr Finn** interjected.

**Mr HORAN:** Unelected people were going boom, boom and up the price was going. The Howard federal government stopped and capped it at 38c partly because of the pressure of the Queensland Nationals.

**Mr Springborg:** The member for Yeerongpilly wants to put it back on.

**Mr HORAN:** Does the member for Yeerongpilly want to put it back on? Surely not! That is capped at 38c. The high price of fuel is bringing about a change in the driving habits of people. The trend has already started to emerge. People are moving from large cars to smaller cars. If honourable members look at car yards now they will see that the big six-cylinder and eight-cylinder cars are not on the lot or they are around the back of the shed. They will find that all the smaller cars are out the front because that is what is selling currently. People are trying to use less fuel. People are trying to think more rationally about the number of trips they make. When they run kids out to places they consider if they can do it in one trip rather than two or three. All those sorts of things are happening. If that brings about a reduction in the volume of fuel sold in Australia then the total taxation collected by the federal government of 38c per litre—because it is based on volume—will actually decrease. It is worth while and it is one of the things that this committee will look into.

The other aspect is the GST that is collected on the price of fuel. All of the GST—100 per cent of GST—that is collected on the sale of fuel in Queensland goes back to the Queensland government. That will be something to consider: whether the Queensland government wants to pay back some of the GST it gets in some form of rebate. If people want to say that the federal government is levying the GST, let us be honest in this debate and understand that it is Queensland's taxation that we are talking about. It is going to take a lot of honesty in this particular committee to look at these issues in a very even-handed debate.

One of the other important things will be to look at the price of fuel in regional Queensland and the outlying areas of Queensland. Based in my electorate in Toowoomba I see these fluctuations. Over the years I have seen that prices in Toowoomba can vary substantially from the prices at outlets down on the Warrego Highway. People line up at these places on the Warrego Highway so they can get cheaper fuel. It is a shame that happens because the actual cost of cartage per litre in a B-double, which can carry thousands of litres of fuel, from the refinery in Brisbane to Toowoomba or other parts of regional Queensland is very small. I cannot remember the cost off the top of my head. The variation does not reflect the cost of cartage.

The other issue that needs to be looked at is the demise of small service station operators. What happens to some of these people who try to get a fair wholesale price for the fuel they pay so they can make a living—and they may need to make 1c, 2c or 3c a litre—for their families and earn a wage to repay the investment in that particular service station? Over the years we have seen the discounts for people who have big businesses and the smaller businesses and corner stores have had to pay top dollar. That is an important thing to look at: do we have absolutely fair competition so that a service station run by a mum and dad—a small business—can compete properly with a company owned service station? Small business still pays the same price for their fuel but tries to match their business on service, courtesy, cleanliness and all the other things that are so important to the running of a small business. They should not be disadvantaged and Queensland motorists should not be disadvantaged because those small service station operators are forced to charge a higher price because they cannot buy their fuel at the same price that the big companies can.

In terms of the price we pay for fuel in Australia, the post-tax retail price of petrol in Australia was the fourth lowest among OECD countries. That is still no reason for us to say, 'We are the fourth lowest, so we shouldn't worry about it,' because the price of fuel is hurting people and it is hurting businesses. In some ways it is negating the great tax cuts that the federal government has given to people so that they can have more disposable income.

I think that all the aspects of this motion reflect what the National Party has been fighting for for years. It fought for a royal commission into petrol prices and it then fought for a select committee to look into petrol prices. The Labor Party voted against both of those proposals. But now, because of the problems it faces due to the Bundaberg Hospital inquiry and the two by-election losses, suddenly it is saying, 'Yes, what the Nationals have been proposing is right, because we need a diversion.' Diversion or not, this select committee is important. I believe in this select committee, I know my colleagues also believe in it, and we will give it our support.

In return, I ask the Premier and the members of the Labor Party to be honest and bipartisan and include our amendment to the motion in the resolution. If the committee discovers that the 8.35c a litre subsidy is not properly being passed on to the people, it will not cause the government any harm. It will not become a political issue; it will be a worthwhile outcome of this select committee. If the select committee picks up a saving of a cent a litre here or half a cent a litre there, or it can do something to alleviate the impact that the price of petrol is having on the people of Queensland, then it will have done a good job. But the motion is incomplete unless the government accepts the opposition's amendment. I wish we did not have to move the amendment, because when the opposition moves an amendment there is always this burring from the government members as though they will suffer a defeat if they accept an amendment from the opposition. This amendment should be accepted just to make the motion complete.

I hope we do not build up the public's expectations that, through this committee, we are going to achieve unbelievable results. I hope we can approach this committee in the spirit of trying to do our best. I hope we can pick up a saving of half a cent or a cent a litre—or whatever we might be able to pick up—to reduce the price of fuel. At the moment petrol costs 116c a litre. When we consider the wholesale cost of petrol, how much it costs to refine and the increasing cost of a barrel of oil at the moment, it might well be that this committee can find petrol savings of a cent a litre or more in the whole process. But by then the petrol price could well be \$1.20 a litre or \$1.25 a litre.

It is not right for us to pull the wool over our constituents' eyes and say that we will go out there and easily bring about a massive reduction in the price of petrol. But when people are paying that much a litre for fuel, every little reduction that we could achieve would be well worth while. The National Party is giving its commitment to this motion. I sincerely ask the government to accept our amendment, because it has been introduced in a spirit of bipartisanship to make the motion complete so that this committee can do its job 100 per cent for the people of Queensland, not 90 per cent.

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.22 pm): I rise to add my strong support to the motion moved in this House by the Premier and to genuinely commend him for seeking to bring the parliament together to address this enormously serious issue. I was disappointed that the National Party quickly tried to find a political angle in this motion. I think it behoves all of us to address this matter as it is a serious financial issue.

In 1999, oil cost \$US10 a barrel. Two years ago, it cost \$US25 a barrel. Today, it costs \$US67 a barrel. In recent years we have seen a massive increase in the price of oil and there is nothing really to suggest that anything is going to change that. Just last month the *Bulletin* predicted that within a very short space of time the price of petrol at the bowser in Australia would be \$2 a litre. That would mean that the average household, which drives 1,500 kilometres a month, would be paying an extra \$108 on top of the \$132 they pay now for petrol.

So it is not just a matter of me saying 'X' and the member for Toowoomba South saying 'Y' on this issue—and I do not suggest that the member did. The price of petrol is probably the most immediate and pressing financial concern for most Queensland families. Even with petrol at the current price of just under \$1.20 a litre, my constituents are expressing very serious concern to me about the fact that they are paying out more and more and more of their household budget just to keep driving their car to work, just to keep taking their kids to school.

**Ms Nelson-Carr:** That means less money for food.

**Ms NOLAN:** It means less money for food, it means less money to pay a little bit extra off the mortgage and it means less money to spend on some of the very basic necessities of life.

The price of petrol is more of an issue for Queenslanders than it is for people in the other states. On average, because Queensland is such a decentralised state, Queenslanders use more petrol than people in the other states do. Our increase in petrol consumption is happening at a faster rate than it is in other states. I am sorry to have to give a whole bunch of figures, but we need to understand that in eight years—from 1992 to 2000—while other Australians' average petrol consumption increased by 12 per cent, Queenslanders' average petrol consumption increased by 15 per cent. That means that we are paying more and more for petrol and that it is making a bigger and bigger cut into the household budget. The petrol price increases are affecting my constituents. They talk to me about it in the street. The increases are worrying people and they are impacting on consumer confidence. Just last month Westpac reported that a significant decline in consumer confidence was mainly because people are concerned about the rising price of petrol.

This is a very serious issue for my constituents as much as it is for anyone else. The city of Ipswich has a jobs to population ratio of just 36 per cent. That means that there are not as many jobs in Ipswich as there are workers. So many thousands of Ipswich people are simply forced to commute to work every day. With the Howard government steadfastly refusing over many, many years to spend any of the \$900 million a year it gets in petrol excise on fixing the Ipswich Motorway, the commute between Ipswich and Brisbane is taking longer and it is becoming more expensive. We hear a lot about—and to some extent it is mythology—people in the country being the ones who are most seriously impacted by rising petrol prices. I know that for people in rural areas petrol is a big expense. But there is substantial evidence to show that it is the people who live in outer metropolitan areas—they live in Ipswich, but they work in the middle of Brisbane, or they live in Ipswich and they work at Acacia Ridge—who are forced to drive the most miles in a year.

I feel enormously privileged that the Premier has invited me to participate with my colleagues and non-government members on this committee. I will seek to be the voice of those outer metropolitan residents—the people who live in places such as Ipswich, Caboolture and Pine Rivers—

**Mrs Reilly:** The Gold Coast.

**Ms NOLAN:** And places like the Gold Coast. For those people who live in outer metropolitan areas and who are forced to drive a long way to work every day, I understand that rising petrol prices are an enormous financial concern for them. We are obliged to look at petrol prices, we are obliged to look at how we can become less reliant on cars—we are obliged to look at the whole gamut of solutions to this problem. I will seek to represent those people who live in outer metropolitan areas.

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (3.29 pm): Let me say at the outset that the Liberal Party will be supporting the creation of the Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee and that we will be participating in it in good faith and in as bipartisan a manner as we are able because of the concerns that others have expressed about the impact of petrol prices on commuters and families around Queensland. That support for the creation of a select committee comes with some pretty serious reservations.

In the Premier's introductory remarks here today he focused entirely on federal issues—he had sought a federal inquiry, and he alleged that John Howard had turned his back on commuters. It follows on from a concerted effort on the part of this government to direct attention in Queensland to federal issues in preference to issues that are under the control of the state government. We have had Telstra, we have had industrial relations and now we have petrol prices—all of them federal issues. It raises with us a serious concern that the rationale for having a committee of this nature may well be for its political

impact rather than its other stated purposes. I note in an article in yesterday's *Sydney Telegraph* Mr Beattie pushing the issue of petrol prices as a federal government issue and calling for a federal royal commission, but I notice that he has not opted to create a royal commission in Queensland to assess petrol prices.

One issue that has been studiously avoided by the government in this debate—I had my ears pricked and I listened carefully; I do not think I missed it because I do not think it was said—is how much this select committee is going to cost. A wide-ranging, six-month select committee, with public consultation and the other detailed aspects of it, cannot be conducted without putting a budget in place. Quite frankly, I think we should have had that information for this debate today. I have absolutely no doubt at all that the people of Queensland are entitled to know how much is going to be spent on this exercise. Presumably the committee will be travelling to different parts of the state. With fuel prices as they are, that is not going to be a cheap exercise.

I particularly note the aspects of fuel prices that are federal issues or even beyond federal issues and are totally outside the scope of anything the Queensland government can influence, such as world parity pricing and federal fuel taxes. The global price of oil has gone from \$15 a barrel a few years ago to \$67 a barrel this morning. World parity pricing is beyond the control not just of the Queensland government but also of the federal government. The Australian dollar plays a significant role in fuel prices. The Premier himself has raised the issue of the ACCC, a federal competition authority. So we are setting up a state select committee to investigate federal government matters and international pricing upon which, at the end of the day, our recommendations may not have very much impact.

I notice the reference in the motion and also made by previous speakers to community consultation. As members will have noticed in my contributions in the parliament, including earlier today, I believe that community consultation is essential. We would vigorously support a high level of genuine community input into the select committee. I would like to support what the member for Toowoomba South said about there being a danger here of creating a false expectation in the community that a select committee of the Queensland parliament will deliver a result in terms of fuel prices. That is a danger, and I think we have to be very, very careful about creating that false expectation in the community.

I note that the one aspect of fuel prices in Queensland that is under the sway of the Queensland government is the 8.35c a litre subsidy that is returned to oil companies to keep the price of oil down. I find it amazing that we would set up a select committee in Queensland, with several pages of terms of reference, and the one major aspect of petrol pricing in this state that is, in fact, under the control of the Queensland parliament does not rate a mention. If we look at the Premier's motion, it is like we do not have an 8.35c a litre subsidy on fuel.

I note the comments of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Toowoomba South in speaking to the opposition's amendment that there is a genuine feeling out there in the community in Queensland that oil companies do not entirely pass on the subsidy that they are collecting. The Liberal Party will be vigorously supporting the amendment moved by the opposition that this matter should also be included in the terms of reference. It is ridiculous to leave out of the terms of reference of a Queensland parliamentary select committee a major component of fuel pricing in Queensland, one that is actually under the control of the Queensland government. I wonder if it is because the government has been asleep at the wheel and has not been monitoring this subsidy as it ought to have been and does not want the matter raised in the motion here before us today.

At the end of the day, if the government uses its numbers to prevent the select committee examining issues surrounding the fuel price subsidy, the people of Queensland will see that as a stunt, as an effort to play this committee out simply on other issues. When there is an issue that could perhaps make some difference to fuel prices at a state parliamentary level here in Queensland, the government does not want it included. I join with members of the National Party to urge the government to reconsider its opposition to the amendment and make this a wide-ranging select committee into petrol pricing. We have been asked to consider these issues in a bipartisan way, and we will do that. But the government should listen to its own request and, in a bipartisan way, include all of the aspects of petrol pricing, including the state subsidy.

I note references from the Premier in relation to the Palm Island committee. Liberal leader Bob Quinn represented us on that committee. It was a very constructive committee, and members strove to find outcomes to some of the impasses that confront Palm Island. The Liberal Party will certainly be approaching this committee in the same way, but I appeal to the government to do so as well and to not use this as a point-scoring exercise against the federal government.

The Liberal Party would certainly like to see some reduction in the price of fuel. We would certainly like to see the general public educated about ways that they can minimise their fuel consumption. We would love to see fewer four-wheel drives on our suburban streets. We would love to see people consider the fuel economy of vehicles when they purchase new vehicles. We would love to see more people using public transport.

Another aspect that is under state government control in relation to the cost of petrol to motorists has also been left out of this motion here today—that is, the state of roads, particularly in the south-east corner of Queensland. We have had reports from engineering bodies that show a huge cost to the people of Queensland of sitting in their cars motionless or in crawling queues of traffic because of the failure of the government to provide adequate roads. It is wrong that this select committee is not going to examine the amount of fuel that people have to waste sitting on state controlled roads in gridlocked traffic jams because we have ignored essential infrastructure.

When I was elected to this parliament last year I was consistently getting over 10 kilometres per litre fuel economy travelling to work, because I did not travel during busy times and I did not work in the city. Since being elected, I sit in my car every morning on Moggill Road and the Western Freeway, which are a disgrace within the City of Brisbane. My fuel economy has dropped from well over 10 kilometres a litre to well under nine kilometres a litre. That is equivalent to a 10 per cent to 15 per cent increase in the cost of fuel from commuting to work on state controlled roads sitting in motionless traffic. This is a significant part of the cost of fuel to people in outer metropolitan areas. We heard the member for Ipswich—and I support her comments wholeheartedly—saying that she was going to represent outer metropolitan commuters. It is sitting in queues of traffic that is adding to the cost of petrol to outer metropolitan commuters far more than many of the aspects that are going to be examined. This committee should have had the power to look at this issue in relation to petrol costs.

When we have a state issue that impacts upon the cost of fuel, whether it be the subsidy or whether it be the ludicrous situation on our state controlled roads, we do not want the select committee to have a look at it. We do not want the people of Queensland to have an input into those areas that are costing them dearly every day such as fuel, but, when it comes to issues where there may be a hit on the federal government, where we might be critical of federal government taxes or any other aspect of the federal government, we are only too keen to rush it into the select committee. It goes both ways. The government ought to look at being bipartisan if it has a genuine intention of benefiting Queensland motorists.

The National Party's amendment on the fuel subsidy will receive our vigorous support. Bear in mind that this is a government controlled committee. This is not a committee where there is a balance of numbers; this is a government controlled committee. The Liberal Party in this committee, and I trust the National Party as well, will not allow it to be turned into a stunt. We will not allow it to be turned into an exercise of bashing the federal government whilst ignoring very real state issues in relation to fuel pricing.

There have been far too many of these political games within the state of Queensland where federal issues are fair game to create a distraction and state issues are to be avoided at all costs. We put the parliament on notice that we will not be allowing this to be turned into a political stunt, and we trust that at the end of the day it will deliver some benefits to Queensland motorists. We will be doing the very best we can to make a positive and constructive contribution.

**Mr WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.42 pm): As the member for Rockhampton said, this seems to make a lot of sense so my comments today will be very brief. Coming from regional Queensland, it gives me great pleasure to support this motion of the Premier. I know my colleagues the members for Ipswich and Moggill may disagree but, as you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, we in regional Queensland rely on petrol much more than residents in this part of the state. That is because we simply do not have the public transport that is available in the south-east corner, nor are we located in proximity to distribution centres.

Where I am from, petrol is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Up north in most places we cannot get the bus or train to take us to work, we cannot get it to go and get the groceries or to take the kids to school and then to sport in the afternoon. We have to buy petrol and lots of it just to live. When it gets up to around \$1.20 a litre, things look pretty grim in the family budget. Only last week I was having a chat to my dear old dad in Home Hill, which is about 100 kilometres south of Townsville.

**Mr Barton:** A fine town.

**Mr WALLACE:** I take the interjection of the minister for industrial relations, being an old Burdekin boy.

**Mr Reynolds:** Burdekin boys always stick together.

**Mr WALLACE:** I take the interjection of the member for Townsville as well. We are a fine bunch.

Dad was telling me that his fuel bill has jumped by around \$100 a week. Mum and Dad are not some hoity-toities where \$100 does not mean very much. They are average, ordinary Queenslanders and \$100 means a hell of a lot. I have not been sitting around on my bum over the last couple of months as fuel prices have surged. I have been working closely with the North Queensland Consumers Association and its hardworking president, Ken Kipping. Ken and I have repeatedly called on the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to investigate fuel prices.

It is interesting to note that the Howard government abandoned Queensland road users in 1998 when it deregulated the fuel industry and got rid of the ACCC's role as the fuel price watchdog. When I told Ken earlier this morning about this inquiry, he expressed his delight and offered immediately to assist. Being a lateral thinker, Ken has spoken to many groups about ways and means of reducing the burden of fuel prices on Queensland families. Ken's ideas include the setting up of community petrol stations similar to the community bank model to help cut costs. I trust that this inquiry will call on people of Ken's calibre. He is not afraid to take on the big petrol companies and the Howard government, which is making a motser out of fuel excise.

What a pile of money John Howard and Peter Costello are sitting on. Last year they took in about \$14 billion in fuel excise. Guess how much they returned to the states in the form of transport subsidies for roads et cetera? \$3 billion. The rest—\$11 billion—went into consolidated revenue. It makes Barnaby Joyce's \$3 billion look like the pathetic figure it is. From 1929 to 1956, for instance, 100 per cent of revenue from fuel excise went into our roads. The Menzies government broke that nexus and it has never returned. That is a pathetic effort from a pathetic government. Queensland motorists need to start to stand up to Canberra and demand that more of our money be spent on our roads. That is what this inquiry, if I have anything to do about it, will do. The terrible roads up north need serious money spent on them. I know from my colleagues down here that there is also a lot to be done in this neck of the woods. It is our money, John Howard; now give it back.

As I said before in this place, I am proudly a north Queenslander who grew up with the sugar industry. I am pleased to see in the terms of reference that we will have a look at ethanol and its possible use in replacing petrol. As chair of the north Queensland ministerial forum, we have had a close look at E10 and I think that this thing can work. It can help benefit not only our sugar industry but also motorists and the environment.

From my excited tone, members I am sure will be able to deduce my support for this motion. I congratulate the Premier on bringing this motion before the House and on giving us the chance to do something about petrol prices. As the only member who will be a part of this inquiry outside south Queensland, I offer my support to all members north of the Brisbane line. I will be in there fighting for their needs and the needs of their motorists. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr FINN** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (3.47 pm): I welcome the motion by the Premier to establish the Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee to examine a range of issues relating to petrol pricing, and I am pleased to serve on that committee. Today we see the highest fuel prices we have seen since the Gulf War. In May for the first time ever the RACQ price survey has found that the monthly average price is more than \$1 per litre across Queensland, and there is an urgent need to give relief to Queensland families, businesses and rural communities.

