



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 5 March 2013

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TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 2013



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

ASSENT TO BILLS



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

The Honourable F. Simpson MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Date of Assent: 19 February 2013

“A Bill for An Act to amend the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for An Act to make ongoing provision for particular matters arising under the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985 and to repeal that Act, and to amend this Act, the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Land Act 1994, the Land Court Act 2000, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the Wild Rivers Regulation 2007 for particular purposes”

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

19 February 2013

The Honourable F. Simpson MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Date of Assent: 26 February 2013

“A Bill for An Act to amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for An Act to amend the Classification of Computer Games and Images Act 1995, the Classification of Films Act 1991, the Classification of Publications Act 1991, the Criminal Code, the Land Act 1994, the Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Act 2011 and the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 for particular purposes, and to make consequential or minor amendments of other Acts as stated in schedules 1 and 2 for purposes related to those particular purposes”

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

26 February 2013

Tabled paper: Letters, dated 19 February and 26 February 2013, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to bills [\[2118\]](#).

REPORT

Auditor-General

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General a report titled *Report to Parliament No. 7 for 2012-13—results of audits: Queensland state government financial statements 2011-12*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 7 for 2012-13—Results of audits: Queensland state government financial statements 2011-12 [\[2119\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Parliamentary Reporting Service, Production System

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the Parliamentary Reporting Service uses a software production system to produce, deliver, compile and publish the speeches that members and ministers make in parliament. A new production system has been designed and will commence this sitting. An enhancement of the new system is that transcripts of members' speeches can now be delivered by email. As of this sitting, a member's draft speech—the green—will be emailed to both their parliamentary email address and to their electorate office email address. Ministers' speeches will be emailed to their ministerial email address. The delivery of hard-copy greens will continue for the next two sitting weeks to enable a smooth transition to the new delivery system. Therefore, members will continue to receive a hard-copy speech delivered to their seat in the chamber. Ministers' greens will continue to be faxed to their ministerial offices. Hard-copy delivery of ministers' and members' greens will therefore cease from the sitting week commencing 16 April 2013. Members are invited to provide any feedback to the Chief Hansard Reporter.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—

Stradbroke Island, Proposed Bridge

Mr Davies, from 145 petitioners, requesting the House to construct a bridge from the mainland to Stradbroke Island via Russell Island [\[2120\]](#).

Flinders to Amity Point Beaches, Off-Leash Area

Dr Robinson, from 417 petitioners, requesting the House to rescind the recent closure of the off-leash area for dogs from Flinders to Amity Point beaches and return the area to an off-leash area for the exercise of dogs [\[2121\]](#).

Bribie Island Road and Old Toorbul Point Road, Intersection

Ms France, from 206 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate the dangerous intersection at Bribie Island Road and Old Toorbul Point Road and look at options to minimise the risks posed [\[2122\]](#).

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

Advertising, Outdoor and Shopfront

Dr Robinson, from 1,399 petitioners, requesting the House to reassess the current self-regulation scheme and enact State legislation that will place further restrictions on outdoor and shopfront advertising with the intention of preventing the display of material that is sexually explicit, offensive and/or inappropriate for children [\[2123\]](#).

Barrett Adolescent Centre, Closure

Mrs Miller, from 1,093 petitioners, requesting the House to reverse its decision to close the Barrett Adolescent Centre and keep the centre open [\[2124\]](#).

Caboolture Hospital, Funding

Mr Mulherin, from 146 petitioners, requesting the House to rule out any cuts to the funding of staff, services or future development plans at Caboolture Hospital [\[2125\]](#).

Coal Dust Emission

Mrs Miller, from 116 petitioners, requesting the House to take immediate action to reduce the amount of coal dust and other air pollution in the Wynnum Manly district and surrounding suburbs [\[2126\]](#).

Voting System, Compulsory

Mr Wellington, from 353 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the compulsory voting system that is currently in place in Queensland [\[2127\]](#).

Multicultural Recognition Bill 2012

Ms Palaszczuk, from 21 petitioners, requesting the House to support the passage of the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2012 when it comes before the House [\[2128\]](#).

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

Emergency Services Cadet Program, Funding

277 petitioners, requesting the House to restore and increase funding to the Emergency Services Cadet Program, one of the most successful youth programs in Queensland [\[2129\]](#).

Queensland Health, Federal Funding

Two petitions, from 187 petitioners, requesting the House to approach the Federal Treasurer and request the reversal of the Commonwealth decision to reduce health funding to Queensland Health by \$103 million in 2012-13 [\[2130\]](#) [\[2131\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS**PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS**

The Clerk to inform the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated (tabled paper number is referenced)—

15 February 2013—

[2098](#) The Queensland Music Festival Pty Ltd—Financial report for the year ended 30 September 2012

[2099](#) Townsville Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2011-12

[2100](#) Townsville Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2011-12: Late tabling statement from the Minister for Health (Mr Springborg)

18 February 2013—

[2101](#) State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 18—Subordinate legislation tabled 27 November 2013

19 February 2013—

[2102](#) Certified copy of the Register of Reports and Recommendations made to the Police Minister, Ministerial Directions and Tabled Ministerial Reasons 2012, dated 21 January 2013, together with a covering letter, dated 21 January 2013, from I Stewart, Commissioner, Queensland Police Service to Mr R Martin, Chairperson, Crime and Misconduct Commission, and a covering letter, dated 23 January 2013, from the Chairperson, Crime and Misconduct Commission to Mrs L Cunningham, Chair, Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee

21 February 2013—

[2103](#) Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 17—Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

22 February 2013—

[2104](#) National Environment Protection Council—Annual Report 2011-12

[2105](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 16—Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Government response

25 February 2013—

[2106](#) Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 14—Inquiry into the Operation and Performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority 2012: Interim Government Response

[2107](#) Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines (Mr Cripps) to a paper petition (2051-13) and an ePetition (1934-12) presented by Mr Kaye from 259 and 87 petitioners respectively requesting the House to consider changing the name for the northern part of East Brisbane (bound by Mowbray Terrace, Wellington Road, Mowbray Park, the Brisbane River and Norman Creek, including Heath Park and Churchie) to Mowbraytown

26 February 2013—

[2108](#) Public Report of Office Expenses for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, for the period 1 July 2012 to 31 December 2012

[2109](#) Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 13—Review of the Retirement Villages Act 1999: Government Response

27 February 2013—

[2110](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 22—Succession to the Crown Bill 2013

[2111](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 17—Queensland Mental Health Commission Bill 2012

[2112](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 17—Queensland Mental Health Commission Bill 2012: Submissions received in relation to the inquiry

[2113](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 17—Queensland Mental Health Commission Bill 2012: Supporting document to the submission of the Public Advocate (tabled at the public hearing on 13 February 2013)

[2114](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 17—Queensland Mental Health Commission Bill 2012: Supplementary information provided by the Australian Medical Association Queensland

28 February 2013—

[2115](#) Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 13—Inquiry into Queensland's Agriculture and Resources Industries: Government Response

[2116](#) State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 17—Inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland: Government Response

1 March 2013—

[2117](#) Mental Health Review Tribunal—Annual Report 2011-12

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The Clerk to table the following statutory instruments, received during the recess—

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005—

[2132](#) Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 17

[2133](#) Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 17, Explanatory Notes

Right to Information and Integrity (Openness and Transparency) Amendment Act 2012—

[2134](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 18

[2135](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 18, Explanatory Notes

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

[2136](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 19

[2137](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 19, Explanatory Notes

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

[2138](#) Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 20

[2139](#) Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 20, Explanatory Notes

Legal Profession Act 2007—

[2140](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2013, No. 21

[2141](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2013, No. 21, Explanatory Notes

Professional Standards Act 2004—

[2142](#) Professional Standards (College of Investigative and Remedial Consulting Engineers Australia Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2013, No. 22

[2143](#) Professional Standards (College of Investigative and Remedial Consulting Engineers Australia Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2013, No. 22, Explanatory Notes

Animal Care and Protection Act 2001—

[2144](#) Animal Care and Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 23

[2145](#) Animal Care and Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 23, Explanatory Notes

Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012—

[2146](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 24

[2147](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 24, Explanatory Notes

Environmental Protection Act 1994, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Sustainable Planning Act 2009—

[2148](#) Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 25

[2149](#) Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013, No. 25, Explanatory Notes

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994—

[2150](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2013, No. 26

[2151](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2013, No. 26, Explanatory Notes

MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk to table the following members' papers

Member for Capalaba (Mr Davies)—

[2152](#) Non-conforming petition regarding the absence of a bridge to travel to Stradbroke Island via Russell Island

Member for Moggill (Dr Flegg)—

[2153](#) Non-conforming petition regarding the development at 66 Gilruth Road, Kenmore

Member for Inala (Ms Palaszczuk)—

[2154](#) Non-conforming petition regarding the Barrett Adolescent Centre

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk to table the following report—

[2155](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2012

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 2012'

Insert—

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 2013'.

Classification of Computer Games and Images and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

‘Classification of Computer Games and Images and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012’

Insert—

‘Classification of Computer Games and Images and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013’.

Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2012

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

‘Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Act 2012’

Insert—

‘Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Act 2013’.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Changes in Ministry



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.36 am): I lay upon the table of the House the *Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazettes* of 15 and 20 February 2013 which outline recent changes to the ministry.

Tabled paper: Extraordinary Government Gazettes, dated 15 and 20 February 2013, advising of changes to the ministry [\[2156\]](#).

These changes include the appointment of the member for Mansfield, the Hon. Ian Walker MP, as Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts; the member for Southport, Mr Rob Molhoek MP, as Assistant Minister for Planning Reform; and the member for Mount Ommaney, Mrs Tarnya Smith MP, as Assistant Minister for Child Safety. I congratulate the honourable members on their appointments. I have every confidence that they will perform strongly for the people of Queensland in their respective roles. I inform the House that, consequent upon the appointment of the member for Mount Ommaney as Assistant Minister for Child Safety, the member for Greenslopes, Mr Ian Kaye, has been appointed as Deputy Whip.

Seeley, Mr B



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.37 am): I want to place on the parliamentary record acknowledgement of the retirement last week of the Building Services Coordinator for the Executive Building, Mr Barry Seeley. Barry worked in the state government Protective Security Service for nearly 29 years, including in the Executive Building since 1987 where he was head of security for many years. He has worked for eight Queensland premiers, including myself, and also many cabinet ministers, including 11 treasurers.

Barry immigrated to Australia at the age of 17 after leaving his family on the Isle of Wight in the UK. He worked on a farm at Redbank Plains until he decided to join the Australian Army. Barry had a long and distinguished career in the Australian Army and served overseas in Malaysia, Borneo and Vietnam and was a machine gunner with his battalion. I personally note that 45 years ago in a few days' time Mr Seeley was serving in the Republic of South Vietnam with my own late father, Kevin Newman, on Operation Ashgrove Tram from 25 to 28 March 1968.

Barry became an Australian citizen in 1976—certainly a major gain for all of us. He had an impeccable record of service with the security service and was instrumental in assisting with the development and refinement of protective security services throughout government. On behalf of the current government and the governments that have come before and during Barry's career, I place on record our thanks for his years of service to the people of Queensland and the government, together with our best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Natural Disaster Events of 2013, Recovery Assistance

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.39 am): It is important to remember that, while much of the south-east of the state is starting to dry out, parts of Queensland have again suffered from flooding over the past week. Some business owners were forced to clean up last week for the second time in a month after Gympie's fourth major flood in a year and its fifth flood in just two years. Between 26 and 28 February, around 50 houses were impacted by flooding in the Mary Valley and the west of Gympie in particular. Thankfully, no homes were inundated at that time. In Gympie, around 50 businesses were affected and 40 suffered inundation. The people of Gympie are resilient, but repeated flooding is having a severe impact even on them. In the Western Downs region, more than 300 Dalby and Jandowae residents had flooding in their yards, with around 40 in Dalby taking water into their living areas and 14 where flooding made the house uninhabitable. In Dalby, 10 businesses were closed when the rain came on 3 March.

The wet season is not yet over. There is the chance that more rain will come and Queenslanders need to be vigilant and prepared. We are working with the federal government to get the funds needed to rebuild and for projects that will increase Queensland's flood resilience. We have expanded Minister Crisafulli's portfolio to put him in charge of flood recovery and resilience, working with local councils to identify the projects and to get the job done. I repeat my commitment to Queenslanders that everyone will get the help that they need from this government and we will keep working to ensure that the Commonwealth also holds up its end of the bargain. While the Commonwealth's commitment last week of \$57 million for Queensland betterment and resilience projects is welcome, it is less than half the \$140 million in matching funds that this government has put on the table and identified as the absolute minimum needed. We will keep on fighting for the funding that Queensland needs.

Queensland Plan

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.41 am): Last week, I officially launched the creation of the Queensland Plan—a 30-year vision for Queensland. Shaping this plan will be a collaborative process that will involve the community, industry and local and state governments to set the long-term vision for our state. This will not be a state government plan; it will be a plan created by Queenslanders for Queensland. It will influence the future decision making of all levels of government, industry and community groups.

The engagement and consultation process for the plan will start at a summit in Mackay on 10 May 2013 involving all members of parliament and community and local government representatives. All honourable members are being invited to bring a diverse group of their constituents to the Mackay summit and I am looking forward to seeing all members and their constituency representatives there. The Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, the Hon. Andrew Powell MP, has agreed to be the plan's project champion. The minister will be holding a briefing session for all members during this sitting week on Thursday, 7 March to provide further details on the process and to outline the next steps.

The purpose of the Mackay summit will be to determine which questions we need to ask Queenslanders to help develop our long-term vision and to discuss the best ways of engaging with local communities. From May through to August, activities will take place right across Queensland to seek local community input to the vision. Online resources and a comprehensive website will allow Queenslanders to participate if they cannot be involved in face-to-face discussions. A second summit will be held in South-East Queensland in September to bring together the results of the community consultation and to workshop the key elements of the vision and priorities. I envisage that the final Queensland Plan will be released in late 2013. We can all play a role in shaping Queensland's vision and we will all have a role in achieving our vision. I encourage all honourable members—all 89 members—and Queenslanders generally to make the most of this opportunity.

Gold Coast Cruise Ship Terminal

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.43 am): In November last year our government joined with the Gold Coast City Council in entering into an expressions-of-interest process to gauge private sector interest in building a cruise ship terminal on the Broadwater at the Gold Coast. The EOI process attracted eight submissions from national and international consortia and I can inform the House today that the Gold Coast Broadwater Marine Project has now entered the next important stage.

An evaluation panel consisting of state and Gold Coast City Council officers has now decided that four of those submissions should be taken to a request-for-detailed-proposal stage to produce detailed proposals for the provision of a cruise ship terminal as part of an integrated tourism development on the Gold Coast. The successful four are ASF China Property Consortium, Azure Consortium, ACPI Consortium and Ridong (Gold Coast) Development. All the short-listed proponents included a cruise ship terminal in the EOI submissions and three of the four included an integrated tourism facility incorporating a new casino. Some proposed development within the Southport Broadwater, including Wave Break Island, while others limited development plans to various parts of The Spit.

The request-for-detailed-proposal stage will engage these short-listed proponents to move from broad proposals to more detailed plans, which will be far more rigorously examined for commercial viability and environmental impact. The Gold Coast City Council believes that the provision of a cruise ship facility is vital to the ongoing growth of the city and its tourism sector. Our government is prepared to fully support the mayor and the council to assess the private sector's willingness and ability to deliver a multimillion dollar development on the Broadwater, which will include a cruise ship terminal.

It is still early in this whole process and there is much hard work and negotiation ahead, but it is heartening to see the marketplace is showing a significant level of interest in this project. The short-listed proponents will now need to address a number of detailed requests for information from both the state government and the Gold Coast City Council and during this process there will be very strict probity arrangements in place to protect the process and the investment of the proponents.

We have consistently stated that the government is willing to participate in this process conditional on the proposed developments being subject to rigorous assessment and evaluation in every respect. We do so on the basis that there is no financial cost or material risk to the state. If this project proceeds it will be built and funded by the private sector. That said, a project such as this holds great possibilities for the Gold Coast, with the provision of not only a cruise ship terminal but prospects for new hotels, marinas, retail, entertainment, community open space and recreation facilities. If it can proceed it would provide a huge boost for the construction and tourism sectors—two of our four-pillar economic agenda. At this point we would expect the request-for-detailed-proposal stage to be completed around midyear. Hopefully, this project can contribute to this government's plan for great jobs, a great lifestyle and great services into the future.

Commission of Audit

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.47 am): Queenslanders have been left a legacy of debt and deficit by Labor—debt heading towards \$85 billion; the loss of Queensland's AAA credit rating; increasing taxes, fees and charges; taxes on the purchase of the family home; big fare increases for public transport; more land taxes; and more regulation and licence fees for businesses, knocking families and businesses for six in Queensland. Clearly, this was unacceptable to Queenslanders. Interest bills of potentially \$585,000 per hour showed just how much Labor was prepared to hock Queensland's future. This government commissioned the independent Commission of Audit to help chart a path back to prosperity for Queensland. On Thursday, after nearly 12 months of investigation and work, the Newman government received the independent Commission of Audit's final report. The commissioners briefed the Cabinet Budget Review Committee ahead of Friday's public release of the executive summary.

The report, containing 155 recommendations over 1,000 pages and over 330,000 words, is aimed at, (1) restoring Queensland to financial strength; (2) increasing productivity; and, (3) building prosperity warns that a business-as-usual approach will lead to more deficits and debt—debt that we will not be able to finance if it continues to accumulate at the way Labor accumulated it. The report makes it clear that, for Queensland to regain its AAA credit rating and maintain services that Queenslanders expect and deserve, the massive Labor debt legacy must be reduced by \$25 billion to \$30 billion. It also makes it clear that reducing the debt cannot be done by simply achieving surpluses. That would, if it were possible, take up to 50 years of surpluses of one per cent of revenue. The only other option is the Labor option: massive increases in taxes, fees and charges. Paying down debt rapidly and regaining the AAA credit rating would dramatically reduce the state's interest bill, enabling us to spend billions of dollars more on front-line services and infrastructure—things like flood proofing our cities and towns in rural and regional Queensland.

The report also addresses the challenges of delivering services in the 21st century and identifies declining productivity as a major issue in Queensland. It also says that in many instances the government should look to be the enabler not the doer. In 2010-11 Queensland had the highest cost of service provision of any mainland state and as such the report recommends introducing more competition. As an example, a health procedure in a Queensland hospital is almost \$1,000 more expensive than the same procedure conducted in a Victorian hospital. In effect, Queenslanders are paying more and receiving less while Victorians are paying less and receiving more. It says funding increases that were made by the previous government were not matched by productivity outcomes and recommends a review of the Public Service to achieve better value for money.

On Friday we released the executive summary to the public. The 2012-13 state budget addressed stage 1 of the fiscal repair task to stabilise the debt, and ongoing monitoring of that process is underway. Last Friday marked the start of the public debate about stage 2 on how best to pay down Labor's debt, debt that ballooned under Labor from 2005-06.

This is a debate we must have. We will not sell government businesses without a mandate from the people and we are determined to keep the promise we made at the 2012 state election, but this does not preclude a sensible and rational debate. We will take time to consider the 1,000-page report in detail and I emphasise that no decision has yet been made. If the previous Labor government had taken the time to consider the various reports it had commissioned, like those into the Health payroll, maybe it would have avoided the disastrous decisions it made that we are left to clean up. All too often the previous government opted for the short-term political fix which has resulted in this government having to clean up its mess.

Ministers and backbenchers will be an important part of the process. On Monday I will deliver the full 1,000-page report to my cabinet colleagues with a party room meeting to follow in coming weeks. I look forward to a frank and open debate about the many and varied issues this report raises. I trust my cabinet colleagues will enjoy the 1,000-page read as much as I have and will consider its recommendations and its supporting evidence.

Let me emphasise it one more time: we will not sell government businesses without a mandate from the people. We expect to release the full report, along with the government's response, in about two months. This will be a careful and considered process, as Queenslanders would expect of their government. We will work to make Queensland the ideal place to live, work and invest—a great state with great opportunity, but we must fix the finances.

Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.51 am): A new plan to re-establish our healthcare system as a national pacesetter was launched by the Premier and me in a web broadcast to staff last week. The Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland follows 11 months rebuilding a health system run into the ground by Labor and union bosses. This is a milestone, marking the transition of Queensland Health to a new phase of lasting recovery and investment. It is part of the government's plan for great jobs, a great lifestyle and great service into the future.

Better health care is our objective, uncluttered by political restrictions and waste. This government will never stand by while health workers go without pay, as in the notorious case of the IBM payroll contract. Health budgets will not blow out year after year, as in the past decade. We have wrested control of local resources away from the central bureaucracy. Now local boards are the ones required to live within their means and be rewarded for doing so.

The bonanza discovered by the fake Tahitian prince in so-called health grants to community organisations is over and new service agreements will be linked to health goals. Our blueprint brings together all the resources of the public, private and not-for-profit health sectors. Under the LNP, Health is no longer measured by numbers of public sector jobs. Its administration is not feather-bedded to suit union bosses. Health care in Queensland is evolving more rapidly than ever before. Labor's wasteful abandonment of the Royal Children's Hospital site will be addressed when options for a planned surgical procedures centre are tested in May. Expressions of interest follow in October and hopefully tenders in January. A review of partnership models to provide value for money in the future management of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital is commissioned from the accounting firm KPMG and begins this week. Expressions of interest for latent space at Gold Coast University Hospital and tenders for its radiation oncology services are also being sought.

These examples show the health benefits of switching from a moribund past to an innovative and inclusive future under the LNP blueprint. The Premier and I pay tribute to Health staff who are redesigning clinical systems and fighting off problems such as the billion dollar inherited Health payroll system. This will build community confidence in partnerships across all health sectors and levels of government.

Our Blueprint for Better Healthcare places the patient at the centre of all we do. A newly created independent Mental Health Commission to guide government strategy in this challenging area will begin work later this year. A rural telehealth service will provide rural communities with first-time access to new services as part of a strategy for remote area health care. Ambulance bypass is banned and recommendations for better access to hospital emergency departments will be implemented. Current changes to Queensland Health's corporate office will make it 43 per cent smaller. Awards and entitlements will be simplified and senior officers transferred to competitive contracts.

The biggest health investment of this government so far is \$1.35 billion for well-deserved pay rises for nurses and midwives, medical officers and public sector award employees. As a commission of inquiry investigates the payroll fiasco, Health employees help with the clean-up, payroll underpayments are resolved and the moratorium on overpayments ended. A pay-date change improves processing time and limitations on historic pay claims are now in place. A Ministerial Health Infrastructure Council will guide private investment in health services and infrastructure and a contestability branch will supervise the competitive performance of government business units. Strategies to provide hospital in the home are being developed. Indigenous owned and led healthcare enterprises will be promoted and the Health Services Information Agency reviewed. Twenty-four additional hospitals will report online by the end of 2013. The first five began reporting last week. Quarterly hospital data will be published in newspapers comparing emergency departments, surgical and outpatient waiting times, rates of hospital acquired infections, support for families with newborns and value for money.

Overall, the Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland will improve our performance against national benchmarks. Our goal is to meet the national average benchmark for healthcare delivery by mid-2014—and the Treasurer outlined the importance of that—with further improvements in subsequent years.

Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts



Hon. IB WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (9.56 am): As the newly appointed minister, I take great pride in informing the House of my vision for the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. There are two major arteries, or common threads if you will, that run through this portfolio: they are productivity and creativity. Those two common threads are in everything my department does and all of the outcomes that are achieved. Queensland's future productivity will be delivered, at least in part, from innovation, science and information and communication technology. Information technology is a clear driver of productivity as solutions are found to deliver great services cheaper and in different ways. ICT can also revolutionise entire industries. You only need to look at wotif.com to see how old business practices can be turned on their head by ICT.

Innovation and science too are key drivers of the future prosperity of the great state of Queensland. Who knows what future products and services, what future businesses, will arise from the work of scientists and innovators. And such innovation is key to providing the great jobs that the Newman government is providing for the people of Queensland. We will use those world-class scientists and innovators we have right here to help unearth those products, services and businesses.

Each of the areas within my portfolio also touches on creativity. Science is not only about people in lab coats with clipboards. It is people taking a problem and attempting to find an explanation or potentially a solution to a problem that has not been solved before. That takes creativity. Of course, the arts are the largest driver of creativity in my portfolio. Arts and culture have the capacity to lift the heart and feed the soul, to nourish our lives and see the world in a slightly different light. Just last night I attended the Matilda Awards recognising the extraordinary talent in our theatre scene. That was a fantastic evening—as was Clancestry, Queensland's newest arts festival celebrating our Indigenous culture. I was very pleased to open that officially in the open air under clear skies, thank heaven, last Friday night.

My vision for the portfolio embraces all of that creative energy and the great lifestyle that this state provides people. That means growing Queensland's productive future through ICT, science and innovation, especially in the important tourism, agriculture, mining and construction industries throughout the state. There are great jobs to be had in Queensland. This will ensure that the benefits of arts and culture are felt by as many people as possible, in as many places as possible.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I ask you to finish your contribution.

Mr WALKER: Building Queensland's productive and cultural capacity will not be easy. It will take dedication and hard work. I look forward to further updating the House on the progress and details of my vision in the near future.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (10.00 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing will be absent from the House for this sitting and the subsequent sitting in March. Minister Dickson is absent due to ill health. Minister Davis is Acting Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and, very importantly, Racing during this absence and I look forward to her tips.

REPORT

Office of the Leader of the Opposition

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.01 am): I table the public report of the office expenses for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 1 July 2012 to 31 December 2012.

Tabled paper: Report titled 'Public Report of Office Expenses, Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 01/07/2012—31/12/2012' [\[2157\]](#).

NOTICE OF MOTION

Newman Government

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (10.01 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House:

- condemns the Newman LNP government for its plans to outsource and privatise essential health services;
- condemns the Newman government for using materials prepared at taxpayers' expense for a LNP fundraiser; and
- calls on the Newman government to donate the proceeds of the LNP health fundraiser conducted on Wednesday, 27 February 2013—estimated to be approximately \$120,000—to the Red Cross Queensland Floods Appeal.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Commission of Audit

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.01 am): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier tell the House if he has read the \$2 million taxpayer funded secret Costello report?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I can tell her that I have read the executive summary; I have not yet got my hands on the 1,000 pages that the Treasurer was alluding to earlier on. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question, because it does give me the opportunity to talk today about what the Commission of Audit report is all about. The problem is very much as—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease her interjections. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: This allows me to outline why the exercise was undertaken in the first place, because still many Queenslanders are unaware of the terrible financial mess that we were left by those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition was one of those decision makers who, for example,

cranked up public transport fares by 15 per cent while seeing maintenance drop to an all-time low and, as a result, significant outages to do with the electricity system and then delays for commuters. That is the pattern across their government. It is a pattern of financial waste and mismanagement; it is a pattern of deficits. We are seeing it happen federally. We saw the debt blowing out in the most extraordinary fashion. That is what we are dealing with.

We did inherit a huge mess and it has to be dealt with. Today, I say to Queenslanders that what this actually means is that in 10 or 20 years time you will not have a health system that delivers for you in the way that you will expect. It means that the services that you have every right to believe you are going to get—whether it be police, ambulance, fire services, looking after people with disabilities—simply cannot happen if we continue to see the mess left unattended. It has to be cleaned up. That is what the Commission of Audit report is all about. It sets out very clearly what the problem is. If you are a concerned Queenslanders, it behoves you to look at the initial report that came out last year, which is on the internet. When the full report is released, I urge my fellow Queenslanders to look at the reality of the situation left by those opposite.