Last week I bought fuel for my family sized car at one of the cheaper outlets in my electorate and for the first time I paid almost \$80—\$78, in fact, to fill my 60-litre tank. Two years ago it would have cost me around \$55. I know that many families in my urban electorate struggle to make a tank of fuel last for a week as they go back and forth to schools, child care, work, shopping, kids' sport, visiting grandparents and friends and so on. A family who uses a tank of fuel each week is now paying an extra \$23 a week or \$1,200 a year more than they were two years ago.

At a time when we have the highest taxing federal government in our history, a government that takes submissions to national wage case hearings seeking to reduce the minimum wage and seeking to introduce legislation to abolish shift and penalty rates, Australian families are hurting. \$1,200 a year is a lot of money, but relief is not likely. Last week John Howard, when referring to the federal government's fuel excise—that, as other members have mentioned, makes up almost 38c a litre of the cost of fuel—said, 'I guess, in a sense, every time I see the oil price go up I wince like everybody else, because I know the pain that is inflicting on families but we do not have any plans to reduce the excise.'

It is no wonder that business representatives are warning of the impact on consumer spending of rising fuel prices. A recent survey by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the St George Bank found low levels of small business confidence as they expected economic slowdown on the back of soaring fuel prices and the associated fall in profits. St George Chief Economist Steve Ryan warned—

As a result, many in small business see the outlook in their own particular industry as flat and predict a similar downturn for the economy generally.

The problem for small businesses is that they are unable to hedge their fuel costs as easily as medium or larger businesses. Their smaller volume in turnover means that they cannot pass on increases in fuel costs to the consumer because of the resulting flow-on in greater price increases.

This does not affect just small business. Coles Myer CEO John Fletcher has also warned of the impact of fuel prices on retail sales as household discretionary spending levels fall. On 18 August Harris Scarfe chief Robert Atkins said—

All my research shows that (a high fuel price) is the number one concern in terms of consumer spending at the moment.

Yesterday the Queensland Tourism Industry Council warned of fears that higher price rises are likely to have a negative impact on the self-drive tourism industry. In May Dr Errol Stock of Griffith University predicted bowser prices of \$1.50 per litre by May next year. He said that the impacts of consumers moderating their spending habits would flow on to most major industries in Australia, especially tourism and manufacturing.

Rural industries and communities are also hard hit. Last week's *Sunday Mail* carried a story about primary producers struggling to keep machinery going after diesel price rises of more than 20c per litre since February and with prices up to \$1.16 per litre. The article warned of farmers fearing a greater impact from fuel prices than the drought. It quoted a Darling Downs silage contractor who uses 250,000 litres of diesel per year and has suffered a 25 per cent fuel increase in the last six months as saying—

I just don't know how far we can go. It's the worst it's ever been, the worst price we have ever seen.

AgForce has not been silent on the issue, either. On Monday, President Peter Kenny warned that rising fuel costs may finish some farmers. He warned that without an increase in the cost of food for consumers the cost of production as a result of increased fuel prices may force farmers to the wall. People should also spare a thought for the families living in rural communities—the shopkeepers, teachers, nurses, mums and others who are paying upwards of 10c a litre more than their Brisbane counterparts for their everyday family activities. Queenslanders of all walks of life are feeling the pain of rising fuel prices. Our families, small businesses and rural communities need this relief.

I was a bit disappointed to hear the contributions of the members on the other side who say that there is nothing we can do about this.

**Ms Nelson-Carr** interjected.

**Mr FINN:** I take the interjection from the member for Mundingburra. These are the people who do represent those rural areas and they are saying that there is nothing we can really do about this, that it is a global force, that there is nothing this inquiry will be able to do and that it is all just a stunt.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr FINN:** In effect that is what was said.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr FINN:** The member for Moggill certainly said that, in effect. He said that it was a stunt. The member for Toowoomba South said in his contribution that he also felt it would have minimal impact. It is almost like the members opposite want to kill it off before it gets going. They say, 'Don't go after the feds,' yet it is the feds who levy the fuel excise. It is the feds who do not provide the funding, back through the AusLink project, to Queensland roads. It is the feds, as the member for Thuringowa said, who take a large amount of money out of the excise and return a very small amount of it.

We are doing what we can in Queensland, both through fuel subsidisation and through the establishment of this committee, to provide Queenslanders with reduced fuel costs. I say to John Howard: maybe it is a bit rich to collect a levy and a rising GST amount when people are hurting. It is time for the federal government to do its bit, too. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.53 pm): I rise to support the motion for the creation of this select committee. In relation to a committee that is supposed to be impartial, it is disappointing that some of the comments made have been extremely political and run the risk of undermining the commencement of the committee's operation. It is particularly disappointing because petrol pricing is a sensitive issue for all Queenslanders—whether they live in the south-east corner, in central Queensland or in northern Queensland—where, in all instances, travelling is essential for not only work but also recreation and schooling. It is one of the expenses that, as the price of petrol rises, is very difficult to pare down, particularly if there is not a public transport system available to people.

In most capital cities there is an extensive public transport network. In a discussion with the member for Moggill, I was surprised to hear him state there is not much public transport in his electorate. I always thought that the public transport network extended well past those suburbs that would be regarded as fairly close to the city. We all face challenges in terms of how much we can pare down our own personal vehicle use. Bus services in the city of Gladstone are used by a lot of commuters, particularly retired people, but they cease at the borders of the city. The new timetable shows that there are one or two runs to Boyne-Tannum and one to Calliope. That has been welcomed, but it has only just been instituted—for less than a month.

Like other speakers, I have written to the ACCC as the disparity in fuel prices has become obvious—not only between cities within Queensland but also between Queensland and New South Wales, taking into account the 8c a litre fuel rebate that we have in Queensland because we have no fuel tax. At Christmas time my husband and I travelled into New South Wales. We travelled about 3,000 kilometres and noticed that in some rural areas of New South Wales the prices were comparable to prices in Queensland. It raises some very important questions in terms of the application of rebates et cetera throughout Queensland centres.

I also believe that the impact of the majors, like Coles and Woolworths, has to be taken into account. They are doing their utmost to corner the market and kill off any independent fuel suppliers that might be left, leaving them, together with a couple of the major fuel companies, with an effective monopoly. I have been astounded that the ACCC has refused to take on any references in relation to that situation. I do not believe it is outside its purview of responsibility. I would certainly be looking forward to the opportunities to investigate the limitations, or lack of limitation, that it might have in applying its investigative skills.

The other issue that I think should be raised here is a local government issue. At local government conferences, almost from time immemorial, one of the issues—and the member for Bundaberg will confirm this—was the amount of fuel excise returned to the states for roadworks. It was a bit of a chestnut. The issue always came up, it was always debated and there was a high level of angst. We did not make a lot of headway, but people were able to vent their spleen about the ability of Queensland councils to maintain and upgrade roads given the level of fuel excise that is paid by motorists throughout Australia. I do not mean that as a party-political belt at anybody, but it was always—and I am sure it continues to be—on the LGAQ agenda for conferences and the comparisons between excise returned for roads in years gone by and the excise that is available for councils and governments to apply to roadworks now. It will be interesting to see the dynamics of that issue play out.

In relation to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, I would join with others who have asked for the Premier to review his opposition to this amendment. Queenslanders are in a beneficial position because we are a state that has not had a fuel tax. The complications that occurred when the court overturned the right of states to apply certain tax several years ago created a great deal of pressure on residents of this state to diarise—to keep records of—on-road and off-road fuel use. It did not affect just farmers. It also affected fishermen, those in the rural community and small businesses, particularly businesses that ran trucks, backhoes and the like. Often they would dink the backhoe on the back of the truck and drive it to the job. It would then be regarded as being for off-road use. They had to keep this extensive paper trail of off-road and on-road use.

That was exacerbated by the fact that there was a 12-month lag between when the structure changed and when the Office of State Revenue actually clarified with fuel consumers their obligations. They were caught in the middle. The federal government had made certain decisions, the state government had made certain decisions; the information was sent to the bulk fuel outlets, the bulk fuel outlets got back to government and said, 'Surely we are not responsible for the distribution of this information,' and the state government said, 'No, you are not. Just leave the leaflets on the front counter.' Most fuel consumers did not pick up the documents and 12 or 18 months later these people with backhoe hire companies were sent letters from OSR to say that it estimated that they owed a backlog of moneys from the 8.35c rebate that they were ineligible for in the off-road use.

I think it would be important to include that element of how the 8.35c per litre is being handled within the state. Motorists are mystified when travelling up and down the coast—or inland, but I will use the coast because it is a traffic route that a lot of people use—at the price differential between the various places which does not reflect consistently the 8.35c a litre rebate. People cannot follow the logic. I have tried to investigate, as I am sure many members of parliament have for their residents, these inconsistencies both within a community—within the electorate of Gladstone—or within the state of Queensland. It is very difficult to get to the bottom of the root causes. Fuel companies will say that they give fuel outlets on the highway a highway discount to attract motorists going past, but that still does not answer the questions. This committee provides an opportunity for Queenslanders to better understand, even within the state, the fuel rebate process.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about the suggestion at one stage to reduce registration to accommodate the fuel rebate because we did not have a fuel tax. That was always going to be inequitable. I certainly do not support it and I was pleased when the government of the day reversed that proposal and went to the 8c a litre rebate on fuel purchase because, after all, those who are forced to consume greater amounts of fuel should benefit from the rebate, not just a one-off reduction in the cost of registration.

The current process is the most equitable in terms of what the 8.35c is supposed to address, but there is still that inequity within the state and this committee would have the opportunity and the power to be able to investigate where the system is falling down within the state and how that inequity could be addressed and rectified. I would genuinely call on the Premier to reconsider his position on this because I think there are many Queenslanders who are frustrated by the lack of logic in fuel prices across the state, both on the eastern seaboard and inland, and it would be a wonderful thing to be able to give them some information that is factually based to try to explain to them the way the rebate is apportioned.

In closing, I support the motion that has been moved to establish the committee but I also support the amendment to include the 8.35c Queensland based rebate because I think Queenslanders are confused, they are looking for information, and I think that this would be an ideal opportunity for us to get a better understanding of the application of that rebate within Queensland. I commend the motion.

**Mr McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (4.03 pm): I am pleased to make a brief contribution this afternoon in support of the Premier's motion to establish the Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee. I congratulate those members who have agreed to undertake this important work, in particular in relation to the issue of transparency of retail fuel pricing which has been a bugbear for many years.

In light of some of the comments made earlier in this debate by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I should just clarify for members what I have been up to, at least insofar as the Oil Vulnerability Task Force goes. I am currently chairing a multidepartmental task force considering Queensland's vulnerability to global oil depletion. The report of the task force is being prepared as a cabinet submission for information through the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and I hope to have the report finalised by the end of October. Although covering largely different ground and at a different level to that proposed for the select committee, to the extent that the terms of reference of the two committees do overlap it may be possible, with the consent of Minister Palaszczuk, for information gathered by my committee regarding the impact of a long-term irreversible rise in fuel prices and the viability of various demand restraint courses to be made available as a submission to the select committee.

The Oil Vulnerability Task Force has been utilising the expertise of scientists from the departments of Natural Resources and Mines, Energy, Primary Industries and Fisheries, Transport and Main Roads and Environment over the last four months and our work is at a relatively advanced stage. My task force is not considering the role of the federal government's fuel excise in the rise in the price of petrol, nor issues relating to road funding directly. However, like other members of this place, I know that these are issues of serious interest to my constituents and I look forward to reading the select committee's findings in due course. The Oil Vulnerability Task Force is concerned with the broader issue of energy availability over the next 10 years as global total oil production struggles and then ultimately fails to keep up with global demand and the effect of this widening gap between supply and demand on the people of Queensland.

I should state categorically that my task force is not considering the end of oil but rather the end of cheap energy. However, the same motivations that have necessitated the establishment of the select committee underpin the concerns of my task force, although the question under consideration is perhaps wider than fuel for cars and a consumer focus. For example, my committee is looking at the issues of how do delivery companies afford to drive if fuel is \$2, \$3 or \$4 a litre? How do farmers and professional fishers stay viable? John Olsen, from the Queensland Seafood Industry Association, just last week told me that the cost of fuel is already 50 per cent of the gross value of the catch of many trawler operators. How many more price rises will it take for their boats to be tied up for the last time? What happens to tourist towns like Hervey Bay if regional air carriers become nonviable? Virgin Blue, which has just started flying to Hervey Bay, last week downgraded its 2006 profit forecast, for the second time this year I note, by over 40 per cent due to rampant avgas price rises. What happens to our consumer society as the cost of plastics and pharmaceuticals and synthetic clothes begins to spiral due to irreversible oil price rises? These are the sorts of issues that my task force is grappling with, as well as the availability and viability of alternative, renewable and non-conventional fuels to plug gaps. I note for the record that, although cars can run on LPG or ethanol, the reality is that jet planes cannot; it is avgas or no go.

I sincerely hope that the select committee can help to broaden the awareness of the potential impacts of fuel price rises to the extent that its terms of reference allow. In particular, I commend the reference in clause 2(c) of the Premier's motion to identifying practical ways that consumers can reduce their petrol bills. I have no doubt that significant efforts at demand restraint will form an important part of my task force's recommendations, because in time all of the alternative, renewable and non-conventional sources of energy will not be sufficient to plug the gap left by declining oil and gas production and certainly not at the bargain basement prices that cheap oil has given us for over 100 years.

I welcome the select committee directing public debate to the issue of fuel affordability and ultimately fuel availability. The issue of managing resource depletion, be it fish, water or fuel for cars, homes and cities, is the biggest issue of our time. It is perhaps the only make or break issue that confronts us as a society. Failure to manage this challenge puts our civilisation at risk. As the astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle observed in a 1964 speech summing up the stakes regarding resource depletion—

This is a one-shot affair. If we fail, this planetary system fails, so far as intelligence is concerned. There will be one chance and one chance only.

Those are the stakes for resource depletion. I look forward to the select committee visiting Hervey Bay soon and I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—Lib) (4.09 pm): I rise today to support the motion proposed by the Premier and also the amendment proposed by the opposition. However, the support to the motion, as stated by the member for Moggill, is premised on the basis that it is not a witch-hunt of the federal government or any of the arms of the federal government. I was also quite concerned to hear two

members in the House today in their comments—the members for Thuringowa and Yeerongpilly—launch into a full-scale attack on John Howard and the federal government. In my opinion that does nothing to enhance the comments of the Premier that this committee be bipartisan and that it use a sensible and constructive approach in its deliberations. In my opinion, they have shown a bias even before the committee has met on the first occasion. I hope they realise that by showing bias they then tend to bring to the public attention that the committee has less credit and its conclusions are less reliable in finding a long-term solution to a real problem that affects many people across Queensland.

Having made those comments, it is also very important to understand that this committee is dealing with an issue or issues that do have long-term impacts and it is most important that it be approached on a non-political basis—that is, with a goal in mind to achieve a positive result for all in this state. If we open our eyes and look at the issue on a frank and honest basis on both a state and federal level, there is every likelihood for a real resolution or a series of resolutions to be formulated and put forward. I agree with the Premier: people in this state are hurting as a consequence of the increase in petrol prices and indications are that as long as world commodity prices increase so will the price of oil, and there is certainly no hint of either falling at this point in time. I take the comment by the member for Ipswich that we could well be facing petrol prices close to or in excess of \$2 a litre before the end of this year or early next year.

The Premier made the comment that this committee must act on a sensible and constructive basis, and I agree with that. It must be an approach by all members of the committee—whether they are Liberal, Labor, National Party, One Nation or Independent—that they seek honest and true answers to a real problem that afflicts many people throughout Queensland. The amendment proposed by the opposition is also equally commendable. It makes sense to incorporate issues that do have a direct impact upon the price of petrol in the state. It rounds out the debate and provides, in my opinion, a full and utter question to be asked and resolved.

There is no doubt that the cost of living in many ways in Queensland is increasing and that the cost of living is tied to petrol prices. Goods and services transported across this state are tied to the cost of petrol and those costs are inevitably passed on to the consumer. Those costs impact families, schools, corner shops, commercial enterprises and the cycle goes on and on. As the price of petrol increases, the costs of goods and services also increase. These increases are then passed back on to the community and are absorbed by the family purse.

One of the points raised by the member for Moggill is quite correct. To a large extent this is a federal issue and it is outside the jurisdiction of this state to make real and long-term solutions available. There are also issues of an international flavour that we in this state and in this parliament cannot control. There is certainly a jurisdictional issue, but I do agree that it is a debate that has to be had and it is a debate that the people of Queensland will be keenly looking to see the result of.

I also indicate that on the jurisdictional base there are even issues in Queensland itself that may not be able to be touched by this committee. State issues will be well and truly in the forefront, but there are also local government and federal government issues. There are also public issues and private issues. The main question I have is: where do the major fuel companies and the major industry players sit in the whole scenario of this select committee and its deliberations?

I conclude by making one further comment, and that is that it is very important that this debate and this select committee undertake its task with absolute bipartisanship. If we do not do so and it is seen by the public to be simply an exercise in scoring points, it will lose all credibility and it will simply have no standing in our community.

**Mr FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (4.14 pm): I rise in support of the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer. I have always been a believer in MPs being good listeners and not operating from behind desks but being out in the community. When we actually lace up the Nikes and knock on doors, we get information that outstrips top-line polling data any day. People in the community are talking about the impact of petrol pricing, and this inquiry is the vehicle to ask tough questions about the phenomenon of petrol pricing. Petrol prices do not just impact on the budget figured at the kitchen table, as so many other members have ably demonstrated today, but also on the budget figured at the cabinet table. The latest state accounts point to the dampening effect of petrol prices on economic growth. Petrol has an enduring inelastic demand. The price of petrol does not really affect its consumption. This is immediately reckoned. If people need to drive an hour from Pine Rivers into the city to work, they cannot adjust their demand for petrol. It is critical to their ability to earn a wage.

The effect of petrol price rises, therefore, hits directly the capacity of households to pay for other goods and services. More money on petrol means less money on household goods, most particularly felt through dampened retail turnover, and so the spiral goes. This detracts from demand in the economy and detracts from growth. Reduced consumer power reverberates throughout the economy, and this is especially important in the context of recent times when the resilience of our recent economic prosperity has been due in no small part to the buoyancy of household consumption. This is a real issue that transcends the kitchen table, the boardroom table and the cabinet table. Petrol remains a key input component to the functioning of households, business and the broader community.

In the context of sustained higher prices, we need to get to work on the efficient use of a scarce resource. That includes making sure that the market for petrol is operating properly. This goes to ensuring competition is present and reinforced by proper powers. It is also incumbent upon us to look, in this context, at alternative sources such as E10 and also, in recognising the impact of petrol prices on the household budget, we must ask the questions about the taxation of fuel—what level it is at and where the revenue is going.

The cruel impact of petrol prices on the household budget should be squarely on the agenda of any parliament that is in touch with the views of the community. The fact is that this is an issue in the broader community. When we who are to be members of this inquiry step outside this place, I am utterly convinced that we will find that this is at the forefront of community concern—from the kitchen table to the boardroom table—and we will need to bring that back to this parliament. I welcome the participation of the opposition, the Liberals and the Independents through the member for Gladstone and look forward to working with them on this inquiry. I commend the Premier and Treasurer's motion to the House.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (4.16 pm): I wish to speak briefly to this motion moved by the Premier this afternoon and amended by the Leader of the Opposition. In doing so, the main reason I want to speak to it is that I believe this has to be a wide-ranging debate and a wide-ranging inquiry. I say at the outset that I was fortunate to be selected by the Premier to be a member of the Palm Island parliamentary all-party committee to investigate ways and means of trying to get better outcomes for the people of Palm Island and the community of Palm Island. I found that a rewarding committee to be on. All members of that committee worked honestly and openly in a transparent way to try to get genuine outcomes for that community. Hopefully, in time, it may become a template for other Indigenous communities around the state.