Unlike those opposite, we will be open and upfront. They never sought any say-so from the people of Queensland when they sold off QR. They never sought any say-so when they sold off the airport in Cairns. Today, the Treasurer said that we want a debate in Queensland about how to sort out the mess that they created.

Commission of Audit

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Premier. If the Premier and his ministers are too lazy to read the top-secret Costello report—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, take your seat. That question is out of order. You are fully aware of the standing orders in regard to appropriate parliamentary language and inferences. I ask you to reword the question. I warn the Leader of the Opposition. She is aware of the standing orders. I also ask you to apologise, withdraw that statement and reword your question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw. My question is to the Premier. If reading the top-secret Costello report is such a low priority for the Premier and his ministers, will he commit to releasing it today so that Queenslanders can read it in full?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the opportunity again to talk about the great big financial mess that they left us. In relation to the report, there are many things on my plate at the moment. For example, we are seeing power prices go through the roof and we know why that occurred. We know that it is because the people opposite were cheer leaders for the carbon tax, they were cheer leaders for the renewable energy target scheme, they were cheer leaders and, indeed, strong advocates for raising the weighted average cost of capital. In other words, they wanted to make profits from the GOCs—effectively, taxation by stealth on Queenslanders—and right now we are seeing the results of that policy flowing through to power bills.

I am happy to talk about their poor and reckless financial mismanagement until the cows come home. I am happy to talk about what \$65 billion worth of debt means when we are trying, in the longer term, with an ageing population, to provide decent health services. I am happy to talk about having to borrow \$11 billion this year. That is their shameful legacy. It affects every Queenslanders. That is why the Commission of Audit report is so critically important. It sets out some of the realities of the situation. It sets out some of the options for dealing with this. We want to have a proper debate with Queenslanders. We want a proper debate, because no decisions have been taken. The Treasurer said it today.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I now warn members on my left for their interjections. I will start warning members under the standing orders. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: This report will be released in accordance with the timeline as outlined by the Treasurer and everyone will see it. Sadly, it will be lost on those opposite who have continued to come in here and be debt and deficit deniers. A number of them have said that there is no debt problem and there is no deficit problem. There is and 1,000 pages outline the problem and the solution. For those opposite who are challenged by matters financial, perhaps all they will be able to deal with ever is the executive summary. Perhaps, that is all they will ever be able to cope with.

We are unlike those opposite who never sought any permission from Queenslanders to sell off the Port of Brisbane and who never asked if it was okay to actually privatise QR. Some of those opposite made the case quite passionately. The Leader of the Opposition is on the record saying how important the privatisations were. She spoke on the bill. We can remind her later on if she keeps asking these questions and asserting that we are going to do something when we are still about having a debate with Queenslanders.

Queensland Plan

Mr HATHAWAY: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please advise the House how the government's Queensland Plan announcement has been received by Queenslanders and what views are coming forward from key industry representatives?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for his question. Indeed, on the whole, there has been a very positive response to the announcement about the Queensland Plan and about our work to, in a very wholehearted and comprehensive way, engage with all Queenslanders and develop a plan for the next 30 years. But there are some nay-sayers as well, and I will get to them in a moment.

Firstly, I will deal with the positives. Kathy MacDermott from the Property Council of Australia said this—

They welcome the plan saying it has long advocated for the need to draw up a strategy for Queensland's growth.

They also said—

The plan will provide a much needed direction for Queensland's future and help to guide the state's economic development and expand its green credentials.

The Queensland Resources Council said—

The Premier is to be congratulated for bringing resource sector companies and community leaders together for this summit. There are opportunities for communities throughout the state to be part of the resources sector's bright future through the skilling of talented people to take up long-term and rewarding careers.

What about the Planning Institute? They said—

We support the need for a clear picture of where Queensland should be in 30 years and welcome the community's involvement.

We have also received—I note—cautious support from the Queensland Council of Social Service and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland. There was also support for holding the summit in Mackay. Narelle Pearse from the Regional Economic Development Corporation said—

The fact that the Premier has chosen our region shows his strong understanding of the importance of growth regions in regional Queensland.

Government members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Honourable members, let us just see what the positive people said. Tim Miles from the Mackay Region Chamber of Commerce said that it was a fantastic opportunity to raise Mackay issues. He said—

By bringing the entire cabinet and ministry to Mackay we can talk about local issues they don't hear day in, day out.

But what did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition say—the local member? He said that the summit should be held in Brisbane.

Government members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: That is right. I ask rhetorically whether he agrees with the member for Bundamba's position. She went one step further saying that the decision to hold the summit in Mackay—

Mr MULHERIN: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. I welcomed the summit in Mackay. I did not mention Brisbane. I said that the Premier flip-flopped all over the place on this policy.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Take your seat! I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: Well that may be so, but does he support the member for Bundamba's position where she labelled the decision to hold the summit in Mackay as 'a joke'? Forevermore, the current supposed member for Mackay will be to me the member for South-East Queensland. That is the way I will respond and refer to him from now on because he betrayed the people of his electorate. He betrayed them last week. He turned on them. Like Judas he turned his back on them. He does not care about his own electorate.

Commission of Audit

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Costello audit report and the fact that the Premier has not read it, the Deputy Premier has not read it and the Treasurer has not read it. Will the Premier advise just who in this government has read it or will anyone be reading it any time soon?

Mr NEWMAN: I love it when they ask questions that I want to talk to; I just love it. I will say this: the Treasurer on last count had got to about page 200. That is what he told us all yesterday. I say again that I have read the executive summary. But I do not have to read the report at this stage because we have made no decisions. We are about to consider the report in the way the Treasurer has said. We are then going to have a proper debate in Queensland about how we clean up the mess those opposite left us—all of us; not just us over here, Queenslanders.

Those opposite left a mess for 4.5 million Queenslanders. They have fundamentally compromised the ability for us in 10, 20 and 30 years time to fund better hospitals, to implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme and to actually do a better job in our public schools. They have fundamentally compromised these things. How the heck can we ever undertake important infrastructure projects—whether it be the upgrade of the Bruce Highway, whether it be public transport infrastructure in South-East Queensland or indeed in some of our important regional cities? How will we ever be able to do that when the debt has gone beyond \$62 billion thanks to the—I even hesitate to call them—policy settings that they put in place.

Remember how they sold \$16 billion worth of assets. What happened to the debt? The debt went up. Remember during the election campaign how they had the mines to minds commitment where they were going to spend royalties from the gas industry, which had not yet been received. They were absolutely reckless. These people did not have a clue what they were doing with the finances. Even now they continue to deny the fact that there is indeed a debt and deficit problem.

We are not going to do that. Nor will we sell off assets without taking a case to Queenslanders. We have made no decision on those matters. Nor have we made any decisions on outsourcing other than the things that have been outlined by the health minister in the health blueprint. I encourage those members opposite to see how we can run better hospital services in Queensland.

At the end of the day, we want the best state government administration in the nation. We want the best delivery of services. You do not get any awards for spending more than you should be. That is why Victorians are smiling because their health system—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are interjecting across the chamber at other members and not listening to the Premier who has the call. I warn members on my left that their interjections are excessive. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: The health minister and the Treasurer were alluding earlier to the fact that in Victoria it costs \$4,400 to look after a particular condition in patients. In Queensland it is \$5,400. How can they possibly sit there and justify a stance which says we will not do something about that. We need to treat more sick people.

Brisbane Airport, Delays

Mr KAYE: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier advise the House of any outcomes of meetings he has had with the Brisbane Airport Corporation about the ongoing delays at Brisbane Airport?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for the Greenslopes for the question about an issue that is becoming increasingly important not just to the many hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who are continually delayed at the Brisbane Airport but an issue that is very important for the economy of Queensland. I congratulate the *Courier-Mail* on the efforts they have made to highlight this issue in the last couple of days.

Last week I met with the Brisbane Airport Corporation and expressed the concern of this government at the ongoing delays at Brisbane Airport. I made it very clear to them that it was not just an issue for the Brisbane Airport Corporation and its shareholders; it was an issue for every Queenslanders who travels through that airport and, indeed, every Queenslanders who is part of the Queensland economy. What dismayed me about that meeting was the lack of strategies—the lack of strategies going forward; the suggestion that somehow we had to put up with the current situation for the five, six or seven years it is going to take to build the second runway. I made it very clear that I found that situation untenable.

A second runway has been talked about at the Brisbane Airport for a long time. What we have not heard in recent times is comment from those members of the federal government who spoke about the second runway while they were in opposition—as far back as 1998. In 1998 Kevin Rudd, in his maiden speech to the parliament, talked about being incensed by the proposition of building a second runway at the Brisbane Airport—incensed by the proposition. Through the early 2000s both Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan were leaders of protest movements against the second runway in its planning stages. If there are two people in Queensland who have done more to ensure that we do not have a second runway at the Brisbane Airport today it is Wayne Swan and Kevin Rudd. But we have heard nothing from Wayne Swan and Kevin Rudd about the current delays.

Kevin Rudd admitted in 2007, when the then coalition minister Mark Vaile approved the second runway, that he had personally spent \$32,000 of his own money fighting the proposal. We have heard nothing from Kevin Rudd about the second runway since he came to government in 2007. We have heard nothing in recent months about what the federal government is doing.

I say to all of the people who will experience delays through the Brisbane Airport today, next month, next year: send your frustrations to Kevin Rudd. He is a great fan of Twitter. Get on Twitter and tweet Kevin about the delays. Remind him of what he said in 1998. Remind him of the \$32,000 that he spent opposing a runway that is so desperately needed by the people of Queensland and the economy of Queensland today.

(Time expired)

Electricity Industry

Mr MULHERIN: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the government's decision to tell Ergon workers in Maryborough about job cuts in the midst of the flood response, and I ask: will the Premier explain whether this is a sign of things to come for workers in the electricity sector in Queensland as the government makes these businesses more attractive to sell by laying off workers?

Mr NEWMAN: In relation to this issue about selling off electricity assets, particularly the poles-and-wires business, I refer the honourable member to a number of statements I have made over the last probably 10 or 11 months in relation to the poles-and-wires business. I think the best way to put it is that I am going to have to be convinced because it is a natural monopoly. But to move on: who did have a secret plan to enhance the value? Who were the people who were busy trying to boost the asset value of those poles-and-wires businesses back a few years ago? The answer is the poor and reckless financial managers who used to sit over here. One in particular is a person who continues to try to boost his profile and that would be, of course, Andrew Fraser.

Madam Speaker, a very interesting letter has turned up. The letter is dated the first week of February 2009. It is actually alluded to in an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 4 July 2009 by Robert MacDonald. What Robert MacDonald pointed out was that back in February 2009 Queensland Treasury—in fact the Treasurer—wrote to the Australian Energy Regulator saying that the weighted average cost of capital—this is the return; this is how much money they are allowed to make—was not enough. It was too low. I will read from Robert's article and also from the letter. This is what Robert MacDonald said—

You can't spend \$9 billion on new electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure over the next five years, which is what Energex, Origin and Powerlink are doing, and you can't suddenly introduce a price for carbon, which is what the federal government wants to do from 2011, and you can't insist on ever higher renewable energy targets without the price of electricity going through the roof.

So the letter that I have here dated 5 February 2009 to Martin Ferguson and to the Australian Energy Regulator shows those opposite arguing for higher profits for Energex and Ergon. Why? I can only assume two things: firstly, they wanted to tax Queenslanders through their electricity bills and, secondly, they were getting them ready to flog them off because they had their secret plan at that stage. They were busy—it was just prior to the election. And what happened afterwards? Well, off they went—QR, the Port of Brisbane, Cairns Airport, the forestry assets. Why didn't they sell this one? I will tell you why. Peter Simpson and the ETU—the most spirited opposition indeed of the entire anti asset sale campaign. Here is the smoking gun today. Well, it is more than a smoking gun; it is clear evidence of their secret plan to sell off electricity assets after first taxing the bejesus out of Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: Premier, I would ask you to please withdraw that phrase.

Mr NEWMAN: Madam Speaker, I withdraw.

Construction Industry

Mr PUCCI: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please inform the House about the Newman government's initiative to support the home building construction industry and are there any other alternative views?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Logan for the question because in his part of the world being able to build and own your own home is still an aspiration and a goal for Queenslanders, as it is throughout the state but particularly in his area. Just yesterday evening we were discussing some aspects of what is going on in terms of the construction and property sector.

It gives me great pleasure to stand here today to tell the House about the Newman government's Great Start Grant. From day one this government has shown a real commitment to boost the construction industry—one of the four pillars of the economy that was neglected and overregulated and taxed out of existence by the former Labor government. We reintroduced the principal place of residence concession, which was shamelessly scrapped by Labor because they were having increased debt and deficits. In doing so, we have saved Queenslanders up to \$7,000 when they are buying the family home.

In September last year in the budget we introduced a \$15,000 grant to help Queenslanders looking to buy or build their first home. When the grant was first announced it was named the First Home Owner Construction Grant, but the government wants to make sure that eligible Queenslanders know about this grant and that it is readily available to them now. The First Home Owner Construction Grant is a bit of a mouthful, so we have renamed it to more accurately reflect its purpose—the Great Start Grant, a grant that gives Queenslanders a great start to buying or building their first new home. To go with the new name, the Newman government is also launching a campaign so information on this grant reaches all eligible Queenslanders, and I launched that campaign at the Home Show on Sunday.

The campaign will keep first home buyers informed and speaks directly to the experiences and aspirations of Queenslanders striving to build their first home. What is important about the Great State Grant is that it is an ongoing scheme, providing certainty to buyers and developers alike. Unlike Labor's Building Boost, this is not a short-term sugar hit. It takes into account the development process. It makes sure that buyers are able to plan and deliver their new home in time and with support from the government.

Promoting the grant is all about creating jobs and economic growth in Queensland. It is clear that the Newman government's policies are already having an impact and boosting confidence in this vital sector. This was made clear in a Property Council of Australia survey released yesterday which ranked the Newman government as the best performing state government in Australia. I table the chart from the independent Property Council of Australia showing the overall performance.

Tabled paper: Graph charting the overall performance of each state government, prepared by Auspoll [\[2158\]](#).

I do want to acknowledge the great work done by the then assistant minister for planning reform, Mr Ian Walker, under the auspices of the ever watchful care of the 'godfather of planning', the Deputy Premier. The Great Start Grant is a great start, a great boost for young families wanting to build their own, a great start for the property and construction industry—a great state, a great opportunity.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Queensland Competition Authority's recommendation to increase electricity prices by 21 per cent, and I ask: will the Premier outline how he is planning to restrict the rise in electricity prices to single digits as he promised last month?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for South Brisbane—and I will make good on the dinner date proposal later on. That is great. Firstly, we need to go back again and have a look at why power prices are going up. Here is the article from 4 July 2009. It says, 'Powerful forces double your bills'. Robert MacDonald back then in July 2009 reflected on the letter that I have been referring to, which is a letter from Andrew Fraser to the Australian Energy Regulator and to Martin Ferguson saying that we have to have higher profits in our state owned power companies. He, the then Treasurer, four years and one month ago was advocating for higher returns for Energex, for Ergon, for Stanwell et cetera. He wanted to use them to milk Queenslanders.

The other reasons for higher power prices are covered in this article—the price on carbon, which those opposite supported in this chamber, and the renewable energy target. There is another reason that is not covered here—it is probably one of the worst bits of public policy that we saw implemented—and that was the 44c per kilowatt hour feed-in tariff, which means that particularly disadvantaged Queenslanders—those who cannot afford solar panels—are having to pay for those who can afford the panels.

All of these things have come together in a perfect storm. We see the Queensland Competition Authority, based on the AER's rulings, influenced by none other than Andrew Fraser, the former discredited Treasurer of Queensland, all coming together in a perfect storm with a very large price rise recommended. But there is some light at the end of the tunnel, to answer the question. Because Andrew Fraser sought higher profits there are, as we saw in a recent article in the *Courier-Mail*, higher profits in Energex. What a surprise! It is also happening because the new boards are finding efficiencies. As we have said, we are going to find a way to redirect some of those excessive Andrew Fraser, Anna Bligh and Annastacia Palaszczuk profits back to consumers and struggling families so they do not get hit with an effective 21.5 per cent power price increase.

How can Queenslanders trust us to know that we will do this? Well, we have done it with water prices in South-East Queensland. People did get a rebate—to deal with whose higher water bills? That is right; once again the flawed policies of those opposite that saw water bills go through the roof. We are fair dinkum about cost-of-living relief. We have done it with stamp duty, we have done it with motor vehicle rego and we have done it with a freeze last year on power prices. We will do it again in the way I have just outlined.

Queensland Plan

Mr MALONE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on how Queenslanders can become more involved in the development of the Queensland Plan?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that he would never, ever reject Mackay's location, unlike the 'member for South-East Queensland' who will always advocate for the greater south-east in terms of these important major summits.

To go back a bit, the outline for the development of the Queensland Plan was announced by me last week in Townsville at an enterprise investor breakfast which was very well attended. I stressed then that the Queensland Plan is a creation by all Queenslanders for the state. I said this earlier in my ministerial statement: it is not a state government plan; it is a plan for the state, but it will be developed by Queenslanders themselves. It will be collaborative. It will be consultative. It will be a process that involves as many people as we possibly can right across the community—industry, non-government organisations and, of course, local government—to set that future vision.

I am inviting all MPs to be involved. I will say it again: those opposite need to think very clearly. Will they wholeheartedly support this? Will they put aside their normal petty politics, their university style politics and their school debating society politics? They guffaw and snort, but we have heard some really lousy questions from them today. We have had hopeless questions which allow us to again talk about the mess they have left this state in. The Queensland Plan is a mechanism to get us out of the hole they put us in. It is a mechanism to allow Queenslanders to understand the magnitude of the issues that confront us. This government wants better services. We want a better hospital

system. We want better outcomes in our schools. We want to provide a disability insurance scheme offering in this state, like the rest of the Commonwealth. We want to do these things but, because of the debt and deficit that they have left us, there are real challenges in achieving all these things, and that is what this is all about.

In Mackay we will bring people together to determine what the questions are, how that vision can be achieved and how to ask the questions in local communities. We are doing this because we know that one-size-fits-all is not what it is about. The needs of regional Queensland need to come through loud and clear. We need to make sure that as MPs we create a mechanism in our electorates that will properly engage with the local community. I stress that we will have online resources—a website and the use of social media—to make sure that all Queenslanders who want to get involved can get involved if they cannot be involved directly in one of the two summits. I am very excited about the Queensland Plan and the opportunity to make this a great state with great opportunity.

Electricity Industry

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Premier. If the government did decide to sell off Queensland's electricity generators, there will no doubt be billions of dollars raised. Is the Premier prepared to put some funds aside to subsidise the massive power bills that privatisation will bring—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. That is a hypothetical question.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, I heard sufficient of the question to hear that it is hypothetical in the way that you have premised it.

Mr HOPPER: I will reword the question.

Madam SPEAKER: I will allow you to reword the question.

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Premier. When the government decides to sell off Queensland electricity generators, there will no doubt be billions of dollars raised. Is the Premier prepared to put some funds aside to subsidise the massive power bills that privatisation will bring to pensioners and low-income earners?

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Condamine, that question is still hypothetical and I rule it out of order.

Health, Federal Funding

Mr SYMES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the decision by the federal Labor government to cut \$103 million to the Queensland Health budget, which threatens great jobs and great lifestyles in this state, and I ask: given that every single health minister has confirmed that the federal Labor government has made health funding cuts to the states and given that Wayne Swan and Julia Gillard have both finally confessed to making the cut, is it true that the only people still denying federal Labor's health cuts are the unions and the Queensland Labor MPs?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I am going to allow the question, but I warn the member that the question has too long a preamble. I call the Minister for Health.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It is a pretty long and complex issue for the Labor Party to understand. I thank the honourable member for Lytton for his question. I also thank him for the leadership and tenacity that he is displaying as a local member in his electorate as he works within the community and with the hospital and health board to clean up some of the mess that was left there. I raise as an example the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit, which the previous member for Lytton was briefed on and agreed needed to be closed and the residents relocated. At Wynnum Hospital the previous government actively bypassed all category 1 patients to the Redland Hospital and came up with a deal with the paramedics to do it. Not only that, its secret briefs held an indication that category 2 and 3 patients attending at that hospital were not able to be received and triaged safely and effectively. The honourable member is working constructively to ensure appropriate subacute services as that particular health service transitions down there.

We have had a couple of deniers with regard to this \$103 million cut and the impact on Queenslanders in recent times. Even Wayne Swan and Julia Gillard admit that there has been a cut in recent times, and they have handed \$107 million back to Victoria with some strings attached. Even

the unions in Queensland have now started to concede that there has indeed been a \$103 million cut. You will not find this on the Queensland Nurses Union website because there is a lot of stuff attacking us but nothing attacking the federal government. But in their submission to the Senate committee looking at the impact on the midyear Commonwealth Health budget cuts the Queensland Nurses Union states, 'In Queensland the adjustment has meant the state will receive around \$103 million less than projected in 2012-13.'

It only leaves one set of health cut deniers in Queensland, and the seven of them sit over there. Everyone else agrees there has been a cut and that it has had a brutal effect. The brutality of it is magnified because it came halfway through the financial year after the budget was set, and \$40 million of it was retrospective to the 2011-12 financial year and \$63 million of it in this financial year, half of which had already been spent. Let us put it into context. That means 4,600 knee replacements, 4,700 hip replacements, 2,400 cochlear ear implants, and the apologists over there continue to let the people of Queensland down.

Gladstone Ports Corporation

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Given the significant income generated by Gladstone Ports Corporation and the need for employment certainty to ensure reliability of bulk product movements, will the Treasurer rule out the privatisation of Central Queensland ports corporation?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Gladstone for her question. I also again extend the concern of this government to the residents in and around Gladstone given the rains that they have suffered yet again. As I indicated during the last sitting week, I was up there over the Australia Day weekend. I know that there have again been some more rains up around Boyne. I extend our sympathies to the people who have been affected.

I do need to emphasise again that the report is 1,000 pages long and it contains 155 recommendations. It identifies the state of the books as they were left to us by Labor. We have heard over and over this morning the debt deniers over there trying to make something out of the fact that the Premier has seen the executive summary but has not read the whole report, that I have read 200 pages or 300 pages—it was an extra 100 pages last night—and all those sorts of things. When we reflect back, our commitment remains unchanged—that is, no sale of government businesses without a mandate. When we compare that to the situation in this House in May 2009—I think it was 15 May 2009—when a minister of the Crown was asked—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Treasurer, I am going to warn the Leader of Opposition Business under 253A and ask you to cease your interjections.

Mr NICHOLLS: When a minister of the Crown—I think it might have even been the then transport minister—was asked in this place was Queensland Rail up for sale, she said, 'No, not ever, not now, never to happen.' Do honourable members know what happened? The following day it was on the chopping blocks; it was on its way out the door. They did not even tell their own parliamentary colleagues what they were doing. That is a disgraceful display. After they did it, what did the Labor Party do? They cancelled their own state conference so they would not have to talk to their own branch members about it. They gagged themselves, they did not tell their ministers and they flogged those assets off without telling the people of Queensland.

What have we said all along? We will bring the people of Queensland into our confidence; we will have a mature discussion about the prospects and the need to improve service delivery, to increase productivity and to release funds in order to deliver front-line services that Queenslanders want because business as usual is not an answer.

In response to the question by the member for Gladstone, I understand and commend her for her concern in relation to employment of people at Gladstone Ports Corporation and I acknowledge the role that Gladstone Ports Corporation plays in the economic prosperity of this state, being a massive coal handling terminal, the largest in the state. That is why we are taking our time in considering the report and we will be talking to people like the member and others in relation to the recommendations that have been made. But we have made no decisions. We will consider the report carefully. We will reflect on it and, as always, make a decision in the best interests of Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Education Reform

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister please update the House on progress regarding the Gonski report and the federal government's response?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I saw him recently at the Logan summit in what is now LNP heartland with the members for Springwood, Logan, Albert, Stretton, Algester and Coomera. Of course, the member for Woodridge was there as well in what used to be Labor heartland, but they have turned their back on those people. However, we were there with six ministers.

Up until now the Gillard government has been trying to sell Gonski without giving state governments any detail. They have been selling a slogan. They have been telling the states to buy a car without letting us look under the hood. When we look at the detail and we look under the bonnet we find that there are 102 low socioeconomic schools that will be worse off by up to 18 per cent under the federal government's school resourcing scheme. That is reduced funding in real terms. Let me give some examples to those opposite and to those on our side as well. Oakenden State School in the electorate of Mackay, which is represented by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, would face a 16.6 per cent reduction. That is \$7,000 per child—real funding in real terms. Is he going to go to them and tell them that that is what they should accept because he 'gives a Gonski'? What about the member for South Brisbane? St Laurence's College is in her electorate. It would face an 18.4 per cent reduction in real funding—reduced funding in real terms. What about the Premier? Should he go to Mitchelton State High School and tell them that they should accept an 11.5 per cent reduction in funding in real terms, or \$3,100 per student? That is what the federal government is asking us to sign up to and we are not going to do it.

The Queensland government operates 1,239 schools. We are responsible for 500,000 students and 40,000 teachers. The Australian government operates no schools. It is responsible for no students. It employs no teachers. I have a simple message for those opposite to pass on to their mates in Canberra: states run schools; so stop trying to foist homogeneous, bureaucratic and inefficient systems on our students.

It should ring alarm bells that anyone who has responsibility for a school is opposed to Gonski, as we have seen up until now. The states are against it—even Labor ones like Tasmania. The Catholics are against it. The independents are against it. Part of the reason is that we do not like being told how to do our job by people who have been so terrible at theirs. Despite an 87 per cent increase in money from the federal government over the last 10 years, standards have continued to slide. They spent 11 times more on building school halls and improving outcomes at low SES schools, 32 times more on building school halls than they did on improving literacy and numeracy and 37 times more on building school halls than they did on improving teacher quality. Forgive us if we do not want the federal government telling us how to do our job.

Electricity Industry

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier guarantee that the LNP—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Mount Isa, take your seat. I now warn the member for Lockyer under 253A. The member's question will be heard in silence. Member for Mount Isa, please start the question again.

Mr KATTER: Can the Premier guarantee that the LNP government will not follow the mistakes of the Victorian government, as identified by the John Quiggin report on privatisation of its electricity industry, and will not privatise our electricity government owned corporations Energex, Ergon, Powerlink, Stanwell, CS Energy and, by doing so, increase power costs?

Mr NEWMAN: Firstly, I refer back to my earlier comments today on electricity prices. I make the point for the honourable member that these electricity assets are in government hands and power prices have gone through the roof. I do not know whether the member for Mount Isa has noticed, but power prices have gone through the roof, and it was predicted by Robert MacDonald in the *Courier-Mail* in July 2009. He told us why they were going to go up: because then Treasurer—discredited Treasurer, shonky Treasurer—Andrew Fraser actually argued for the power utilities owned by the people of Queensland to be used to make higher profits, to essentially tax people by stealth. We also know from the article by Mr MacDonald that it was also due to their wholehearted

endorsement of renewable energy targets—the RETs and also due to the fact that they were enthusiastic cheerleaders for the carbon tax. The member for Mount Isa was not in this parliament at the time—and I was not myself, but I was an observer—when a motion was moved one day rejecting the carbon tax. The then opposition, my colleagues here around me, put that motion forward and what happened? That is right: those opposite voted to be cheerleaders for the carbon tax, wholehearted supporters for the carbon tax. The only thing that Mr MacDonald did not cover in his article was the insidious, pervasive effect of the feed-in tariff, giving people 44c a kilowatt hour to supposedly go green. Instead we see people switching off every appliance during the day, not using the grid but pumping electricity into the grid from their panels at a time when we do not need it. Then we see them coming home in the evening, switching everything on, including those pool pumps which should have been on during the day, and buying electricity at a much lower price.