This fuel inquiry is a similar situation. This issue affects all Queenslanders regardless of where we live. As a member representing a remote electorate in far-western Queensland—and I know that there are other members in the House who represent remote areas and country electorates—there is a cost impact on not only us as members of parliament but also our constituency. One of the biggest factors that is compounding costs for people in rural and remote Queensland today is the cost of fuel. There is no doubt about that. I spoke to one livestock transport operator—probably one of the larger and more professional operations in the state—and he told me that they have increased their surcharge on fuel by 12 per cent. Whilst that has gone up 12 per cent, he said that it should be going up more in real terms but he feels they cannot keep putting that cost on to the client. At the same time, fortunately, tyres are coming down in price for heavy transport, but fuel costs keep escalating.

This evening members in this House have raised the issue of roads. Roads in some of those western areas are deteriorating due to prolonged periods of drought, no rain and gravel formations falling to pieces because of heavy transport, large lifts of cattle et cetera. The situation gets progressively worse. Oil traffic and other heavy traffic in the country areas have been a significant factor in compounding the problems. Members of the proposed committee will have to travel the state to get first-hand information as to how complex this issue is and how the imposts are affecting everybody. I understand fully the imposts on people here in Brisbane. I heard the member for Moggill talking about being stalled in traffic as he journeys to work or travels on the roads in Brisbane. That is burning fuel and is a cost to industry and everybody.

I am genuine when I say that this issue affects people right across Queensland. One of my constituents told me that today a litre of diesel fuel costs \$1.36 at Bedourie. When that is multiplied by 3,000—that is how many litres it takes to fill a road train—it equates to many dollars. That cost has to be passed on to the consumer.

I drive a Toyota four-wheel drive wagon. It costs me anywhere from \$130 to \$160 every time I fill it. I might fill that vehicle a couple of times a week. Last year my fuel bill was in the vicinity of \$8,000. This year it will probably be closer to \$11,000 or \$12,000 because of the miles that I travel and the price of fuel. That is an example of the cost in rural and regional Queensland. That is a cost to the farming industry, which has endured prolonged droughts, and to the transport industry, which carries the commodities produced.

I refer to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I plead with the Premier to identify whether Queensland motorists are receiving the full benefit of the 8.354c per litre subsidy. It is absolutely paramount that we keep that component to benefit Queensland motorists and Queensland industry. This is an issue that affects all Queenslanders. I am genuine about seeing that this committee gets the full support of this parliament to give it the power to conduct a full investigation of this complex industry. If we give this committee the proper powers to conduct a thorough investigation, the cowboy element—the crook element—within this industry could be found out. That has to be brought into the light because people are still abusing the system. Through its investigations and travels this committee will find that out. I wish the committee well as it pursues its inquiry across Queensland. Hopefully we will have some genuine outcomes from that investigation that will be advantageous to all Queenslanders, regardless of where they live.

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (4.22 pm), in reply: I want to thank members of the House for supporting in general terms the motion that has been moved. I want to address a number of things. The Leader of the Opposition asked why this has suddenly become relevant now. There is very good reason. We have not been paying \$1.20 per litre up until now.

**Mr Johnson:** Or more.

**Mr BEATTIE:** In fact, where the honourable member for Gregory comes from it is more. Up until now we felt that there were matters that needed to be investigated nationally. I refute the nonsense from the Leader of the Opposition that there does not need to be a national inquiry. For God's sake, these fuel prices and standards are set nationally; they are not set within Queensland. It is just politically naive and stupid, frankly, to suggest that a state based inquiry on its own can produce all the answers. It cannot. There is only one inquiry that can produce all the answers, and that is a national inquiry. The federal government has consistently refused to conduct one, so we are coming to the second best thing, that is, a Queensland select committee of this parliament to look at the issues.

A select committee is the second best thing. I am not going to pretend it is otherwise, but it is better than doing nothing. That is why it is so important. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that there is a very clear reason this needs to be done at a state level, notwithstanding all of the limitations of it, and that is that we have now reached \$1.20 a litre. I think that is commonsense. Anyone could see the reason for that.

The second point I want to make is this: when he spoke to this motion, Mr Horan suggested that we had politicised this debate in some way, which I totally reject. He should have a look at the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. It is worded in such a way that, in my view, it clearly strikes a political position and a political agenda.

**Mr Horan:** How?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am happy to go through it if the member opposite wants to waste time on it. The amendment states 'refund the state based excise resulting in Queensland not having a petrol tax and examine the efficiency and administration of the bulk end users'. What relevance does it have to what previously used to happen? It has no relevance. Previously we did not have a petrol tax. That is fine, but what is the point? Is that some sort of political point that is being made? Of course it is. We have never had a petrol tax. But why say that?

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Just be patient. If the member is really serious, why did he not say 'identify whether Queensland motorists are receiving the full benefit of the 8.354c per litre subsidy'? Why not do that?

**Mr Horan:** I would be happy to do that.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Okay. Because I want to get bipartisan support—and I have just had an indication from the member for Gladstone that she would support that—if the member opposite is prepared to support that, I will amend the motion to include those words because I do not want this to be a nonsense.

**Mr Horan:** I support it, too.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I move—

Identify whether Queensland motorists are receiving the full benefit of the 8.354c per litre subsidy.

Hopefully we can get a unanimous position in this parliament, which is what I want. At the end of this I do not want to play politics. I simply want to get to the heart of the problem. In the interests of getting some credibility and some bipartisanship, I am prepared to move that amendment.

**Mr Reynolds:** I will second the amendment.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member for Gregory and I had a discussion prior to the Palm Island inquiry. He said to me that he would play it straight down the line, which is exactly what he did. I thank him for that. It was a good report and he ought to be congratulated. Earlier I congratulated the member for Southport as chairman. I congratulate all committee members. That is what we want for this committee.

Honourable members have to remember that some things are actually beyond politics. We represent the most decentralised state in Australia. If we represented New South Wales or Victoria in the federal or state parliament our perspective on the world would be different. We are the only mainland state in which most people live outside the capital. That means that the member for Gladstone has particular issues in her electorate that need to be focused on here in Brisbane and argued in Brisbane. The constituents of the member for Gregory need to be given a say, too. If he was in Sydney or Melbourne they would be basically ignored. That is why I am determined while I am Premier that Queenslanders everywhere will get a fair go.

I am pleased in particular that the member for Gladstone has agreed to be on this committee. I am pleased to see that the former leader of the opposition will also be on it. He understands these issues pretty well. We have a good team from the government. We have Dr Flegg from the Liberal Party. I think this is actually a good committee. In the interest of some goodwill, I have moved the amendment so we can get some agreement on this.

Just in passing, the reason I did not put the 8.354c a litre subsidy in the motion originally was that we went through some reforms on this a few years ago. At that time we made a change. When we made that change I thought we had dealt with most of the issues. It was our decision at the time to pay the 8.3c a litre subsidy directly to retailers instead of wholesalers to stop subsidised fuel being transported interstate. We thought that reform had achieved a better outcome. If the committee can find that the 8.354c per litre is not being passed on, I will make whatever legislative changes are necessary to enforce it. I give the member opposite that clear commitment today. I want to ensure motorists get that money.

I think that amendment demonstrates my goodwill on this matter. I would urge the committee members to make sure they focus on the other parts of those terms of reference. We have to look at ethanol, at encouraging people to use public transport and at the federal taxation position. We have to look at all of those positions. If I ask them to do one thing, I ask them to do this: please ensure you give each one of the terms of reference equal billing in your considerations. Do not focus on just one or part of them.

I was a little concerned that, once a subsidy is referred to, there is the temptation to focus all of our attention on that. That is also why I did not include the subsidy initially in the motion. I do not want all of the attention to be focused on the subsidy. If we simply deal with that limited part of petrol pricing, we will miss the big picture. That is why it is important that we look at the total picture, not a small part of it. By accepting that amendment, I think that I have dealt with most of the matters that were raised by the member for Gregory.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Fouras): Order! Premier, can I suggest that you move an amendment to the amendment and then we will go through that process.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I will move an amendment to the amendment that will say, 'All words after "litre" be removed and the word "subsidy" be added.' So the amended motion would state—

(g) Identify whether Queensland motorists are receiving the full benefit of the 8.354 cents per litre subsidy.

That would be my amendment.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is fine.

**Mr Horan:** Can you keep the part in about the bulk end and off-road users?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I will have to take some advice on the ramifications of that. I do not have any great drama about that. To finalise the amendment, I suggest we have in the wording the following—

(g) Identify whether Queensland motorists are receiving the full benefit of the 8.354 cents per litre subsidy and examine the efficiency of administration for the bulk end users scheme.

Therefore, we take out the words—

...refund of state-based excise resulting from Queensland previously not having a petrol tax.

I will take that bit out. We will let the members opposite have a little win on it on the understanding that we look at every aspect of this and on the understanding that we have bipartisan support to get a real answer.

The final point I want to make is that Dr Flegg made a remark and I have to reply to it. He asked how much will the committee cost. Obviously, we have a responsibility to try to spell that out. I want to say to Dr Flegg—and I am sorry he is not here—that he has had a lot to say about the Morris royal commission. That is fair enough. But I have never heard him complain once about the cost of it. The cost has been in excess of \$5 million. I stand by the expenditure of every cent and every dollar on that royal commission. My government set the commission up and I support that expenditure.

This select committee will cost nowhere near that amount. But frankly if we have to pay for committee members to visit Rockhampton, Cairns, Townsville, Thuringowa, Longreach, the Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast or other parts of Queensland and they go to the expense of holding public meetings—and there is a cost involved in having public meetings: you have to advertise and you have to invite people to make submissions—the cost is not going to be chickenfeed. Of course the committee will cost money. Frankly, we have not yet budgeted for it, but as Treasurer I give an undertaking that we will deal with the parliament on these matters to make sure that the committee is appropriately funded. Of course, there is going to be a cost to this committee.

I just say to Dr Flegg, for heaven's sake, think of how much the current price of petrol is costing every family every day. What are we supposed to do? If we follow Dr Flegg's argument, this parliament costs money. It costs money to fly the member for Gladstone to this parliament. So let us close the whole place down.

**Mrs Liz Cunningham:** Broom.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Or drive—however the member gets here. The point is that it is ridiculous to suggest that we should not spend money on trying to get to the bottom of things. I tell Dr Flegg—wherever he is—that democracy costs money. The reality is that, if we want to give people in the bush and the regions a go, then it is going to cost money. Yes, we will have a budget. We will deal with it. I move the amendment to the amendment to the original motion.

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.33 pm): I second the amendment to the amendment to the motion.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (4.33 pm): I move—

That the following Members be appointed to the Impact of Petrol Pricing Select Committee—

Mr Fraser (Chair), Member for Mount Coot-tha

Mrs E Cunningham, Member for Gladstone

Mr Finn, Member for Yeerongpilly

Dr Flegg, Member for Moggill

Mr Horan, Member for Toowoomba South

Ms Nolan, Member for Ipswich

Mr Wallace, Member for Thuringowa

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.34 pm): I second the motion.

Motion agreed to.

## **SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN**

Resumed from p. 2793.

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (4.34 pm): I am very pleased to speak in support of the regulatory provisions of the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026. The plan and the associated South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan is unprecedented in this state's history. It is a comprehensive blueprint for the future to ensure sensible development while promoting a quality of life that is the envy of many people, as evidenced by the fact that each year on average 55,000 new residents move into the south-east corner.

The plan contains 20-year budget allocations compared with the usual three-year cycle that most governments work on. The plan delivers on this government's promise to protect 80 per cent of south-east Queensland from urban development. The plan and regulatory provisions very responsibly identify investigation areas, such as the Mount Lindesay-North Beaudesert study area. This is forward thinking and it is very important forward thinking for future planning in our outer south area.

One of the major growth areas has been in my electorate of Algeria. My electorate is an economic and transport hub of south-east Queensland. I grew up in this area so I have seen first-hand the growth. I used to go yabbying and swimming in some of the creeks in the bushland areas that are now home to many thousands of people or local industry. The challenge is always to get the environmental and economic balance right. We know that this sort of bushland environment will not last forever in all of our areas, but certainly it is very important to strike a balance. That is what this plan is all about.

The changes that have occurred in my area have seen lots of jobs created and innovative communities such as the wonderful Forest Lake, Calamvale and Parkinson areas—the new growth areas in my electorate. I am committed, and I know that the entire government is committed, to ensuring that the growth in south-east Queensland has a positive impact on the quality of life of my local residents.

As a down payment on maintaining this quality of life, I am pleased to see that the associated infrastructure plan for south-east Queensland allocates \$25 million to fix the grade separation that is needed at the Acacia Ridge rail crossing. I will not let up on my call for the federal government to match this commitment so that that project can proceed. It is a national rail crossing over a state road. Both levels of government must work together. I again urge the local federal member to join local residents in the campaign to get this \$50 million project off the ground.

The transport needs of residents and industries is one of the pressing issues for south-east Queensland, and particularly within my local area. We need to get more freight from our local industries onto trains, not onto trucks. That is what the current proposal by Queensland Rail at Parkinson, in my area, is all about. Queensland Rail is considering building two rail track sidings off an existing rail line to service the new warehouse tenants. The proposed sidings would service the tenants of the growing warehouse precinct, the aim being to move more of that freight onto trains and not into trucks to reduce the need for the trucks to travel into that area. That is something that local residents have been calling for. The proposal is at a prelodgment phase. No development application will be finalised until all of the necessary environmental studies, including noise and vegetation studies, are completed. If it is to proceed through to a development application, the proposal has to stack up. Consultation with local residents is very important and it would be a key part of the development application process.

In order to preserve the local environment, QR is proposing to hand over a 70-hectare, 500-metre wide environment corridor to the Brisbane City Council or another responsible body. This is good, balanced development. Responsible planning involves the active involvement of local residents and accurate information being given to local people based on evidence and facts. I know that any development proposal causes angst in some people. I accept that in my local area many people are worried. They are partly worried because there is some irresponsible fearmongering by Liberal Party members going on in my local area under the leadership of a former political candidate, Angela Owen-Taylor. She is promoting fiction, not facts. I think she said that something like 85 houses will be resumed. That is total nonsense. There will be no resumptions. I have had that commitment from Queensland Rail. It is irresponsible and untruthful behaviour. Ms Owen-Taylor is saying that this area will become a national freight yard. That is totally irresponsible behaviour. We are talking about two 800-metre rail sidings. I condemn the actions of the member for Moggill for coming into my patch and aiding and fuelling that fearmongering. He can go and cause fear in his own area, not mine.

I encourage local residents to have their say. I encourage them to advocate and raise their concerns. That is a healthy part of democracy when people do that. It is important that we continue our consultation. It is important that we continue to do it on the basis of fact and responsible behaviour. People are sick and tired of political point-scoring. I reaffirm my commitment to work on our south-east Queensland planning issues responsibly and openly with local residents, including the local proposal in Parkinson. I commend the work that this government has done to have such a forward-thinking south-east Queensland planning process.

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (4.40 pm): I am very pleased to rise to speak about the South East Queensland Regional Plan. I thank the Premier for standing up here and telling us that what we are talking about today is a plan that will 'safeguard the future of this wonderful region'. This provides one with a very wide scope to look into the future of the 280- by 140-kilometre area that is the south-east corner. What one realises is that, after seven years of government, the Labor government is now just deciding that it should plan for the rapid growth that is expected in the south-east corner.

I acknowledge the former Deputy Premier for at least having the courage in this place to do something about planning, for having the courage to make a fist of something that has been neglected by the rest of the government for so long. However, just as it may be a sad day for Mr Beattie, the Premier, as he will have to have his hands dirtied by factional battles and friction, it is a sad day for the south-east corner as the last pair of remotely responsible hands have passed the responsibility for carrying out the South East Queensland Regional Plan to the Premier and, in some other respects, to the minister for everything else, the Deputy Premier, who if history repeats itself will simply walk away from the job and into another one if things are not going to plan.

In true Labor style the government has promoted this infrastructure plan in its usual smoke-and-mirrors way. It all sounds good and looks great on paper, with the funky artwork and the innovative language that probably cost as much to put together as a small stretch of highway. But, in the end, a large number of the initiatives, or at least the initiatives for the next five years, are initiatives that had been announced prior to the plan. Any new initiatives are not going to be done for a number of years. The plan has also provided the Labor government with an opportunity to put back projects that have been earmarked to be completed in the next few years or put back projects that have been on the cards in the past. When confronted with this, the government says, 'Well, it is in the South East Queensland Regional Plan. It will be done by 2026.' However, if it had been done when the government said it would be done, the problems would be fixed now and not later and the growing pains that south-east Queensland is currently experiencing would not be happening.

There are, of course, a number of projects that have been missed out in the plan and that will now not be on the table for another 20 years. Gold Coast members will be very aware of traffic issues in my electorate of Surfers Paradise because they affect many people on the Gold Coast. Bundall Road at the Ashmore Road intersection and the Monaco Street bridge duplication are not on the radar screen because they are not in the South East Queensland Regional Plan. Those traffic issues affect many residents of the Gold Coast morning and evening. All in all, south-east Queensland should be appreciative that this plan has come about and that there is some structure to the way that the south-east will grow up over the next few years.

Aside from the big ticket transport and health infrastructure, I would like to briefly raise in the House a pet area of mine and something that needs to be addressed in depth and given significant weight in the next five to 10 years. I note that the regional plan says that by 2026 we will have reduced our water usage by 25 per cent per person per day. While I think that is fantastic—and if it were to come about, it would go a long way towards helping the water problems we face and will face—more needs to be done. One cannot clean a window just by cleaning the inside. The hard work must be done to build more dams and more water infrastructure to help the south east. More than that, looking beyond the 2026 deadline, planning needs to start in the next five to 10 years for the next phase of water infrastructure that will help Queensland for 20 years after that, such is the nature of building water infrastructure.

Australia is the world's driest continent and Queensland is even worse off than many other parts of the country. Water is the most precious resource we have and with a changing climate and more erratic and sparse rainfall we must do everything we can from this place, aside from rain dances and cloud seeding, to ensure that we maximise the water we have. This may also include looking into ways of recycling water for agriculture as they do in other parts of the world rather than simply letting it run off. It is now time to get smart with water and realise that we do not have enough to take it for granted. I encourage the Premier and the government to stop using smoke and mirrors and be serious about where Queensland is headed.

**Hon. KR LINGARD** (Beauresert—NPA) (4.44 pm): Because my electorate goes from the high urban areas of Logan Village and Browns Plains to the magnificent rural areas of Mount Tamborine to the New South Wales border, taking in Boonah, Kooralbyn and Peak Crossing and those areas north of Boonah, there has been a mixed reaction to both the regional plan and the infrastructure plan. I believe that the Beauresert and Boonah councils are happy that at last they have been given a general outline of where their urban development should be, and that decision has been made for them. But in the areas north of Boonah where some people have over 100 hectares, especially farms where dairying is not viable, there is concern that they cannot subdivide in the future, particularly when we are going to see massive development in the Ripley area, including industrial development, and I support that.

So between Boonah and Ipswich there is a group of people with magnificent properties who, as there are currently very few viable industries for them, are looking at subdivision for the future. There is a concern for some families who genuinely want to subdivide for family members. That was once done. I have made several applications but they have been declined, and these people no longer have the ability to subdivide for their families. That can be quite harsh. As we find with all legislation, anomalies occur. Because house prices around Boonah and Beauresert are increasing, there is an obvious demand for subdivision. In this respect, the regional plan and infrastructure plan have clearly hurt some people in those areas. But, as I said, generally the Beauresert council and people in that area are happy.

I congratulate the government for at least reviewing the plan for the Mount Lindesay-Beauresert area, so there will be a delay until April next year at which time decisions will be made on the development in that area. I do not think either the council or the government realise the amount of growth that is going to occur in the northern part of Beauresert. I will give the government its due. It has openly said that the review is not complete, and it will wait now until April next year.

I note the comments by the Premier this morning about the dams. Obviously the best site was always the Wolffdene dam site. That was a purely political decision which is now rebounding on all of us in south-east Queensland. The beauty of the Wolffdene dam site was that it would have been close to urban development such as Beenleigh and Brisbane. The water would not have to be taken too far by pipes, which is obviously costly. The water could have come down the creek and river system. It would have been a cheaper dam to build, cheaper to maintain and certainly cheaper in terms of the price of water in the future. But that decision has been made.

I congratulated Ed Casey as the then minister for primary industries for the speed with which he developed the plan for Glendower dam. All of that land was resumed and everyone accepted that the Glendower dam would be built. However, the government went cold on Glendower. I note that the government is again talking about Glendower. I believe that Glendower dam, being on a different river system—it is not on the Logan River; it is on the Albert River, which services Canungra—would be more reliable. The hurt about Glendower is that the water would not be beneficial to the people of Beauresert or Canungra, who are also desperate for water. The dam would be built by the Brisbane and Area Water Board, and therefore the water would be used by the Gold Coast and Brisbane. So there would be no benefit to the people of Beauresert, even though the dam would be located there. I have no doubt that Beauresert itself would have benefited from some of the new roads that would have been built.

It is the site for the Wyaralong dam that amazes me and amazes people in that area. There is no doubt that Wyaralong—the dam was originally going to be called the Brahford dam because someone saw a Brahmin-Hereford cross down there, but the name was changed to Wyaralong dam—has never been seen as a great site for a dam. Even now the people are amazed. Even now I am sure that most of that money has been allocated in the budget for the purchase of areas around Wyaralong.

Wyaralong, being on the Teviot river system and feeding into the Logan River system, is completely different to Glendower and to the old Wolffdene site. If it is that Wyaralong is going to be a dam, it has to be finalised quickly, and decided quickly, because the people of the area do not believe that Wyaralong is viable. It is quite amazed at the government's decision. The government says that it is still at least 26 years away but no-one has even decided whether the Wyaralong is viable. So I think that there should be a decision made quickly about Wyaralong.

Similarly, people do not see the Cedar Creek weir as a viable option; they see it as only a very small option. I am amazed that 93 per cent of the Logan River goes out into the ocean. To think that we cannot harness and use 93 per cent of the water of the Logan is quite amazing. I would say to the government that the best site would clearly be behind Bromelton, in behind Beauresert, because that

water would not be water from the Maroon Dam but from the tributaries down creek from the Maroon Dam. When we have very rainy times, especially around Beaudesert, I believe that, as creeks such as Christmas Creek and those in behind the Lamington Plateau bring their water down the Logan, some of that water should be stored at Bromelton. If water comes into the Maroon Dam area, that water can be captured and used but it is the water that lands in the Christmas Creek areas that I believe is escaping at this stage. The National Party and the Liberal Party in coalition certainly stated in their reviews that the next dam that should be built in that area was the Bromelton. Unfortunately, when we lost power the ALP did not implement that particular suggestion.

The workshops which have been conducted in the northern part of Beaudesert should allow the Beaudesert shire to continue to be extremely viable as far as their rates system is concerned. This area has developed rapidly but it needs not just the development of the urban areas but also the road structure to be finalised. It is this particular area where the Hancock forest—the old area—is to be developed with supposedly more than 30,000 people coming into the area. I believe that we need the government and the councils to make a decision very quickly about whether this new town developed at the Hancock forest behind Logan Village should be built, because it is going to affect the roadworks.

The one thing that those people should not be able to do is go across to Beenleigh, join the M1 and use only a small part of the M1 as they go down to areas like Southport and Surfers Paradise. Those people should link up very quickly with Smith Road so that they are not just using the M1 for a very short distance. Because, if that is allowed, then clearly the M1 in the future will not be viable within itself. That will mean that people coming from Sydney along the National Highway will probably have to come to Coffs Harbour and then come up through Beaudesert as the National Highway. There is no doubt in my mind that in the future, even though there are eight lanes and the M1 is a magnificent road, it will not be enough to carry national traffic and local traffic, especially from the Hancock forest area. They would have to go across to Surfers Paradise. We must have overpasses to bypass them.

Industrial land is in great shortage. I am amazed at the people who come to Beaudesert who say that they have looked around Beenleigh, they have looked around Browns Plains and there is just no industrial land available. That makes areas around Bromelton, which is to the west of Beaudesert, between Beaudesert and Boonah, extremely viable in the future. The big trucking companies coming from the south probably realise that Acacia Ridge is not going to be viable in the future and that areas around Bromelton should be developed. It is good to see that in this infrastructure plan and the regional plan they have made comments about Bromelton.

An area which is difficult to determine is that of Mount Tamborine. There is an overriding plan in place at Mount Tamborine with the requirement that all local area plans be rewritten to the consistency of the regional plan included in the local area plans of the Beaudesert shire strategic plan, of which the Tambourine mountain development control plan forms a part. When the draft regional plan was established, it was criticised by the people at Mount Tamborine who are very jealous about what happens in their area.

The Office of Urban Management has produced a definitive regional plan which broadly affects the present DCP and outlying areas suitable for various terms of development. The regional plan referred to a forest escarpment area, and some rural production areas in the plateau are more rigorously protected from development by the DCP. It is my own opinion that we need a local area plan which continues to support the principle of the DCP, particularly with regard to the urban and rural residential areas.

The people of Mount Tamborine are concerned. Having made submissions, they do not believe their submissions were looked at as far as this final plan is concerned. I think Mount Tamborine is a very special area. I know that the development plan probably allows for a projected enrolment of about 9,500 people at Mount Tamborine. Mount Tamborine is a special area. Over the weekend thousands of people come and enjoy the delights of Mount Tamborine, whether it be the forests or whether it be the small crafts in that area. Certainly the urban footprint, rural living areas and regional landscape and rural production areas have to be looked at very closely in this beautiful area of south-east Queensland. We have the very special areas of Canungra, Kooralbyn and Tambourine mountain. I believe that as long as the OUM is significantly developed with the thoughts of the people in mind it will be a great thing for all that area.

I did not mention Boonah. The one thing about Boonah and Beaudesert is the difficulties we have with water. If it is that Wyaralong is developed, we have to remember that those sorts of dams do not help the local area. They will be areas which will be used by the Brisbane area water board. When the Moogerah Dam gets to about 10 or 11 per cent, the water is immediately siphoned off to Swanbank, and Swanbank uses its big dams there to store water. When Moogerah is 10 per cent, then people can use it for skiing. Moogerah needs to be about 25 per cent before water can be used for agricultural irrigation. It is probably at least three to four years now since anyone has received any irrigation water from the Moogerah Dam. That dam was built for agricultural viability, and having not got to 25 per cent means that the rural people there have not had water for at least 3½ years. But they still have to pay maintenance costs for the system that is there and these costs are continually rising. I say to the

government that I realise the rules have always been that until it gets to 25 per cent the agricultural people cannot use the water. But it is heartbreaking for them to see the dam sometimes increase to 11 per cent and all of a sudden that water is taken by Swanbank. Swanbank has other alternatives. Swanbank can go to the Wivenhoe but it has always used the Moogerah water. If Swanbank does not use the water, it means that the farmers have to pay extra prices. I know it is a catch-22 situation, but people must appreciate that people in those areas are extremely concerned.

In terms of water development, whether it be the Teviot Brook or the Wyaralong, some quick decisions must be made. I am concerned by the way the government continues to talk about what it is doing for dams when I know full well that there is no real intention of developing the Wyaralong at this stage. It has virtually put it on the plan and said, 'We will look at it and see if it can be developed.' I am concerned because the people of that area do not believe that dam will be viable in the future.

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (4.59 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Premier, and in doing so I provide the parliament with the positive effects that will flow to the electorate of Aspley from the South East Queensland Regional Plan. The regulatory provisions that we are seeking to ratify here today support the intent of the plan and as such underpin the hopes and expectations we have for the continued implementation of the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

Aspley is the gateway to Brisbane from the north. It is a middle to outer urban community that is a diverse mix of convenient accessibility to a wide choice of services and facilities that are found in a large city like Brisbane. It also has access to beautiful natural environments. It combines a near city convenience with the benefit of a community that is home to valuable waterways and important animal and flora habitats.

Aspley electorate areas such as the Tinchy Tamba Wetlands, Cabbage Tree Creek and Downfall Creek catchment, and the North and South Pine rivers are a vital part of south-east Queensland's waterways. The Pine Rivers koala habitat is a critical environment for the survival of the koala. Any service that somebody would want can be found in downtown Aspley, yet people can fish and see unique wildlife in our own backyards and get to the beach in 15 minutes. At the same time we are home to a number of vital extractive industries that are important to south-east Queensland's building needs. These industries need to live side by side with our important environmental treasures.

We are an area that attracts a considerable number of new residents who are keen to take advantage of our community. We have seen extensive new developments in Carseldine, Bridgeman Downs, Bald Hills and Strathpine over the last few years. Everybody wants to live there, and why not? Land space is becoming scarce. Small lots are the order of the day. Our populations are growing in schools, health facilities, businesses and on our roads. The challenges are many.

In addition to the increase in our own local traffic, we are beset by the difficulty that Aspley is the thoroughfare for the burgeoning communities of Pine Rivers, Caboolture and the Sunshine Coast, which are all on route to the city. The sign above my electorate office on Gympie Road is, I understand, the most sighted parliamentary office sign in Queensland. It explains why I am so busy.

In considering the plan, the single most important issue to the Aspley people in relation to the south-east Queensland plan is to improve and sustain the quality of life that must be derived from a well planned south-east corner. The challenges are big and are upon us now. There is no room for delay. Ratification of these regulations will enable the work to continue without delay.

Inherent in the success of the plan is the commitment of the Beattie government to give protection and attention not only to our most important areas of environment, health, education, water management and urban sprawl but also to our vital transport infrastructure needs. None is more important than the commitment to encourage both the use of public transport to keep cars out of our suburbs and the development of regional business hubs in areas like Strathpine, Chermside and Caboolture to name a few. The Beattie government's commitment to improve public transport services and improve roads is evident in the announcements made in the Brisbane North and Aspley electorate TransLink plans. They are real and tangible and are being delivered in my electorate.

The Linkfield Road connection project has been fast-tracked by our government and is due for completion early next year. This will take 64,000 cars off Strathpine Road. It is a huge commitment to road traffic management now and in the future. It will make an immense improvement in the traffic problems that we currently experience. The extension of the northern busway to Aspley and the success of the TransLink oversight of transport services are about delivering to my community better and more user friendly public transport.

It is my community's view that one of the most significant elements of the South East Queensland Regional Plan that will make a positive difference is the encouragement and planning of regional hubs that will create employment where people live. The single-minded drive each morning of 75 per cent of the Pine Rivers and Caboolture community through to the Brisbane city centre for work is a challenge that will be countered by the creation of employment where people live. In my mind the challenge is not always to build more roads and infrastructure but rather to build business and employment opportunities so that people can work and travel to work closely within their community. In my mind this is one of the

most significant issues that will resolve the problems that we have with traffic. The south-east Queensland plan recognises this as critical to the success of the plan.

Our government's joint commitment with the Pine Rivers Shire Council to revitalise Strathpine city centre through a million-dollar investment in streetscape, the movement of disability services into Strathpine and the new courthouse being built in the centre is our bricks and mortar commitment to the growth of Strathpine as a regional business hub within my electorate. All are signs of the planning success already put in place by the Beattie government, which are further explored and prioritised in the plan.

The south-east Queensland plan is further and fundamental evidence that the Beattie government is a government committed to the long-term prosperity of the south-east corner and for the entire state and, most importantly, to the quality of the life of the people who live particularly in my electorate. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.04 pm): I would like to speak to the South East Queensland Regional Plan regulatory provisions. It says that the Office of Urban Management was established in February 2004 to report to then Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth. The south-east Queensland corner has been attracting an average of 55,000 new residents each year for the past two decades. A million more people are expected to settle into the region by 2026. That is a huge number of people. Concerns have also been expressed about there being a 200 kilometre city extending from the Sunshine Coast to the New South Wales border if growth was not properly planned.

The Office of Urban Management's main task has been to develop a South East Queensland Regional Plan, which is essentially a growth management strategy. I believe that there are many ways to help solve and alleviate the congestion in south-east Queensland—that is, we need to provide infrastructure and manage the decline in rural and regional Queensland. The influx of people who pour into the south-east are not just from the south of Brisbane. They are not just from New South Wales or Victoria. They are also from western Queensland and northern Queensland. We also need to provide that infrastructure in those rural and regional towns.

I will give an example from the town of Hughenden. In 1989 there were 921 voters. In 1995 there were 812 voters. In 2004 there were 697 voters. Those people are not moving to other regional towns because the towns are declining. Some of them are moving to south-east Queensland. That is why I believe it is very important that we seal our unsealed roads, that we provide water infrastructure and that we keep the services that we do have in those rural and regional towns. That will relieve the congestion in the south-east corner. We had railway stations—for example, from Charters Towers, Southern Cross, Balfes Creek, Homestead and Prairie. They are all gone. They have closed down. The stations provided jobs for the community. When they were closed down the residents left because they did not have jobs. They find another place to go. Sometimes they go to the south-east corner.

I will give an example with Moranbah housing. There are a lot of people there who come from Brisbane and there are a lot of people who come from the south-east corner, but there is a lack of water. There is no water. They have not had a decent water supply for at least 16 years. They have been calling for water infrastructure but that has not been provided. It was looked at whether to build single men's quarters, but the water supply cannot be guaranteed. At the present time there is a \$350 million housing development proposal. That has been stopped by the state government.

We are trying to get people from the south-east corner to move to places such as Moranbah; to get people to move to the northern regions and to move to western Queensland. It has been stopped and prevented because it is believed that that development will close over a mining lease. I am for mining and I recognise the contribution that mining makes. However, I do believe a fine line needs to be drawn between expanding mining operations close to a township and protecting the quality of life for mining town residents. Families need the assurance that they can live and enjoy the quality of life that Moranbah has to offer without being subjected to contaminated dust.

**Mr WALLACE:** I rise to a point of order. I seek your guidance on this. I am wondering if the mining activities in Moranbah have any relation to the south-east Queensland plan. I seek some direction from your good self, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Copeland): The member has been talking about the influx of people into the south-east corner and the need to provide infrastructure around the state as well.

**Mr KNUTH:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is what we are doing. We are looking for strategies to solve the problem of growth in the south-east corner. We are here to bring that to the attention of the House.

People should not be subjected to contaminated dust, airborne silicon, excessive noise, lights and other health risks associated with 24 hour open-cut mining operations on their doorstep. My concern is that people with ailing conditions that are affected by these contaminated dusts which will inundate homes will leave the mining towns in droves and move elsewhere. We want to encourage people to the mining towns. We want jobs in the mining towns. We want water infrastructure in the mining towns. We want to provide incentives to bring people out of the south-east corner into the north

and west of Queensland. To do that we have to provide water infrastructure, jobs and build power stations. We are not necessarily after more services; we want to retain the ones we have. I want to bring that to the attention of the House.

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—Lib) (5.10 pm): I rise to support the motion here today. I note that the regulations were tabled on 11 July this year and are required to be ratified by this House within 14 sitting days. The regulations cover the south-east regional plan—that is, those cities and shires covered by SEQROC—and we are going to see throughout those areas over the next 10 to 20 years massive changes driven by population growth. That population growth will also bring with it enormous changes in commerce, an enormous number of houses being constructed, commercial entities and dwellings, and other items being put in place.

Of course, with this growth also comes a number of risks and the major risk is land misuse by way of development. The urban spread, unless it is controlled by a mechanism, could be of untold proportions, massive high-rise complexes or exceptionally large areas of housing development. With that, of course, comes the degradation of the environment, which is of major concern not only to ourselves but also to those who will follow us in the future. Coupled with that will be the use and the wastage of water, which is a major infrastructure item that we do need to take into account in the next few years to cater for that population and commercial development and also to look to the future. As such, it is essential that there be a control mechanism put in place and that is, in fact, what the south-east regional plan and infrastructure plan will do.

If the south-east Queensland region under SEQROC is not able to cope with the changes that are coming and continues to become larger in the foreseeable years there could well be a domino effect throughout the balance of Queensland. If we do not get it right in the south-east corner the effect is going to be multiplied throughout the balance of the state. We simply cannot afford to allow that to occur.

When one looks at attempting to control or at least put into context the growth of south-east Queensland, it is not just the use of land itself that we need to take into account; we also have to ensure that those who are coming here, those who will live here, those who are to be born here and those who are to work here have the resources and infrastructure to fulfil their lives and to enable them to undertake their work tasks in a suitable environment. Those items incorporate water, sewerage, roads, rail, hospitals, police stations, schools, just to name a few. In addition to the use of land and the planning for the use of land, there is also the necessity for planning in regard to the infrastructure needs of the future.

If I might quickly turn to the Sunshine Coast, we find that over the next 20-odd years we are going to have a population increase of somewhere between 250,000 to 300,000 people leading to a population base of somewhere around half a million people. Of course, half a million people on the Sunshine Coast is going to bring with it diversified economic needs and a population demographic that is completely different from what we have there today. This growth, in fact, will be spectacular. It has been in the past and will be in the foreseeable future.

As a consequence, I want to turn to the infrastructure documentation produced by this government and, in particular, look at the Sunshine Coast. Firstly in relation to public transport connections, if we go to that document we see that the Caloundra to Maroochydore quality bus corridor and public transport stations will not be built until 2014-15; the CAMCOS rail corridor, Beerwah to Maroochydore, is to be constructed by 2025-26; the TransLink subregional station upgrade program is to be constructed by 2014-15; the additional rail line, Caboolture to Beerburum to Landsborough, by 2014-15; and the additional rail line, Landsborough to Nambour by 2025-26. So here we have the public transport needs for the Sunshine Coast and my opinion being totally neglected by this government. In fact, what we have here is a minimum period of 10 years from today's date before any of those items will be up and running on an effective basis. In that period of time, however, we see the population increasing dramatically.

We then turn to Caloundra itself and we find Caloundra Road, one of the major arterial roads into Caloundra and the Sunshine Coast, will not be opened until 2008-9. This is a road that carries well over 30,000 to 40,000 motor vehicles per day on average. This is a road that is, as I said, a major road into Caloundra but again has been totally ignored by this government and has been since it gained power in 1998. The Caloundra-Mooloolaba Road, the new link from Creekside Boulevard to Sunshine Motorway, will be constructed by 2025-26. We debated earlier today the issue of the rising cost of petrol and here we find that the public transport needs of the Sunshine Coast have been totally neglected. It is an absolute disgrace that public transport issues will not be resolved until 2014-15 or 2025-26.

If we turn to the issue of the health needs of the Sunshine Coast we find that the new hospital at Sippy Downs will not open its doors until 2014-15. How absolutely disgraceful is that? This new hospital should have been on the board years ago. Nambour Hospital is a wonderful hospital in the sense that the doctors and nurses provide a wonderful service, but we need a new hospital now, not in 10 years time. It will be 2009 before the Caloundra Hospital opens its new doors after its upgrade. There will be \$50 million allocated over the next four years—too slow, too little, too late. Caloundra Hospital should have been upgraded many years ago and this government has been neglectful in not doing so.

If I could now turn to the issue of the Bells Creek connection road, Bruce Highway to Caloundra Road. This is going to be a road of major importance to the Sunshine Coast as it will cut through what is termed the Caloundra Downs complex, an area that will house between 30,000 and 40,000 people plus large commercial areas. This road is not due for completion until 2025-26. If it takes that long to get that road constructed I can only wonder at the congestion that will occur on Caloundra Road as a consequence of the inaction of this government.

I do not want to spend too much more time as other people do wish to speak this afternoon, but could I say that one of the major issues that faces Caloundra, the Sunshine Coast, the south-east corner and the whole of Queensland is, in fact, water. If we do not get water right and if we do not put in place steps, plans and results immediately we will face major problems in the years ahead.

**Mrs REILLY** (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (5.17 pm): I am pleased to rise in support of the motion moved by the Premier in relation to the regulatory provisions of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. As a member of a rapidly growing electorate and the fastest growing region in Australia I have watched with interest and monitored carefully the development of the plan from its first draft to the plan in its current form. Many residents of Mudgeeraba and a whole range of community organisations have expressed interest and raised various concerns regarding the plan and many have made submissions and brought planning issues to my attention during the time the draft was available for comment and since then.

The issues brought to me were wide ranging. Some residents were concerned that some of their land would fall outside the urban footprint into regional landscape and rural production areas and that their development rights would be curtailed. Other residents were concerned that not enough land in the vicinity of their homes came under the protected zone or that pending developments would not be subject to the new provisions. I have also had strong representations from community groups representing both these divergent views, that is, that there is not enough protected green open space or that there is too much and more development should be catered for.