All these things come together—I say this for the benefit of the member for Mount Isa and other members—to see a situation where power prices have since 2009 gone through the roof. And what did Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh say about electricity reform? They said that people would pay less, that they certainly would not pay any more.

In relation to the Quiggan report, which I have not seen, I do reflect that he is actually a particular economist with, shall we say politely, a left-wing view of the world. We will consider all advice. Again I say—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I am unlike those opposite, who were cheerleaders for the sell-off of assets. I am saying here today what my position is on the poles-and-wires business—unlike those opposite, who just agreed to do these things by stealth. Perhaps they did not even know, were not even consulted, and then found out that Andrew Fraser and Anna Bligh were selling off the family silver.

(Time expired)

Small Business

Miss BARTON: My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Can the minister inform the House of any recent developments that demonstrate how the Newman government is assisting business in Queensland?

Mrs STUCKEY: I thank sincerely the honourable member for Broadwater for her question about something that I know is very close to her heart, my heart and the hearts of government members. That is, of course, our small businesses—some 412,000 small businesses. Unlike those opposite, we actually embrace small business. We are unashamedly pro small business. Those opposite tried to strangle them with 92,000 pages of red tape. Now we have made a commitment to the people of Queensland to cut red tape by 20 per cent over the next six years.

I will tell the House today how my department is making it simpler and easier for business to do business with government. Today I would like to explain the success of the business industry portal, which is a one-stop shop for business to deal with this government. People in business and industry can visit one site that will allow them to get answers to their important questions and issues quickly and easily. These questions and answers range from 'How do I hire and develop staff?' to 'How do I better promote and advertise my business to the local and interstate community?', 'What licences and forms do I need to complete?', 'What recovery assistance can I obtain?', and 'How do I apply and what information do I need to supply to secure any of that assistance?'

Our business industry portal can be found at www.business.qld.gov.au. It recorded the highest ever number of unique visitors this February, with 126,884 people visiting, compared to only 33,238 in February last year. That is a massive 370 per cent increase in use since 12 months ago. I am very pleased to say that there is an 83 per cent satisfaction rating on the part of people who engage with us. This means that not only are more businesses coming and visiting the site and embracing technology; they are also finding the information most valuable.

A high volume of users accessed the flood information, too. In the 10 days following the floods the site had almost 11,000 individual visitors, and more than 50 per cent of those visits were from mobile devices. We understood that many people were without power. Our current series of free web based seminars—webinars—have also experienced record participation, and we have something like 278 registrations of interest for our current series.

(Time expired)

Commission of Audit

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Costello report, which proposes cutting the time frames for environmental assessments of major projects without extra resources, and I ask: will the Premier advise whether the full, unreleased version of the report outlines which components of the EIS would be shortened and whether it details any adverse impacts of such a decision?

Mr NEWMAN: In responding to the honourable member I need to talk about the need for us to see a much better approach to approval processes for major projects between the Commonwealth government and the state of Queensland. This is something that I, the Deputy Premier and others have been advocating for some time. We have this rather unsatisfactory situation whereby we have overlapping legislation, which I believe is holding Queensland back. To put it more bluntly, it is almost ensuring, I am afraid, that we do not create the jobs, in the private sector particularly, that we would like to see created. So Queenslanders are missing out. Young Queenslanders are missing out.

I refer, for example, to the approval this week by the Coordinator-General of the Great Keppel Island resort. I again ask: when will Julia Gillard and Minister Burke approve Great Keppel Island's redevelopment? I make this point because when I was first elected as member for Ashgrove and became the Premier one of the very first meetings I had was with the Prime Minister in the Executive Building, just down George Street. On that first occasion I raised the issue of Great Keppel Island, which had been delayed by the Commonwealth at that stage. So here we are, 11 months on, and in relation to the Commonwealth nothing has happened.

I have never heard the member for Rockhampton—maybe I am wrong—stand up and give a speech calling on the feds to approve the project. If I am wrong I will gladly withdraw, but this is all about jobs for his community. It is all about jobs for people in Yeppoon and Rockhampton—young men and women. Yet he comes in here and asks a question about approvals. We have spoken about it in here before, but there has been no advocacy from the member for Rockhampton on this important local employment opportunity. It is a massive project. It needs to go ahead. It has been approved by the Coordinator-General of Queensland but after 11 months, after direct representations by me to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, nothing has been done. Queenslanders who want work know that we need to get these approval processes sorted out, because it is not good enough.

I am not going to give up on this. I will continue to push the point with this Prime Minister and this dodgy minister for the environment to get out of the way and approve projects like Great Keppel, South of Embley and the Galilee Basin so that Queenslanders can get work.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

Mr SHORTEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Can the minister advise what the government has done to lessen the cost-of-living impact of electricity prices and how it is going to reduce the impact of the latest increase proposed by the Queensland Competition Authority?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question. This government cannot and will not stand by and see Queensland families forced to pay a price rise on their power bills of 21 per cent. To do so would be a disaster. Such an increase would tear apart the ability of families to meet their cost-of-living expenses. It is the policies of the Beattie and Bligh governments and federal Labor that are entrenched in the draft pricing proposal of the QCA. Their history imposed towering and unprecedented problems, and our response must also be towering and unprecedented. Their history should cause all Queenslanders great concern, but it is not cause for panic. The Newman government, in recognising this, has put in place a raft of reforms.

Current and future reforms of Queensland's power sector will deliver major savings in the near future. Waiting for these means higher prices in the here and now. As the public and the gallery are aware, the government put in place short-term relief by freezing tariff 11 while we unwind the irresponsible policies of those opposite. By putting in place long-term reforms we will meaningfully reduce prices for consumers.

We want to deliver great electricity services to the people of Queensland, as power is not just part of our lifestyle; it is a basic requirement for living in our modern society and modern community. Ensuring the efficient delivery of services at an affordable rate reduces the impact on families and businesses who will all struggle with such a price increase. In its latest draft determination, the QCA

identified green schemes, the carbon tax and the excessive Solar Bonus Scheme as major factors in increasing power prices. This is why this government under Campbell Newman took steps to cap Labor's costly Solar Bonus Scheme in July last year, capping future impacts on power price rises. Looking ahead, the government is now considering a number of options to lessen the impact of the draft QCA determination, including excessive profits from energy sources such as Energex, Ergon and Powerlink where those moneys can be diverted in part to assist in driving down this exceptional power price increase. There are also other options that this government is considering that will go to cabinet shortly for determination and scrutiny. The Newman government is determined that the cost-of-living issues will be tackled by it to help the people of Queensland in the long term. This state has great jobs, great lifestyle and great services going into the future, and power prices are a component thereof.

(Time expired)

Australian National Child Offender Register

Mr JUDGE: My question is to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. The child protection offender reporting scheme, the ANCOR scheme, has been operating in Queensland since 1 January 2005. There are already over 4,500 reportable offenders recorded on the state's register, with 500 new offenders on average being added to the register annually. Can the minister please advise—

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: I wish to acknowledge three groups visiting the parliament today from Sheldon College, which is in the electorate of Redlands.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Commission of Audit

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.01 am): Today we have heard some extraordinary answers from this government. Today the Premier was clearly asked whether he has read the Costello audit in full—yes or no—but the Premier failed to answer this fundamental question. What we do know is that the Premier has not read it, the Deputy Premier has not read it and we now hear that the Treasurer has perhaps read 200 pages—or is it 250 pages? This was supposed to be one of the most important reports handed—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Minister for Natural Resources to cease interjecting. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This has been described by members of the government as one of the most important reports ever received, and yet no-one has had the opportunity or the will or the desire to read the Costello report. But not content with having not read the report; they are not even prepared to release the report! Their own cabinet colleagues do not get to see the report until next week. They do not trust the backbenchers, do they? They do not trust the backbenchers because they cannot get it before Easter but will get it in a couple of months' time. So now we have a government once again in disarray—no-one leading. The executive team—the leadership team—of this government is incapable of reading a 1,000-page report. I do not know, but I think most novels are about 1,000 pages long and I can get through that in a night or two. I cannot understand how this government can be so lazy as to not have read a 1,000-page report that taxpayers have paid for.

How much have taxpayers paid for this report? We hear that around \$2 million has been spent. I am happy to stand corrected on that, but around \$2 million has been spent on commissioning this Costello report written by an LNP mate paid about \$3,000 a day which no-one can see. No-one can see it. The Treasurer has it and has read 200 pages, the Premier has it and has not bothered to read it and the Deputy Premier has not bothered to read it either. What is going on in this government? It is

a complete and utter disgrace that in this day and age the leadership team of this state has walked away from its responsibilities—has walked away from its responsibilities of taking the time to read a report that basically turns on its head how a government should deliver services. Why do I say that? Because this secret Costello report talks not only about selling off assets; it actually talks about outsourcing—selling off—services. We have already heard what the health minister wants to do with Health, and that will be the subject of a debate tonight. But not content with selling off services and health, the LNP wants to profit as well by running fundraisers in which it raised around \$120,000 at a time when the Premier has been asking Queenslanders and saying to Queenslanders very seriously, 'Queenslanders, please donate to the Red Cross appeal.' That is what he has been saying up and down the coast. That is what he has been encouraging people to do. Likewise, I have been encouraging people to donate to the Red Cross appeal and everyone on my team here has donated to the Red Cross appeal, and I thank all members here for their support in making sure that families across Queensland can get back on track.

But, no, the LNP has other ideas: a fundraising lunch in which \$120,000 was raised, not for the flood appeal but for itself. But not content on a lunch; there was also a breakfast. There was also a breakfast held by the member for Chatsworth. What I am very alarmed about—and this will be discussed further in the debate tonight, and I note that the health minister is sitting in the chamber—is that people did not know that their funds were being donated to the LNP.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. We have anticipating the debate at 5.30 this afternoon.

Madam SPEAKER: I take your point of order and ask the Leader of the Opposition not to anticipate debate.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker; I will move on. But what is very interesting in the 28-page executive summary which has been released—we are allowed to see the 28 pages but not the 1,000-page report that was handed over—is that it actually talks about how government is going to be run into the future. Basically, this government is doing away with its ministers, because the executive summary states—

From these principles, the Commission recommends that in service delivery the Queensland Government:

- provide core services such as policing, public safety, emergency and justice services, which have a strong public good element ...

Therefore, we are seeing the potential of outsourcing not just health but also mental health, Disability Services and Child Safety. Government is about the delivery of services. It is about the delivery of core services of education, of health and of transport, and the Treasurer has not ruled out selling off the public transport assets of this state. That will mean higher prices for consumers, higher prices for travel. At the moment I actually know a bit about transport.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They know not what they do. For every dollar that the customer pays on public transport in South-East Queensland, the government puts in \$4. Once you sell that off, commuters will be paying the full cost. They will be paying the full cost.

Mr Choat interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ipswich West will cease interjecting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The other thing I want to make very clear today to the government is that what it has signalled by this executive summary outlined in the Costello report is that no job in Queensland is now safe. If you are an ambulance officer, if you are a teacher, if you are a wardie or if you work in hospitality, these people right across the state now have a cloud of uncertainty, as does every health worker in our hospitals.

This government has not sat down and thought long and hard about the direction in which it is taking this state. By this Costello report, it is walking away from its fundamental responsibilities of providing core service delivery. Once you walk away from that, what are you left with? How can you make sure that the children in the child protection system are safe? How can you make sure that people who have mental health issues and forensic orders are kept safe? How can you be sure that public transport costs will not rise? How can you be sure that people entering our hospitals will not have to pay more? We already know that letters have been written to families advising that, once their children leave hospital, they have to pay for consumables. So who is to say that families will not be paying more under this radical plan to outsource core government services?

I have put it on the public record that we learned our lesson at the last election. There are seven of us sitting in this chamber—seven. Now, the LNP government wants to go down this same path. Queenslanders do not like asset sales. We heard that message loud and clear and we will oppose asset sales.

This government is failing to release the secret Costello report that talks about outsourcing health, child safety, court reporting services, transport and prisons. The 1,000-page report remains hidden. Taxpayers paid for this report. Taxpayers deserve to see the report. What is this government hiding from? A 1,000-page report about which essentially the Premier says, 'I'm sorry, I have other things on my mind. I can't be bothered reading the 1,000 page report that our government has paid \$2 million for.' He cannot trust giving the report to his cabinet ministers until next Monday. He cannot trust the backbench to have a look at the report, because they will leak it. They know what the sentiment will be in their communities. The community does not like asset sales.

Commonwealth-State Relations

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (11.11 am): Many years ago I watched an episode of *Four Corners* that, to the best of my memory, was titled the 'National Jigsaw Puzzle', which dealt with duplication in the service delivery of the federal and state governments. I was taken aback by the absolute waste of taxpayers' dollars being spent on service delivery that was being covered by multiple tiers of government. At one stage of my career I was the executive officer of Redland shire council, as it was then known, and at that time it continued to amaze me that areas such as health and child care had all three levels of government with their finger in the pie.

I rise today to speak about the important issue of vertical fiscal imbalance and the need to embrace competitive federalism. Many of my constituents of the Chatsworth electorate may not understand that technical description, but they certainly know about the confusion being caused by wedge politics and the impact of service duplication and the abject waste across key areas of government. Two of the most recent examples of duplication that come to mind are the NDIS and the Gonski education reform.

The bottom line is that many constituents are now confused about which tier of government is responsible for what in terms of actual service delivery. Several years ago those tiers of responsibility were more straightforward. The federal government was concerned with functions such as defence, monetary and fiscal policy whilst the states delivered services such as education, health, policing, public transport and main roads. We now have the situation where the federal government controls the purse strings to much of health and education funding, but how many hospitals and bricks-and-mortar schools does the federal government have? The terms competitive federalism, vertical fiscal imbalance and horizontal equalisation are concerned about the system of political economy that exists in Australia and the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and other levels of government.

The current framework for Commonwealth-state financial relations in Australia is set out in the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, which came into effect on 1 January 2009. A key theoretical objective of the framework was to increase the accountability of Commonwealth and state and territory governments to the public underpinned by clearer roles and responsibilities in respect of each jurisdiction. I put it to members that, given the confusion with health, education and disability service delivery and the ongoing tension between the federal government and the state governments, that framework has not worked effectively.

While the Commonwealth collects the majority of taxation revenue it is the states that maintain responsibility for service delivery in areas such as education, health and main roads. Therefore, it is necessary for the Commonwealth to distribute funding to the states to enable the delivery of these key services. Competitive federalism relies on the concept of competition such as that within a free market and enabling free choices to be made by citizens and organisations. Competitive federalism allows for innovation and diversity whilst also allowing for horizontal cooperation across jurisdictions in policy areas of mutual interest.

In the postwar period, the Commonwealth's responsibility has extended into some state areas through specific purpose payments to the states under section 96 of the Constitution. The SPPs promote Commonwealth objectives in areas such as public hospitals, schools, roads and housing. The difference between the relative revenue and spending responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the states is known as vertical fiscal imbalance. The VFI has existed as long as Australian Federation. However, the issue has become more prominent in the post-1945 era as income tax revenue has

become the domain of the Commonwealth government. Essentially, the Commonwealth government raises more revenue than it requires for its own expenditure needs while the state governments are on average able to raise only half of the revenue that they require for their expenditure needs.

According to the OECD, Australia has a very high level of VFI compared to other federations such as Canada and the United States. Indeed, Australia has the greatest degree of VFI of any federal country. The Commonwealth's own-source revenue—about 75 per cent of total Commonwealth and state revenue—exceeds its own-purpose outlays of around 57 per cent of Commonwealth and state spending combined.

In 2012 in volume 28, edition 2 of *Policy* magazine, James Allan argues that federalism creates a more competitive and prosperous society. In that article he stated—

The conceit in this country is that a one-size-fits-all central government would spend money better than the states would ... All of us who care about lean, efficient government in Australia ought to be cheering on the Newman and Barnett governments as they appear to be giving a hint of life to a workable federalist system of government in this country.

I am a pragmatic and responsible man. It make perfect sense for certain functions of government to be centrally controlled, such as defence, currency and passports. However, I am a passionate defender of state rights and the notions of competitive federalism and the means to address VFI are as important as ever, particularly with one of the worst federal governments this country has ever seen. Hopefully, this situation will change on 14 September, if not sooner.

Rural and Regional Queensland, Online Retailing

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (11.17 am): Today, I bring to the attention of the House the serious issue of online retailing. Last week, RBS Morgans released a report on Queensland's economy, which found that online retailing is having a profound effect on the state's employment market. That report showed that people in regional areas are clearly embracing online retailing. One thing about modern technology is that it has many advantages, but it also has many disadvantages. In a state as decentralised as Queensland, the impact of online retailing is having a profound effect on businesses throughout rural and regional Queensland—from Cunnamulla to Mount Isa, from Bamaga through to Gympie in the south and the rest of the state, for that matter.

Online retailing is also having a very detrimental effect on the employment and prosperity of country towns in general. When I talk about country towns, I talk about the people who live and reside in those towns who are giving the young people of that town a job out of the goodness of their heart because they come from a good family. Online retailing is crippling businesses throughout the country. The employment market in regional and rural Queensland is already fairly shallow. Country retailers find it difficult to compete with their online competitors because of their higher cost base owing to their inability to buy in bulk and high freight charges—that is if those businesses receive their goods on time from the suppliers in the south-east or on the coast. Country retailers also must pay to maintain bricks-and-mortar shopfronts and to staff them. Trading hours are another disadvantage, as online retailers are essentially open 24/7, every day of the year. That is detrimental to these rural businesses. When I drive across my electorate of Gregory and other remote parts of Queensland and rural Queensland I see small retailers closing their doors and this disadvantages the whole community in the long run.

One area of disadvantage that could easily be fixed is the federal government's refusal to charge GST on online retail purchases from overseas. The United Kingdom government charges a value added tax on all overseas online purchases worth more than £15 and personal gifts with a value of more than £36. Wayne Swan's excuses that charging GST is too difficult ring very hollow. We should look at the UK government's model and website and have a think about how we can help Australian small businesses to compete on a more even playing field.

Small business is the lifeblood of every community and of the economy of this state and of this nation. Not too many years ago I had a big businessman say to me here in Brisbane, 'Vaughan, don't worry about big business, look after small business. Big business looks after itself.' This federal government is doing the reverse.

I ask Queenslanders to think hard before they buy their next purchase online. It could be their son or daughter who is pushed out of a job because another business goes flat. I have seen about six businesses close in Longreach where I live. It is not only Longreach, it is places like Cunnamulla, Charleville, Quilpie and right through the west. You will see it anywhere in the west or regional Queensland. Recently I was in Mount Isa and witnessed it there.

Whilst mining is a very big resource and a wonderful income benefactor to Queensland, those people who work at fly-in fly-out operations in places like Moranbah and Blackwater do not spend their incomes in those towns. They go back to where their families are and that is where the dollars are spent. At the end of the day the federal government has to take responsibility and make absolutely certain that there is a fair outcome for all and sundry. Before we know it there will be no rural and regional Queensland towns left, there will be no businesses in those communities because of this online selling strategy and there will not be room for this unemployment factor in the cities of the south-east corner either.

Commission of Audit

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.21 am): Last week saw the delivery of the third and final report of the Costello Commission of Audit to the LNP government. Three reports have been delivered yet the LNP refuses to show the two latest reports to the people of Queensland. Despite taxpayers paying \$2 million to have the reports prepared, the LNP government is keeping them under lock and key, kept away from Queenslanders who deserve to be presented with the truth—well, at least Peter Costello's version of it. Queenslanders are right to ask what is this government trying to hide? If this commission of audit was truly independent, why should only LNP politicians have exclusive access to the Costello report for the next six weeks?

The Costello commission was never independent. No-one in Queensland outside of the LNP caucus room believes the Costello report is independent. Unless you listen to comments from some in the LNP cabinet, then not everyone inside the LNP caucus room believes the commission of audit is independent. From the start everyone knew where the Costello audit was heading: a blatant pursuit of ideology. Last year I referred to the mythical tory playbook where a newly elected conservative government calls for an audit, throws their arms up in the air, cries poor, blames the former government, blames the federal government, then starts sacking workers, slashing services and flogging off public infrastructure. Perhaps my predictions did not go far enough. In May last year I spoke of the predictable pattern of behaviour with conservative governments when I said—

We saw it in Victoria with Kennett. Costello used the same method in Canberra when the Howard government came into power. Borbidge established the commission of audit in Queensland in 1996. We have seen it under Barry O'Farrell in New South Wales and Ted Baillieu in Victoria. They used their audits as a cloak to sack 5,000 public servants and 3,600 public servants respectively.

Of course, we know that since then the Newman government has sacked more than 14,000 workers. Jeff Kennett must be so proud. After the charade of an independent audit, paying an LNP mate \$3,300 a day, it seems I could have saved the taxpayers \$2 million and told the Newman government 12 months ago what was coming.

It is not just the opposition that has outed the Costello audit for being predictably political and ideologically driven. Federation Fellow economist Professor John Quiggin points to recent Queensland history, namely the Vince Fitzgerald audit for the Borbidge government. Quiggin points out that Fitzgerald, as a respected if conservative economist, pointed to strengths in the economy, including the state's net worth at the time of \$51 billion. Quiggin writes—

So, what's happened to our net worth over the 16 years from Fitzgerald to (interim) Costello. Readers might expect that it's fallen a lot, or even become negative. In reality, it's more than tripled, to \$171 billion.

Of course, the Costello report has switched attention from net worth to gross debt. While this makes little economic sense in ordinary terms (if you were buying a company, would you care more about its net value, or its debt level), it might be important if the ratio of debt to net worth had risen a lot. Actually, gross debt was \$24 billion in 1996, and is \$64 billion now. The ratio of gross debt to net worth has actually fallen.

To sum up, the big difference between Fitzgerald and Costello is that Fitzgerald is a serious look at the state's finances, while Costello (in common with the majority of Commission of Audit reports) is a propaganda stunt. The state's underlying position is strong, just as it was in the 1990s.

With logical, researched analysis such as this from independent economists, is it any wonder the Treasurer does not want to submit the Costello report to even basic levels of public scrutiny. We know that when it comes to privatisation, the Newman government has no intention of waiting until the next election. It has already sold hundreds of millions of dollars worth of building infrastructure. It is already privatising the hospital system like the privatisation of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the outsourcing of core clinical services in areas of health care across the hospital system. The Treasurer, as reported in *Brisbane Times* today, says that he wants to sell off other assets through 100-year leases before the next election.

It is remarkable that the Treasurer stands in this place, hand on heart, saying that he will not privatise Queensland before the next election, while at the same time he is selling off infrastructure and privatising core roles of the Queensland government. Again we hear that the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer have not even read the latest Costello report. Evidently, the Treasurer is relying on Costello, architect of more than \$70 billion worth of public assets sold off when federal Treasurer, rather than basing his actions on genuine economic modelling. It seems the Treasurer is so ideologically committed to outsourcing that he is even outsourcing his own job, just like he did his first budget. I simply say this to the Treasurer and the Premier: if they cannot be bothered reading the Costello audit, then release it publicly to people who will.

Open Data Revolution

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.26 am): I rise on a matter of exciting public interest, the announcement of the impending 'Opening the Vault—Open Data in Queensland' launch which will take place on Wednesday, 3 April 2013. The very name, 'the vault', tells you the wealth of information that is held by government and the fact that it is a very rich reserve that has not been tapped into by previous governments. The open data revolution, which the Premier has made a major priority with a whole-of-government approach for open and accessible government data, is now readily available for all within the private and public sectors. This means that small and large businesses, local governments, community groups and associations and non-government organisations can access data and utilise this government information for free.

This is an enormous leap forward by the Newman led LNP government to complete openness, transparency and accountability for all data sets held by this government which are, in reality, data sets owned by the people of Queensland. The two exceptions to this commitment of all government data being made publicly available are matters of commercial-in-confidence and also matters of individual privacy. It is envisaged that all data sets, other than these two exceptions, will become available through the one data internet site.

There are many challenges involved in bringing this open data dream to total reality, but the Newman government is absolutely committed to this program to empower the business community, the social community and even the intragovernment sector to new levels of efficiency and prosperity. The biggest challenge of all with this program is the change of culture and philosophy within government administrators to change from a protective policy of facts and figures as being the prerogative of government officers' eyes only to a proactive platform of delivering as much information as possible to all public sectors so that information can be utilised to come up with better solutions and better decision making.

This priority program of the open data revolution for Queensland is one of the most exciting initiatives by any Queensland government in decades and probably since the abolition of death duties in Queensland in the Joh era which led to the economic boom for Queensland in the seventies.

The possibilities are enormous, unbounded and even unthought of as yet as to the utilisation of the government data sets by commercial and social communities. This worldwide trend of making governments more accountable and open with their information sets can only lead to more understanding and responsibility as to the increasingly difficult world of decision making for governments. This is the culmination of long hours of hard work from many people and today I would like to thank them personally. In particular, I thank the ministers involved and their departmental and ministerial staff for embracing this exciting new direction of open and accessible data that is now available from across all portfolio areas.

With the announcement in December of our data.qld.gov.au website, our beta site, on 3 April I will have the great pleasure of assisting the Premier in officially launching the open data revolution, along with the new minister for IT, Minister Walker. As of today, we have 92 data sets on the website. I am extremely pleased with how enthusiastically it has been embraced by interested industry and community participants. I am also excited about how our team has delivered on time frames, which are being achieved at each stage. We have reached a point in the project where each core departmental agency has been working on an open data strategy, with particular roadmaps for the release of data sets.

This is the beginning of an exciting new phase for the open data revolution that is a major priority for the LNP government. Queensland is leading the way in our approach, delivery, accessibility and dissemination of government raw data and departmental information. This approach has placed access to state government data in Queensland on a level that has never ever been

attempted in the past and we hope to join other world leaders in this open data area of governance. Since being appointed to this position, I have spoken with many stakeholders in the IT and business industry and the response has been overwhelmingly supportive. Industry participants want to be involved with the new direction this government is moving in to achieve open, transparent, accessible, useable and appropriate data that can be utilised not only for the business sector and commercial development but also by community and non-government organisations.

Commission of Audit; Mackay Summit

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): Since the last sitting week of parliament, we have seen the agenda of privatisation of assets and services ramped up by the government, again at the detriment of the people of regional Queensland. Despite \$2 million of taxpayers' moneys being used to compile the Costello report, the Newman government is refusing to publicly release the report, which recommends a wholesale sell-off of Queensland assets. What does the government have to hide? What is so damning in the final Costello report that the LNP government will not even show its own members of parliament, let alone the people of Queensland? Basically, the report is flagging that everything in Queensland is up for sale. No job in Queensland is safe. The LNP government could contract out every job in Queensland. Whether it is teachers, nurses, cleaners or bus drivers, no Queensland job is safe.

It is disgraceful that the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer have not read the Costello report. It is supposed to map out their future vision for Queensland, but they cannot be bothered to take the time to read it. If cabinet is not going to see the Costello report until next week and the LNP backbench will not see it until after Easter, who has read the report? Peter Costello probably has not even read the report. A report that, essentially, recommends that the government gets out of the business of governing and a report that proposes that the government stop providing services such as health, education, child safety, mental health and corrective services has not been read by anyone in government. What a ridiculously lazy attitude to a report that is supposed to be shaping Queensland's future. The government should give the report to the opposition. We will read it for them and even provide a simple summary. What does the government have to hide? Why won't it let its own backbenchers read the report? Is it too worried about the ongoing divisions in the party room? Why cannot the public see the report? It cost \$3,300 a day of taxpayers' money to produce, yet taxpayers are not allowed to see it. The government needs to stop deceiving the people of Queensland and release the report for public consumption.