The fact that I have had so much interest in my office and such opposing views leads me to believe that we have got this right, that the balance we are seeking as a government, that vital balance between development and growth and conservation, has been struck. It is when everyone is a little bit unhappy and not completely satisfied and each area wants a bit more their own way that we have struck the balance. I think we have actually got it right.

Over the past 12 months I have taken all these views and concerns to the minister responsible, formerly Terry Mackenroth, and his office. Now I will continue to bring these views to the Premier. I know that every concern and issue is investigated thoroughly and considered carefully before a decision is made. I am confident that that is the case throughout south-east Queensland.

That does not mean that everyone gets what they want. Not everyone gets exactly what they want with every submission. The job for the Office of Urban Management and the presiding minister is a tough one. It has been to weigh up those many competing interests. I really do feel for some of the people who have come to me because they feel that their future potential, their investment or their nest egg has been changed by the demarcation of lines on a page, but the lines had to fall somewhere. There is a two-year window open for people to still consider how they might develop some land. I encourage them to work with the Office of Urban Management and with the Gold Coast City Council to ensure that the plans they have can be put through in a timely manner and that they meet the aims of the local area plan and the town plan.

The aim of the South East Queensland Regional Plan—that is, to improve the quality of life of people living in the most populated region in Queensland by planning for growth, infrastructure, jobs and services—has remained at the forefront of the government's mind. Since I was elected to parliament, seeking that balance between development and conservation, between enabling growth for lifestyle and economic prosperity and protecting the environment for future generations, has been a constant tightrope walk. Growth and development and the potential impacts on the environment were issues about which I was concerned before I was elected in 2001, given that there was a proposal on the table at the time for a cable car from Mudgeeraba to Springbrook.

Mudgeeraba, on the Gold Coast hinterland, is a very special area. It has a growing population. It has rural and agricultural interests and a fragile environment. It is getting this balance right that is of paramount concern in an area like that. The electorate of Mudgeeraba includes the World Heritage listed Springbrook National Park and other areas of significant biodiversity and environmental value. What makes Springbrook National Park so special, so fragile and so vulnerable is its very small size compared with its really wide boundary. The potential for negative impacts on the park through adjacent developments and activities is enormous.

Mudgeeraba also contains the region's water catchment and the region's water supply in the Hinze Dam. That is why I am pleased to see the \$55 billion infrastructure plan, which complements the regional plan, include significant investment in water projects. An amount of \$27 million has been set aside for upgrades of various dams including the Hinze Dam. That is not the only response—and I am aware that that is a controversial response—however, it is one we are working through.

It is not the only response because a sustainable water supply requires a comprehensive water strategy. A multipronged approach is obviously what is required, with significant investment in infrastructure and better planning as well as a recognition that we have to change the habits of all water users. We have to get all Queenslanders to understand that water is a precious commodity and not one to be taken for granted. We need to encourage better water usage and recognise that we are a dry country that regularly experiences drought. That is why we are encouraging and enabling grey water use through the amendments we made earlier in the week to the Plumbing and Drainage Act. That is why the water strategy is worth \$2.3 billion. The strategy itself covers everything from improving access and water storage to recycling. It represents the most comprehensive water planning strategy that the state has ever seen.

Planning for the region's future transport needs is also vital in south-east Queensland and for a seat such as Mudgeeraba, which has many isolated communities like Lower Beechmont, Austinville and Springbrook and small rural villages like Numinbah Valley, which are quite a distance from central and urban transport hubs. So getting right the transport needs for these areas is very important. I will be lobbying hard for my fair share of the \$35 billion roads package that includes the state's share of funding for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. I know that is there. If we could just secure equal funding from the federal government for this road, which is a road of national importance, we could see this upgrade happen much faster. Of course that response also has to be multipronged. It has to include public transport. That is why we are planning for the extension of the rail line to Coolangatta. Other responses of course are needed.

Health is at the forefront of many people's minds. That is why we have made a commitment in the infrastructure plan to building a new \$500 million additional hospital on the Gold Coast, next door to Griffith University, with a commitment to actually train local doctors and see them work in the Queensland health system. There is a broader level of response there, too, which I will not go into now.

It is good to see the opposition supporting the motion today because it essentially ratifies the regulatory provisions of the plan. I want to make note of a couple of comments I heard earlier in the day. The member for Callide launched into some sort of bizarre attack on this government's commitment to planning and delivering infrastructure and its capital works program. He claimed that no concrete had been poured during the term of the Beattie government, or something of equal value. There is a school in my electorate which was opened only last year and which was built in the last term. There is also the Gold Coast Convention Centre, which I have seen built since I was elected in 2001. I think they used concrete. They are just two capital works projects that come to mind, and this government presided over them. The list is too long and too enormous to detail here.

The truth is that the National Party members know that the problems we are facing now with an expanding population and gaps in service and infrastructure are largely thanks to them. They know that they did not plan when they were in government and that we are planning, and they cannot stand it. It sticks in their throats that they did not plan for almost 30 years when in government.

**Mr Lawlor:** Ripping up the rail line.

**Mrs REILLY:** It sticks in their throats that they spent all that time in government ripping up infrastructure such as the rail line from Brisbane to the Gold Coast. When they were at the helm they were busy handing out developments willy-nilly to their mates in the white shoe brigade and their National Party buddies without any thought for planning infrastructure or service provision. It sticks in their throats that we, the Beattie Labor government, are doing it. We are planning—not them, but us. Not only are we spending now with record budgets in the areas of health, education and roads; we are also planning for the future of this state and we are looking 20 years into the future beyond their noses and 20 years beyond that as well.

There has been some criticism from some of my local groups such as Gecko and the Mudgeeraba Community Association that, essentially, the regional plan will not stop the urban sprawl and will still require community members to fight or lobby to limit subdivision. I want to put those fears to rest because they are unfounded. I am able to do that now with quite some confidence, given the commitment that the Premier gave earlier in this House when he talked about a firm commitment to the lines on the map. I know they are only lines on the map, but they are the demarcation between the urban footprint and the rural areas—the areas we are going to allow for development and the areas we will not allow for development under subdivisions of 100 hectares.

The ratification today of the regulations should give these groups some peace of mind and reassure them that we are serious about protecting open space and to limiting urban development to where it can be sustained, where it can be serviced, where infrastructure can be provided and where it will not impact negatively on the natural environment. Regulations such as division 3, No. 5, outlining the types of subdivision prohibited, state that in regional landscape and rural production areas or investigation areas subdivision may not occur if any resulting lot would have a lot size less than 100 hectares. I am summarising what are very detailed regulations. If after reading them further any residents or community groups still have concerns, as always I invite them to bring them to my attention and I will certainly raise them with the Premier and continue to seek that reassurance for them.

I have lived my whole life in south-east Queensland. I grew up in Chandler on rural land, spent some years in Redlands in the suburbs and then moved to the Gold Coast, where I have lived in suburbia as well as in the paradise of rural Mudgeeraba. I am not the first person to move to Mudgeeraba to enjoy the benefits of open green space, the wildlife and the trees close to all the amenities and shopping centres of the Gold Coast, and I will not be the last. It is this unique hinterland that is providing this unique lifestyle that is bringing people from the southern states up to the Gold Coast in droves. In accommodating them, we do not want to lose the reason they came. We want to protect it. The regional plan protects more than 80 per cent of south-east Queensland from future urban development, and much of that area is in my electorate. It is a level of certainty that this region has never seen before. Without this government's commitment to visionary future planning it may never have seen it.

Finally, I take this opportunity to commend the previous minister responsible, the former Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth. He showed great vision, commitment and tireless endeavour in bringing about this plan. I thank the Premier for his commitment to seeing it through. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—NPA) (5.29 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, may I welcome you to the chair. I have not spoken while you have been in the chair so I congratulate you on your appointment as a Deputy Speaker. The regulatory provisions of the South East Queensland Regional Plan have to be put in place in line with the establishment of the Office of Urban Management. Unfortunately, I am a bit disappointed with some of them, but the opposition supports them. The infrastructure plan that will go with these regulatory provisions is a long way away.

Included in the plan is a proposal for a second range crossing, which will travel through my electorate. Unfortunately, that second range crossing is not planned to be constructed until about 2016, which is a long way away. It needs to be constructed to ease the traffic problems in south-east Queensland. The same applies for the electrification of the railway range crossing. It is put on the never-never plan for 2026—whether it ever gets done for electric trains. That is also very disappointing. I would like see the construction of a rail electrification line up past Gatton into the Withcott/Murphy's Creek area.

The water plan is also a problem. In an earlier debate I said that water is more of a defining issue now than is land size. The plan limits lot configurations to 100 hectares, which really means that if people want to cut up their land, they have to have a 200-hectare block. When cutting up land, water has become a more important issue. However, I notice that the provisions have been softened a bit so that some local governments can create special rural divisions in their areas for industries such as the intensive horticulture industry. People do not need to have 100 hectares to engage in that type of industry. In areas such as Beaudesert there are over 100 racehorse trainers. They do not need 100 hectares or 200 hectares to undertake their operations.

But water is just an enormous issue. Unfortunately, the Wolffdene dam did not go ahead. That was purely a political decision made by the Goss government. Water recycling has been very, very slow in coming. We have had to drag this Labor government kicking and screaming to the debate on recycling water. Unfortunately, as the member for Beaudesert mentioned, thousands of megalitres a day are being used to cool power stations in the south-east corner. That is good, potable water that is being used. Surely recycled water could be used.

I have had some discussions with groups in the Redland, Springwood and Daisy Hill areas. They believe that the area set aside for the koala habitat has not lived up to their expectations. Unfortunately, the people of south-east Queensland were given only four or five days in which to make submissions in response to some of the changes that were made to the plans, which occurred in February.

The whole South East Queensland Regional Plan is a bit of a hodgepodge. The infrastructure plan is really going to have to drive the whole program. I hope that this government lives up to its promise of implementing its infrastructure program and actually gets something done on the ground. As the member for Callide said, very little concrete has been poured. The member for Mudgeeraba gave a couple of examples of a school and a big hall. Every country town has a big hall, so I really do not believe that is a good description of infrastructure that has been put into areas. We support the regulatory provisions, but I believe that they could have been improved greatly.

**Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—Lib) (5.33 pm): I welcome this opportunity to speak, albeit briefly, to the motion moved earlier today by the Premier regarding the acknowledgment of the regulatory provisions of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. The South East Queensland Regional Plan is to be commended for its bold attempt to plan and shape the future of the fastest growing area in Australia over the next 20 years. Continued rapid population growth is unavoidable as people flock to this sector of Queensland to enjoy its enviable climate and lifestyle. To cope with the demands that this population explosion will create, certain changes will be implemented. Understandably, not all of these changes will be well received by local residents who will be affected by them. That includes the good people of the Currumbin electorate.

These provisions require each of the 18 councils within the south-east Queensland region to amend their planning scheme in order to recognise the impact of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. Implied in the process is an understanding that every council is given carte blanche status to amend its planning scheme to take into account the provisions of policies written into this regional plan.

There is nothing in the regulatory provisions that requires a council to consider these changes as being a major revision. I regard a minor revision as being a change to the planning scheme that ordinarily would not change the rights of a property owner. I regard a major change as one that affects the rights of property owners either as a group in an area or a class by virtue of the domain category. Every policy in the South East Queensland Regional Plan has the capacity to induce a major change to property owners. It is this new authority that has raised concern among Currumbin residents.

One underlying principle of this plan is to make the most efficient use of land allocated for urban development. For example, on page 65 under part F8 under the heading Regional Policies, it is recommended that council focus high-density and mixed-use development in and around regional activity centres and public transport nodes and corridors. These high-density, mixed-use developments caused a degree of apprehensive comment earlier this year at a Friends of Currumbin community meeting where the local councillor was guest speaker. Of concern was the fact that when a council amends its planning scheme in accordance with the regional plan, it can amend the domain use categories around regional activities and transport centres in a way that may well have a major and detrimental impact on the established communities surrounding these centres.

An example of this is the proposed railway station at Elanora which, like other stations identified in this plan, is a designated transport centre. With the passing of these regulations, the council can change the domain around the railway station from the current low-density urban structure to high-density urban structure without going back to the community and seeking its input on such a massive change. I am talking about changing the domain from single-storey or double-storey residences to a minimum of seven storeys within a one-kilometre radius of the station, otherwise called a public transport node. The change in domain from low-density, low-rise homes and businesses to high-density, high-rise buildings is a dramatic one.

It has been pointed out by numerous individuals in my community that the regulatory provisions need to be amended so that all 18 councils in south-east Queensland can amend their planning schemes only to conform with the facts of the maps referred to in schedule 1 of the regional plan. This way, the councils will be less able to slip in something without following the usual and current process, which gives all residents affected by change the right to express their views and concerns.

Although this plan is honourable in its intention, it has particular implications for my local area. This plan will impact heavily on the southern Gold Coast region, and especially the Currumbin area, over the next few years. People are drawn to Currumbin largely because of its natural beauty, its beaches, its waterway, its rainforests, its valleys, its native flora and fauna, all located within easy distance of services and facilities. The active environmental group Gecko, which is based in my electorate, has voiced its disappointment over the lack of allocation of green space areas in the plan. Others worry about the negative impact the plan could have on the middle and upper sections of Currumbin Creek. Some residents argue that the plan is merely an invitation for more and more urban development.

As I have already mentioned, rapid population growth is inevitable. After all, many of us in this House were drawn here from locations outside the south-east corner. If we choose to reside here, it is something that we must live with. It is also our right to have access to thorough community consultation via our elected representatives and to have a say in processes that directly affect us and our lifestyle.

The regulatory provisions of the south-east Queensland plan leave much of the future of the Currumbin area, as well as other areas in south-east Queensland, in the hands of councils and, in the case of my electorate, the Gold Coast City Council. How that council integrates the plan into its land use planning scheme is critical to my electorate's health. It is hoped that the council will handle the Currumbin electorate with care. Indeed, as I stated previously, large tracts in Currumbin are still unspoiled, compared to other areas in south-east Queensland. I would like to protect my electorate's environment by looking after its valleys and rejecting unsuitable and unsustainable developments. Taking into account the above reservations, I support the motion.

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.38 pm): It gives me great pleasure to participate just briefly in this debate. I wish to really strongly express my support for the regional plan and hence the regulations that support it. As members will know, this regional plan, more than it is anything else, is a plan for the future of Ipswich and the surrounding region. As such, I have taken a great deal of interest in its construction and I am enormously supportive of the regional plan. I think it is good to have this debate today, because it gives members an opportunity to nail their colours to the mast when it comes to the regional plan. I have been really very pleased to see that there has been strong bipartisan support for it.

A couple of weeks ago in this place I gave a speech about where we are going in terms of planning. I talked about the principles of new urbanism, which I very firmly believe that we as a government and as a community need to adopt. I then followed up that speech by writing an article for

the 'Perspectives' column which appeared last week in the *Courier-Mail*. I received an enormous amount of interest in this issue from the community. I have had an overwhelming number of phone calls and emails to my office often from people I do not know who have been really interested in these issues about how we make south-east Queensland better in the future.

I do not think that any of us should begin to imagine that this is not an issue in which there really is overwhelming interest. Why is that? Let us not muck around here. A lot of the planning that has happened in south-east Queensland in the last 30 years has been a complete debacle. If one drives in any direction from here right now, one will drive through the inner city and then through the old established suburbs that have a sense of community—timber houses and little corner shops—and then one will get to this mess, to some extent, of terrible urban planning where there are little developer-driven housing estates which have no connection to each other and no particular centre and which are spread out along overcrowded arterial roads, with a little bit of light industry thrown in. This is, to some extent, what we have done with urban planning or what we have called urban planning in the last 30 years.

What have been the implications of this? There have been a few. Firstly, we have some really serious traffic congestion problems which, quite frankly, will not ever be fixed just with new roads. We have a sense of community that is measurably declining. We know for a fact that people are less engaged with their neighbours, they are less likely to trust their neighbours, they are less likely to shop locally, they are less likely to work locally, they are less likely to have a connection going on around them, they are less likely to join a community group or a political party than they were 30 years ago.

There have been a lot of social changes, and there are a lot of reasons for those changes. But I do not think that we can deny the major underlying reasons for that enormous social disconnection which Robert Putnam, the American academic who is a leader on these things, identified started to turn in 1964. I think the same could be said of Australia. There are a lot of reasons for the changes and the decline in social connection. But we cannot pretend that one of the major reasons is not the absolute debacle that has passed for urban planning. It is important for a number of reasons. It is important for our quality of life. It is important for lifestyle affordability. It is also important, just in the sense of how we feel connected to our neighbours, that we do much better urban planning in the future.

Today we had a debate about petrol prices. That really highlights the problem that we create when we get it wrong on urban planning. What we have been doing wrong in south-east Queensland over the last 30 years—and this is not the state government's fault; the state government has had to try to jump in here to try to fix it—is that we have been creating these spread out suburbs, which are not great places to live but they become impossible places to live when the average family cannot afford to drive their car anymore. I will give you some figures.

The average Australian household drives 1,500 kilometres a month. If someone lived in an outer urban area such as Beaudesert but worked, say, at Acacia Ridge, that person as an individual would drive about 1,500 kilometres a month to get to and from work. If someone works in one of those jobs, he or she is probably not a high-income earner. On the current petrol price, which is a lot dearer than it was a year ago, that person would be paying \$132 a month in petrol—

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Ms NOLAN:**—which I notice the member for Gregory thinks is not much compared to the driving that he does. He is quite right: it is not as much as people in the bush have to pay. If petrol goes up to \$2 a litre, which it will do in the foreseeable future, that person will be paying an extra \$108 a month. If that person is on \$400 a week, that increase will have a serious impact on that person's household budget. So it is enormously important that we get urban planning right.

A number of people have said to me that Labor governments are obliged to create affordable housing on the urban fringe. I think it is important that we cut that argument off. It might be all very well to afford a house, say, for \$180,000 at Springfield but, as energy prices increase and it becomes more expensive to heat and cool the house and as petrol prices increase, my very strong view is that by creating cheap housing on the urban fringe we condemn people, and we often condemn poorer people, to a life of great ongoing expense. There is no social advantage in the long term in creating cheaper housing on the urban fringe. They are the kinds of issues that the regional plan is dealing with.

One of the central elements of the regional plan is its very high priority on public transport and on urban infill. The reason that I said at the beginning that this debate was important as it gives members an opportunity to nail their colours to the mast is that it is on those infill issues where the rubber will hit the road. Members have stood up today saying, 'The regional plan is terrific and I really support it,' but then when it comes to an urban infill in their electorate many of them, particularly the conservatives, will say, 'Not in my backyard.' I think this debate is important because it behoves all of us to nail our colours to the mast and to stay the course on these issues. It is up to us when it comes to urban infill issues to say, 'You have to do that,' and we have to do that if people are going to live affordable lives in the future. That is what the regional plan does. That is why I have been involved with it and why I continue to be really supportive of it. I very strongly support this motion.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (5.46 pm): This motion about the South East Queensland Regional Plan is very important. In 1997 when I was the then state minister for transport and main roads I had the joy of being the person responsible, in conjunction with the then minister for local government, to launch the Integrated Regional Transport Plan, or the IRTP, as it was commonly known. It was a living, working document that was structured by Queensland Transport and Main Roads, in conjunction with the 18 shires in south-east Queensland, incorporating SEQROC. I believe that SEQROC is an integral part of future planning in south-east Queensland.

I have heard many people speaking in this chamber today about getting it right. In his opening remarks today the Premier spoke about developers. It is paramount that we recognise the work and input of developers, but at the same time they must abide by the rules and regulations set down by local governments and by government authorities and they must be made to conform with those rules and regulations. Probably the biggest factor today is the environment. We would all like to embrace the environment as we progress growth.

When I was the Minister for Transport and Main Roads we had the development of Mango Hill, the satellite settlement on the north side of Brisbane. We had to get the road infrastructure into that area right—the roundabouts, traffic lights and crossings, everything that goes with planning a settlement of that size. When people plan to buy their first home, regardless of where the home is or what it is like, I think it is important that governments, regardless of what side of the fence they are on, recognise the value and the worth of that asset. A lot of people today—and there are probably people in this chamber who this is befitting of—still live in the first home they ever owned. It is where they reared their families and they continue to live there. A lot of people today are going to buy a home and hope that they live there for 30, 40 or 50 years and hope that they do not see a major development or maybe a major highway destroy their asset and find that at the end of the day they have a liability rather than an asset.