Last week, in another slap in the face to regional Queensland, the LNP government backed away from its pledge to hold a series of town hall meetings to develop a 20-year vision for the state's future. Now the government is making it even harder for regional Queenslanders to have their say by holding only one summit in regional Queensland, in Mackay. As the member for Mackay, I know this would be great for local tourism, but I fear that the discussions will be hijacked by interests from other regions. The better option is for the government to fulfil its original pledge to have town hall meetings in each region so that everyone's voice can be heard.

The Newman government has failed to explain why it has backed down on this original promise. Instead, this morning the Premier deliberately misled parliament by parroting the Deputy Premier's blatantly incorrect statements of last week that I said the summit should be held in Brisbane. That claim is untrue and it was shown to be untrue last week. I challenge the Premier and the Deputy Premier to provide any proof I made those claims. The Premier is so desperate to play politics over the proposed Mackay summit that he is deliberately repeating the incorrect statements of the Deputy Premier. This is all a desperate attempt to divert attention away from the fact that the Newman government has again failed the people of regional Queensland and this is a pathetic base political stunt from the Premier.

Juvenile Justice

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (11.35 am): I appreciate this opportunity to speak on a matter of public interest that has been at the forefront of people's minds in my area and across the state. It is the issue of juvenile crime and the youth justice system. The shape of juvenile crime is different on the Gold Coast to that in Kingaroy, Mackay, Townsville or Mount Isa. Nonetheless, it is an issue that affects us all. Locally, it is an issue that has grabbed headlines and raised voices in protest. When the Premier visited Townsville on Monday and Tuesday last week, victims' rights advocates loudly

decried the juvenile justice system as inadequate. The week before at a roundtable discussion, they had met with the Attorney-General, police and groups who work with juvenile offenders. I take a moment to thank the Attorney-General for making that trip to Townsville at my request to meet with those stakeholders. The meeting was a stepping-off point in my community to examine the issue of juvenile crime in greater depth and to look at legislative changes and other recommendations to try to tackle this issue in such a way that we can see positive change.

On returning home from the previous sitting week of parliament, I heard of the recent spate of stolen cars being driven at ridiculous speeds such as 235 kilometres an hour in a 60 zone, in one case with a 14-year-old at the wheel. I made an immediate visit to the assistant commissioner and a district officer of QPS for an update. Their feedback was beyond words. From an operational point of view, the police are confident they are on top of juvenile crime in my area, particularly involving repeat offenders, but they are powerless to stop the continual flow of new juvenile offenders. I will continue to support the men and women of the police force who deal with this issue on a day-to-day basis. Some officers and constables are out and about on the beat, while others help make up special operations teams assigned to deal with this specific issue.

I went to the media, announcing my support for this government and the Attorney-General to review the juvenile justice system from top to bottom. My media statement has prompted much feedback not only from the community but also from people who work within the judicial system. Following the recent roundtable discussions, I will continue to lobby and discuss with the Attorney-General where and how we look at the matter of juvenile crime and the role of the court system. I will also continue to work closely with local police and Minister Jack Dempsey to ensure the police get all the resources they require, whether that is more police officers or a dedicated taskforce, if need be, to address the current spike in crime. This is what I was, in part, elected to do by the people of Thuringowa and it is something I said I was committed to tackling head on. I take this opportunity to thank Minister Dempsey.

At any one time in my city there exists a core group of 60 or so youths, both boys and girls, who are considered persons of interest. They range from a 10-year-old first-time offender to a 16-year-old recidivist. Those juveniles come from a range of backgrounds, both culturally and socially. Today I want to point out the real face and range of problems faced by this group of 60 or so children. I believe the family unit is the true core of humanity, irrespective of one's religious, cultural, social or geographical background. Today, we refer to such children as juveniles and in most cases they do not have a family unit. As I said, these kids are now known as juveniles; they are no longer considered children in the eyes of the community, the media and the state, and I consider that to be a blight on a 21st century society. I appreciate the work of the groups that work hard to fill the gap of the missing family unit. The Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services just launched Foster and Kinship Carers Week. On Saturday, I represented the minister at a ground-breaking ceremony for a new ACT for Kids centre, which will seek to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect. Groups like Mission Australia and Share House try to provide a place for youth who are homeless or at risk and those transitioning from detention.

Governments, both past and present, have put many programs and support groups in place to address the issues that these families and their children face through NGOs, government departments, church and community groups, foster systems, police and the juvenile justice system. Despite the genuine intentions and commitment to help, we have not seen any real progress in the last 30 to 40 years, taking into account the different social challenges of today and what works in one region does not work in another.

I do not want to take away the real face of these children, such as the boy last year who at four months of age was taken into state guardianship showing up to seven—yes, seven—broken bones in X-rays and who had developed attachment disorder, that is when babies learn not to cry due to abuse or neglect. That is the real face of these children's backgrounds and the future too if we do not make some changes in how we care for them.

Instead of the attitude of sweep it under the carpet, lock them up and throw away the key, in not all of these children's cases but in most we have failed as a community and as a government in ensuring the safety and care of these children. Let us not forget that they are children. As we review a system that needs to be rebuilt, let us not forget that victims of crime can also be the perpetrators and that juvenile justice needs to be just.

Health Plan

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (11.40 am): The health plan announced by Minister Lawrence Springborg last week has some really sensible objectives. It has some statements that are blatantly false and detract from the overall document. In between there is a lot that needs expansion or editing. But what it does have is a fatal flaw. That said, we are all about to embark on what seems to be part 2 of the whole new health plan which is a replacement for Labor's 2011 whole new health plan that replaced its 2004 whole new health plan. Some would say that the reason that health plans fail is because we do not stick to the one we have or that the first plan—or the second or the third, et cetera—was not any good. Cynics would say it is because we let politicians near them and their own self-interest dominates the outcomes that should be those of the patients themselves.

This 2013 plan claims to build on the reconstruction of responsible health boards and some devolution of health control. The devil is always in the detail and so it will be when the new health plan announced by Minister Springborg last week is put in place. The good news is that firstly the minister has largely followed the policy objectives developed by the subcommittee of the LNP standing policy committee. Secondly, he has made the patient the centre of all planning decisions. Thirdly, he has embraced some of the old information that follows that is sound.

The bad news is that he continues to try to condition us with false information such as the continuing saga of arguing that the Gold Coast University Hospital has too many beds for a population of 700,000. This is nonsense, and he should correct this immediately. The minister needs to face facts and not try to invent a new statistical formula for public beds to total population census data. The Gold Coast University Hospital has an average formula that is 300 beds short already and it has not even opened. It will not open for effectively another nine months.

The new plan also allows for a very poor administrative decision to hand over control of the single public health facility to a private operator. This is no reflection on the Mater Hospital or the Mercy nuns, but this proposed solution is ill-conceived. The Mater has its own objectives and these can be managed by just doing both on the same site. It is easy for nonpoliticians.

As for the critical flaw in a plan that ostensibly offers so much, in an area where there is \$13 billion plus of expenditure we cannot afford that predictable error. Health care is a bit like gravity; there is a certainty that bites. The critical flaw is the flawed belief that near enough is good enough. That is that if we rigidly control expenditure, carefully measure both inputs and outputs and monitor day to day the fluctuations then we will be able to do what we currently do and also that which we cannot really do without any really good quality assurance improvements medically.

At its core is an assumption that the \$13 billion is already being poorly spent. In other words, it is bad value for money. The reality is that there is precious little that is wasted. After years and years of running a system at 130 per cent, it has left us years behind in quality terms. The example that one might use is that if one can do something well for \$1 then you can almost do as well for three for \$2.50 in twice the time frame. This type of thinking is management dreaming. It must end in disaster.

The balance between private and public health care is always an inexact one. Clearly, in the last 25 years that weighting has been incorrect. The registration of private radiology and oncology services within public hospitals is a step forward. It is a great step and will be beneficial to a growing number of patients. It is not correct to then go 10 steps forward and contract everything else out. For example, the concept alone of a single food provider was tried before and failed absolutely. So it has been in some of the areas that have been raised within the plan outlined by Minister Springborg.

Health care in hospitals is not unlike running a city state. The real question is: do you want to do it at all? My question to Minister Springborg is not is he up to the task but does he want to do it at all? The blueprint says very little, but it gives you clues as to what has been planned for and what is up there for negotiation and is the body under the core analogy. My current guess is that he wants someone else not only to do it but to wear the responsibility for it too.

Health care done well requires responsibility. All the proposed changes in the world will not make one scrap of difference unless responsibility is taken for decisions made. The types of measures announced in the last week do not give enough reassurance that even shared responsibility is being considered. It is very much a situation of 'we will give you the money that we think is enough'. These are budgetary driven decisions, but it proposes the response, 'You will deliver optimal health outcomes and you will be responsible for all of those.'

Delegating responsibility without true delegation of budgeting does not work. It erodes trust and it will never deliver good outcomes. These two decisions do not match one another. The natural conclusion is that there will be at differing times hostility, rationalisation of services and people falling through the cracks. These are poor outcomes and it is predictable that they will occur.

Gold Coast, Party Houses

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.45 am): The Newman government has made some great strides forwards combatting the scourge of party houses on the Gold Coast and more broadly throughout Queensland. I note my colleague the member for Mermaid—

Mr Stevens: There is no beach anymore, it is just Mermaid.

Ms BATES: That is right. He has been very vocal on party houses. The hard work also expended by the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience in this regard, by handing the power to councils throughout the state to fine party house owners for excessive noise, is a significant step in the right direction. It should have been done years ago. The Labor Party truly dragged their feet on this issue.

However, noise is only one impact of many that stem from having a party house in your street, your block or your neighbourhood. I recently met with a constituent who lives outside where many would expect a party house to be located. He lives well away from the coastline, in an area whose primary appeal would be its tranquil and unspoilt environment—the suburb of Tallai.

The party house down the street from his place can barely be called a house at all. It resembles more a conference facility or a small hotel, yet it operates a short-term rental as other party houses do. Its professionally designed website boasts the features of this so-called house: 1,500 square metres of living area; two wings; street parking for 14 cars; a granny flat for nannies or security; and a 14-person spa. To quote the site: ‘Nothing about this property is ordinary.’

Unquestionably, a facility like this is not a party house; it is a full-blown tourism and function facility with the detrimental effects accompanied by this for the neighbouring residents. The fact that the operators of this facility believe that accommodation for security is a selling point illustrates one fact. They understand that the possible uses of the property can lead to trouble. My constituent says he has witnessed rampant drug use with blatant disregard for discretion, nudity with little regard for the neighbours and groups of well over 50 people partying around the pool, clearly substantially under the effects of the consumption of significant amounts of alcohol and potentially drugs.

In the local Gold Coast paper, the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Monday past was an article describing conditions not unlike those I am describing here today. I seek leave to table this article for the benefit of the House.

It goes to demonstrate that this issue is more widespread than just one property in Tallai. It is our responsibility to act for these residents who have been robbed of their ability to enjoy their own homes. We act to protect residents from highway noise with noise mitigation and sound barriers. We act to protect residents from the sound of hoons doing burnouts in the middle of the night with strong laws against such antisocial activities. We act to protect all Queenslanders from automotive based noise pollution by placing restrictions on how loud car exhausts can be.

We should also be protecting residents from excessive noise created by party houses and the other negative impacts of these businesses. These are businesses not residential homes that happen to be rented out when the owners are away. The area in which some of these party houses are located—the beautiful Gold Coast Hinterland—means that delivering outcomes is all the more difficult. For starters, the impact of the noise, traffic and antisocial behaviour is all the more noticeable when it is the sole blight in a quiet and peaceful location. In addition, our police resources are focused where the population densities are higher. It means significant travel time out to the hinterland where resources are scarcer than we would like and it makes addressing the issues difficult.

I was recently copied into a letter sent by Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate outlining the difficulties for council in taking full advantage of the government’s changes to legislation. Council wants more police resources made available to monitor the activities of these party houses. While I do not think that this is necessarily the answer, we do need to broaden our approach to this issue from the recent changes in legislation.

Tallai is not the only area where there is a problem with party houses. It is more widespread than that. But having one of these businesses located in Tallai adds insult to injury. The people who live in Tallai choose this area in part because of its beauty, its tranquillity and its rural lifestyle despite being within a short drive of significant infrastructure. They are being robbed of what they believed they were buying into.

I urge our government to continue to work with the Gold Coast City Council in order to address the issues associated with party houses with an approach that takes into account the varied properties that come under the 'party house' banners and the enormous impact these properties have on neighbouring residents. We are the Gold Coast hinterland and people buy in our area because of its tranquillity. The last thing that my residents need is party houses.

Gulf of Carpentaria, Fires

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.50 am): I rise today to raise awareness of the damage and loss suffered as a result of the gulf fires from late November through to December last year. While the terrible losses from the flooding have captured much of the attention in the media, similar levels of damage have been done in the gulf. However, all seems to be forgotten. The people who have had their enormous grazing holdings destroyed are now in despair as their hope for any further government assistance is fading.

Here are some facts. The fires burnt primarily through the shires of Croydon and Etheridge in the eastern gulf region, taking out approximately 5.65 million hectares of trees and shrubs that make up the feed for the vast cattle herd that exists in this region. Fires are commonplace in this country but rarely ever of this heat intensity or size. Fires were, up until recent decades, a more common control practice, but improved sustainable practice has moved away from fire control on a regular basis which in many cases increases the intensity of inevitable fires.

Approximately 216 properties were affected in the Etheridge Shire alone, with 11 having over 90 per cent of their place burnt out and a further 49 properties having 50 per cent of their place burnt out. It is not just the trees and shrubs that are destroyed but also the bores, fences, sheds and in some cases homesteads and livestock. These 216 properties cover an average area of 90,000 hectares or 240,000 acres. So that gives members an understanding of the size of the area that has been damaged and destroyed and size of the area that they need to recover and rebuild. Over these sorts of areas, the scale of feeding and repairs is very onerous and often beyond the capacity of the often meagre workforce helping to keep these places going.

It is no stretch of the imagination at all to put an average value of these businesses at or above \$5 million on a walk-in walk-out basis. So if we take 49 properties that now have 50 per cent of their place wiped out, the losses do not take long to add up. If you multiply that by the 216 properties affected, there is a big problem up there. This will put the brakes on the cattle industry in this region where there is no alternative industry—no mining or otherwise. The townspeople are very scared of this prospect and are very aware of the threat that this event presents to the prosperity of their area.

At this point let us stop and take stock of the northern beef cattle grazing industry in Queensland. I table a report compiled by Resource Consulting Services for Meat and Livestock Australia outlining the condition of the industry in 2009.

Tabled paper: Meat and Livestock Australia document regarding Northern beef situation analysis 2009, final report details [\[2159\]](#).

I might add that most people would acknowledge that the condition of the industry has deteriorated since then, as that was prior to the devastating live cattle export decision that was made.

Here are some facts about the northern beef cattle industry. Land values have increased 250 per cent from 1999 to 2008 which has encouraged higher debt levels. Beef prices increased until 2004, then levelled and have since declined. Debt levels have more than doubled on a per large stock unit basis. Vegetation management plans have been rolled out. There have been rising cost structures. Expense ratios have been over 100 per cent in six of the last seven years. I will say that again: expense ratios have been over 100 per cent in six of the last seven years. So in six of the last seven years those people have not made a profit, and that should worry everyone here who has an interest in that region. And, like I said, conditions have deteriorated since that date. If substantial action is not taken to somehow hold this area upright, there could be a significant regional economic fallout.

Let's put this rebuilding effort into a workable example. Many people say, 'Let them build up their own stock numbers.' If they sold a beast in the market now, they would get \$300 or \$400 for it, but they often need to go outside the region to buy their breeder stock. A lot of them are looking at spending \$700 to buy a replacement cow to breed which they will hold on their place for six to 12 months and then if they sell they will only get back \$300 or \$400. So if they restock now, they will make a \$400 per beast loss straight up.

In terms of rebuilding, there have been asset rundowns. Like I said, houses, buildings, fences and stock have been destroyed, which is a huge barrier for them in terms of rebuilding. The government quite generously offered a \$100,000 contribution to the Bendigo Bank fighting fund, but this falls hopelessly short of anything that would make a significant difference to many of these big operators up there who are definitely in trouble. The community contributed over \$300,000 to the same fund. I might add that the Tasmania bushfire victims received \$200,000 from their government. I plead for this government to engage with either me or the Etheridge Shire on some of the options going forward in terms of supplementing these people's income over the next few years as they rebuild and assisting the rebuilding of their assets such as fences, tanks—

(Time expired)

International Women's Day

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (11.55 am): Mr Deputy Speaker, as I am sure you are aware, Friday, 8 March is International Women's Day. Today I would like to take the opportunity to speak about the significance of International Women's Day and highlight the work of Ovarian Cancer Australia and ActionAid—two organisations that are inspirational and I am proud to support.

International Women's Day is a worldwide celebration and signifies the role and contribution of women in our society. And, at its core, International Women's Day seeks to encourage equality, peace and opportunity for all women. International Women's Day gives us an opportunity to reflect on the plight of women—our achievements, struggles and past. It also provides us with a chance to refresh our thinking and open our minds to the challenges women in developing countries continue to face.

International Women's Day is about inspiring women not only to achieve our individual goals but also, as a collective, to consider and reach out to the millions of women who continue to experience violence, abuse and the unspeakable violation of human rights. Importantly, International Women's Day provides a platform for organisations like UN Women to raise awareness of social issues and gather women to make positive changes locally and internationally.

This Friday I will be attending the UN Women Australia International Women's Day event at the convention centre, with many of my colleagues across all levels of government and around 1,300 other guests, to raise funds and support the Papua New Guinea critical services initiative. According to UN Women, 67 per cent of women living in Papua New Guinea experience violence. This is an incredible statistic but one which I know is evidenced by a personal friend of mine who spent a number of years working in Papua New Guinea. It also demonstrates that we still have much work to do to help our neighbours in PNG and women further abroad.

In line with this focus from UN Women, ActionAid is an organisation I would like to acknowledge. A group of Brisbane women led by Pamela Greet have set a goal to fund a project for women in Afghanistan. Last year Pamela presented me with some facts about the concerning situation for women living in Afghanistan: over one-third of the population lives in poverty; only around 12 per cent of women can read and write, fewer are numerate; and most women spend no more than four years in school. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 87 per cent of women are beaten on a regular basis. Women who have been raped are considered to be guilty and infrequently report it to authorities. The ActionAid project aims to train 30 female paralegals in Kabul who will then represent and support women who have been abused or mistreated.

I was eager to speak about ActionAid today in the week of International Women's Day because this project encapsulates the determination of women to make a positive change in the lives of other women. At its core this project is about educating and empowering local women to support and teach each other to break the cycle of violence. The local paralegals will have a greater chance of achieving peace and equality through teaching other local women their rights under the new Afghan constitution.

Similarly, I am also proud to support Ovarian Cancer Australia. February was Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, and I hosted an 'afternoon teal' on Teal Ribbon Day to raise awareness for a form of cancer which is often very difficult to detect in the early stages. Each year more than 1,200 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Around 800 will die from the disease, equating to one woman dying every 10 hours, and on average three Australian women are diagnosed every day.

When I learned about the symptoms and the destructiveness of ovarian cancer, I was keen to share Ovarian Cancer Australia's important message. It is important for all women to understand the symptoms of ovarian cancer, which include abdominal or pelvic pain, increased abdominal size or persistent abdominal bloating, needing to urinate often or urgently and difficulty eating or feeling full quickly. If these symptoms are experienced for two weeks or more, women are encouraged to visit their doctor.

At my 'afternoon teal' I partnered with the Wesley Research Institute, which conducts world-leading research in the backyard of the Mount Coot-tha electorate. This was a perfect opportunity to focus on the role of medical research, and I would particularly like to thank Dr Ying Dong, who presented her research and findings to date. Ying has dedicated many years to researching ovarian cancer, and she is working on regimes for better treatment and to block the spread of this cancer.

I would also like to thank all of the women who attended: Karen, Mish, Francesca, Shannon, Kim, Michelle, Lynne, Dimity, Maggie, Lisa Newman—who is an incredible champion of so many worthy causes—Peter Hackworth, Terri Cooper, Di Watson and Councillor Geraldine Knapp. Together we raised almost \$400 for Ovarian Cancer Australia to go towards its important research projects.

In summary, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate both Ovarian Cancer Australia and ActionAid for their inspirational work, believing in two different but equally important issues facing women. I thank my colleagues who are hosting, attending and promoting International Women's Day.

(Time expired)

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

LAND, WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.02 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, the Land Act 1994, the Land Title Act 1994, the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the River Improvement Trust Act 1940, the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, the Vegetation Management Act 1999, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes, and to make consequential or minor amendments of the other legislation as stated in schedule 1 for purposes related to those particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Land, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 [\[2160\]](#).

Tabled paper: Land, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes [\[2161\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Land, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which delivers on a range of government commitments and initiatives. In particular, the provisions in this bill will reduce red tape and unnecessary regulation in the resources sector and in the management of our natural resources. It will also deliver on key recommendations of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry regarding levees. The bill also makes a number of additional, miscellaneous and minor amendments to further streamline, simplify or clarify existing processes covered by natural resource management and resources legislation.

The devastation wreaked on many Queensland communities by the recent floods associated with ex-tropical Cyclone Oswald is still very fresh in the minds of Queenslanders. Communities are continuing the very difficult task of rebuilding and recovery. While we cannot entirely stop flooding in our state, it is important all levels of government look to better manage ways to minimise the impacts of future floods. The issue of levees and their impact on flooding is a matter of priority.

In relation to levees, the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry was clear in its final report, stating—

What has attracted the Commission's attention are systemic questions of inconsistency in the approach to the control of the development of levees and disputes as to who should impose that control.

The commission concluded that the patchwork of state and council approvals, and in some areas a complete absence of regulation, is not conducive to consistent decision making. The bill aims to resolve those issues. The final report included five recommendations related to levees. In essence, the recommendations included working with local governments to formulate a definition of 'levee' and determine the most appropriate regulatory regime under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 to regulate levees. The Newman government made it very clear in its response to the final report on 7 June 2012 that we would implement all five recommendations from the commission that the state is responsible for regarding levees. This bill is the first step in delivering on that commitment.

The amendments I am introducing to the Water Act 2000 provide a definition of a levee and the power to make regulations about the construction of new levees and modifications to existing levees. Levees will also be made 'assessable development' under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and additional criteria to assess those levees will be developed from the outcomes of a regulatory impact statement which will be undertaken later this year.

These amendments will be followed by the development of a code that will be used to assess levees. The Queensland government will seek public feedback on the implementation of the new regulatory framework for levees through a regulatory impact statement. A code will also be developed to assess levees before commencement of the provisions in this bill on 1 January 2014 should they be agreed to by the parliament. The bill also contains a number of red-tape reduction initiatives including the repeal of the future conservation areas provisions in the Land Act 1994. These provisions are just another example of the onerous red tape and unnecessary regulation placed onto leasehold landholders by the previous Labor government. Repealing these provisions will alleviate concerns amongst rural leaseholders about their leases potentially not being renewed in favour of the land being converted into conservation areas. If the state identifies an area that ought to be converted into a conservation area and it is on a lease, the government will be required to stand in the marketplace to negotiate its purchase.

The bill also amends the Water Act 2000 to extend the stated period of all water licences until 30 June 2111. The extension will apply to the majority of new and existing licences to take or interfere with water. This amendment will remove unnecessary red tape. The practice of regularly reviewing water licences through an application process in order to implement natural resource management policies has now been superseded by the contemporary water resource planning processes used in Queensland. Water resource plans and resource operations plans are the single point of truth in terms of clearly defining entitlements to water. Water resource plans and resource operations plans are based on the premise of full utilisation of existing entitlements including water licences.

The bill also removes the need for a riverine protection permit to clear vegetation in a watercourse—again, a reduction in onerous red tape and unnecessary regulation for landholders. This will eliminate confusion by ensuring that vegetation management issues are dealt with under a single act, the Vegetation Management Act 1999.

The provisions of the Water Act 2000 will continue to ensure that bank stability is maintained and the physical integrity of a watercourse, lake or spring is protected. A person will not be required to obtain a riverine protection permit to manage vegetation above the surface in a watercourse, lake or spring. However, if vegetative material below the surface is to be removed, a riverine protection permit will still be required.

Other amendments in this bill include:

- streamlining a number of transfer related issues on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands—for example, simplifying the opening and closing of roads which will shorten the timeframes for transferring the land.

- providing land trusts with the power to appoint, remove or suspend members of the land trust and also provide the minister with broader powers to enable the removal of members of a land trust.
- shortening land acquisition processes where there are no objections or where the parties agree to the taking of an interest in land. A gazette notice will be published without the need for referral to the Governor in Council. This shortened process will not apply where native title or Indigenous interests are involved.
- providing a legislative framework for the recording and registration of statutory easements over small terrace type housing lots containing buildings with shared common walls. This will reduce the administrative and compliance burden on business and the land development industry.
- streamlining the process for conversion of unutilised petroleum wells to water supply bores.
- streamlining governance and administration requirements for River Improvement Trusts.
- amending the provisions relating to the state Rural Leasehold Land Strategy to increase the applicable land area threshold to 1,000 hectares or more for new leases and lease renewals under the Land Act 1994.
- providing flexibility in prioritising the review and replacement of water resource plans.
- removing the requirements on water entitlement holders proposing to undertake irrigation to prepare land and water management plans. Water use plans will be retained to deal with any threats of land degradation that may arise.
- amending section 20 of the Water Act 2000 to allow certain low risk activities to be undertaken without a water entitlement. Low-risk activities are those that pose minimal risk to the sustainable management of water resources if undertaken without a resource entitlement, or works approval.
- amending the Land Valuation Act 2010 to allow a market survey report to include sales that have occurred outside of a particular local government area. This applies, for example, in western grazing land where sales evidence can be limited.
- facilitating the conversion of water authorities to two tier co-operative structures.
- amending the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to provide a definition of dual reticulation.

The bill also amends the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 and the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 to provide for the extension of due dates and sunset clauses. The amendments extend an existing temporary water approval process in South-East Queensland under which distributor-retailers, such as Queensland Urban Utilities and Unitywater, rely on local governments to issue approvals on their behalf. This bill also contains a number of additional, miscellaneous and minor amendments which will further streamline the operation of a number of acts as well as simplify or clarify existing processes. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.11 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

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

HOUSING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 13 November 2012 (see p. 2488).

Second Reading

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.12 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In opening, I thank the members of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee and the chairman, the member for Warrego, for the deliberation and report on the bill. I would also like to thank those who made submissions to the committee. I greatly appreciate the time and effort taken to share their suggestions. I note that the committee tabled its report on 6 February 2013 and I am pleased to now table the government's response.

Tabled paper: Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 15—Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, government response [\[2162\]](#).

The committee's report makes three recommendations including passing the bill. The government supports all three recommendations. The Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will pave the way for a sustainable social housing system that better meets the needs of our tenants. It is no secret that the current system is broken. It is no secret that something has to be done.

This bill enables the implementation of the national regulatory system for community housing providers—the NRS. Building a sustainable social housing system requires a significant expansion of the non-government housing sector. Our vision is for a number of providers to be capable of managing up to 15,000 dwellings. Currently, the largest community housing provider in Queensland manages fewer than 1,500 dwellings while Australia's largest manages only about 4,000. This is a big change but a necessary one and one that is welcomed by our community housing providers.