When we talk about regional planning, we must leave politics out of it. The member for Caloundra said this afternoon, 'If we do not get it right in the south-east corner, we will have a multiplying effect for a long time to come.' The member for Caloundra was dead right in what he said. Not only a multiplying effect; it will be a compounding effect on cost right across government.

I remember many years ago when I was a young fella going to school in Sydney there was a freeway built from Crows Nest across to Manly. Only about two years before they built huge blocks of flats in North Sydney and within two years they had bulldozed those flats to put the Ku-Ring-Gai road through to Manly. It would have cost thousands of dollars in those days but this is a classic example of poor planning, poor vision and probably politics getting in the way of being realistic about genuine outcomes.

Water infrastructure, communications infrastructure, road infrastructure—all those important corridors have to be structured so that there is not interference at a later date. This is where cost comes into planning. It is very important that the Office of Urban Management, which was established last year, works very closely with local governments in this region to do precisely that. As speakers have said, something like 55,000 people a year come to south-east Queensland to live. That is a huge number of people. It is quite a large city on its own—probably a Bundaberg or a bit smaller. When that sort of city is put together, there is a lot of infrastructure associated with it, whether it be schools, hospitals, roads or shops. The planning has to be very precise, very accurate and conforming so that we do not see a huge cost and impost on taxpayers 20 and 30 years down the track because we did not get it right now.

The member for Mudgeeraba is not in the House. I thought she made a pretty fair contribution this afternoon until she started to criticise the Bjelke-Petersen government. We can have a debate about tearing up infrastructure. I know that the Gold Coast railway line was torn up and that at the time there was a lot of controversy about it. I know that other infrastructure has probably been torn up and gotten rid of in the past. But that is what I am saying about this plan here: if we are going to get it right, we must be absolutely rock solid on getting the plans in place where we have governments—federal, state and local—working in unison to make certain that those plans progress for the common cause of the viability of the community, of the state and of the people in question.

Another issue that I would like to comment on is that of road corridors. Road corridors are very important to planning. When we were in government we built the Pacific Motorway. That was a very controversial road at the time. I know that the Goss government had planned a different corridor through the koala habitat. That is all very well. We all get things right and we all get things wrong. It is all very easy to point the finger and say, 'We got it right and you got it wrong,' but that does not fix the problem when we are spending taxpayers' dollars and we have to rip something up later on. That Pacific Motorway was built under traffic. We utilised the existing corridor, but a lot of people do not appreciate and do not realise that there was a huge impost on the government and on the department which moved water pipes, communication links and the whole bit. All of that costs money. Whilst it was built under traffic, it is still a huge cost.

We know of the population explosion in the south-east. We know that another million people will move here over the next 20 years. I implore the state government and local government to make absolutely certain that they do utilise existing corridors. If we look at what happens in Europe in relation

to building roads and rail, they certainly do not tear up farmland; they try to keep in the corridors in question where they have been for probably 200 to 400 years. In Australia, especially in Queensland, we have that grand opportunity of getting it right the first time, not like that occasion that I mentioned of Crows Nest and Manly in New South Wales, where after a couple of years they ripped it all up and started again. Someone has to pay for it and a lot of times it is the ones who cannot afford to pay for it.

I also want to talk about the issue of public transport. I know that a lot of government members have touched on public transport. I think it is a very important issue. We see the worth now of the Gold Coast rail link to Robina and the number of people who patronise that service. There are also bus services that interface with it. Maybe in time we will have light rail that will interface with it and go to other parts of the Gold Coast.

I want to bring to the attention of the House tonight the importance of the CAMCOS project on the Sunshine Coast. The government is now talking about it being 15 years away. I urge it to fast-track that project and bring it forward. If we are to see genuine development and genuine growth on the Sunshine Coast, if we are to let people plan and be a party to that planning process, it is very important that that CAMCOS project is built. In time hopefully we will see the Sun-Gold project eventuate that Vince O'Rourke, the former chief executive of Queensland Rail, espoused. We call it Sun-Gold as the project covers Sunshine Coast to the Gold Coast or Noosa to Coolangatta. I think in time we will see it but we have to fast-track it.

I say to government members today: light rail is all very well, but if we are going to have interchanges from light rail to heavy rail on main arterial corridors it is not going to work. In places like London, Frankfurt and Vienna—all those big cities in Europe—their urban system is all uniform. Whilst it may interface, the main corridors are all heavy rail. If QR is going to venture into this operation or even private enterprise ventures into it, it is very important that people boarding a train at Coolangatta—and hopefully it will not be too long before we can do it—can go right through to the Sunshine Coast. That is about getting traffic off our highways and it is about letting people travel. As the member for Ipswich said a while ago, with the increasing price of fuel, what is it going to cost to run the family car? What will it cost to have that congestion on our roads? Then again, it comes back to the sprawl of south-east Queensland. Instead of having a population of two million, we will have three million and ultimately four million. We talk about shires like Noosa, where they put a cap on their population, but when it comes to a court of law I question that. I ask how valid that legality would be because we really cannot stop people living anywhere. We have to make certain that the planning concepts and the strategies are right so that we do not see a huge impost and the tearing up of infrastructure through foolish or selfish planning 20 years, 10 years or five years down the track.

Another issue I want to touch on while we talk about south-east Queensland is the second range crossing to Toowoomba. A lot of people think that is affecting only Toowoomba. This is probably one of the most important pieces of road infrastructure in Australia today that needs to be fast-tracked. I will tell the House why: it is strangling not only Toowoomba but also commercial traffic that comes down that range every day. To give members a bit of an idea, there are 3½ thousand head of cattle killed at AMH at Dinmore every day. Eighty per cent of those cattle come on the back of road transport into Dinmore and the greatest percentage of those cattle comes through Toowoomba on the backs of semitrailers and B-doubles.

They have to be broken up on the other side of Toowoomba and come through in single trailers because a type 1 or a type 2 road train cannot be pulled through that city. It is an absolute impossibility to come down James Street. I know that my colleague the member for Toowoomba South will probably touch on that when he speaks this afternoon. That is something that, although it is a huge cost, can be achieved by building it with a PPP or a PFI—a private-public partnership or a private finance initiative. There is a lot of private enterprise that would build that road crossing if they were given the opportunity to do so by the state and federal governments.

Now that we have canvassed the issue of Telstra—and no doubt Telstra is going to be sold—I appeal to the federal government to ensure that some of that money comes back into infrastructure in the states. There would be no better place to start than in Queensland with the upgrading of the Bruce Highway right through to north Queensland. It is one of the worst highways in the nation next to the Barkly Highway from Mount Isa to Camooweal on the Queensland border. It could also be used on things such as the second range crossing and the motorway out to Ipswich.

I want to mention the western bypass of Brisbane. A lot of people say, 'We don't want it running through our backyard,' as the member for Ipswich just said. However, if we are going to be genuine about planning in the south-east corner for the next 20-odd years, there must be a western bypass. It has to be there to take heavy traffic. It has to be there to enable that north-south traffic to flow. It has to be there to take the congestion out of the heart of Brisbane and the western suburbs. It has to be there for the future ongoing free operation of this city. We see the choking of this city now. Whether it is through the city council or the state government, those tunnels have to be fast-tracked. That infrastructure has to be put in place so that we can get rid of that choking traffic.

In Tokyo there are highways on top of highways through the city. We do not need that here because we are in a situation where we can plan ahead using tunnels, duplicating the Gateway Bridge and letting that traffic flow through there. With the western corridor, like the western distributor in Melbourne, we can see Brisbane become a very liveable city, a very free flowing traffic city and a city where people will want to be. At the end of the day, I believe it all comes down to sanity in planning and sanity and responsibility on the part of governments and councils, which need to talk with each other and bury the hatchet when it comes to politics. When I was minister for transport I worked very closely with the then Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Jim Soorley, and the mayors of shires from the Gold Coast through to Noosa. I thought we had a very good working relationship which enabled us to put a lot of planning in place. At the end of the day, we can only do this together.

Earlier this afternoon I heard the member for Charters Towers touch on issues affecting his own electorate. I thought he made very fair comment when he said that there are other good places in Queensland where people could live. We can free up the south-east corner by building some more regional centres in those areas, by getting water infrastructure, schools and hospitals in places such as that. I have lived in the west all my life. It is a great place to live. Each of us is born and bred in a particular area and we know that area that we were raised in. We must appreciate and understand that people do live in different areas. It is about trying to provide people with a good quality of life.

At the same time, I believe that the issue of water has to be fast-tracked. There has been much hum and talk in the House over a long period of time about the Wolffdene dam not being built. It is unfortunate that it was not built because it would have alleviated a lot of the problems that Brisbane is currently confronted with in relation to water. The same is applicable to the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. We cannot sustain population growth, or population at all, unless we have water to sustain those people. Regardless of whether it is for domestic needs, industry or everyday needs in business, we must have water to be able to cater for that growth.

I think that we are at crisis point in the south-east corner. It is time that the hatchet was buried, that the slandering across government lines stopped and negotiations were entered into between Transport, the Prime Minister, the Premier and the department of infrastructure to work out a long-term strategy as to how we can get important dollars injected immediately into building that necessary infrastructure.

There has been some talk about housing density. I do not favour high-density housing. I have seen it in Melbourne. I have seen the social implications of high-density housing. I have seen the crime that results from high-density housing. We do not have as many migrant populations in the south-east corner as there are in Melbourne. I have seen it in Sydney, too. In Melbourne at a place called Parkville, on Flemington Road, it can be seen first-hand how it is not working. We do not need high-density housing in Brisbane or in the south-east corner if that is going to be the result of it. Then there is the issue of the Pacific Motorway. When the Pacific Motorway was built we all knew that the motorway would get congested in time. That is why we need to do that planning now, whether it is a Mt Lindesay Highway upgrade and utilising that as a way into the hinterland of the Gold Coast or whether it be for other roadworks.

**Mr Mickel:** Hear, hear!

**Mr JOHNSON:** I heard the honourable Minister for Energy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy say, 'Hear, hear'. He recognises the importance of utilising those corridors. That is exactly and precisely what I was saying earlier: we can build this infrastructure, we can save the government huge dollars and we can progress the issue without being stupid about it.

I urge the government to work closely with its federal colleagues and its local government colleagues to get a genuine outcome so that we can have a prosperous, productive and fruitful society in the south-east corner as we progress into the 21st century.

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (6.06 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to support the South East Queensland Regional Plan. The National Party has always supported good planning and will continue to do so into the future. I want to speak only briefly on this issue. The reality is that it is very easy to draw up a plan with no real commitment to make it happen. I hope that is not the case here. It is very simple to draw lines on a map and put up proposals for water infrastructure and roads et cetera without a real commitment to make it happen. I am sure that is probably not the case on this occasion. The National Party will be making sure that there is a real commitment to make it happen.

There have been some very wise words spoken in the House today by my colleagues and others in relation to south-east Queensland, and I totally support them. There is a real need to look at all of Queensland. My colleague from Charters Towers raised the issue of Moranbah. Interestingly enough, that council plan to build housing over a mine was signed off more than 10 years ago. Things changed and we were not able to continue on with that plan. Any plans that are put in place have to be flexible; they have to be living documents.

My colleague from Gregory mentioned a while ago that we have substantial corridors throughout Queensland that can be utilised and should not be overlooked when we start to build infrastructure. It is amazing, from my perspective anyway, that we had a huge development spurt in Queensland over a

period of time some time ago where a lot of infrastructure was built. A bit of it was not as good as it could have been. In some cases dams were sited in the wrong place. However, there is an overwhelming sense of achievement when most of the infrastructure that has been built is still supplying not only access to roads but also water and all the other infrastructure that we are currently enjoying. Some of that infrastructure was built up to 30 to 40 years ago.

One has to wonder right now, as we move into this period of drought, where we would be without the foresight of our forebears, who had the gumption to go out and build that infrastructure with really very little money. In many cases they did it on the cheap. That infrastructure is still currently supplying our livability in Queensland as it is now.

The reality is that we have a south-east Queensland plan. Supposedly over the next 10 to 20 years much of that plan will be built. The real crux of the matter is who is going to pay for it. Most of the plan would indicate that the money to build the infrastructure that is required will probably come out of federal and local government coffers and there will not be a real need for the state government to get involved. But I think the plan is such that that will have to change. The state government will have to take ownership and will have to commit very substantial dollars to make it happen.

As a farmer, my real concern is in relation to preserving good agricultural land. In any plan there has to be a strong onus on ensuring we preserve agricultural land right throughout Queensland. It is no good in 20, 30 or 40 years time saying, 'We put an urban development on this land and suddenly we are running short of good agricultural land.' That has happened in many places around the world. It is just bad planning—planning on the run, planning without thought to the future. Particularly in Australia, where the coastal plains are basically the fertile land, if there is no real commitment to have large irrigation projects brought forward there will be a real reliance on that agricultural land that is close to the cities, is able to be irrigated and is able to be supplied with supplementary water from rainfall et cetera. We will find that we have to import food from the rest of the world. We do not want to be doing that. The quality and standard of much of the food from the rest of the world are not up to our specifications. The issue of importation of diseased or potentially diseased agriculture items is something to be concerned about.

We recently passed a bill in this parliament, the Plumbing and Drainage and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2005, which allows people to use grey water to irrigate their gardens and yards. That is certainly a step in the right direction. The way in which the bill was put together basically means that it is almost impossible to retrofit that system into established houses, in particular those that are built on the ground on a concrete base—the sewerage pipes and the water pipes under the house would have to be separated—so the system is basically going to apply to houses built from now on. The impact of amount of water that will be saved is not going to be great. We need to start looking at encouraging people to put in rainwater tanks. The amount of water that can be collected off a domestic roof is quite considerable and would go a long way towards saving the storage that we have in our dams currently. This government has to get fair dinkum about that. In most cases, people in our urban communities really cannot afford to put in water tanks and the associated plumbing. There has to be a real commitment. If the government is not going to invest in water infrastructure then it has to encourage individuals to store water on their own land. I support the motion.

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (6.13 pm): This debate is a very challenging one because south-east Queensland is one of the fastest growing and most attractive areas of Australia. It is rapidly moving towards becoming a huge metropolis—from the Tweed to Noosa and west to Toowoomba—so planning is essential. If we look at what has happened in the past in New South Wales with the Wollongong-Sydney-Newcastle triangle we can see how people tend to congregate in an area. It is very important that we get this right. If we are not careful, we could get growth that just turns the place into a slum. If we get it right we can turn it into a beautiful place with good corridors, good facilities and services and parkland so that the lifestyles that the people of Brisbane and south-east Queensland have come to expect can be preserved.

I grew up in Moorooka, which was once almost an outer suburb of Brisbane. When I was a schoolkid I saw the change that happened in relation to the housing camps. There was a housing camp where Moorooka Shopping Centre now sits. There was another housing camp at Rocklea. The government of the day got rid of those camps—great long rows of army huts with washing. A lot of mates I went to school with came from those housing camps. They built new housing commission suburbs at Inala, which was way out in the bush, almost on its own, and at Coopers Plains. Those initial houses were built of Besser block. It did not give due regard to those people. Many of them thought it was wonderful to get out of the housing commission fibro army huts that they were in—the camps, as they were called—but it was not right to isolate people out there without the proper facilities of parks and so forth. I see the member for Inala in the chamber. A spirit has grown up in Inala. My father was the sergeant in charge there at one stage and he had great time for the people and the spirit that evolved in Inala. That is a good example. In Sydney there is the spread of housing through Blacktown, St Marys and Mount Druitt. You could drive mile after mile after mile and see tiny little butter boxes with paling fences between them, kids growing up with no decent facilities and parks. It was virtually unplanned and not giving people due regard. I think we can learn from those lessons of the past and bring about a better time.

I well remember when I went down to play for Parramatta. A part of the contract was free rental accommodation. I asked the bloke at the leagues club, 'Where is a good place to rent?', and he told me to look at Cabramatta and Fairfield. My wife and I went and had a look and we nearly turned around and came back to Queensland. I think we can get over all of those sorts of problems with this type of planning. There are proposals for great satellite cities to be built to the south-west of Brisbane, out around Ipswich and so forth. It gets pretty hot out there in the day and pretty cold at night. At night, Amberley is generally as cold as Stanthorpe. I think the corridors that go to those areas, the parklands that have to be provided, the design of the housing and how we do it are very, very important. In places like England there are towns of 10,000 to 20,000 people that are so tight and compact. At the very edge of the towns you are out into the fields. The development arrangements for subdivisions are very tough.

We in Queensland have become spoilt. As we gradually drive out of most of our towns and cities we see half-acre blocks, two-acre blocks, five-acre blocks, 10-acre blocks, 40-acre blocks and 80-acre blocks. One of the privileges of living in Australia is that, if they wish, people are able to live on land that has space to run a pony or a horse, have the dream of some land and so forth. But that type of development stretches things. To see that, we only have to look through the Lockyer area at all of the little subdivisions occurring around the place. They all have to have a school bus, they will all eventually want water and this, that and the other. It stretches everything instead of having things in well-organised and contained corridors.

This whole plan is very, very important. Proper parklands and family recreation areas are absolutely essential. We are very lucky to have great parks such as Brisbane's Botanical Gardens, Sydney's Centennial Park and Toowoomba's Queen's Park. We are lucky that people had the foresight to establish them. We need places that are not busy. It does not have to be like South Bank with buildings at different angles, landscaping with vines, shops and this, that and the other—just pure parks where people can go with their families, their dogs or their pushbikes and just enjoy the park. Right throughout south-east Queensland we should have strategically placed open space parklands that people can enjoy. My colleague opposite might remember Frogs Rock up the back of Moorooka on the side of Pegg Mountain. Lots of families used to walk up there to those rocks and caves. It was a wonderful area of bushland that was part of Moorooka. We have to do that all over the south-east corner. We need lungs for south-east Queensland.

The previous Labor government under Wayne Goss bought Glenrock Station, just under the Great Dividing Range to the south-west of Gatton. It is important that we have big areas like that within three-quarters of an hour travelling time from the capital city. People living in Brisbane and Ipswich should be within a reasonable drive of parkland.

I heard the member for Ipswich talking about dense housing. It is important that, if we do have to have that sort of housing—and we talked about petrol prices and people having to be close to where they work and the rail line—we make sure that the playing fields, the parklands, the transport and services can provide for a harmonious community. Kids need to get out and run around and let a bit of steam off. They do not want to be kicking tins down the gutter on the bitumen road; they need to be out in the park having a bit of a run around.

South-east Queensland also has some quality farmland. The Lockyer is the winter salad bowl of Australia. During winter something like 80 to 120 trucks leave that Gatton area every night carrying winter vegetables. We have lost some great farmland areas in south-east Queensland. Some of the most beautiful farmland areas were in places like Sunnybank and Redland Bay. Sunnybank had the most magnificent soil and underground water. The Oasis, a resort that used to be there, had wells that descended to flowing streams underneath that area. Imagine if we had been able to preserve that and imagine the parklands we could have had there which would have served the housing that has sprouted in those sorts of areas.

We have to be careful to retain some of that precious farmland of the Lockyer and other areas around Beaudesert, the Brisbane Valley and Stanley River. They are important to south-east Queensland. We cannot keep saying that we have vast expanses so we can grow our produce elsewhere because fuel prices are going up, climate change is of concern and so forth.

The infrastructure of south-east Queensland has fallen way behind. I would like to speak tonight about the proper use of public-private partnerships. In their simplest form, in terms of using a toll road or a tunnel where there is a lot of traffic, it is a relatively simple thing. We should not be tying ourselves up in complexity. If the government has a couple of projects that are going to cost around \$400 million but can only afford \$200 million, it can get a private firm to come in and do the other bit for \$200 million. Then a toll or a charge that provides the private firm with its eight per cent or nine per cent return on capital with security is applied. They are the sorts of simple, straightforward public-private partnerships that we should be doing. We should not be trying to get into complex issues like constructing half a TAFE college, half a school or part of a school or a hospital. They tried that in England and it does not work. It is too complex. It has to be simple. It has to have a good rate of return for the investors. It saves the government money because, by sharing the costs fifty-fifty, instead of doing one project they might be able to do two with the same amount of money. There is a desperate need for infrastructure in south-east Queensland.