Other states and territories are also working towards the NRS. Like us, they realise that the old ways are no longer sustainable. When the Newman government came to office the public housing system was losing \$140 million a year. Maintenance bills were rising, rents were falling and the waiting list had blown out by about 50 per cent in the last three years alone. Without corrective action it would not have been long before the whole system collapsed under the weight of its own inefficiencies. Labor's solution has been to sell off properties to cover their losses, which of course is no solution at all. Unlike the Labor Party, the Newman government recognises the need for innovative ways of providing social housing. The NRS gives us the platform to do just that.

Under the NRS, social housing providers will no longer be bound by the existing prescriptive governance requirements which can be time consuming and costly. Instead, providers will only need to demonstrate their ability across a range of performance outcome areas, for example, tenancy, property and financial management. At present, most community housing providers do not operate across state boundaries because it is simply too hard. As well as needing to obtain separate licences to operate in each state, providers are also faced with different eligibility criteria and different regulatory systems each time they cross state lines. The new system will mean they only need to register once and that registration will be recognised Australia-wide.

The NRS is an opt-in system. In order to register, providers must demonstrate that they need the eligibility requirements set out in the national regulatory code. Providers will be registered under one of the three tiers of registration according to their size, scale and risk of their operations.

Decisions about funding will continue to be made by the chief executive of my department. However, it will be a legislative requirement that social housing providers must be registered in order to be funded. To manage the registration of community housing providers and oversee the regulation of the community housing sector, the amendment legislation establishes a community housing registrar. The registrar will be an independent officer and will make their decisions independent of the chief executive or the minister.

To protect the rights of tenants as well as those of the government and other investors interested in community housing, the registrar will have the authority to take action to bring a provider back to compliance where a problem is identified. One of the great tragedies of Labor's failure on public housing is the absence of any coherent network of support services. Too often people with limited life skills are provided with a roof over their head and then are left to their own devices. The high needs circumstances of the majority of new tenants in particular mean that they often require

significant support in order to sustain a tenancy. The chronic shortage of resources brought about by Labor's neglect of the portfolio means that the department has not always been in a position to provide that support. Under the NRS that will change. Ancillary or wrap-around services will be an important feature of the new housing system to ensure that needy Queenslanders are not only housed but supported.

The amendments to the Housing Act recognise that organisations providing certain services do not need the same level of regulatory control as those managing tenancy and property assets. Organisations delivering only ancillary housing services, such as crisis accommodation, home modification and tenancy support, will no longer need to be registered under the Housing Act. The funding relationship with ancillary housing providers will be managed through contractual arrangements, further reducing red tape.

As with social housing providers, prescriptive regulations instructing ancillary providers how to run their businesses will be removed. It is a great irony that, under Labor, so much emphasis was placed on telling others how to do their job by people who failed to do their own. Under the NRS, funding agreements will be based on outcomes and performances, allowing organisations to get on with the job at hand: delivering services to people in need.

I now turn to the amendments of the Building Act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act. Currently, a new building approval is needed when demolition, removal and rebuilding work takes longer than six months. This can cost up to \$500. Changes to the Building Act will allow many applicants to avoid these changes by extending the time frame for this work from six months to one year.

Applicants will be able to obtain an additional extension of up to six months from their local government, bringing the total to a maximum of 18 months. This is a timely amendment as it may assist people rebuilding after recent floods across Queensland.

The notifiable work scheme, introduced in November last year, has already simplified the plumbing approval process in Queensland. By eliminating the need for a plumbing approval for routine work, competent plumbing professionals are freed from unnecessary mandatory inspections, cost and delay. They can save up to 28 business days and \$1,000, making the work easier, quicker and cheaper to complete. Local governments are also freed from the obligation to inspect this routine work and are instead funded to undertake audits, ensuring that the high standard of plumbing work demanded by the public is maintained.

In keeping with the scheme's goal of reducing complexity, these amendments will clarify the rules around the lodgement of notices for the new category of work and facilitate the ongoing audit program undertaken by the Plumbing Industry Council and local governments to ensure a high standard of work. The government's proposed changes will also facilitate easier licence renewals for certain building certifiers and pool safety inspectors.

These reforms will cut red tape and save people both time and money. This will benefit the building and plumbing industries and create real savings that can be passed on to Queenslanders. Feedback from the government advisory body, the Building Industry Consultative Group, other industry groups and local governments has shown strong support for these reforms. At its core this bill is about loosening the web of rules and regulations that were strangling the non-government sector under Labor. The role of government is to create the conditions which allow people to succeed, and that is what this bill does.

In conclusion, I return to the core business of this bill—that is, paving the way for the biggest revitalisation of social housing in Queensland's history. This is a vital reform. Labor's way has failed. Their failure to recognise this fact until it was too late is evidence of their neglect. This government is different. We are determined to house those people who have spent years languishing on Labor's waiting list. We are building a modern, flexible, supportive housing system that better meets the needs of our tenants. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.22 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. At the outset I flag that the opposition will be supporting this bill and the recommendations of the committee.

Mr Walker: Very good.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you. This bill was introduced by the first Minister for Housing and Public works of the Newman LNP government, Dr Bruce Flegg, on 13 November 2012 and it was referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for consideration. It is unfortunate that the

previous minister was unable to introduce and see through to the end any piece of legislation in this House during his brief but uneventful time as minister. Let us just hope that the new Minister for Housing and Public Works does not get offside or tackled by other issues, such as jobs for the boys or lobbyists, which seem to have plagued this government since its inception.

Ms BATES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that the member has certainly strayed from the long title of the bill. I ask you to rule on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): I remind the member of the long title of the bill, even though the member has only just started her speech. I remind all members of the importance of staying on the bill. The member has the call.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. Precious petal, member for Mudgeeraba!

Ms BATES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the member for Bundamba and her comments insulting and I ask that she withdraw them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has been asked to withdraw.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw. Dear, oh, dear! As the previous Minister for Housing and Public Works, Dr Flegg—the current member for Moggill and member of the Finance and Administration Committee—stated during his only introductory speech to a piece of legislation in this House, ‘Over several years, housing ministers from all states and territories have been debating how to arrest the decline of Australia’s once proud and robust public housing system’. As the legislation before this House today has come about through national reforms—that is why we are supporting it—I would like to take this opportunity to thank all ministers charged with the responsibility of housing in our country, including ministers from the previous Labor government, who have been instrumental in negotiating the bill before the House today.

As indicated in the committee’s report, the legislation before the House today is national model law which has already been implemented in New South Wales, being the host state for the legislation. This legislation, unlike other nationally agreed to pieces of legislation, does not refer any of the state’s powers to the Commonwealth but merely implements mirror legislation across multiple jurisdictions in the social housing sphere.

This bill will amend the Housing Act 2003 to, as the committee’s report stated, ‘create a distinct separation between the funding and regulatory functions of the DPWH’. This will be achieved through the implementation of a community housing registrar, who will be responsible for the creation and ongoing maintenance of a state based register of housing providers, provided by state governments, local governments and the not-for-profit community sector. This will be a one-stop-shop approach—one portal of information, if you like—that will maintain information which is vital in order to see our community housing sector move forward and grow with the needs of our community in the future.

The registrar will also be empowered to make registration decisions independent of the director-general of the Department of Housing and Public Works or his or her delegate and the minister of the day to ensure that the right type of organisations are being registered on the system without any potential influence occurring. However, the registrar, as outlined in the committee’s report, will not have any powers in relation to the disbursement of funds, which will remain with the chief executive of the department—namely, the director-general or his or her delegate. Housing providers, however, will not receive funding from the chief executive through the Department of Housing and Public Works unless they are properly registered on the register. The registrar will, however, have the power to investigate and take action if necessary on non-compliance issues and provide information and guidance to the director-general and/or the minister when the time is appropriate.

Once the legislation has been enacted and a registrar appointed, they will then work with other jurisdictions to ensure that the register is kept up to date and is compatible with each jurisdiction in order to create a uniform register. What these changes mean is that organisations that provide social housing will have to be registered and go through a process of registration which will conform to a national uniform standard in order to obtain funding from the taxpayer. And it will allow for greater monitoring of the sector in terms of compliance. As outlined in the explanatory notes to the bill—

The objectives underpinning the National Regulatory System include to:

- provide a consistent regulatory environment to support the growth and development of not-for-profit community housing providers

- provide an avenue for regulated participation by for-profit community housing providers in the provision of social housing
- reduce the regulatory burden for community housing providers working across jurisdictions
- provide a level playing field for community housing providers seeking to enter new participating jurisdictions.

These objectives are fundamental to having a strong and successful social housing system, not just in Queensland but right across Australia. Social housing is there to help. It is there to assist individuals and families who are finding it tough. It is there to ensure that people do not slip through the cracks and are provided with all the possible opportunities to regain themselves and lead successful lives. It is true to say that we can always improve our housing legislation and regulations and policies to ensure that the best interests of the community remain at the fore and not those of other competing interests such as property developers, which this government seems to love!

In the first months of this Newman LNP government those opposite in the LNP slashed funding out of every single department, including the departments that provide front-line services to the most needy in our community in Queensland. We saw it slash funding in the Department of Communities, Child Safety, Disability Services and also the Department of Housing and Public Works. Shame on every one of the members of this LNP government! The explanatory notes of this bill state that these laws will—

improve tenant outcomes and protect vulnerable tenants

Let me read that again for the benefit of the illiterate members of the LNP in this House. Again it says—

improve tenant outcomes and—

Mr SHORTEN: I rise to a point of order. I find the member for Bundamba's comments offensive to all members in this House and I ask her to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): The member finds the comments unsatisfactory and has asked for them to be withdrawn.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw, but I did not say 'all members'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will—

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw. As I said, the explanatory notes state—

improve tenant outcomes and protect vulnerable tenants

But what did those opposite do in the first few months? They not only sent letters out to every individual in public housing in this state putting fear into them but took an axe to the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service and this government shamefully defunded it. This was a service that, through state government funding, provided a front-line service to those who were most vulnerable to help them remain in their homes. And what did you do? You cut it out from under them! But thankfully the federal Labor government stepped in to clean up this LNP government's mess and it funded the TAAS. As they say, it is better late than never for this government to be introducing laws that will, as the explanatory notes state, improve tenant outcomes and protect vulnerable tenants and I thank—just reluctantly—the new Minister for Housing and Public Works for perhaps seeing this light that his predecessor obviously could not.

Let me turn to the current process of the management of tenants currently being undertaken by public servants and how the new structure will impact on them. Page 8 of the committee's report states—

The Committee notes the restructuring of housing provision and supports opportunities for existing public servants to be redeployed into the not-for-profit sector.

That is what you are on about—retrenching, redeployment. Gee, you get an A+ for that! Since taking office nearly a year ago, this government has wasted no time at all in axing thousands of Public Service jobs, and it is my opinion that more of these jobs are going to go from the Department of Housing and Public Works in the future. As Mr Waters from the Department of Housing and Public Works stated on page 6 of the public hearing transcript of 30 November 2012—

The majority of the people in the housing services are front-line service providers working out of our 23 housing service centres ...

Tony Waters is an excellent public servant in any government—a good man—and he knows the hard work the public servants put in to his department. These front-line staff are a wealth of information and they should be guaranteed that their positions will be safe during the transition process and also afterwards. So, Minister, I put it to you today: will you—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will speak through the chair.

Mrs MILLER: Through the chair, I will ask the minister: will he confirm today that there will be no public servants in the Department of Housing and Public Works who will lose their jobs in relation to this legislation or as part of any other budget cuts? As a former public servant who was retrenched by the LNP the last time it was in government from 1996 to 1998 during a time of massive Public Service cuts, I would be fearful of the words of this government, particularly in relation to the Costello report, and as a consequence of new schemes that it wants to bring in.

Last week we saw the handing down of the so-called 'independent Costello audit' of the state's finances which has recommended that state assets be sold in a massive fire sale. As members of this House would note, the previous Labor government was held to account for selling off state government owned assets—something that I was never a supporter of and for which the Leader of the Opposition has since apologised to the community for. We should never have done it—never have done it—and that is why there are only seven of us on this side of the House, and next time there will only be seven of you! It just goes to show that the LNP has already lost touch with the community if it is proposing to sell off government owned assets. This morning we heard—quite remarkably—that the Premier had only read a couple of hundred pages of the Costello report. Shameful! I understand that the Premier may have issues with literacy or he may have issues with his government's contemptible attitude to Queensland families and that, no matter what, he will flog off anything that he can get his hands on to his mates at the other end of town.

Government members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I say to the Premier: this is a CD.

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The minister will cease interjecting. The member has the call.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. So to help his understanding and to help the Premier's literacy, I believe that the Commission of Audit should be read on to a disc—one like this.

Mr SORENSEN: I rise to a point of order. The Premier is not here to defend himself and I find those comments insulting and I ask her to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not believe that there is a point of order. However, I certainly would remind the member and all members about the standing orders and what is reasonable and fair conduct in the House. I call the member.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much for your protection once again, Mr Deputy Speaker. Perhaps we should have a CD called 'The Commission of Audit' and 'The Commission of Audit' could be not only supervised by Peter Costello but also narrated by Peter Costello! Can members imagine the dulcet tones—

Ms BATES: I rise to a point of order.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. The member will take her seat. I will hear the point of order.

Ms BATES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask again that you rule on relevance. The Commission of Audit has absolutely nothing to do with the long title of the bill and the member for Bundamba has not even read it herself, so it is just mere conjecture.

Mrs MILLER: Because we haven't got it!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do remind the member of what the long title of the bill is and to keep her remarks to the long title of the bill. I have allowed what I believe is a reasonable amount of latitude and I do ask the member to stay focused on the bill and to return to it. The member has the call.

Mrs MILLER: Thank very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank you for your protection once again, particularly from the member for Mudgeeraba. In relation to the Commission of Audit and also this bill before the House, perhaps the Premier could pop the audio book into his chauffeur-driven car, or perhaps into his CD player at night, so he could learn a little bit about what the Costello report is about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, I have just made a ruling that you are to refer to the bill and to restrict your comments and speech to the bill. I ask you to follow my ruling

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much. Mr Deputy Speaker, I will follow your ruling. This bill allows for a better regulatory framework to ensure that the not-for-profit sector can be a strong force in the community housing sector. It will take some of the services and jobs that are currently provided by the government and give them to the not-for-profit sector. But what else will be outsourced? Will this legislation be the catalyst for other services that are currently offered by the government being outsourced? Will the minister rule out outsourcing the rent roll to the private sector or the not-for-profit sector—to their mates in the Property Council? To real estate agents?

One of the fundamental principles of this bill is to improve tenant outcomes and to protect vulnerable tenants. I hope the Newman LNP government lives up to this notion and protects the interests of all, as opposed to it protecting the interests of a select few. The explanatory notes to this bill state clearly that one of the primary purposes of the legislation is—

... the growth and development of the not-for-profit community housing sector.

Members of the House would already know my passion for public housing and in particular the three government owned caravan parks in Queensland: the Woombye Gardens Caravan Park, the Lazy Acres Caravan Park and the Monte Carlo Caravan Park. I note in the Minister's media statement on 22 January 2013 that the Monte Carlo Caravan Park will be saved from sale to private developers and will be sold to only a 'select group of not-for-profit housing providers'. That means that those providers who will be tendering for the three government owned caravan parks will be subject to the new national regulatory system and will have to be vetted by the new regulator.

While I am on the topic of the three caravan parks, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the grassroots campaign run by all residents of the three caravan parks and in particular Teresa Radburn from the Monte Carlo Caravan Park. Theresa spearheaded the campaign and was the principal petitioner calling on the government to not sell off her caravan park. I say to Theresa: you are a legend. Although the government has not completely backed down from selling off the three caravan parks, it has stated that the only organisations that could purchase the properties would be not-for-profit housing providers with conditions put on the sale, including that the caravan parks continue to operate as caravan parks. I note that the residents of the Monte Carlo Caravan Park have formed a committee and have already made representations to the government in the hope to purchase their own caravan park and to run it themselves. I encourage the minister to take that committee's submissions seriously, as they would be the best people to run their own caravan park as many residents have lived there for many decades.

The legislation before the House today not only provides for the implementation of the national regulatory system but also makes amendments to the Building Act 1975 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. In relation to the building work for demolition or removals, the application process has been streamlined to allow for extensions of up to six months to be added to a building application for demolition, removal and rebuilding work instead of a new application being submitted. This change will also flow to the local government level, with individuals allowed to submit an extension application with the local government authorities making a decision within 10 days of the application date. The bill also tightens up the notifiable work plumbing scheme to provide clarity around when notifiable work is completed and to clarify the recent amendments to the Building Act 1975 that aligned building certifiers licensing terminology with a new national standard. These amendments are technical in nature and the opposition has no objections to them or the recommendations of the committee.

Governments are elected to serve all the residents of this state, not just the residents who voted them in or those at the big end of town. But what we have seen by this government is slashing and burning in areas such as the TAAS program and the potential sell-off of the three government owned caravan parks, which have now been saved—so far at least—by the second Minister for Housing and Public Works. Although this bill goes some way to address the needs of social housing

in this state by providing a national regulatory framework, it must be complemented with other public policy decisions in order to ensure that our social housing system grows stronger in the future. So today I ask the minister to practise what this bill preaches and to improve tenant outcomes and protect vulnerable tenants through other policy decisions rather than, like previous ministers, taking our state backwards in this sphere.

Unlike this LNP government, which likes to sack public servants rather than thank them for their hard work, I would like to thank all the public servants who are currently employed in the Department of Housing and Public Works for their genuine dedication to the clients of public housing and to the community housing sector. I know quite a number of those public servants. They have worked in Housing for many decades and they have chosen to work in the housing sector because that is what they believe in. In addition, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Local Government Association of Queensland, Queensland Shelter Inc., the Friends of South East Queensland, the Cairns Regional Council and, of course, all of our friends in the caravan parks—all of our friends who said that it was not good enough to sell off those three caravan parks—for taking the time to make a written submission to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee during its deliberation on this bill. I would like to thank all of them.

It is refreshing to note in this instance that those opposite are finally using the parliamentary committee system for perhaps what it was originally designed to do—to scrutinise the legislation in a timely way, allowing organisations and members of the public to comment on the legislation and provide input before it comes before the House. Unfortunately, this is not a widespread practice and I look forward to one day seeing the parliamentary committee system being used for its true and proper purposes rather than as a funnel for legislation to be pumped through, sometimes without proper time for scrutiny.

In conclusion, I would like to say that if we cannot have an audio book, let us have an audio CD with Costello singing it—perhaps his songs could be ‘Cut, Slush, Burn, Sacking’ and ‘Queensland for Sale’.

Mr BERRY: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have ruled on at least three occasions in relation to relevance. This is going back to at least two occasions and I ask that either the debate be brought back on track or the member ceases to speak.

Mrs MILLER: I have finished.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member’s time has expired.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (12.48 pm): I thank the minister for his favourable comments on the committee’s report and for accepting the recommendations that the committee has put forward. This is a landmark bill that is a change in direction for social housing in not only Queensland but also Australia. Housing ministers from all states and territories have been debating how to arrest the decline of our public housing system. The minister mentioned that we were heading towards losses of \$140 million a year and that, obviously, changes had to be made. Governments have made the decision to embark on what is potentially the biggest reform to the housing assistance system since the state Housing Commission was formed across Australia in 1945 to deliver public housing and to contribute to post-war reconstruction and development.

Queensland and other participating jurisdictions have signed the intergovernmental agreement to establish a consistent regulatory environment supporting the growth and development of community housing nationally. With this, the aim is to improve outcomes for tenants, protect government funding in social housing and enhance the confidence of persons, including investors and financiers who have dealings with registered providers of community housing.

There are many things that will come out of this bill. It is designed to provide a consistent regulatory environment to support the growth and development of not-for-profit community housing providers, provide an avenue for regulator participation by not-for-profit community housing providers in provision of social housing, reduce the regulatory burden for community housing providers working across jurisdictions and provide a level playing field for community housing providers seeking to enter new participating jurisdictions. The bill will also improve tenant outcomes and protect vulnerable tenants, protect present and future government funding and equity in social and affordable housing and enhance confidence for persons, including investors and financiers, having dealings with registered community and housing providers. The committee recommends that the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be passed. We believe that the changes that we are seeing here will have a great deal of benefit to the people of this state.

The proposed amendments to the Housing Act aim to establish national consistent industry standards applied in three tiers according to scope, scale and risk of activities. To support the delivery of quality housing services the amendments also confirm that registered organisations are independent community housing businesses responsible for their performance. Amendments to the Housing Act will also create a distinct separation between the funding and the regulatory functions of the Department of Housing and Public Works. A Community Housing Registrar, as the minister mentioned, who will establish and maintain the state's register of housing providers and make registration decisions independent of the department's chief executive and the minister, will be established. Funding decisions will continue to be made by the chief executive and providers of social housing services will be required to maintain registration in order to receive funding.

This took a long time to pull together and there was enormous consultation Australia-wide in relation to this. Extensive consultation involving a broad section of community housing stakeholder groups was undertaken by all jurisdictions throughout 2011 and early 2012 on the proposed design, the principles, the objectives and the national regulator system. The committee understands that feedback was strongly supportive of the approach specifically to clearly define performance expectations, the separation of regulatory functions from funding decisions and a tiered approach to registrations scaled to the type of activities undertaken and the risks involved. These significant changes to social housing in this state will make it much easier across the whole of Australia to deliver the social housing that is needed.

There are also some other legislation changes in this bill. I will quickly touch on amendments to the Building Act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act. The building industry has expressed concern about the amount of red tape surrounding relocatable buildings. Currently a new building approval costing up to \$500 is needed where demolition, removal and rebuilding work takes longer than six months. Changes to the Building Act will save time and money for both industry and consumers by cutting red tape. For demolition, removal and rebuilding work, a category which includes work for relocatable homes, the changes will allow many applicants to avoid seeking fresh building approvals by extending the time frame for completion of the work from six months to one year. Applicants also will be able to obtain an extension of up to six months from local government. This application must be supported by enough information to allow local government to assess the merits of the application. The amendments specify that local government must decide the application within 10 business days and may consult with any person, for example neighbours or other local residents likely to be affected by the application. The power for local government to decide the extension does not include the ability to impose any additional conditions, providing certainty to the applicant.

The recent amendments to the Building Act align building certifiers' licensing terminology with a new national standard and transfer control of vocational education and training for pool safety inspectors to the Commonwealth. There is concern that these recent amendments may inadvertently prevent certain building certifiers and pool safety inspectors from renewing their licences. The proposed amendments to the Building Act clarify that a building certifier level 3 is eligible for a licence if they had previously held the licence at an equivalent level and hold a current accreditation issued by that accredited standard body. Similarly, the amendments clarify that it is sufficient for a pool safety inspector applying for renewal to show that they have previously held a pool safety inspection licence and they satisfy the additional requirements for ongoing professional development. The amendments provide for retrospective validation of any building inspection and pool safety inspection functions undertaken by affected licensees before the changes came into force.

On 1 November 2012 a scheme to reduce red tape for routine plumbing work, known as a notifiable work scheme, took effect. Although the main elements of the scheme took effect on or prior to this date, some clarification is required to facilitate its effective operation. The proposed amendments provide clarity around when the notifiable work is completed to ensure that local government can access contract details of property owners for the purpose of auditing notifiable work and extend the time frame for commencement of proceedings under the Plumbing and Drainage Act to facilitate enforcement of plumbing standards under the scheme. The current provisions do not state when notifiable work is taken to be complete. This could potentially result in confusion for licensees who are to lodge a notice when the work is completed. The changes clarify that work is completed when it becomes operational or when an invoice for the work is issued, whichever is earlier.

The majority of routine plumbing work will no longer undergo mandatory inspection prior to use. Effective audits are important for the notifiable work scheme. Amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act will put beyond doubt that the Plumbing Industry Council may collect, store or disclose information relating to notifiable work audits. This power is limited to performance of a council's

functions under the act. Where personal information about an individual is involved the individual must give consent to the disclosure. These changes will make a significant difference. Unnecessary red tape was making life too complicated. In conclusion, I support this legislation and commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (12.57 pm): I rise in support of the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and wish to thank both the former minister and the current minister for allowing me to work closely with them on this bill and, indeed, with housing renewal, especially in my city, Logan, and the area of my electorate in Springwood.

It is very interesting to look at public housing over the last 50 years and to sit and study the graph of the number of homes that have been built each year. Indeed, it has climbed to significant heights of a couple of thousand in some years and, of course, it dwindles to very small numbers in others. But to say that we have been able to build over those years up to more than 61,000 homes is something that we should be very happy to have—61,000 homes! That is a lot of stock, that is a lot of shelter and it is a lot of protection for so many people.

I am going to approach this speech from a grassroots level and speak fairly much from my heart and relate to human need in my part of the world. Indeed, in the city of Logan we have in the order of 4,800 homes and in my electorate only 240 homes, but I am passionate about providing shelter for those in need. Two thousand on the waiting list for 4,800 homes rolls pretty quickly off the tongue, but I have had interaction with just one person whose rental price is going up so steeply. As a 67-year-old she is going through all the anxiety of not being able to stay in the private market. When one thinks of 2,000 people you are reminded of the motivation that we as a government need. We need to be doers. We have the right attitude. We do not have all the resources—we wish we had. We have to find new ways. We have to cut red tape which is exactly what these amendments are doing.

We have stock which is mismatched to the current need. It is a pretty simple exercise to realise that if you have 20 bedrooms but half of those are vacant, and if you have a national housing provider who has the financial capacity to demolish those homes and rebuild those bedrooms in different unit formats, you can accommodate many of those 2,000 individuals or small families on the waiting list. And this, of course, is the direction that we are going in. As a government that is extremely low on resources, we have to concentrate on innovation. I want to get some time to speak with the minister on innovation. We have to go to the marketplace. We have to keep our minds on the job. I believe, like many of us, that the best ways to provide housing are still to be found. Our ear must always be to the ground and our mind must always be looking for better, newer, more effective ways to multiply shelter and housing for those who desperately need it.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

 **Mr GRANT:** I continue to speak in support of the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Just before the break, I was speaking about innovation. In providing social housing, currently one of the challenges that we face is that programs of the last decade or so created what is colloquially known as a salt-and-pepper situation on the ground. You might have three, four or five homes that the state government owns and two or three that are privately owned et cetera. There is not a clean canvass right across that whole street where you can start from scratch. There is a whole world of innovation and design out there for us to enter into, as soon as we are ready to do that. We want to move into that space and we want to use every legislative change available to us to move forward into the new era of how we provide social housing.

Across the nation not-for-profit housing providers have stock and borrowing capacity that currently, and sadly, we as a state government do not have. We need to partner with them so that they can provide the finances required to build the new housing that is so desperately needed. I wish to comment on the complexity of providing social services to the tenants who live in social housing throughout the state. It is a time of change. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is getting on with its agenda of changing the funding models from funding groups to self-directed funding. At present, it is a moving feast and we have many things to juggle as we move forward with these reforms in the area of social housing through the amendments in this bill.

I will speak briefly of the auditor's report. Recently the auditor assessed the performance, over the past four or five years, of the program of addressing homelessness, where hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent. I found the auditor's report to be surprisingly frank and honest. It really shows the challenges that have existed and the challenges that still exist and are ahead of us. One thing that I marvel at with this program is that we have tended to ignore groups other than the state government that have capacity to help fight homelessness. We limit how much we can achieve by not

looking around the community and seeing how many people out there can help us, whether they are individuals or local governments. One of the easiest ways to help our money go an awful lot further is to simply require local governments to change their town plans so that local people, local builders, local firms and local families who are motivated to provide shelter for the homeless can have a fair go. We can simply require local governments to change their town plans so that a no-go zone, where currently they simply cannot provide shelter for the homeless, is changed to a zone where people can win an approval to build homes.