I turn to the Logan Motorway. On the south side of the city, Clem Jones put in the South East Freeway. How would we have ever got out of Brisbane without that freeway? Yes, it was very difficult on the people of Buranda and surrounding suburbs who had lived there for years. How would the southern side of Brisbane work if that freeway was not there? I do not know. It has made a huge difference. As a result, those southern suburbs grew and developed because they were on a good road not only to Brisbane but also to the coast.

The Logan Motorway enables all of those people on the western side of Brisbane and people from Ipswich and Toowoomba to come down and zip around, drive to the airport or go to the Sunshine Coast. Honourable members have only to look at the traffic on the Gateway Bridge to see how successful that motorway has been. Yet the other half of Brisbane is virtually dysfunctional. If we want to drive, say, from Toowoomba or Ipswich over to the back of Aspley it is difficult to try to work out a way that does not involve zigzagging in and out through Bardon, Kedron, Everton and Stafford. The best way is virtually to go all the way around the Logan Motorway, over the Gateway Bridge and then come around. At least we would have a fair run. As they have grown and expanded, all of the big cities of the world have had to build a ring-road system of some sort. It has to be developed so that it does not interfere with established suburbs. It is terribly hard to do. As I say, there is the example of what Clem Jones did with the freeway. That certainly opened up the southern half of Brisbane.

Toowoomba is on the edge of this south-east Queensland footprint and for that reason has been a part of some of the planning. Similarly, we are a city of about 100,000, with some 30,000 or 40,000 living around the edges in the rapidly growing shires of Crows Nest which takes in Highfields, the Jondaryan shire, the Cambooya shire, the Rosalie shire, Clifton and Warwick. They are all seeing part of this development coming from the south-east corner. Housing prices in Toowoomba have virtually doubled. They are probably still far more affordable than in most of the south-east corner, but that has happened as a result of these pressures.

We face these infrastructure issues as well. We are on top of the range and have to lift our water over 400 metres in a vertical lift from the eastern fall of the range where there is enough rainfall to have dams. There are two dams there—Crestbrook Dam and Perseverance Dam—up near Crows Nest because we have to place dams where there is a bit of rainfall. We in Toowoomba have to lift that water 400 metres simply because we are on top of the range and are an inland city. Our first dam, the Cooby Dam, is on the western fall which has substantially less rainfall. It rarely has enough water and so is hardly ever used.

Toowoomba got reticulated water in 1947. Before that everybody had a tank. At the back of every house was a laundry and on top of that was the tank. People managed to live off those tanks. I think that a rainwater tank has become essential in our climate. Looking at how much water people use to actually drink, make a cup of tea or cook with, it is not a hell of a lot. A tank would normally fill up off the tin or tile roof two or three times a year with Toowoomba's rainfall and climate. That same rainfall on the ground, coming down slowly, just sinks in and does not run off whereas it runs off the roof into the tank.

We are facing this desperate water shortage in Toowoomba. There are three dams to the north of the city but no other sites for dams. To the south there is Emu Creek, Hodgson, Finns Creek and all those other valleys. There is not enough rainfall and it is not the right place for storage. In any case, we would be taking the water that is desperately needed in the Condamine system. There are no similar storage points on the eastern side of the range. We have virtually run out of storage for water.

Toowoomba is going to need about another 15,000 megalitres a year. The council is proposing to put in place a very innovative scheme which has hit some tough times because it involves recycled water. It is an exceptionally difficult issue for the council and for the community. It has taken a bit of courage to put the idea forward. The proposal is to have the Wurtulla sewerage plant, which is on the confluence of East and West creeks as they come into Gary Creek, fully upgraded. It is being upgraded now. The water that comes out will be of a high quality. It will go into Gary Creek which eventually goes through Oakey and past Dalby. The people of Dalby then use that water for drinking. They treat it of course. Then it goes down the Balonne into the Darling, into the Murray and maybe it gets to Adelaide or somewhere.

The proposal then is to treat it with an ultraviolet treatment, reverse osmosis and also microfiltration and then store it in this smaller dam, the Cooby Dam, on the western side of the escarpment. It is very controversial. There have been major public campaigns and controversy. If you ask people if they want to drink sewage they will say they do not. Council tells us—and it has science to back it up—that this water will be what is called six star, which is better than kidney dialysis water. We are going to have to look at something because we need another 15,000 megalitres.

I thank the minister for natural resources who this week agreed to the council having two artesian bores put down. If we can get into the artesian basin we may get some water from there. We have to look at recycling. After all the money has been spent on the pipes and so forth, proposals have been put forward to use this recycled and treated water from the Wurtulla system for sports fields, schools and so forth. I am not sure how much it would cost to run a secondary pipe system all through a huge area such as Toowoomba to take recycled water. I just hope that the government can continue to support the council working through that very, very difficult issue of water.

The surrounding shires of Toowoomba are experiencing very high growth rates. They are dependent on Toowoomba, as are the people of Toowoomba dependent on these shires for their recreation, employment and the income and services that they bring to the city. I know that, through EDROC, the Toowoomba City Council works closely with the surrounding councils. The metropolis of Toowoomba and its surrounding beautiful rural areas have to work together so that we have infrastructure that services both areas and that planning does not simply stop at a boundary. I know that there is a good, cooperative relationship between the councils.

Toowoomba has a population of 100,000, and probably not far down the track it will have a population of 150,000. We have to start to think seriously about transport corridors for the city. Toowoomba covers a virtual semicircle. It borders the eastern escarpment and goes out in a big semicircle towards its surrounding shires. People in the city of Toowoomba have always expected to be able to drive up to the front door of wherever they have wanted to go and get a park. Basically, they all travel by car. The notion of catching public transport takes a while to grow on people who live in a regional rural city, because generally they can drive downtown and get a park—or they used to be able to. Now Toowoomba has parking stations, parking meters and all the other things that can be found in larger cities. I would hope that, in the planning process, we can start to consider constructing transport corridors for Toowoomba. Who knows? There might be monorails that can transport people from the shires into the CBD or to the industrial estate that is going to be built on the western side of the city. We will have to provide proper transport in the future.

I also want to talk about affordable housing. The greatest dream of everybody is still to have a house. I can remember when I was renting, looking at the little butterboxes that were built in the western suburbs of Sydney and thinking, 'Gee, I wouldn't mind one of those.' People aspire to have that, and hopefully one day when they get on their feet they will be able to afford to buy something a little better.

I think it is very important to be able to give people a start in life. Not only is that important for young families; it is also good for our society. If people can get into the business of owning a house and into the business of having to meet the payments for it, it gives them stability, it gives them something to aim for and it gives them something to feel proud of and belong to. So as part of this process we have to make sure that we can provide affordable housing.

I really stress that, to me, affordable housing means places that are very, very well designed and pleasant to live in. I refer to the postwar housing commission suburbs that sprang up in Brisbane. I have seen the same happen on the edge of Toowoomba. It is not good, but with a little bit of effort and virtually no extra cost we could provide people living in those houses with the little niceties of life such as sports fields, landscaping and trees. If that is done, even if the house is modest—because that is all people can afford—people are still proud to live there.

I hope that this planning process addresses these important issues for south-east Queensland, that we can continue to make our state the most liveable place in Australia and that we can take the ideas and the lessons that we have learned here to some of the other major regional growth areas of Queensland and not forget that we need to plan for the future.

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (6.33 pm): I rise to support the motion that is before the House. The five categories of land identified in the SEQ plan will give greater certainty to local authorities, landowners, developers and existing residents. In Western society, we have never limited the movement of people. That is why the population of a city such as Sydney was not limited to half a million residents, one million residents or 1½ million residents—and nor were the populations of the New Yorks, Tokyos or Londons of this world equally limited.

But in the free movement of people, we have had to deal with population growth. As a child, I can remember going to areas of Aspley with my next-door neighbour, Terry Harris, to visit his uncle. There were dozens of mango trees, lots of open space and schools. Bill Bussetin used to take us out to Albany Creek for hikes on the weekend. At that time it was absolute bushland. Now, of course, it is close urban settlement.

In 1991, when then Minister Mackenroth released the SEQ 2001 plan, a number of people wondered why he was doing that because 2001 was 10 years away. At that time he saw that we had to start planning. He brought together the 20 or so councils in the south-east corner to work with the state government to form what we call the ROCs—the Regional Organisation of Councils. The councils have realised that they need to coordinate their water, sewerage, electricity and road networks, otherwise they cannot do their work in their particular area.

Our society has had to face other major changes. Sometimes it has taken a generation to bring about a change of thinking. One example is that, when drink-driving limitations were imposed in the 1970s, a lot of people objected to them. They thought they were just draconian measures. Now those laws are taken for granted because we realise the cost of drink-driving on our society. Similarly, in terms of the environment, people did not see the harm that was being done to the land, to the waterways or to the air. But a whole generation of talking about the environment and the damage that is being done to it has now led us to being much more conscious of the environment. If Clem Jones had asked for the people of Brisbane to separate their rubbish into recyclable and non-recyclable waste, he would

probably have been thrown out in his second term. At that time society was not ready for that. Society is now ready to cope with recycling waste, because we have talked about it and we have had a change of thinking. Current issues such as the provision of health services and coping with growth also require a change of thinking within our society.

A lot of people say, 'Not in my backyard.' That thinking must change, because this growth is in their backyard. I hope that the member for Toowoomba South, who in his contribution called for things such as the western Brisbane bypass, will ensure that in future state elections the coalition will not support a Liberal Party or National Party candidate who runs on a ticket of opposing the construction of such ring-roads and western bypasses which he has just supported. That is what happens. Candidates see the need for it, but for short-term political gain they will seek a protest vote to not allow the development to occur.

This plan highlights the cooperation that exists between a range of councils and between those councils and the state government. It is good planning and it is good legislation. I support the Premier's motion.

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Treasurer) (6.36 pm), in reply: I rise to speak in response to the issues raised in the debate on the motion on the South East Queensland Regional Plan and the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan. Firstly, I thank those members who stated their public support for the regional planning process in south-east Queensland. I am proud of the work that we have undertaken and firmly believe that the regional plan, together with the infrastructure plan, will help build a better future for this corner of the state.

I noted some points of concern that were raised by members that I would like to address. Firstly, I heard concerns about whether my government will deliver on the infrastructure. Let me make it clear: for the first time in history a Queensland government has made a 10-year commitment to fund the necessary infrastructure that supports growth in south-east Queensland. At the same time, the infrastructure plan identifies the infrastructure requirements for the next 10-year period. It details more than 230 projects. That has never been done. The plan spells that out in black and white. No government in Australia has ever done that.

I reject the suggestion that all of this investment is somewhere off in the distant future. That is just political rhetoric. It is the sort of political nonsense that we get when people seek to undermine the positive by using the negative to try to gain some political advantage. The losers are the people of Queensland. We are not going to put up with that sort of nonsense in this debate. Sometimes we are very generous—perhaps too generous—but when it comes to this debate we want some truth and honesty, not the usual slapstick political whinge that we get from those opposite.

We have already stated our commitment to delivering this infrastructure. I again make it very clear that we reject the suggestion that all of this investment is somewhere off in the distant future. Let me explain why I reject that. We have already started on the Gateway Motorway upgrade, the Gateway Bridge duplication, the Bruce Highway upgrade near Caboolture and the extension of the Gold Coast rail line. We will continue to roll out such projects in a sensible order of priorities as outlined in the infrastructure plan. We will deliver what we said we would deliver. We have already started delivering and we will continue to do that. For example, we have identified \$25.5 billion in road and public works projects and \$72.5 million to investigate another possible \$11 billion worth of road and public transport projects. That has never happened before. That is unprecedented.

I also heard criticism regarding water planning here in south-east Queensland. No-one should underestimate what this is all about. This is the National Party trying to undermine sensible water strategies across the whole of Queensland. Any time there is any debate about water the National Party tries to undermine sensible planning, sensible investment and sensible construction. When we look at this plan, we see that there is no possible means of criticism because money is going into bricks and mortar and money is going into water infrastructure. But the hidden agenda of those opposite is simply to try to undermine, undermine, undermine and whinge, whinge, whinge. They would win a gold medal for whingeing at the Beijing Olympics.

The people of Queensland need to understand the truth, and that is why we are very clear about what we are doing with water projects. I have already spelt that out in my initial address today. Perhaps those who criticised missed some of the \$2.3 billion worth of water infrastructure projects that I listed. We have \$2.3 billion worth of water infrastructure projects. I will say it again for the third time: we have \$2.3 billion worth of water infrastructure projects. Perhaps they also missed my statements this week about our commitment to better managing water use across the region. That is the core issue.

The National Party heartland is giving its members political grief because we are saying to everybody—whether they are in the city, whether they are in the bush, whether they are in the regions—that we have to have better management across the whole of the state. That is what it is all about. We are not doing that because we have some mad ideological agenda. We are doing it because this is an arid continent and water, as I keep saying, is like gold. We have to treat it properly. We have to plan. We have to better use it. We have to conserve it. We have to reuse it. That is what is important here. I am not going to allow the National Party to get away with this doublespeak of trying to undermine our sensible strategies on water just to protect some ideological position. It is not going to happen.

We have made it clear that we will implement level 2 water restrictions, including a complete sprinkler ban, across the entire region in October. Frankly, we have to do this to preserve our water. It is easy to take advantage of that politically. But is that the responsible thing to do, to try to undermine that sensible policy? No, it is not. We would think this is one area where we could get some bipartisan commonsense. But, no, politics is too cheap and too easy. Negativity is easy; being constructive and positive is hard. Negativity delivers nothing; being positive and constructive does deliver.

We will also look at a review of the institutional arrangements for water distribution management across the south-east to ensure reliable supplies for all local government areas. There is no great rocket science about that either. Other states already do this in terms of water planning. In fact, in some states they have overarching and direct control. Therefore, I simply say to our critics on this: give it a break and let us think about what is good for Queensland.

We said that we will accelerate water supply and water infrastructure developments on the Logan, Albert and Mary rivers under the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan. Henry Palaszczuk, the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, and I made detailed statements about this earlier in the week. We also said that we would bring forward \$10 million in subsidies to local governments—and we want that partnership with local governments—for water conservation measures such as pressure reduction and reducing water distribution losses. Those types of losses cost us a lot in terms of water. It is about time we said that openly and transparently. They cost us a lot. Cabinet has discussed it. I have talked about it to the two ministers over here, John Mickel and Henry Palaszczuk, and other relevant ministers. We know that. What we have to do is act on it, and we will. We will put our house in order, but we need a partnership with individuals, with people on the land, with industry, with business and with local government to make sure that this plan works.

Members opposite also raised concerns about how densities will be implemented across the region. Let me refer them to the regional plan itself which makes it quite clear that local governments will manage this process through local growth management strategies. Councils will submit completed local growth management strategies for approval by me, as regional planning minister, by 30 June 2007. I know that this is another area of political sensitivity. If those opposite want to play the stupid political games and engage in the negativity that we see from the opposition, they can do it. But is it right? Is it good planning? Is it good for the state to do that? The answer is no. Is what we are doing here good for the state, getting these density issues right? The answer is yes.

It makes sense to have higher density near transport nodes. It is good planning. Frankly, I understand the political sensitivity about this. I understand exactly what the political agenda is. But if our political opponents want to go out and undermine this, just remember that all they will be doing is supporting another Los Angeles. They will also be supporting another congested part of our south-east corner like we get in parts of Sydney. That is their choice. Do they want another Los Angeles or do they want to have sensible planning? These transport nodes and the higher density near them are very important for long-term growth in this state.

Consultation was another issue raised. I would like to note that consultation in the regional plan was one of the most comprehensive communication and consultation campaigns undertaken by the Queensland government. That is why the plan could not have been developed and released sooner. Indeed, the then Deputy Premier and I produced a booklet—which was released through all of the papers, I understand, in the state—highlighting exactly what was done when the plan was finalised. The consultation period itself was longer than required under the Integrated Planning Act to enable as many people as possible to have their say. Feedback on the draft plan was overwhelming, with 8,460 submissions received. With those kinds of numbers, we can clearly say that the draft plan proved to be one of the most popular documents ever produced by the Queensland government.

Let us look at the issue of koala conservation, which was also raised. The regional plan makes a clear statement about assisting the survival of koalas by protecting identified habitat areas and adopting conservation measures to reduce conflict between urban development and koalas. It is clear. I know that there are some people who have other agendas on this, but the plan expressly provides for it.

On another issue that I would also like to put on record, we acknowledged when the draft regional plan came into effect on 27 October 2004 that a number of people who were preparing subdivision applications were caught out by the immediate effect of the draft regulatory provisions. As such, there is a provision in the final regional plan which enables me, as the regional planning minister, to grant an exemption where I am satisfied that an application was in an advanced state of readiness when the draft regional plan was released. This exemption allows the application to be lodged with the local government. Let me make it absolutely clear—and I do not want there to be any misunderstanding about this—this is not a guarantee that the application will be approved, but it does allow it to be at least considered.

From what I gather, many of those who applied are seeking to take advantage of this clause in a way that they will not be able to. They will be rejected. They have to prove their case. It will be done on merit. It will be done on a case-by-case basis. No-one should think that I am going to be an easy take on this; I will not. We have gone through this planning process. People need to fit very clearly into the

guideline for that exemption to apply. I will have to be satisfied that an application was in an 'advanced state of readiness' when the draft regional plan was released. So everyone needs to be really clear about that. That is not going to be a loophole for anybody.

What conversation by the member for Moggill would be complete without reference to the western bypass? He is simply trying again to be mischievous and dishonest. I repeat what we have said many times before: the government will undertake significant investigation and consultation before it is in a position to determine whether or not a western bypass is needed or will be constructed. No route can or will be chosen before this investigation is completed. I thank the members for their support.

**Mr Terry Sullivan:** And will they support the western bypass if it is approved?

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is right.

**Mr Mickel:** He has been bringing his Liberal Party enemies closer to him recently.

**Mr BEATTIE:** One of his worst enemies is about to appear in this House very shortly. I understand that he has been doing the numbers already. I am told that he has the member for Currumbin as his deputy running mate and he has the member for Surfers Paradise on side. I am told it is three all and there is one undecided. There are seven. There are three Liberals in favour of Caltabiano, there are three against, and there is one undecided. It could only happen in the Liberal Party.

**Mr Schwarten:** Just the way he likes it.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Just the way it is—three all and one undecided. I wonder how they are going to get the undecided one. I wonder what will happen to him. Three all and one undecided—can you believe that? It could only happen in the Liberal Party.

**Mr Mickel:** It will depend on whether the member for Surfers Paradise is moonlighting or not.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Anyway, let us move on. I do not want to be diverted from the core speech here.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wallace): I have allowed some leniency in this debate.

**Mr BEATTIE:** As you understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am looking forward to Mr Caltabiano's arrival, but not everyone in this House is.

I thank members for their support. In conclusion, I would say once again that it is important to remember that if we fail to plan then we plan to fail. I know it is a cliché, but it is true. The South East Queensland Regional Plan and the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan are our blueprints for the future. I will not walk away from our commitment, and I will make sure that these plans are implemented so that south-east Queensland remains a great place to work and live for future generations.

Motion agreed to.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.49 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Wednesday, 28 September 2005.

Motion agreed to.

## DAYS AND HOURS OF SITTING; ORDER OF BUSINESS

### Sessional Order

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.50 pm), by leave, without notice, I move—

That the order of business for Wednesday, 28 September 2005 be the usual order of business for a Tuesday sitting day; Thursday, 29 September 2005 be the usual order of business for a Wednesday sitting day; and Friday, 30 September 2005 be the usual order of business for a Thursday sitting day as set out in the sessional orders.

Motion agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.50 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Health System

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (6.51 pm): In 1989 the Bundaberg Base Hospital had 216 beds. In April 2005, just as 'Dr Death' flew courtesy of Peter Beattie's government to America, Bundaberg had 136 beds—that is a 37 per cent reduction in bed numbers while the Bundaberg-Burnett region experienced a population growth of at least 40 per cent over the last 15 years. The bad news has not stopped for my constituents. On the 17th of this month we lost another 16 beds—16 precious, lifesaving mental health beds. So, as of today, by the best information available to me, from 1989 we have had a 44 per cent reduction in bed numbers. We are now down to 120 beds.

I do not normally like to quote anonymous sources but, given the history of bed closures at Bundaberg Base Hospital, and also the accuracy of previous anonymous health information that I have received, I table in the parliament two letters which were slipped under my door this morning. The author of these letters says that they are a concerned citizen and a Bundaberg Base Hospital staff member. The author makes the claim that further reductions at the Bundaberg Base Hospital are planned. The letter states—

50% reductions in Medical/Surgical beds—to have only one general ward due to medical staff shortages

...

Already the ICU unit has been downgraded to a high dependency unit—even if medical staff are found for it, it is unlikely to be restored to an ICU unit without considerable political & media pressure.

Elective surgery operating lists have been slashed, increasing waiting times even further.

Staff morale has fallen below low ... Staff simply want to leave in their truckloads.

Please Mr Messenger, ask Mr Beattie why he is destroying our health service in Bundaberg.

He also asked whether there would be a hospital here soon or whether this is the Beattie government punishing Bundaberg.

**Mr MICKEL:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The opposition asked this morning that people be referred to by their correct titles. It is not Mr Beattie—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Jarratt): Order! There is no point of order. The member was quoting from a letter.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Today the health minister complained that the Nationals—and I take that to include me—were whipping up hysteria or causing the public to be terrified by our state's health system. Well here is an opportunity for a free kick. Please, Minister, prove me wrong. All he has to do is give the Burnett and Bundaberg families a guarantee that there will not be a further reduction in bed numbers at the Bundaberg Base Hospital and that there will not be a 50 per cent reduction in medical surgical beds.

Finally, my thoughts and prayers are with Naomi Bromly and her family. Naomi has been diagnosed with bladder cancer and has had two operations cancelled at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. I have sent the health minister her details and I hope that he ensures she receives her lifesaving surgery and treatment at the third attempt.

### Health System

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.54 pm): We are continuously hearing about the not-so-good things happening in health. This is because the Beattie government has done the right thing by the people of Queensland by establishing a commission of inquiry which is bringing the longstanding problems within our health system out into the open. We are doing this because these problems need to be identified so that we can take steps to fix them. However, as the representative of my electorate of Mount Ommaney—and as do other members of this House—I hear the good, positive things happening within our public hospital system.

Yesterday I spoke to Leonard Donsky. His wife, Margaret, has been in the PA Hospital for five months in intensive care on life support receiving care and treatment for a rare and yet unidentified infection affecting her spine. Margaret has been a nurse all her life and contracted tuberculosis many years ago. The TB was cured. However, later she picked up a very debilitating infection which was penetrating her bones. Six weeks ago Margaret was heading for palliative care at Mount Olivett Hospital as it was thought all was lost: she was dying. Doctors at the PA Hospital made a decision to make one last attempt to give her back her life. They operated to remove her infected spine and replaced it with a structure consisting of other human bones and titanium. Margaret is now rehabilitating, walking with the help of a walking frame and looking forward to going home.

Leonard rang me so that I could give recognition to the dedicated and skilful doctors and nurses at the PA and to the government for putting money into the state-of-the-art medical equipment and technology, and providing his wife with extraordinary care and for giving Margaret back to him. My praise and congratulations go to that wonderful medical team at the PA Hospital who believe that the value of life is immeasurable.

### Central Queensland Volunteering

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (6.56 pm): Gayle Black, Lorna McGrath and Maxine Brushe are three volunteers who have been working with Central Queensland Volunteering—an organisation that matches volunteers with the needs of various community based organisations. Unfortunately, this week Central Queensland Volunteering has had to close its doors. Four and a half years ago the organisation was started with seed funding from Comalco Community Benefit Fund and that was initially for a four-year period and they extended it for a further six months while Central Queensland Volunteering endeavoured to gain funding from both the state and federal governments. They have had extreme success in placing volunteers in groups like the Gladstone Aqua Therapy Association. Many of the seniors organisations who need drivers and other helpers, and many charity and voluntary organisations have gone to Central Queensland Volunteering seeking a suitable person or persons to help in their particular area.

The funding has been brought to government through Volunteering Queensland based here in Brisbane. To date there has been no success in getting state and federal governments to take over that funding area or at least for Gladstone because they already do fund volunteering organisations in other parts of Queensland. So I would appeal to the minister for communities—who I know has a great heart for people in our community and is a very generous person; a very compassionate person, too—to have another look at the funding for Central Queensland Volunteering and see whether there is any opportunity for that organisation to be assisted. The organisation has a greater than 75 per cent success rate in terms of volunteers later on finding employment, and it certainly would be a worthwhile organisation to support.

Another group of volunteers in my electorate is a steering committee in the township of Calliope looking to establish a Calliope community bank. Bendigo Bank is partnering the Calliope community bank organisation, but I particularly want to pay respect and acknowledgment to this voluntary group of people who have worked tirelessly and had a community fun day last weekend to try to generate interest and support for the community bank. It shows the true spirit of smaller communities in particular. A number of community banks have been established and have revitalised small communities where people who can bank in their small shopping centres also shop there. I commend this group of people. John Williams is one of the spokesmen, as is Craig Thomas, but I know several women also worked tirelessly. One lady said to me that her phone bill has trebled as a result of getting this program off the ground. I wish them every success.

### Proposed Development, Indooroopilly

**Mr LEE** (Indooroopilly—ALP) (6.59 pm): I rise in the House tonight to place firmly and squarely on the record my opposition to proposals by Mirvac and the Indooroopilly Golf Club to develop several hundred units in the Long Pocket part of Indooroopilly. Building hundreds of units at the proposed location is, quite simply, silly.

I understand that the proposal lodged with the council has quite dramatically underestimated the impact of the traffic associated with this type of development. Part of the application included a comparison of traffic use, based on cars leaving, between a particular unit building in Taringa, which is within a couple of hundred metres of a railway station and various other bus stops, and the units proposed to be built in Long Pocket, which is not as regularly serviced by Brisbane City Council buses and is, quite frankly, miles away from the Indooroopilly Railway Station. To suggest that any sensible comparison could be made between the two sites in a transport sense is absolutely stupid and I believe quite mischievous. The road traffic impact will be quite dramatic. The roads in the area are not up to that amount of traffic. I do not believe that there is any significant proposal by the developer to upgrade these roads. Quite frankly, that is not good enough.

A significant loss of parkland is proposed. I understand that one of the suggestions of Mirvac to make up for this loss involves designating part of the hard shoulder of the road as some place that should be considered parkland or should be considered recreational. It is absolutely ludicrous and stupid to take away local parkland and then suggest to local families that an appropriate place for them to—

**Mr English:** To play with their kids.

**Mr LEE:** I take that interjection from the member for Redlands. To say that an appropriate place for local families to play with their kids is the hard shoulder of a busy road is absolutely appalling.

The Brisbane City Council and all of its city councillors should quite simply say no to this development. When there were proposals for a natural sciences precinct to be built very near there I led the campaign against it, and this state government quashed that development. This is an opportunity for the Brisbane City Council to do exactly the same for the local community.

I have now attended two major public meetings in that area. There is significant community unrest over this. What disturbs me is the mischievous way in which some political figures in the Brisbane City

Council are trying to shift responsibility for making this decision away from themselves, who actually make the decision, and throw it back upon the state government, suggesting that in some way the Integrated Planning Act does not give them the ability to say no to this proposal. Quite frankly, it does. This is about Brisbane city councillors having power but refusing to take responsibility.

### **Sale of Telstra**

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (7.02 pm): I want to continue with the statement I commenced this morning in relation to the great work the National Party has done in delivering the last tranche of the sale of Telstra. The Nationals have done what they were elected to do. We used the Telstra sale to help secure the biggest boost to regional telecommunications in Australia's history—\$3.1 billion. The money will future-proof regional phone and internet services but is only available because of the sale.

In many areas the best way to improve services is to encourage stronger competition. Competition gives more choice and leads to new services and lower prices. In some regional areas increased competition will not be enough to bring services up to scratch. That is why the Nationals have helped deliver the biggest regional telecommunications assistance program in Australia's history. The \$3.1 billion package that the Labor Party voted against in this House today and yesterday consists of, first, \$1.1 billion to deliver better mobile phone and broadband services to regional Australia. That is what the Beattie Labor government voted against in this House. There is also \$2 billion to future-proof regional services through the income from a dedicated communications fund, as proposed by the Nationals and as voted against by the Beattie Labor government. Labor will have its hand out when this money is finally rolled out, which will happen very soon. It will probably start going out in January 2006. We know whose hand will be out looking for some of this infrastructure money, because it is a huge amount of money that will improve telecommunications throughout this nation.

The federal government will spend \$1.1 billion over the next four years to boost broadband, mobile phone and Indigenous services in regional Australia. It consists of \$878 million to roll out affordable broadband services in areas where the market is not working. The Beattie Labor government voted against that money going out for broadband services. There will be \$113 million for new broadband infrastructure to improve essential services such as health and education in regional areas. The Beattie Labor government voted against that in this House. There will be \$30 million to extend mobile phone coverage even further and continue satellite handset subsidies for remote areas. The Beattie Labor government voted against that. There will be \$90 million to improve communications in remote Indigenous communities. The Beattie Labor government voted against that. It has the gall to say that the National Party is walking away from the bush. That is absolutely ridiculous when we consider the amount of money that is going to be put into the bush to improve those services. We are going to make sure that the services out there are the best that they possibly can be.

The government will put a law through parliament that says there must be a regular, independent review of regional telecommunications. The first review will take place three years after the sale of Telstra. The income from the \$2 billion communications fund—more than \$100 million a year—will be available to fix the gap identified by those reviews. The money will be allocated competitively, not just to Telstra. The Labor Party in this House voted against that as well.

Time expired.

### **Education and the Arts**

**Hon. DM WELLS** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (7.05 pm): One of the natural synergies that exists between our departments of state is between Education and the Arts. Since 2001 we have maximised the potential of this synergy by having them under the leadership of one minister. I wonder, though, if we have yet exhausted the possibilities in this area. I do not mean simply by encouraging school groups to visit our museums, art galleries and libraries on the one hand or by mandating space for public art in our educational institutions on the other. I mean by bringing the techniques of the educator into our display of the arts and by bringing the techniques of the artist into our educational institutions.

For example, I am aware that a current international exhibition, which I understand is now at a museum in Berlin, uses skills of the educator to a very high level to aid in the interpretation of the material displayed. The exhibition is of the work and life of the great physicist Albert Einstein. It has, like other exhibitions, the artefacts and the written commentary. But, in addition, the exhibition sets out to make it clear, in terms understandable to any high school student, what were the intellectual advances achieved by the great 20th century physicist.

These are complex ideas but, like all complex ideas, they are capable of being explained simply. The device used in the display is a dialogue. In the first room the visitor sees not only artefacts but also, on opposite walls, cinematographed images of actors playing Aristotle, Isaac Newton and Einstein. The images debate with each other regarding the law of gravity. When the visitor exits the room for the next room he or she clearly understands the issue and what advance Einstein had made. After four rooms the visitor understands the theory of relativity.

It might be useful for us, in respect of those several departments that have positive synergies with one another, to maximise them. For example, we could take a senior education administrator off line for a week or two to look at what the arts department was displaying and then advise on how the skills of an educator could be brought to bear to make those displays even better. Inevitably, the instruments of government have to be divided into departments. However, we should not let this inevitability make us miss opportunities for generative cross-fertilisation.

### **Public Transport, Sunshine Coast**

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—Lib) (7.07 pm): Tonight I rise to talk briefly on the issue of public transport on the Sunshine Coast. As people know, the Sunshine Coast is a geographical area that is long but narrow. This makes public transport from Noosa to Caloundra an essential item for people who reside there—to attend their schools, to undertake their shopping and to attend dentist appointments, doctor appointments et cetera.

Public transport on the Sunshine Coast has been in an appalling state for a considerable number of years, and there is a real need to move urgently to address these concerns. In fact, one area on the coast has been brought to my attention. Sugarbag Road in Caloundra does not have a bus service at this point in time. I table a non-conforming petition signed by 149 people asking that Sunbus provide a service along Sugarbag Road as an urgent need. Sugarbag Road is located some distance away from any public transport facility. A bus service is urgently needed to assist those people who do rely upon public transport. In this day and age more and more people, due to many factors, do rely on public transport. These include people with young children, the elderly or those who cannot afford to purchase a motor vehicle or, in this day and age, cannot afford to purchase the petrol to put into the tank.

As I said earlier today, the question of public transport is of growing concern on the Sunshine Coast and it is very sad to see that the planning for greater use of public transport facilities, including the CAMCOS, buslink upgrades and other such items, are being well and truly delayed, are being pushed back 10- to 20-odd years. We all know the public transport needs of the whole south-east corner are in a critical state, but with the population of the Sunshine Coast reaching well over half a million within a short period of time the delay of 10 to 20 years in making certain that these people can get from A to B is an appalling indictment on this government.

It is, in fact, a situation that will lead to greater congestion on our roads across the Sunshine Coast which will, of course, escalate the number of vehicles but, more importantly, will lead to a large increase in the cost of goods and services that is going to be passed back to the families which will again impact on the family purse. The provision of these services is not a magic item, but they are certainly items that we do need to have put in place immediately.

As I said, the delay in CAMCOS and other upgrades by such a lengthy period of time needs to be addressed now. People on Sugarbag Road who do not have access to any reliable public transport—and, in fact, the same statement can be made across the whole Sunshine Coast—need the assistance of this government. The Sunshine Coast needs massive infrastructure spending placed into it as a matter of extreme urgency.

### **Loders Creek Bridge**

**Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (7.09 pm): As part of the Beattie government's commitment to upgrade Frank Street, the first stage is the section from Stevens Street to Robert Street and includes the duplication of the Lodgers Creek Bridge at a cost of over \$15 million. Over the past 12 months, and particularly following the June 2005 floods, I have had numerous inquiries and expressions of concern about the damming effect of the existing Lodgers Creek Bridge which results in a greater flooding effect during heavy rain upstream from the bridge. For the past 12 months I have discussed this major issue with the main roads department, particularly Eddie Peters and Jack Donaghey. They were extremely helpful and receptive to my suggestion that the existing bridge should be replaced and the span across the creek extended. I am pleased to announce that the department has agreed to construct two new bridges. The span of the bridges will increase from the present three by nine metres to three spans of 16 metres—that is, from 27 metres to 48 metres. The Gold Coast City Council has agreed to contribute to the additional cost for the construction of the new bridge and I thank the mayor, Ron Clark, for his assistance and cooperation in this matter.

The Department of Main Roads is currently finalising a detailed design for the upgrade. Construction is scheduled to begin next year. Using the Gold Coast City Council's flood model, hydraulic modelling of the existing bridge has indicated that for the Q100 flood event the backwater impact would be in the order of 70 to 100 millimetres. Modelling of the alternative twin new bridges indicates the backwater impact for the same event would be in the order of 20 to 30 millimetres. So it will not eliminate flooding altogether but it will make a significant improvement.

I would like to thank the many constituents from the area around Loders Creek, many of whom were badly affected in the June floods this year, who suggested and argued for the replacement of the existing bridge. It is a victory for them but also a victory for Southport. We have been debating today the issue of infrastructure in the south-east corner and certainly the Loders Creek Bridge duplication is a major infrastructure item for Southport.

### **Telstra**

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (7.12 pm): Those members who have been following the media reports today will know that the desperate campaign that the government has run to divert attention from their health crisis has not worked. The announcement today by National Party Senator Barnaby Joyce that he is going to back the sale of Telstra has been well received by people right across Queensland as the benefits of the package come to be understood by more and more Queenslanders. The dishonesty that we have seen in this House in an effort to try to divert attention from the government's own failings by running a scare campaign on this issue has failed and failed dismally.

**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr SEENEY**: I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North who is not interested in the health services in Toowoomba. I can assure him that the people of Monto will appreciate the extra telecommunications that will flow to that community and to communities right across Queensland because of the efforts of the National Party, because we have been able to leverage benefits for all Queenslanders from the sale of Telstra for the last three or four years. It is something that we will be eternally proud of, something that the members on that side of the House can never match in any form.

Members opposite have tried to run a cheap, dishonest scare campaign that saw so many of them stand up and try to misrepresent the situation. The culmination of that was the member for Bundaberg. If there was one member in this House who should be focusing on the health issue in this parliament it is the member for Bundaberg. Yet she tried to divert attention away from her failings and the government's failings by coming in here this morning and asking a question about Telstra. Telstra is a good news story. Ask some more questions. It is a great news story for the people of Queensland. As that infrastructure starts to get rolled out more and more people in Queensland will understand the degree to which this government has been dishonest and the degree to which they do not want to talk about health—they do not want to talk about their record.

The Minister for Energy is in here, too. He stooped to a new level of dishonesty when he accused the Nationals of not being interested in the bush and not being interested in telecommunications because we did not come in here last night and participate in some silly little debate on some silly little resolution that was designed to divert the attention. We have been involved in this issue for five years. For five years we have been leveraging benefits for the people of Queensland. Through each of the three tranches of the sale of Telstra we have got a benefit for the people of Queensland—and not just in our electorate but in all the electorates in Queensland. Every Queenslanders will benefit from the great work that the National Party have done and every Queenslanders will benefit when the \$1.1 billion worth of infrastructure is rolled out. Every Queenslanders will benefit from the future-proofing that the other \$2 billion will put in place.

### **Logan Police Service**

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (7.16 pm): The Police Service in Logan takes a leadership role in community service. They are not merely law enforcement officers; they are putting considerable investment into increasing our positive community spirit of connectedness. I would like to pay tribute to our senior police in Logan as well as our commissioner, Bob Atkinson, and Minister Judy Spence. In recent months there have been many opportunities for our community to celebrate with our Police Service. Some months ago both our minister, commissioner, Superintendent Paul Taylor, Senior Sergeant Mike Pearson and other officers joined many of our Neighbourhood Watch volunteers in Logan Gardens for their annual picnic. This is a fantastic day and is one which is a firm favourite on everyone's calendar.

Just last Sunday our police were responsible for another day in the park. This time it was at the beautiful Alexander Clark Park down on the Logan River. Many of our emergency services held displays and Neighbourhood Watch members attended from all over Logan. Originally the brainchild of Superintendent Paul Taylor, it proved a great day with free food, sample bags of good information, displays and dance by the children from the PCYC, great music and displays from the police, SES, paramedics, local ambulance committees, fire brigade and, of course, Neighbourhood Watch information. Our local elected representatives were all there: federal member Craig Emerson; state members Barbara Stone, John Mickel and me; Councillor Pam Parker, as well as Harry Dwyer representing Tom Barton. Special guest for the day was Hon. Pat Purcell in his new capacity as Minister for Emergency Services.

A sad note which has deeply affected many of my own Neighbourhood Watch volunteers and indeed our whole community has been the tragic death of one of our very respected coordinators, Jeanette Maddalena, and her daughter, Roxanne Allam, who leaves four children. I would like to thank both the Hon. John Mickel and the commissioner, Bob Atkinson, for paying tribute to Jeanette and Roxanne on this special day. Jeanette and her daughter were tragically killed in a road accident on Wembley Road on Saturday, 13 August and the loss suffered by their families and our community is simply immeasurable. Jeanette was a warm and loving mother, grandmother and friend. She was a gentle woman of great faith and a salt-of-the-earth community member who volunteered in many ways. Her husband, Ray, children, grandchildren, large extended family, friends and simply hundreds of people converged on St Paul's Catholic Church the following Wednesday to pay a sad yet serene and loving farewell to these two wonderful women. The tragic loss of two innocent lives taken so unexpectedly is another very stark reminder to us all. We wake up each morning, we have plans, hopes and dreams, but this can all be ended so tragically. These families are strong and very close. They will go on and support each other, but the loss they have suffered is felt by us all. Our world is a better place for all they have done and the love that they have shared.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.19 pm.