I will finish with a practical example. For years I worked in local government as a councillor. Parts of my division of the city had up to 70-plus per cent social housing. In the early days, pretty much the whole street would be social housing. I want to put minds at ease that, as we move forward under this new legislation and as we proceed with the Logan renewal project, we are not going to fill the streets 100 per cent with social housing. I use this very practical, very stark example. In the future, we might see that we will demolish 100 three-bedroom homes and, in an extreme case, rebuild 300 single-bedroom units, but they will not be all allocated to social housing. Those 300 units would be shared amongst social housing, affordable housing for rent or affordable housing for sale and housing for sale at market prices. That gives us an instrument whereby we can, in fact, moderate, adjust and defray the concentrations of social housing and seek to have a better spread and a better peer pressure situation. Instead of being two and three generations unemployed, folk will live beside people who are fully employed and, indeed, can encourage them to do the same. With that practical example I finish my speech in support of the bill. I thank the minister for the work that he is doing and commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (2.37 pm): I, too, support the bill. I believe this is template legislation. Appropriately, it is described as mirroring the legislation from other states. The former minister, the member for Moggill, did a first-class job in his fleeting time as a minister. He is a good man who took to the task as the professional that he is. He has delivered a fine piece of legislation that should stand the test of time.

The specifics of the legislation have been well covered in earlier speeches. Social housing or housing commission houses serve a great need in our society by delivering a roof over all manner of homes for many disadvantaged. The spread of those homes throughout our communities and across Queensland is wide and the types of housing very diverse. The core mission statement of this bill is to improve tenant outcomes and deliver equity for those tenants. The legislation appears to be focused on this as a deliverable in the sector, which is as it should be. Interestingly, all the Australian housing ministers have the same objective and maybe have gone further to support the growth and development of the not-for-profit housing sector.

Within the Queensland model I highlight the role of the regulated participation of not-for-profit housing providers, the reduction in red tape and the provision of a level playing field for those who want to enter new jurisdictions. I highlight the proposal of a whole new development by Consolidated Properties on the south side of Brisbane, which is a great template for the redevelopment of older properties with the integration of public and private properties and the services they need to make those communities succeed. That is a great template and it should be more widely available throughout the state. I would like to see more of it, particularly on the Gold Coast.

The bill also addresses the issues of protection of government investment, which is good. It provides tenants, especially vulnerable tenants, with the sort of protection they need and enhances the confidence of those potential investors to come into this new area, which they might not have done in the past. In my electorate of Gaven, we have many examples of successful models of public housing where harmony and the provision of acceptable homes with good access to services for the wider communities within the electorate are provided.

I thank Allan Finn and the staff of the regional office at Robina for their great assistance to myself, my staff and my medical colleagues throughout the 25 years that I have dealt with them as a GP on the coast. Most general practitioners have to deal with those departments on a regular basis. I have never ever had anything other than the most harmonious, rather than spirited, and fair discussions over that time. I thank them for that.

They have also shown great sympathy and foresight in equal measure to most people on the Gold Coast. I would imagine that in many areas throughout regional Queensland we would see the same sort of services. I know QBuild often gets a bad kick. I certainly know that the current member for Burnett, an ex-QBuild person, would endorse the fact that QBuild, particularly on the Gold Coast and throughout the regions, does a wonderful job in maintaining those homes—also those contracted

to QBuild. They look after the homes as if they are their own homes. I appreciate their good work. I know they go the extra mile. It is not appreciated as often as it should be. I would like to say that all staff need to have this communicated to them. This bill that is going forward makes sure that their positions are in some way protected. I know that there have been some comments made by the member for Bundamba and I take those on board, and I think so should the minister.

We have a variety of types of properties in my electorate from domestic residential housing to community over 50s housing. I know that in some parts of Brisbane that has not happened. It has certainly been happening on the coast for a long time. It is independent living accommodation mainly. In recent times we have also had the Gold Coast Housing Co. build six-storey, small-unit, studio, low-cost accommodation. That is a new type of development for us. It has certainly provided a lot of housing.

We also have had the YMCA provide a second major development within our area. It is a mixed use development. It is a public housing and private housing mix. It is working very well. Interestingly enough, they have a child-care facility in the bottom of one of those developments. These sorts of developments are wonderful for the future. I congratulate the YMCA for what they have done with regard to those sorts of developments, particularly in my electorate. For those people who are considering them I would ask that they be very reasonable to them.

I heard the statement by the member for Springwood before that there is actually a complement of 61,000 homes throughout the state. That is actually a very decent number when we think about it. I would say in Gaven that we have a proportionately higher number than elsewhere. Need has driven the provision of services, as it should. These are outcomes that work.

I agree with a lot of what the member for Springwood was saying, particularly with regard to local government and how we provide housing for the homeless and those who are having difficulty obtaining housing. It will make our lives a little bit better by integrating the services we provide for these people. If all that needs to be done is to try to simplify some of the red tape within councils or the actions that councils need to take with regard to planning initiatives then so be it, that is what we should do. We need to move on and do that. I would implore the minister to follow up on that matter.

It is a difficult area but it is important for all to understand that everyone wants to be in a home or a castle all their lives. When their children are gone, the husband is dead or gone or not there for any sort of reason—I know that there are a lot of split families these days—it is appropriate to say that we need to get them into more sensible accommodation for their needs not really our needs. As a doctor this is never easy, but it is great to see the government now understanding this dilemma.

I think the former minister, the current member for Moggill, managed this dilemma in the press very well. He clearly stated that there are times in one's life when one needs to live in more appropriate accommodation. It is timely that the government has done this. These initiatives are to be applauded. I thank him for his work on that. I thank the department for pursuing that as an objective.

Under these circumstances there will be greater availability of housing stock which will allow for people's and families' needs. It may be that we have a greater need to provide over 60s type accommodation or maybe even over-70s accommodation because we all live so long now.

In freeing up housing we will see some schools with greater numbers of enrolments where currently they have been in decline. That is to be applauded. For example, on the edge of my electorate Ashmore State School, which is in the Southport electorate, has this problem. There is a lot of public housing in the area. It is good to see that the department may be working towards addressing both those needs. The Nerang State School, which is in my electorate, has had the same problem. As we see the greater utilisation of housing that is more for families we will see other things within communities grow. Communities grow by small steps. These little steps lead to giant strides and community outcomes. This is true synergy in action.

This will be the legacy of the member for Moggill and former minister, Bruce Flegg. He can be proud of it. To give someone a home after giving them life is no greater gift.

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (2.44 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Being on the committee responsible for examining this bill, I will give the members present an overview of the benefits that this legislation will provide for those in the public housing sector in Queensland.

As we know, Queensland is a large and diverse state and Queensland's social housing providers are equally diverse, both in how they operate and the type of clients they house. There are a few larger providers that operate across the state, some regional providers and many small

providers delivering services within our local communities all over Queensland. The current system of managing community housing providers in Queensland takes a one-size-fits-all approach that does not reflect the diversity of our community housing sector and is no longer appropriate here in Queensland.

It is important for the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to be passed and for the national regulatory system for community housing to operate in Queensland. The national regulatory system for community housing creates three tiers of provider registration based on the scale and scope of providers' activities. This new approach to regulation creates a balance between the business of community housing and the level of regulation that funding bodies and investors need to have confidence in the industry.

Tier 1 providers will be the large development companies that undertake significant construction and renewal activities at scale. Tier 2 providers are large scale property and tenancy managers. While they may undertake some level of development and construction, this is at a much lower level than tier 1 providers. Tier 3 providers are smaller scale organisations that are managing smaller property portfolios.

While our local governments cannot register nationally they will still be registered under the Housing Act 2003 and regulated on a state basis. Since local governments have a range of obligations under other legislation, their housing activities will be regulated using a light touch approach. This system will provide real benefits to government, providers and the people who need housing in Queensland.

Community housing is just one of many government funded industries delivered across this nation. Others include aged care and child care. Unlike aged care and child care, we do not have a national industry for community housing providers. Our nation's largest providers are hampered by the existing insular state based registration systems. Any provider wanting to operate across jurisdictions needs to make multiple registration applications and adhere to the varied regulatory requirements of each jurisdiction. This red tape for these organisations is no longer acceptable.

Implementation of the NRSCH will eliminate barriers to operating across the state and will enable some of our larger providers to build a national presence. This will also have benefits for organisations operating in cross border areas. A national industry means providers operating in more than one state only apply for registration once. They only have to report to one registrar instead of reporting to someone different in each state. This is a real benefit for households in need. Organisations can focus on delivering services rather than on writing reports for government agencies. While there has been some focus on larger organisations and growth, our smaller providers are not lost in all of this. The tiered system proposed by the NRS recognises the value of smaller organisations and tailors registration and reporting obligations accordingly.

The bill introduces a red-tape reduction initiative for buildings relocated to a new site or where buildings are being demolished. Currently a new building approval is required where a building is being demolished or removed and the work takes longer than six months. This cost may be up to \$500 as well as the unnecessary paperwork and delay. This is an area in the bill that I found myself taking a keen interest in when reviewing the bill in the committee. That is the red tape and regulation around this industry that is taking a stranglehold on actually getting things done and delivering services to Queenslanders.

Feedback from industry and local governments has shown strong support for amending the Building Act 1975 to increase the time allowed to complete this type of building work and to give local governments the power to further extend that period. The amendments will extend the time to complete this type of work to 12 months. In addition, local government will be given the ability to extend this time by a further six months. The request must be made in writing to local government which will then consider how much work has been undertaken and the possible impacts on the community. Where a request for an extension is made, the amendments provide that the approval is extended until the local government has had time to consider the extension request. The amendments offer timely relief to Queenslanders who wish to relocate away from flood affected areas in the wake of recent and ongoing wet conditions.

An important part of this bill is the notifiable work plumbing approval scheme. Again, in my electorate I have sought advice from a lot of plumbers, a lot of builders and a lot of people who take an interest in the housing sector, and this has been one of the biggest issues that these people have raised—red tape and government regulation around how they do their business. That is why it is good to note that this bill also amends the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 to support the notifiable work scheme, which was introduced on 1 November last year.

This scheme is already slashing red tape by eliminating the need to obtain plumbing approval for routine plumbing work, and this is something that many plumbers throughout my electorate have approached me about and suggested has been one of the greatest things the Newman government has done since taking power. The scheme has replaced the previous compliance assessment system for much routine plumbing work. Instead of waiting for approval to begin work, a single form is lodged with the Plumbing Industry Council when work is complete, avoiding unnecessary costs and delays. As a result of these reforms, Queenslanders are currently saving up to 28 business days and around \$1,000 when they are getting routine plumbing work done, such as plumbing work for a home extension or renovation.

Effective audits by local government are an important part of the notifiable work scheme to ensure plumbing work is of an appropriate standard. Local governments need information collected by the Plumbing Industry Council, including contact details, to arrange audits. To remove any doubt, the amendments expressly provide that the Plumbing Industry Council is able to collect, store and disclose information obtained from notifiable work forms to local governments for the purpose of auditing the work. To support the scheme's operation, the amendments clarify that only one notice needs to be lodged for work that is completed as part of a single transaction. For example, all the plumbing work for a house renovation can be included on one notifiable work form. Again, builders and plumbers throughout my electorate have expressed that that has been a great red-tape reduction scheme for their business, being able to include all of their work on one form rather than submitting many, many government regulation forms to get the work done.

The amendments also clarify that a supervisor can lodge the notifiable work notice for work undertaken by one or more of their employees. Again, that is a very important part of this scheme. This reflects the fact that many employed plumbers are supervised and ensures that the supervisor can lodge forms for all of the work they are responsible for. Again, a lot of guys in the industry are working for plumbers as contractors. So where one person can fill out and submit one form, I think that will be of great benefit to Queenslanders and to the plumbing industry and the housing industry alike.

The amendments recognise that there will be occasions when notifiable work is undertaken under a compliance permit. To avoid a licensee having to apply for a permit and also having to lodge a notifiable work notice, the amendments clarify that any notifiable work covered by a plumbing permit is outside of the notifiable work scheme and as a result no notice is required to be lodged.

Under the current provisions of the Building Act 1975, a certificate of classification is required before any building other than a detached house, town house or a shed can be used. To ensure that these buildings are fit for use, the act also requires that a plumbing approval is obtained and provided before the certificate can be issued. Because plumbing approvals are no longer required where notifiable work is undertaken, it was necessary to amend the provision to allow the use of a building where a notifiable work is lodged. These changes will help to keep costs and delays to a minimum for consumers and for the industry, providing real savings that can be passed on to Queenslanders.

From what these plumbers and builders have said to me, one of the fundamental differences between this Newman government and what we have seen in the past is the cutting of red tape and allowing them to get on with what it is they do—that is, the mums and dads, the contractors, the plumbers working for a living to feed their families. They can do what they are good at—which is plumbing, building homes and building infrastructure for Queensland—rather than filling out government regulation forms and unnecessary red tape.

I will finish on this point. Housing is a very important issue for my electorate, and many people have heard me speak about it in this place before. I take my hat off and give credit to the current minister, who stepped into the housing portfolio, and to the former minister, the member for Moggill, who introduced this bill to the parliament. The Newman government inherited a problem in public housing where we saw 30,000 people on the waiting list to access public housing. Since then, it has been sobering to see that, through good management, through taking some initiatives, through being a good property manager if you like—using the words of the Labor Party—we have been able to

manoeuvre ourselves, without throwing too much extra money at the problem, to lower that waiting list to 25,000 people. So, politically, whichever way you look at it, there are 5,000 people who were on the waiting list who now have a roof over their head and have somewhere to live. Ideologically, you have to look at that and say that we have achieved quite a lot as the Newman government has been focusing on delivering a roof over their heads, delivering a home for people to live in and delivering the services that Queenslanders deserve in the housing sector. I urge all members to support this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algeria—LNP) (2.55 pm): I rise today to contribute to the discussion on the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As honourable members would know, I am passionate about public housing, so I am very excited about this bill and the opportunities it presents. We know that there are well over 25,000 people on the waiting list for public housing. This bill will enable the sector to take great leaps in gaining investment by significantly expanding the role for provision of housing assistance by registered not-for-profit and local government providers. This bill is part of what the minister referred to as 'potentially the biggest reform to the housing assistance system since the State Housing Commission was formed'.

The bill mirrors the provisions of a model national law made by the parliament of New South Wales. This is an example of cooperation between states. The national regulatory system for community housing does not refer any power to the Commonwealth. The more the Commonwealth butts out of state business the better. We have heard in recent days the Minister for Education call on the federal Labor government to stay out of education.

Again, through this bill, this government delivers on its promise to cut red tape. You may ask how? Providers of ancillary housing services, such as crisis accommodation and support services, under this bill will no longer be required to retain registration. So, on the commencement of the amended act, existing registrations will lapse, meaning that the number of prescribed requirements will be drastically reduced. Existing registered community housing providers and new entrants will need to apply for registration. Once this has been achieved, it will be up to them to continue to demonstrate that they are meeting the industry based performance outcomes which are contained in the national regulatory code.

I would now like to move on to another aspect of this bill which deals with the minor amendments to the Building Act 1975 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. These may be minor amendments but they have had a large, positive impact on the plumbing industry and consumers. I have many small plumbing businesses within my electorate and I have spoken at length to a number of plumbers about how these changes have impacted their business and, in the long term, their customers.

I had one gentleman tell me that he was able to save his customer well over \$500 on the plumbing work that he performed. This is what this government is all about—making it easier for business and saving consumers money. As I have mentioned, the changes to the above acts are a red-tape reduction initiative for relocatable buildings. They also address issues for licence renewals for building certifiers and pool safety inspectors and facilitate the introduction of the notifiable work scheme for plumbers, which I have mentioned before.

Compared with some of the other bills that the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee have investigated, this one is only small but it has large implications for the public housing sector. I am excited about the future and I am excited that, again, our government, an LNP government, is getting on with the job, the real job of putting a roof over Queenslanders' heads. I commend the former minister, the member for Moggill, and I commend the current minister, Minister Mander, on bringing this bill to the House. I commend them on the job that they did and are doing to house the most vulnerable in our society, picking up the pieces where Labor dropped them. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (2.59 pm): I rise to speak to the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and echo the words of previous speakers about the importance of housing for individuals and families. It establishes or re-establishes a dignity and respect for self when a family is confident that they are providing for their children and for themselves. I commend the former minister, Bruce Flegg, and the current minister, Tim Mander. This portfolio requires a particular compassion, and both of those gentlemen, I am pleased to say, have demonstrated that gift.

When Minister Flegg filled that portfolio, he visited Gladstone and outlined some innovative but very effective ways of increasing housing stock for our electorate, which constantly faces challenges in relation to access to affordable housing. Whilst the cost of housing has plateaued at the moment

with the construction industry that is occurring on LNG, the drop in rent has been minimal. It has been a small drop of about \$10 to \$20 a week but it still costs \$500 to \$600 a week for quite a modest dwelling, and it goes up from there. The demand on Queensland housing—the old housing commission houses—has not diminished and it will not diminish because of the projected industry that is coming on top of LNG in the very near future.

We have some wonderful organisations that manage affordable housing in the electorate. At the outset, I would like to commend Queensland Housing staff in Gladstone. I will not name names, simply because that would be inappropriate, but the ladies in my office and I find each and every one of those people amazing to work for. They do have a challenging role to play. They are mediators, they are arbitrators and they are at times deliverers of news that the applicants do not want to hear, and I believe they do an amazing job.

The Gladstone Regional Council has been the point of contact for housing assistance money that has been put up by the LNG industry. That has not covered everybody who has been in housing crisis but it has certainly helped some and has been welcome. The Aboriginal co-op assists people in the Aboriginal community. There are three other organisations—Roseberry Community Services, Anglicare and Endeavour—which provide emergency housing and affordable housing in the electorate. Each of those fill a slightly different niche but none are more important than the other. Then we have the Gladstone Affordable Housing Co., which is an adjunct of the Brisbane Housing Co. It is bringing in some innovative housing construction. The former minister sought opportunities to work in partnership with Gladstone Affordable Housing Co. to get housing stock in some of its development sites. When the new minister took over, I am sure it was like jumping into a pond of—I was going to say piranhas, but that is probably not a very good analogy. With so many demands on his time it was difficult to follow through, but I am sure the minister has now had feedback from the department on the initiatives that former minister Flegg discussed on his visit to Gladstone. I am looking forward to a visit from the current Minister for Housing to see what is available and the significant need.

The other group that provides housing for seniors is the senior citizens organisation, which manages the houses at Heritage Village. This housing stock commenced construction many years ago, but it provides a wonderful environment and a good standard of housing for people who are means tested but it is a lovely environment for people who live there. What we do not have at the moment and what I look forward to working with the government on—it is not just Housing but also Disability Services—is independent living for people with a disability, but there is a crossover in that responsibility. We are one of the regions on the eastern seaboard that is definitely not catered for in this area, and I certainly look forward to working with the minister in relation to the provision of those services.

This bill is intended to streamline the provision of affordable housing. As other speakers have said, the provision of housing is so important for families to feel safe and secure in the community. It will be important as this bill is implemented to ensure that there are no unforeseen negative consequences, and I am sure that Minister Mander will follow through and ensure that that does not occur.

The other issue that I wanted to speak about was the change to plumbing standards and the independent building approval processes. When independent certifying was introduced in Queensland under the former government, it was seen to be a way of streamlining building application approvals. There have been unforeseen negative consequences, and I draw the minister's attention to the fact that there are instances where approvals are given by an independent certifier that later on prove to be problematic. There have been instances where that certifier has either on-sold the business or gone out of business. In many instances it either leaves the local government responsible for oversight of the rectification or the homeowner vulnerable in terms of rectification. I have seen it happen in my electorate. There have been some pretty good barneys over independent certification that has not been kosher. I think there will have to be a watching brief to ensure that does not occur in the plumbing industry as well.

In closing, I commend the minister on these changes. Streamlining of housing approvals, streamlining of housing availability and availability of affordable housing are incredibly important in all of the electorates. I speak for the electorate of Gladstone where it is critical, because when we have an industrial boom the impact has always been significant and ongoing. I look forward to the implementation of this bill to provide greater opportunities for affordable housing to our community.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (3.06 pm): I am proud to rise today and contribute to the debate in support of the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I am sure that members on both sides of the House are aware that the existing methods of delivering social housing in Queensland are unsustainable. The Queensland government is therefore taking steps to ensure Queenslanders will continue to have a place to call home in times of hardship.

Before I continue, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and achievements of the former minister for public housing, Bruce Flegg, the honourable member for Moggill. While serving as housing minister, the honourable member initiated much needed and long overdue reform to the public housing sector. Since being elected, our government has made significant steps in addressing the shortfalls and irregularities within the housing sector. Along with this amendment bill, the work accomplished over the past months by our government has delivered better services and relieved the regulatory burden on Queenslanders when seeking much needed assistance in the housing sector. Many of the achievements were made possible because of the foresight, hard work and tireless effort of the honourable member.

I would also like to commend the work of the honourable member for Everton and Minister for Public Housing for continuing with such tenacity the work commenced by his predecessor. I believe wholeheartedly that the honourable minister will get our public housing sector back on track. As Michael Caton's character Dale Kerrigan said, 'A man's home is his castle.' I love that movie. It is one of my favourite Australian movies.

Mr Grimwade: The serenity!

Mr PUCCI: Yes, it reminds me of this place—oh, the serenity! Homes are where memories are made. Through good times and bad, a home is one place you can always feel safe. To own a home and call it yours is one of the greatest Australian dreams. However, sometimes that dream of homeownership is beyond our grasp. Sometimes we need a little boost. We need a helping hand. Public housing is an essential service that provides much needed relief and support to members of our community.

One of the first areas of the state we have turned our attention to is Logan, where the older three-bedroom style housing does not meet today's housing needs of vulnerable people. In response to both the mismatch between property and need in Logan and the lack of sustainability in the current system, the Queensland government has established the Logan Renewal Initiative. This will produce master planned renewal of housing in Logan which will revitalise state owned and managed social housing and increase the supply of new affordable homes for rent and for sale.

This proposal has the potential to become one of the largest public housing renewal projects in Australia. It will contribute to growth of the sector through transferring management of properties to non-government organisations or a consortium of organisations. The organisation of consortia selected to undertake the Logan initiative will be well placed to enter the national regulatory system part of the tender process. Applicants must be registered under the Housing Act 2003. With the bill including a provision that will require all funded providers to be registered, this stipulation will continue once the NRS has commenced.

This amendment bill will form a part of the nationwide drive by all housing departments, at both the state and federal level, where the not-for-profit housing sector in our great state will be replaced and succeeded by a nationally consistent regulatory approach. This amendment bill will enable the Queensland public housing sector to facilitate the implementation of the national regulatory system, or the NRS. This intergovernmental agreement has established a platform for improved outcomes for tenants, protecting government funding in social housing and enhancing the confidence of people, including investors and financiers, who have dealings with registered providers of community housing. We will also see an avenue for the regulated participation of for-profit community housing providers when delivering social housing. In enacting this bill, we will provide access for Queenslanders to safe, secure and appropriate housing and help build sustainable communities for years to come.

This legislative amendment will provide a level playing field for the community housing providers seeking to enter new participating jurisdictions. As an industry based regulatory approach, this national system does not refer any powers towards the Commonwealth. This bill, which endorses the NRS, will mirror the model national law provisions reflected in the Housing Act of 2009. Over time this amendment bill will enable Queensland to step out of the direct service delivery method and shift towards a purchasing—contracting—services platform from the registered community housing sector. As the sector develops and becomes established under the NRS, opportunities to expand supply through industry partnerships and funding from external sources will without a doubt take on greater

significance. This amendment bill will also provide assurance to government funding agencies, investors and other partners that the registered community housing sector is well managed, well governed, viable and delivering services that are responsive and accountable to their clients and the communities in which they operate.

The Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill provides the platform for the establishment of a community housing registrar separate from the minister and the chief executive. This appointment under the legislation will allow the decisions about registration of funding to remain independent. This is an approach that is based on treating providers as independent of social housing businesses and, therefore, accountable for their own activities and performance rather than the current practice of being focused on process prescription instead of outcomes.

Amendments to our Housing Act bring about the facilitation of a structural and functional separation of the roles regarding the regulation and program funding. This separation is reinforced by dealing separately with funding and regulatory matters. This bill is about providing for our communities. It is about reducing red tape and about delivering better services to the clients. It is about creating a more operationally effective department. Our government is committed to providing a better future for Queenslanders. We are delivering a better life for those who need a helping hand and need that second chance to get back on their feet. Public housing and our holistic approach to its delivery must always be seen as a support network rather than a lifestyle. With legislative changes like those we debate today, this philosophy towards delivering these services will always have a pragmatic and productive outcome. It will support our communities and encourage the opportunity to build a wholesome life that would otherwise be impeded by a bottleneck of regulatory measures. In our communities not everyone has the same opportunities and successes as others. Amendment bills like this one provide that the systems in place to help those in need are the best available and are free from unnecessary regulatory restraints.

It is well documented that housing is an issue in Logan City. Our government is taking the steps that the former government failed to take to ensure that the right practices are in place and that our communities get the services that have long been hampered by clog after clog in the bureaucratic network. Public consultation with community stakeholders, service providers and local council has supported the direction in which this amendment bill will take the management of Queensland public housing. I am pleased to hear that Logan City Council is one of the many public bodies supporting these legislative changes. If all levels of government continue to work together as a team, despite political motivation, we can all provide a better and brighter future for our communities.

Her Majesty's loyal opposition would like the public to think that they are the people's party, that they are the voice of the hard done by and the 'all Aussie battler' yet they have very little, if anything, to show for that self-proclaimed title. They have done more to impede the livelihoods, services and support agencies of our communities than any other government. The fact is that our government—this LNP government—as a team has done more for all Queenslanders in one year than those in opposition did in 20. The fact is that our great state is getting back on track and our communities will finally have a shot at achieving the many great opportunities our state has to offer. I proudly commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (3.15 pm): I rise today to speak very briefly in support of the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill is about bringing Queensland into line with the national regulatory system for community housing. It is no secret that community housing is in a mess. We have heard previously in this House of the appalling numbers with regard to those awaiting access to housing. We have all heard the horror stories about the impact this is having on people's lives. We also know that there is a large number of dwellings within the current housing stock that could benefit from long overdue maintenance. To put it simply, when it comes to housing, there simply is not enough. Our supply does not meet the demand and, as a result, Queenslanders are experiencing hardship.

There are many different ways or reasons why one may be in such circumstances and, indeed, I hear from people regularly expressing their concerns or frustrations borne of a genuine need for assistance and awaiting access to housing. More often than not it is a waiting period that has been some years and often with no end in sight. This government is seeking to address the issue. This government is manoeuvring to provide appropriate housing to those in need despite the significant financial difficulties we are faced with and we are doing it to give those people the kind of direction and certainty that they have been crying out for.

This amendment will strengthen the government's ability to deliver on key objectives underpinning the national regulatory system and to achieve more efficient and appropriate outcomes for community housing. This is about providing a consistent regulatory environment to support growth and develop not-for-profit community housing providers. It is about providing an avenue for regulated participation by for-profit community housing providers in the provision of social housing. The objectives of the national regulatory system seek to reduce the regulatory burden for community housing providers working across jurisdictions and to provide a level playing field for community housing providers seeking to enter new participating jurisdictions.

This amendment will afford us the ability and flexibility to be able to address housing concerns in Queensland and to improve access for Queenslanders to safe, secure and appropriate housing through a model that will take a more considered and integrated approach to building sustainable communities. I take on board what the member for Logan said previously. I would also commend Logan City Council for their involvement in the initiatives underway.

While it is true that a degree of flexibility will be required to address housing concerns, it is also important to ensure that an adequate level of accountability is in place to ensure that providers of community housing continue to achieve a high level of service delivery. I am pleased to see that the introduction of the scheme will also see the appointment of a registrar whose role it will be to make decisions on the registration of providers, to monitor the performance of providers and to take action in the event of noncompliance. As I mentioned previously, these amendments allow us to tackle the issues, to provide a clear direction for housing and to provide better access to safe and appropriate housing for those experiencing hardship despite the financial difficulties confronting this state. On that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. At the outset I commend the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the Hon. Tim Mander, for bringing this amendment bill to the House. I also acknowledge the work initially undertaken by the member for Moggill. I congratulate them both.

This amendment bill will make changes to the Housing Act 2003 which are desperately needed in this great state of Queensland. The first major change that this amendment bill will introduce is consistent regulation in the not-for-profit community housing sector. Supporting the amendments that this bill will make enables Queensland, along with other states and territories and the Commonwealth, to partake in a national regulatory system when it comes to providing community housing. This intergovernmental agreement means that Queensland will adopt a system that aligns with the national model law. What does this mean? It means consistency, which Queenslanders did not see much of until about a year ago. This government, in which I am proud to represent the good people of Chatsworth, is about delivering consistency for all Queenslanders.

What will this new national regulatory system bring for my constituents in Chatsworth who benefit from community housing? It brings regulation that is consistent in supporting growth and development for not-for-profit community housing organisations. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for regulated participation in providing social housing whilst reducing the red tape associated with community housing providers dealing across different states and levels of government. These are all things that the Newman government is committed to providing—making it easier to prosper, cutting the red tape and, most importantly, providing opportunity for all stakeholders. Unlike those seven ALP members sitting across the chamber—correction, make that two—we are making getting things done easier. We are ensuring that it is easier for community housing providers to seek new opportunities with other participating states and territories.

What will the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 mean for most tenants who utilise community housing? It will ensure tenants get results and provide protection for vulnerable tenants who use this vital service that we call community housing. The Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 provides a future and protection for current and potential stakeholders in the social and affordable housing sector. It will mean that confidence will be heightened for people who may look to invest in community housing providers. However, even though all of the things I have just mentioned are paramount in providing efficient and effective social housing, it further drives what the Housing Act 2003 was enacted for: improving accessibility for Queenslanders to safe, secure and needs-appropriate housing.

I support the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I am proud to stand here today and say why. With this national approach being taken, a register will be formulated that will become a national record of all social housing providers. Again that word 'consistency' comes to

mind. The Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will allow a chief executive to appoint a registrar who will make independent decisions on registration and performance and in some cases take action in relation to providers who are not complying with legislation. The appointment of a registrar will ensure Queenslanders will continue to be provided with safe and accessible housing when they need it most. It gives stakeholders who may consider investing in community housing confidence that it will be administered properly and consistently.

Hopefully now that I have mentioned that word 'consistently' a couple of times, the ALP might take a note of what they failed to do over the past 20 years, when they were in charge of Queensland housing. The Newman government is committed to ensuring that all Queenslanders are represented, especially the vulnerable who look to government to ensure they have access to housing that meets their needs. This national regulatory system will provide all stakeholders with a sense of confidence that good governance will prevail across-the-board when it comes to community housing. It is about delivering sustainability and a high standard of quality when it comes to building and maintaining community housing dwellings. Over the last two decades public money has been given out here, there and everywhere without any accountability or—let me say it again—consistency.

This bill will allow for a transition period. There will be time allowed for existing providers to make an application for national registration to ensure that funding that is allowed under the Housing Act 2003 will continue. However, funding arrangements will not continue if providers are not proactive in obtaining national registration.

Unlike the ALP, we have a plan for the future of community housing—to ensure that not-for-profit providers are able to get their job done with direction and clear guidance. In the past 20 years these organisations have been just given a pot of money without any guidelines about the best way to spend this money and to ensure the best interests of Queenslanders are met. I have a very good suggestion to make to the member for Bundamba: with the CD she may want to take a remedial economics course, because the legacy of the previous government on this particular issue is absolutely disgraceful and diabolical. Any reference to the 30,000 people on the waiting list is all anyone needs to have their attention drawn to.

I am proud to be a part of a government that is looking to the future—setting out a very clear direction, especially in the not-for-profit housing sector. That is why I stand here in the House proud to support the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I thoroughly commend this bill to the House.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (3.25 pm): I am delighted to be able to stand and say a few words in relation to this very, very important bill that I feel very honoured to have had some involvement with at an earlier stage. This bill is about facilitating community housing organisations within this state and facilitating their increase in participation in public and community housing in a very big way. This is a very major change.

I note at the outset that almost any time we talk about a non-government sector taking over—whether you call it contracting out or whatever else—those opposite like to jump up and down and scream about it. It has always struck me that in this particular sector, somehow or other, we do manage to achieve some bipartisan consensus that, going forward, more and more of the public and social housing stock of this state will be managed in the non-government sector. If anybody has a look at it they will see what our community has gained from that—in particular those in our community who are unable to provide for their own housing needs.

In relation to the national uniform system for community housing organisations I draw the attention of the House to three particular things. The first is a significant amount of red-tape reduction for community housing organisations, particularly those, as will be the case increasingly, who work in more than one state. This bill is aimed fairly and squarely at bringing the larger interstate providers who currently do not operate in Queensland into Queensland to help us with the expansion of this sector.

A not insignificant aspect of the bill is the fact that the constraining factor for community housing organisations is finance. I say that again because it is a very important thing for people to understand. The constraining factor on the expansion of the role of community housing providers is finance. It was made abundantly clear to us in consideration of these measures that banks, who increasingly are involved in funding community housing providers, wanted this sort of regulatory environment and without it they were very reluctant to support the providers that operated in Queensland.

In the short time that I was responsible for housing I had what I regard as the great privilege to work with the community housing organisations that are active within this state. They are very, very impressive people—not just in their ability to build, deliver and manage property but also for the fact that they care about getting outcomes for vulnerable people, because at the end of the day that is what community housing and public housing are about. As every politician knows, it is always dangerous to mention people because you tend to offend the ones you have not had time to mention, but I am going to mention a number of community housing organisations because I am so impressed with how much they care for the people they are providing housing for and with the professionalism they display.

Churches of Christ Care, which I had a lot to do with, has a number of projects. Its project at Mitchelton is a model. Society and our needs are changing rapidly. About 13 per cent of the population is aged 65 or over. That will rise to almost a quarter.

A very significant part of that will be dealing with dementia. Thousands and thousands and thousands of ageing Queenslanders are going to have to be housed in a manner that will allow them to be supported with their dementia, and Churches of Christ Care developed the model at its Mitchelton facility. If anyone interested in the subject is not familiar with that model, I encourage them to become familiar with it, because we are not just putting roofs over people's heads anymore; we are catering for a whole raft of physical, intellectual and mental health issues of the people we need to house, whether it is a physical disability, whether it is people with a mental health issue, who are increasingly housed out in the community, or whether it is an intellectual issue like dementia. Churches of Christ Care in conjunction with others is interested in a development in Hervey Bay, another one on the south side of Brisbane and another one on the Gold Coast. We should be bending over backwards to ensure that it has support and resources.

Mr Grimwade interjected.

Dr FLEGG: There is a lot of work going on in Morayfield, but it is not my place to say that. Another agency that does not operate in the community housing sphere in Queensland but I believe will and I sincerely hope will is Mission Australia, one of the largest providers Australia-wide but hitherto not operating in this state in the area of community housing. Its professionalism in the other states is something that Queensland could reap rich rewards from. There are a couple of big home-grown community housing providers such as the Brisbane Housing Co. with David Cant and Professor McAuliffe, who have done a magnificent job growing the Brisbane Housing Co. as a social and community housing provider from scratch—from nothing—to housing thousands in dwellings. With the right sort of support, it will go on to be many times bigger than it is today. The same applies to the Horizon Housing Co. which had its origins on the Gold Coast and is almost as big, having grown from nothing. Similarly, I was particularly impressed with Anglicare which is interested in further work, particularly in the Taigum area and again dealing with the specialised needs of people. 4walls, which is a Brisbane based organisation, is also professional. One thing I noticed with 4walls, probably the last one that I got the opportunity to meet, was that those who work there are just quiet achievers. They get out there and they do the job. They know the people whom it is their role to help, and they get on with it and they are very impressive. We also should not forget the number of Indigenous housing organisations. We know that there were problems with some. There was a bailout of a number, but we need that Indigenous input into the housing of Indigenous people in the general community because they frequently have specialised housing needs.

When the LNP came to office, the state of public housing in Queensland was appalling. I famously told the story of a staff member in this parliament who put his family's name down for public housing when one of his children was two and who eventually got a letter to ask if he still wanted to be on the waiting list when that child had left school, and that is the fate of anybody who is in the lower categories of need. They will never, ever get to the top. Not only were there 30,000 families waiting; there was massive underoccupancy, and this meant that the Housing portfolio was being run at a loss. It was losing money. The result of that was that when houses were sold that money paid for the losses because of the mismanagement of the portfolio and we housed fewer people. Vulnerable people were left unhoused because of it. When I sent out a survey we found thousands—not hundreds but thousands—of people living in Queensland government public housing not paying a cent of rent, many of them in the workforce. To the credit of people living in public housing, a large number came forward and took advantage of an amnesty we gave them and agreed to pay rent going forward. We also looked at some controversial issues like selling some assets—the old QBuild site in

Cribb Street in Brisbane—and diverting that money, not to consolidated revenue but to strengthen the balance sheet of community housing companies so that we could magnify the amount of product we were able to help people with. This is all about helping vulnerable people not only to get a roof over their head but also in a setting where their particular needs, whether that be physical disability, dementia or other, can be appropriately met. This bill is a big step forward in reaching that goal.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.35 pm): I rise to support the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which aims to help establish a consistent regulatory environment to support the growth and development of the not-for-profit community housing sector. In my role as Assistant Minister for Regulatory Reform, it is important to note that this bill goes a long way towards the Newman government's plan to reduce red tape and regulation. Community housing providers are stuck with excessive red tape. The implementation of the national regulatory system for community housing will provide relief and a reduction of red tape and will build a national presence in this space. Of most importance are the problems relating to cross-border operations for those larger organisations that are stuck with the various regulatory requirements of all of the different jurisdictions. Therefore, this bill will allow these companies to focus on increased delivery and service and reduce the onerous administration and red tape that they face. The national approach also means that providers can be confident that regulatory decisions are consistent across the borders and the states and that the registrars are accountable to the public and to the industry more broadly. There is more transparency in this new approach and an open and accountable government is one of this government's key policy positions.

Queensland's largest providers will see the benefits of operating within a national industry framework that supports them to expand their existing boundaries, providing increased access for private finance and reduced compliance costs for cross-border providers. Smaller providers have not been forgotten in the reduction of red tape for their business. They will have increased visibility and enhanced reputation for the sector. In particular, organisations funded under the act that only deliver ancillary services such as crisis accommodation will no longer need to obtain registration. I understand that about 100 community organisations that are currently registered under the Housing Act 2003 will no longer be required to register and that approximately 220 organisations that will be part of the NRS will have the number of regulations applying to them reduced by half. This goes a long way towards reducing red tape and regulation as promised.

In relation to the reduction of red tape and regulation, I want to touch on how this bill provides for amendments to the Building Act 1975 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002. This goes a long way towards not only saving money for small businesses and all businesses but is a red-tape reduction initiative that relates to relocatable buildings. It addresses the issues within licensing renewals for building certifiers and pool safety inspectors. It also facilitates the introduction of a modifiable work scheme which will simplify the approval process for most plumbing workers. To give a practical example, it extends the time frame for workers who are involved in the demolition and removal and rebuilding of these buildings. It will save these people some \$500 by extending the time period from six to 12 months and after that they can then apply for a further six-month extension. In the past they would have had to pay a \$500 fee. That has now been wiped if they do it within that time frame. There is also a saving for businesses seeking plumbing approvals for routine work. In the past, that would have cost \$1,000 and a wait of up to 28 days for those approvals.

This bill goes a long way towards achieving the Newman government's plan to reduce regulation and to deliver on its promise to cut onerous red tape by 20 per cent. This bill is all about changing the culture of government—from one that promotes red tape to one that actively reduces it. Under the previous Labor government, red tape was allowed to grow, stifling all sorts of businesses—not just small businesses but large businesses as well. It also stifled business development and investment.

Not-for-profits in the community have long been calling on governments to improve the processes and to reduce the stock of existing regulation. The Newman government has already implemented or is currently implementing more than 300 individual red-tape reduction initiatives across government. This bill is another bill that has been put before this House that will go towards reducing red tape and regulation. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.40 pm), in reply: I would like to thank the honourable members for their contribution to the debate on the Housing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I will now address some of the comments made by members. I thank the member for Bundamba for her strong support of the bill and her recognition of its value to

the social housing system. I thank her for her entertaining presentation, as it always is. However, I think it is a bit rich for the member for Bundamba to accuse the government of putting fear into social housing tenants given that she has spent the past six months trying to convince them that they are about to be made homeless. I also remind the member that the three government owned caravan parks are not public housing, which is why they are being sold to not-for-profits, and that we will build more social housing from the profits of those sales.

I agree with the assessment of the member for Bundamba of the staff at the housing service centres. Over the past four months I have had the pleasure to visit many of these centres and I am constantly impressed by the passion and compassion of Housing staff for the people whom they are dealing with and the work that they do. We need to remember that in the future, no matter who is providing the service—whether that be the state or the community housing sector—these services will be required and people will be looked after.

I also note the support of the bill by the member for Warrego. I thank him for his understanding of the positive changes that this bill will bring to the social housing system in Queensland. The member for Springwood has a strong passion for housing. It is inspiring to work with him on the Logan Renewal Initiative as well. I thank him for his tireless work and the contribution that he made today in the debate on this bill.

I note the recognition by the member for Gaven of the need to have appropriate wraparound services to support social housing tenants. Too often people with high needs find themselves in accommodation that does not lend itself to the type of support services that they need. One of the key benefits of engaging the expertise of the community housing sector is the added emphasis on wraparound services.

I was delighted to hear the contribution to this debate of the member for Moggill and former minister. At this stage it is very appropriate to acknowledge the contribution that he made to this portfolio. He introduced this bill. He is the brains behind this bill. I acknowledge that and thank him for the contribution that he made. People in this sector continue to make reference to the fantastic relationship they had with the member and the contribution that he made. So I thank him for that and 'hear, hear' to him.

I thank the member for Morayfield for his well-considered contribution to the debate. I note his comments about the need to remove the jurisdictional barriers that impede the growth of the community housing sector. It is great to see his passion as well for social housing. The member for Algester in his contribution to the debate focused on notifiable works making it easier for business and cutting red tape. I thank the member for that acknowledgement. As he noted, this bill is about government getting out of the way of private enterprise.

I note in particular the comments by the member for Gladstone about the housing situation in her electorate and the high rents that are faced by her local residents. She is a tireless advocate for her community and I look forward to working with her to address those issues. The member also made reference to the outstanding work that is done by Housing staff in her local area. As I have mentioned already, they do an incredibly tough job and I am proud to be associated with them. I thank the member for her comments about the changes to the Building Act and note the concerns that she has raised in relation to the role of building certifiers. Her comments highlight the crucial role that building certifiers play to ensure that buildings meet the requirements of the National Construction Code and the Queensland Development Code. I am happy to take the member's concerns on board and note that these issues will be considered as part of the review of the Building Services Authority, which is currently underway.

I thank the member for Logan for his contribution to this debate and in particular for his interest in the Logan Renewal Initiative. He is a great advocate for his community and he fully understands the need to tackle these issues caused by the failure of the last government. I thank the member for Waterford for the interest that he showed in his contribution to the debate. I particularly note his recognition of the need for clarity of purpose. I thank him again for his contribution. The member for Chatsworth, who is always an enthusiastic contributor to parliamentary debates, noted correctly that the Newman government will deliver results that will provide safe and secure housing that is needs appropriate. I thank the member for Nanango for her contribution and her support of this bill.

Finally, I would also like to thank all the members of this House who have indicated their support for the technical amendments to the Building Act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act. In particular, I would like to make special mention of the member for Warrego for his work as chair of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee. Committees play an important role which can

be overlooked from time to time. I thank him for his great leadership. Once again, I would like to put on record my appreciation to the member for Moggill for his work on this legislation. I am delighted that he is here this afternoon to contribute to this debate.

As I said earlier, this is vital reform. If we are to provide a home for tens of thousands of people, who in some cases do not know where they are going to sleep tonight, something needs to change. This bill is the necessary first step to bring about that change. We are building a modern, flexible, supportive public housing system that better meets the needs of our tenants. Finally, I would like to thank the departmental staff who have worked hard over an extended period in putting this legislation together. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 94, as read, agreed to.

Schedule , as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.48 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.49 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 13 November 2012 (see p. 2489)

Second Reading

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (3.49 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012 and the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995. This bill was referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee on 13 November last year for the committee's consideration. I thank the committee members for their constructive comments and recommendations on the bill and note in particular that the committee has recommended that the bill be passed. The committee tabled its report on 25 February this year, putting forward four recommendations and two points for clarification. The department has provided a response to these items and I table the government's response to the report.

Tabled paper: Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 17—Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, government response [[2163](#)].

I will move the two recommended amendments during consideration in detail of the bill and will also move further amendments that have been identified by my department. One recommendation made by the committee was that clause 28 should be amended to include 'on or before'. I understand this was a particular recommendation put forward by the chair, the member for Lockyer, and I understand that this will make this provision consistent with the act as a whole. This is a reasonable recommendation and I will move that amendment be made to ensure a waste disposal site operator is able to provide a data report on or before the due date not just before the due date. My department will continue to consult with waste disposal site operators in relation to the due date for the data reporting period which will be prescribed by regulation.

This bill forms part of the Newman government's election commitment to repeal the waste levy and cut the cost of living for Queenslanders. It also helps meet the government's commitment of reducing the regulatory burden and bringing Queensland's economy back on track. In 2012 the government commenced the levy repeal process by amending the Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011. This amendment established a nil levy rate for all waste and came into effect on 1 July last year. The amendments in the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 currently before us now complete the repeal of that levy. The amendments do so by removing the head of power for the waste levy and the now redundant references to the waste levy from the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011. This includes the provisions in relation to the calculation, verification and remittance of the waste levy, levy exemption processes and volumetric survey requirements.

The bill provides for transitional provisions to enable levy related enforcement action. The transitional provisions will allow the government to pursue compliance action if necessary for offences under the repealed provisions such as levy evasion and failure to keep the relevant documents. I do not, however, anticipate that this action will be necessary based on the very high level of compliance to date, but the provisions are there as a safeguard.

The amendments also change the weighbridges requirement for waste disposal sites. This bill removes the requirement for smaller waste disposal sites, those sites disposing of between 5,000 and 10,000 tonnes in a year, to install a weighbridge, removing an unfunded impact on small sites. Additionally, the time period for installing a weighbridge at sites of greater than 10,000 tonnes has been extended. This provides added flexibility for the remaining 10 sites that have not completed installation of their weighbridges.

Additionally, data reporting processes are being simplified under this bill. The frequency that waste disposal facilities will be required to submit data will be determined by regulation. This was previously monthly for sites that were required to pay the levy. I must, however, emphasise that the government believes that robust data is essential to underpin policy development and support business opportunities in the waste industry and to allow for good local and regional planning. As part of the development of the new industry led waste strategy, a data and reporting working group has been established to look at our data collection needs. The government believes that it must lead by example and that is why the requirement for state and local governments to prepare a strategic waste reduction and recycling plan has been retained. However, the requirement for government owned corporations to prepare plans has been removed to align those requirements with other corporate entities.

Amendments have been made to extend the time, through regulation, by when these plans are required as they need to reflect the government's waste strategy. As the strategy developed by the previous government was based on the levy, it is appropriate to delay the requirements for a new strategy. The government is committed in its endeavours to help businesses adopt more sustainable practices to reduce waste costs, improve competitiveness and to adapt to changing conditions and that is why we are working with industry to develop a new industry led waste strategy for Queensland. I am pleased to report to the House the waste industry has been assisting the government to identify the priorities, challenges and opportunities that exist for reforming waste management in this state. To date I have held three ministerial forums with a number of key players, including all four pillars of resources, agriculture, construction and tourism, as well as commerce and industry, academia, waste and resource recovery, environment, community and local government sectors. The new strategy will deliver what the waste sector needs without compromising environmental protection. The department will take on a facilitation role in the development of this new waste strategy for Queensland, forming partnerships, agreements and seeking outcomes. A discussion paper about the new strategy will be released for public comment in the second half of this year. Through reviewing the existing policy settings relating to waste management we can provide other more sophisticated policy incentives that

will encourage business to recover materials and not dispose of waste to landfill. By removing green tape, streamlining processes and barriers for business and reviewing the policy settings around recovery, treatment and disposal we can provide more indirect incentives for business to divert material from landfill and recover useful resources. All this can be done without an industry waste levy—a tax on business.

In addition to amending the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011, this bill amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to remove the definition of a leviable waste disposal site from the waste definition. The bill also amends the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012 to ensure there is clarity and consistency between the acts. Additional provisions to this act allow operators to suspend operations where it is no longer viable for them in the short term, which is particularly relevant to the intensive agriculture sector. This ensures operators can avoid those periods of financial hardship and maintain viable economic growth.

Amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 allow for the creation of self-assessable codes under the integrated development assessment system under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. Low risk development will be able to proceed according to standard criteria and environmental protection will be maintained through the standard conditions under the self-assessable code.

The Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee has commended this bill to the House with only minor amendments. It takes another step towards the government achieving its commitment of reducing red tape, of reducing the regulatory burden and of supporting economic growth. The repeal of the waste levy will encourage business growth by reducing the cost for Queenslanders to do business. This bill retains strong environmental protection while also encouraging economic growth in Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.



Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I assume that no-one in this chamber would be surprised to learn that the opposition will not be supporting this bill.

Government members: Oh!

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order!

Ms TRAD: I can see that the games have commenced, indeed, by the Attorney-General himself. In large part this bill is a legislative formality, the central purpose of which is to abolish the Queensland waste levy, as the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection has detailed. When the Newman government effectively ended the waste levy by regulation in July last year, I moved a disallowance motion. Labor's position has not changed since that time. I will get to the waste levy in a minute, but first I will deal with the few elements of this bill that would receive in-principle support from the opposition if it were not for the fact that they have been embedded in this bill, which finalises the abolition of the Queensland waste levy.

In addition to removing the waste levy itself, the bill also removes the weighbridge requirements for smaller waste disposal sites and extends the installation time frame for large sites. It moves provisions identifying waste disposal sites required to report data into a regulation to enable flexible arrangements to be developed in consultation with the waste industry. It extends the time frame by which local governments and state entities are required to prepare and report on waste reduction and recycling plans to allow the plans to be revised in the context of a review of the state's waste strategy. It also amends the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 to allow the creation and use of self-assessable codes for the purposes of the integrated development assessment system, and other minor amendments.

In relation to the Coastal Protection and Management Act amendments, the opposition does not object to these amendments, per se. They are broadly sensible, especially insofar as they remove a number of minor infrastructure works from the necessity to receive a permit. It is sensible that the Department of Transport and Main Roads will be able to self-assess maintenance work on boat ramps, jetties and the like, rather than submit an application for assessment through to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. Given the reduction in the number of public servants in the department, that would be commensurate with the fact that there is a lower ability to

perform those functions. I also accept the minister's explanation that the changes to the definition of 'tidal works' are designed to clarify what triggers assessments. While we oppose this bill outright due to the fact that it completely abolishes the waste levy, we would be happy to support these amendments if they were presented separately.

I accept that there is a need to extend the time frame for local governments and state entities to prepare waste reduction and recycling plans. This necessity, however, has only come about because of this government's bungling approach to waste management. The truth is that the minister did not need to undertake a wholesale review of the previous government's waste management strategy. He could have easily accepted it and given certainty to the waste industry and local governments. Instead of reusing key elements of Labor's waste management strategy, this minister is wasting more taxpayer funds and time in developing a strategy that he can call his own. Inevitably, the next waste strategy will say the same thing as the previous waste strategy. While I deplore the fact that this minister has placed proper waste management at the bottom of his to-do list, I do not want to punish local councils for his lack of urgency or attention.

In relation to data collection, the one segment of the bill that I and the Labor Party support wholeheartedly is the continued data collection program. I believe that public policy must be based on evidence based research and the rigorous collection of data. That is why Labor established and funded this particular data collection program when in government. This is an essential component of informed waste management strategies into the future. Essentially, the minister is tinkering around the edges of the program established by Labor, for example, by allowing the frequency of reporting to be set by regulation, which I have no objection to. But ultimately this government will do what is in its best interests, regardless of what the data or evidence suggests.

The bill also amends the legislative requirements for the installation of weighbridges at waste disposal sites. I accept there is a need to push back the deadline, primarily due to the minister's decision to axe the waste levy. However, I do not accept the justification behind removing the requirement for sites disposing of between 5,000 and 10,000 tonnes of waste to install a waste levy. I acknowledge this is a significant cost to waste disposal site operators, many of them local councils, which is why the previous government had a grants program to at least partly fund the installation of weighbridges for enduring infrastructure that would assist with waste management into the future. Unfortunately, due to the government's decision to abolish the waste levy, they no longer have the money that Labor earmarked for those grants.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I appeal to you. The member for Stretton is talking incessantly and I cannot read my speech. I ask you to ask her to refrain from speaking while I am delivering my speech.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Thank you, member for Stretton.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Weighbridges help the data collection effort and, therefore, when fewer sites have weighbridges the data collection effort will be weakened. In relation to the waste levy repeal, which is at the heart of our objection to this bill, in July last year the Newman government introduced a regulation to lower the waste levy to zero dollars, effectively rendering it useless. At the time, I introduced a disallowance motion calling the regulation unthinking, which is exactly how I would describe the piece of legislation before us today. By and large, it is unthinking. In fact, the arguments against the repeal of the waste levy remain the same and, in the spirit of recycling and re-using, I will reiterate in large part for the benefit of the House the speech I gave on the disallowance motion last year.

It is inconceivable that in the 21st century a government would seek to repeal a waste levy and bring Queensland out of step with the rest of Australia, particularly when we look at the outcome that effective waste management strategies and a price signal have had on modern civilisation: from proper sewerage systems that have led to improved public health and better urban—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your protection against such juvenile attacks.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms TRAD: I repeat, 'attacks'—from proper sewerage systems that have led to improved public health and better urban environments, which are the cornerstone of a modern society, to council rates levied to ensure the proper processing of domestic waste, the collection of public waste and the cleaning of our streets. Dumping rubbish without a care or concern about who will deal with it, when and how is thinking that belongs in another century from people who do not care about this century or the next. The introduction of a waste levy was a move designed to bring Queensland into the 21st century.

In June 2010, the member for Noosa and then opposition spokesperson, Glen Elmes, stood in this House and said—

Queensland is the last state in Australia to introduce such a levy. On World Environment Day, the Premier, the Treasurer and the then acting minister jointly confessed that Queensland's waste management industry would finally be dragged into the 21st century ... This certainly is a win for the recycling industry, with a promised 7,000 jobs and an expanded industry, and it is a win for the environment if it reduces landfill by a third as projected.

With such a considered view I look forward to the member for Noosa following through on his convictions by joining us on this side of the House today to vote against the bill.

As members would know, the previous Labor government unveiled plans to introduce a waste levy as part of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy 2010 to 2020. The Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 outlines the waste levy charges that were introduced in December 2011. This levy originally added \$35 per tonne to general waste, \$50 per tonne for low-hazard waste and \$150 per tonne for high-hazard waste. Despite what those opposite claim, the levy never applied to domestic or household waste. It was a charge on industry and it was, therefore, avoidable if businesses acted in the best interests to reduce their landfill disposal.

The introduction of the waste levy is good Labor policy. It is progressive; it is necessary. The waste levy was built from years of careful consideration and consultation. In the process of developing the legislation, Labor sought to bring people together: councils, businesses, environmentalists and academics. The waste levy is an example of what Labor does best: it delivers for future generations. Indeed, Labor continues to have its eyes firmly set on the future; a future where sustainable business practices are rewarded and our dependence on landfill is reduced; a future where Queensland is the number one state in the country for recycling and re-using.

In comparison, if this bill passes today Queensland will not be looking at a sustainable future but at a future where our children and our grandchildren are forced to clean up an enormous and avoidable mess. Indeed, when our children and grandchildren, when future generations deal with the dilemma of our waste legacy, they will not have to look far to identify when and why we the state's law-makers got it so wrong. That this government of so-called can-do rhetoric walked away from this public policy dilemma because they could only appeal to base political opportunism. They need only look to the current Premier and environment minister to identify the source of such a disgraceful inheritance. But this bill is not just an environmental step backwards; this is a gigantic economic leap backwards.

Waste management is an industry where Queensland has previously missed out on new job opportunities. In Victoria there are more than 13,000 green jobs associated with waste management. Queensland only has 5,000 equivalent jobs. But those opposite have no regard for long-term secure jobs for Queenslanders. They have shown that over their entire first year in office. I believe that it will be only a mere taste of what is yet to come. They fail to show any ability to think far ahead. Instead the LNP are today pushing a short-sighted decision through the parliament without consideration and based on politics not policy.

Queensland faces a significant challenge when it comes to dealing with our waste. These challenges require long-term solutions. Queensland generates more than 32 million tonnes of waste every year. That is enough to fill 16 Suncorp Stadiums to the roof. On top of that, Queensland recycles only a third of its waste, making us one of the worst states for recycling. This is not only embarrassing but also unsustainable. As our population continues to expand so does our landfill, and it is costing Queenslanders money.

Councils are reporting that waste management is becoming an ever-growing burden on their local budgets. In 2010 Local Government Association of Queensland spokesman Greg Hoffman highlighted the need for urgent action when he said—

Costs are growing, landfill is getting harder to find, business and industry need to recycle more, so to do nothing is not financially or environmentally sustainable.

While Labor's waste levy could have cut landfill by 33 per cent, the LNP is choosing to do nothing. Queensland is the only mainland state without a waste levy and it has some strategy off in the never-never. We are the only state in mainland Australia not to have a waste levy. Every other state recognises that landfill should not be the first and easiest option.

Even conservative state government understands that we must provide an incentive to recycle not only for our environment but for our budgets too. Indeed, not only are the Liberal-National governments retaining their states' waste levies, many of them are actually increasing the levy rate. For example, in New South Wales the levy rose by more than \$40 a tonne to \$95 this financial year.

As the only state without a waste levy, the Newman government is sending an open invitation to interstate businesses to dump their waste in our backyards. I said that in July and since then we have seen reports of more waste travelling across the border. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in December last year titled 'More Sydney trash to be dumped in Queensland' estimated that since the repeal of the waste levy a thousand tonnes of waste are now travelling across the border from New South Wales each week. I take this opportunity to quote from that article. It states—

The top end of town is now talking of establishing transfer stations to send waste north."

Geoff Gerard, business development manager at waste processor Sita Australia, said: "Queensland is now the dumping ground for NSW waste."

Not only general waste is being put on the road, but a rising volume of contaminated waste is also being shipped north, including an estimated 3,000 tonnes of waste from Barangaroo, the redevelopment site on the western side of Sydney's central business district.

"The Queensland government's move has had the perverse effect of it receiving contaminated waste from NSW," the Total Environment Centre's Jeff Angel said of the changing dynamics.

Further, the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection's conservative counterpart Ms Robyn Parker, the environment minister in New South Wales, said—

The Government has been looking closely at this specific issue of waste going over the border to Queensland and is working with the EPA on potential solutions ...

So not only are they disincentivising the Queensland waste industry from recycling and effectively managing their waste but also those in other states as well. For the benefit of the House I table a copy of the article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, dated 9 December 2012, titled 'More Sydney trash to be dumped in Queensland' [2164].

But everybody knows this but the minister, however. His conservative counterparts from New South Wales have alerted him to it and have identified it as a problem. Experts in the waste industry—indeed experts who came along to the public hearing—alerted the committee to it and in turn the minister. The media have of late detailed the issue of interstate rubbish dumping in Queensland on numerous occasions since the removal of the waste levy. Even the Gold Coast City Council in September 2011 advised the minister when he was opposition spokesperson that it was an issue. However, this minister is yet to be convinced, despite all the evidence that this is a problem. This position sounds very familiar. It is much like the minister's position on the cause of climate change. He is yet to be convinced.

The concept of a waste levy is nothing new. South Australia introduced a levy over a decade ago. Since that time it has had an incredible impact on the state's environment. South Australia's recycling rate is 70 per cent—that is among the world's best. In fact, South Australia continues to innovate and invest in sustainable practices with the goal of creating a zero waste state. That is vision.

The concept of a waste levy is not even a controversial or overly partisan one. On top of the Liberal-National governments I mentioned earlier, there have been other notable conservative supporters of a waste levy. Indeed, when the Premier was Brisbane City Council mayor he praised the government's initiative stating that reducing landfill was the biggest piece of unfinished business left for councils. The then Lord Mayor Newman went as far as to praise the work of former environment minister Kate Jones saying, 'I must say how impressed I am with Minister Jones's approach.' What a monumental backflip from the Premier. But then consistency Queenslanders are learning is not his strongest quality.

The Premier has turned his back on a practical and considered approach and has instead turned to one of slashing an effective program just because it is not one of his making. This approach leaves Queensland decades and decades behind the other states. It is an approach that will cut

funding to local councils and leave them struggling with the rampant spread of landfill and with the ballooning costs associated with waste disposal—an approach that shows no regard for Queensland's environment.

This is an unthinking approach, as I said earlier. It is a belligerent approach and it only serves to take Queensland back to the dark old days of environmental destruction where this LNP government wants it to be. I urge members to oppose the bill.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.17 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I thank the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, the Hon. Andrew Powell, for presenting this bill to the House. I would also like to thank my fellow members of the Agriculture, Resource and Environment Committee for giving the bill appropriate consideration and those stakeholders who contributed to the committee's proceedings. As usual, I would also like to thank the research team from our committee, led by Rob Hansen.

Before I go on, I note that the member for South Brisbane seemed to want to spend more time in this chamber today trying to sell something that we know is not wanted by the people of Queensland. She is trying to go back to the normal situation of scaremongering and talking doom and gloom. Despite what she says, those at the public hearing that I attended I do not believe were in favour of this tax.

I am proud that in passing this bill and its included amendments to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 we will be meeting another of the Newman government's election commitments. This government promised the people of Queensland that it would repeal the waste levy to ease the cost to business and reduce the overall cost of living.

From the outset, the waste levy designed by the previous government was flawed and created an impost on Queensland businesses. But what more could we expect from the previous Labor government—a slipshod piece of legislation that taxes small business unfairly to pander to the minority affiliates who could only come from the crumbling halls of the previous administration. Everyone was unhappy with the levy—the waste industry did not support it, local governments did not support it, and other businesses objected to the additional cost to their operations. This government listened to the people. It made a strong election commitment to repeal this levy, which it has done.

The repeal process was started back in 2012 by amending the Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011 to provide for a nil levy rate on all waste. This bill now finalises the repeal by removing the levy head of power and other provisions associated with the levy and by confirming the repeal of the levy was effective from 1 July 2012. This clears the way to examine the remainder of the legislation, to salvage what is still usable going forward.

Waste management is still an important issue for all Queenslanders. It is important to note that, while we have repealed those parts of the legislation that are most unfair to Queensland businesses, we remain committed to further restructuring of our waste management policies in such a way that they are both environmentally and economically viable.

The majority of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 remains untouched by the current amendments and provides the ongoing foundation for continuous improvement for waste management and resource recovery in Queensland. The majority of the provisions this bill repeals are located in chapter 3 of the act and relate to the calculation and remittance of the levy, processes for levy exemptions, payment instalment plans and future levy reviews. The waste fund that was established principally to receive levy revenue will also be removed once any outstanding levy payments have been accounted for. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will oversee the discharge of these funds.

There are also a number of transitional provisions associated with repealed offence provisions. This will ensure compliance action can be taken if necessary in relation to the provision of information and record keeping associated with levy payments during the operation of the levy. Overwhelmingly, the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee in their inquiry into this bill heard from stakeholders who have identified the flaws in the original legislation. They were calling for a new framework for waste management that is practical, workable and sustainable.

This government remains committed to legislative change that will safeguard our environmental future without alienating those service providers, both public and private, who have to work under the new system. This bill wipes the slate clean, enabling the government to build a new approach to waste management that ensures we maintain high environmental standards while ensuring steady growth of the Queensland economy.

I also congratulate the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection for putting this bill together, answering the comments and requests by our committee and providing expert advice. The committee was satisfied with the advice provided by the department in relation to the amendments. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.22 pm): I rise in the House to speak in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, and I am delighted to do so. The bill provides for finalising the repeal of the industry waste levy introduced by the previous Labor government and in the process delivers on the Newman government's commitment to reduce the cost of living for Queenslanders and the regulatory burden for businesses.

As the minister noted in his introductory speech, Labor's waste tax was another broken promise from a tired government that was desperate for Green preferences in the months before an election. And who springs to mind when we hear that sort of line reiterated here in the House this afternoon? I will tell you who comes to mind, Mr Deputy Speaker. The former member for Mount Coot-tha. Remember him? He is well known to people in the Whitsundays, a wonderful part of Queensland that I proudly represent. He was the boy wonder from Proserpine in the eyes of some. He was in it up to his eyeballs until he was blown out of the water into a waste land of his own on 24 March 2012.

Let's not kid ourselves: this tax hit Queensland businesses and household budgets at a time when they were already struggling. Many businesses in my own electorate, from Blacks Beach to Airlie Beach, come to mind. I can recall, pounding the pavement with the now Premier during my 57 weeks on the hustings, people in small business crying out for relief from regulatory burden. This was one of the first cabs off the rank. Many of those people are very much overjoyed, delighted, relieved, that it has now been consigned to the history books.

We should not forget also that this bill contains other important amendments. The bill includes amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 to create self-assessable codes for minor developments under the integrated development assessment system and an amendment to the definition of 'tidal works' to include the reclamation of land. I understand that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has conducted a review of referral triggers under the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009, including those that are related to the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995.

This review made a number of recommendations to cut back on the number of referrals to the state government for a planning decision. In particular, the review identified that a large number of low-risk activities were going through assessment. It was identified that self-assessable codes could be developed so that the activity could be undertaken without the need for a development permit. Under this process, the coastal environment will still be protected through the use of acceptable outcomes in the codes. And that is coming from someone who arguably has the best coastline in the whole state of Queensland, with due respect to other members!

Government members interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: I will take the interjections to some degree. The process for the development will be faster, streamlined and the costs to the applicant will be reduced. Additionally, state government officers will not be wasting their time assessing and approving low-risk activities.

The first code being developed is for works undertaken by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Examples of activities under the code include minor public marine development—for example, boat ramps, something that is pretty dear to my heart. We need more of them in our part of paradise, particularly at places like Cannonvale and in the Hideaway Bay and Dingo Beach areas in the Whitsundays. As the current wording of the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 does not include a head of power for self-assessable codes, this amendment provides this head of power.

Other changes include amending the definition of 'tidal works' to include the reclamation of land, as I said. This simple change allows two referral triggers to be merged into one and, in essence, simplifies the legislation. We promised to cut back on red tape. And guess what? The Newman government is delivering. These amendments will enable faster processing times and reduced costs to applicants, without causing any additional risk to the environment. In my part of the world, that is something that is very dear to the hearts of so many people.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee in relation to this piece of legislation—again, under the stewardship of our chairman, the member for Lockyer. I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for their input and those who have come before us in giving their take on this legislation as part of the process. It goes without saying that I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.28 pm): I rise to speak to the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. In relation to the removal of the waste levy, I think there are two sides to the argument. There are many local authorities that support the levy because it gives an incentive, if you like, for better recycling and limiting waste to landfill. I think there are some other ways of addressing that by incentivising recycling.

I acknowledge that the member for South Brisbane said that the Labor Party's waste levy did not attach to domestic waste, only to business and industrial waste. I remember at the time we debated this I expressed concern that the waste levy on industry was brought in after many of the industries in my electorate had costed their developments and, given the level of the levy, the cost to those industries would have been substantial, although I have to put on the record that I had a very short conversation with the mayor in the Gladstone electorate today and he indicated that they supported the levy simply because, as I said, it incentivised industry and business to better utilise waste or to recycle where at all possible. I think councils can do that by ensuring that there are opportunities for recycling at the landfill site, such as the old 'dump shop', as it was affectionately known. Whether it is for household waste or even industrial waste, it is a great place to purchase gardening items and similar things. You can build some pretty good things from items at the dump shop.

My support for the removal of the waste levy at this point—and it is circumstantial—is that many businesses not only in my electorate but across Queensland have faced substantial waste because of flooding. Some businesses in the Gympie area and in other parts of the state have faced inundation of their business premises three, four and five times in the last 12 to 18 months. Much of that stock has had to be dumped. If particle board or similar is used, it does not survive floodwater and, therefore, has to be dumped. Any fixtures and fittings in a shop that do not repel water or that in any way hold water have to be dumped because the stench is unacceptable. Whether a reprieve or a moratorium was made available in relation to the levy that was in place is a moot point. However, I think that is one good reason to consider this levy issue at this point. I do not think we should forget how much emotional damage has been done due to the frequency of inundation in the last little while. The shops in Gympie are looking at their third or fourth inundation.

Mr Gibson: Fourth in 12 months.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: They have had four inundations in 12 months; I thank the member for Gympie. For some of those people, this levy would have been the straw that broke the camel's back.

I also support the changes relating to requirements for weighbridges for waste disposal areas of between 5,000 and 10,000 kilograms. Those are quite small waste disposal sites. In my electorate they are mainly transfer stations and I would say they carry 90 per cent, if not higher, domestic waste. The bigger transfer stations and the central landfill in Gladstone would take the industrial waste. I think most industries would be conditioned to take their waste to the bigger landfill. So I support that provision. That is a huge impost. Where there is a weighbridge, it has to be manned or it is just an ornament, and that is not a practical outcome.

As a community, do we have to handle waste more logically? Yes. I notice the minister agreeing and I do not believe he would sit there as the Minister for Environment with any other attitude. We do have to recycle and reuse wherever possible. We have to look at things like packaging. When you buy something that is two inches by one inch, it will have six times that in cardboard wrapped around it to make it look pretty. Then you receive a bag that is two foot square to carry it out of the shop. All that packaging is thrown away and you are left with this tiny thing the size of a bar of soap. We really have to look at packaging and the psychology that says that, if an item is packed in a pretty box that we are going to throw away anyway, somehow it is of greater value. We do have to look at those fundamentals.

This debate today may be addressing the issue of the LNP's election commitment—and it is important that if you make a commitment you honour it. However, we also have to deal with those day-to-day issues such as packaging, recycling and programs like the 5c return on glass bottles. I love that. As a kid I used to collect bottles with my twin brother and we used to buy things that mum and dad would not buy us—lollies mainly. You never saw a bottle on the side of the road—

Mr Johnson: I bet you gave him a hard time.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: No, I never gave my brother a hard time. He is a good bloke. There was not any rubbish on the side of the road because every kid in sight would pick up a bottle when they walked past because, to be honest, it was money for jam. In spite of the difficulties relating to reception areas and all of those bottle banks, I really think it is well worthwhile having another look at it. That aside, I look forward to the minister's comments and his summing-up.

In closing, I put on the record my concern for those people who have been affected by the floods and the impact on small business that this waste levy would have created.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (4.35 pm): I rise to support the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I congratulate the minister on the haste with which he has managed to get this piece of legislation before the House. This LNP government is really starting to get some rubber on the road. It is starting to come through with some of the legislation that we promised for which we had a mandate from the people of Queensland—an overwhelming mandate, I might add, that supported these types of issues. We were no shrinking violets; we did not hide the fact that we were going to do this from the people of Queensland. This was not a surprise for the people of Queensland.

Mr Grimwade: We were upfront.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right; we were upfront. Who do members think actually pays for the waste levy on industry and business? Joe Punter pays. That is who will pay eventually. That is why this government has reduced this waste levy. I also take the comments of the member for Gladstone, who talked about the waste produced in floods. Unfortunately, there have been large volumes of waste. We had a meeting today with the mayor of one of my local councils about what we are going to do with waste from flooded areas. I thank the minister very much for convening that meeting.

Some of the biggest dumps in South-East Queensland are located in my area. Veolia has a mine site at Willowbank that is an enormous dump, which is very well managed and operated. I attended a community meeting last night at Willowbank where the dump operators were promoted as corporate citizens. They also support the local progress association with some funds every year. Some of these big operators are very good managers and, of course, they want to make this work.

We are developing new strategies. That is what this is about: developing new strategies and steering committees so we can look at recycling in another way. The Anuha recycling service in my area was set up by the Lutherans years ago. It employs 30 people with disabilities. It is a great facility and it is a real benefit to the community. It is one of those win-win situations. I am sure the Deputy Speaker would know the facility I am talking about, being involved with the Lutheran Church for a number of years. That facility is a real win-win in that we are recycling, the community is supporting local people with disabilities and the families of the people with disabilities are receiving some respite as well. It does work extremely well.

I had to smile when I heard some members talking about recycling in South Australia. I would like to see the cost-benefit analysis of recycling in those states, particularly in comparison to a diversified state like Queensland.

Mr Grimwade: Very decentralised.

Mr RICKUSS: It is very decentralised. It is totally different to a state like South Australia which is a much smaller state and is very compact.

Mr Powell: It is just Adelaide.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. Its inhabited area is very compact. When we consider recycling waste from Winton, Longreach, Blackall and those sorts of areas it becomes a very difficult proposition. I had to laugh at the cost. I was listening to some of the issues related to the cost of transporting it up here. I do not think people realise how expensive it is to run a B-double from Sydney to Brisbane with waste. It is a lot more expensive than the \$90 a tonne they are talking about in relation to recycling. Businesses do a maths calculation in their head and say, 'Hang on, this does not actually pay.' Those are the sorts of issues that are raised as red herrings by the members of the opposition, who have no understanding of the complexities of industry or how recycling works.

Mr Davies: They have all worked for unions.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. If the pay cheque did not turn up in the bank account every fortnight they would have really been in trouble! They have no real concept of how industry works and how things are managed. It is all about the bottom line.

Let us face it: this was really just a tax on the people of Queensland. We made a commitment prior to the last election that this measure would be repealed. I commend the committee members for an interesting debate. Some of the hearings were very informative. I commend the bill to the House. I commend the minister for the good work he is doing.

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—KAP) (4.40 pm): I rise to speak to the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which attempts to cut the cost of living for all Queenslanders. We welcome any measure that cuts the cost of living for all Queenslanders. This bill was an election promise of the LNP. They are obviously keeping their promise by introducing this bill.

When this measure was first introduced there was a lot of worry on the part of those associated with our country rubbish tips. A lot of people started dumping rubbish around quiet roads. If people were to be charged by any dump they would have rather thrown out their rubbish than take it to the dump. I will address the effect of the charge on Queenslanders in terms of education.

This bill fails to provide a plan for the waste reduction and recycling activities currently being undertaken in Queensland. The principal aim of this bill is to overturn legislation passed by the previous Labor government in December 2011. The LNP's amendment bill follows hard on the heels of Labor's waste tax and is a poorly planned reaction. It is a bill that falls way short of providing any long-term and sustainable plan. What Queenslanders need are better, more sustainable waste management options and recycling opportunities which are easily available to all communities. If we do not provide reasonable and cost-effective solutions to waste, we will see illicit burning and dumping of rubbish, with worse pollution when it comes to an industrial scale. The bill places very little focus on motivating changes in land use and environmental management practices. There is no education program outlined. A comprehensive bill would outline how individuals and industries will be motivated to create less waste and recycle more.

In a statement of progressive vision, surely waste must be viewed as a resource rather than a liability and valued for its potential to be recycled, re-used or used to generate energy. While I welcome any reduction in red tape and increased flexibility for regional and metropolitan Queensland communities, I must recommend more consideration be given to addressing some of the more far-reaching—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr HOPPER: Listen to the member for Lockyer mouthing off.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr HOPPER: He is so rude.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Member for Lockyer, you have been warned.

Mr HOPPER: He is the chair of the committee, yet he treats the House with such disdain. He should be ashamed of himself and hang his head in shame. Is this bill more about saving on paperwork—

Government members interjected.

Mr HOPPER: Mr Deputy Speaker, could I have the respect of the House, I ask you? Is this bill more about saving on paperwork than about protecting and conserving regional and catchment environmental values? Should it go further into creating opportunity for more to be done in promoting activities which restore degraded areas?

The bill sadly falls short of outlining any forward vision. Queensland is a wasteful society, with one of the highest waste levels and one of the lowest recycling rates in Australia. That is correct: we have the lowest recycling rate in Australia. I think we need to seriously address that. We heard about the charges in New South Wales. The landfill levy in New South Wales is currently \$95.20 a tonne and will increase by \$10 a tonne plus CPI until 2015-16 under the current regime announced by the New South Wales state government. With the landfill levy at zero in Queensland, one of the outcomes of the amendment may be—just may be—that landfill is transported from New South Wales to Queensland. We will certainly have to watch to ensure that does not occur.

The Queensland state government should be actively and financially supporting research and development into new waste-processing technologies, such as energy from waste, and creating new partnerships with the private sector to develop innovative outcomes. Ongoing mining development in Queensland is creating the opportunity for more industrial pollution and land use known to be associated with land contamination. We are fast becoming a cesspit for an extensive array of mining activities that produce hazardous contaminants—drilling fluid, brine, leachate, coal dust et cetera.

The Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 needs to reduce local community red tape indeed, but never at a cost to the environment. The Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill needs to provide more flexibility to operators and free up low-risk development by all means, but not at the cost to us from coal seam gas mining or coalmining projects. The act needs to be endorsed so that current and proposed mining activity must be required to demonstrate and guarantee that their proposed mine management methods will and can, for example, prevent the problem of heavy metal contamination and that mine design is effective and able to keep water away from acid-generating materials and help prevent contamination of water sources, agricultural land and soils occurring.

Mr POWELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask the member to come back to the bill before the House.

Mr HOPPER: That is not a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr POWELL: Point of order on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, I will allow you to continue at this time but please be cognisant of the long title of the bill.

Mr HOPPER: Mr Deputy Speaker, this bill is about waste and waste management. For a man who sits in a ministerial position to make such a statement! He does not even know what a point of order is. He, like the member for Lockyer, should hang his head in shame. This is just a disgrace.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, please return to your speech.

Mr HOPPER: Queenslanders need to generate less waste—that is in the bill—reduce the amount of waste—that is also in the bill—for disposal to landfill and manage waste as a resource to ensure safe and environmentally sound futures are secured.

The state government is missing the valuable opportunity presented by this bill to introduce a deposit refund system, as we heard the member for Gladstone speak about. In South Australia, for instance, deposit schemes are in place whereby empty beverage containers are re-used and recycled. These schemes are a way of life and are now embedded in the community culture. Drink bottles and cans can make up much of our roadside rubbish, and these deposit schemes can serve the obvious purpose of reducing litter. Deposit systems have also been used for other products such as pesticide containers, lead acid batteries and tyres. Some of these systems are voluntarily implemented by industry, whereas others are implemented by state or local authorities. Charitable organisations may also benefit by arranging collection points for items to be recycled, and deposit refund systems help them raise very much needed funds. Long-term planning for a cleaner, smarter Queensland should be addressed by this bill.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (4.48 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill amends the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 primarily in relation to the administration of the waste levy. What a relief it is for Pine Rivers businesses that this toxic levy will be removed. I still live in hope that the day may come when Labor realises that you do not have to tax people into submission to get positive environmental outcomes. I regularly meet with local business operators and they continually say to me that what they really need is for government to get out of their way and let them get on with what they do best: running their businesses and creating jobs for our local economy. I applaud the minister for doing exactly that with the removal of the waste levy, while still ensuring we get the best possible environmental outcomes.

The removal of the levy also necessitated changes to some of the obligations that were previously linked to the administration of the levy. This is why amendments have also been proposed to provisions about installation of a weighbridge at a waste disposal site and for data collection and reporting, and it is these particular areas that I will concentrate on in my short contribution. As the minister has already stated in his address, the changes in these areas streamline requirements and remove some of the more onerous obligations for waste disposal site operators, especially for smaller site operators. Most of these small sites are generally run by local councils in regional areas. The amendments remove the requirement for smaller sites—those sites disposing of more than 5,000 tonnes but less than 10,000 tonnes in a year—to install a weighbridge. Whilst these sites will still have to measure the waste that enters the facility in order to collect data, they may now do so through means other than using a weighbridge. This provides them some flexibility for those operators and allows a more appropriate mechanism to be applied for these sites.

The government has recognised that the installation of a weighbridge comes at a cost, and for smaller sites the cost may outweigh the potential benefit that could be gained in having a weighbridge. The true benefit of weighbridges is that they provide an accurate measure for the tonnes of waste received and removed from the site, and this information benefits the government in that the data received can be more easily validated. It also helps the operators to better plan their waste management operations. Also recognising the cost of installing a weighbridge, another amendment provides that if a waste disposal site is closing down within 12 months of the date that the weighbridge must be installed then the operator is not required to install that weighbridge. This is logical and it makes perfect sense. There is absolutely no need to install a weighbridge at a site that the operator knows will be closing. Whilst it might be a simple thing, this amendment once again demonstrates this government's commitment to reducing costs and the regulatory burden for businesses and is a common-sense approach to such issues.

Whilst the requirement for a waste disposal site over 10,000 tonnes to install a weighbridge is being retained, amendments will extend the time by which the weighbridge has to be installed. When this bill was introduced late last year, no-one could have foreseen the magnitude of the disaster events that have once again hit Queensland communities. This amendment now provides the flexibility the operators of those affected sites will need to enable facilities, first and foremost, to return to normal operating conditions and for them to then think about additional infrastructure needs. Again, this is a practical, common-sense approach. Site operators will still be required to report data. However, to reduce the reporting burden, amendments will simplify the amount of information that is to be provided and change the reporting period for data from monthly to a time that will be prescribed in regulation.

Gathering waste data is essential to understanding how much waste we produce in Queensland, how much we recycle and dispose of and how much waste moves around the state and between states. I am sure most in this place are aware of the media reporting recently about truckloads of waste coming into Queensland from New South Wales. The facts are that it is known that waste comes into and goes out of Queensland every day. It has been going on for years and is a normal part of business practices and movement of goods. The transport of some wastes is tracked into and out of Queensland. These are regulated wastes such as tyres and oils and it is known where this waste comes from, how much there is and where it goes. What is not known is how much additional, everyday household and business waste might be coming into Queensland. In partnership with industry, the data gathered will help the government build a better picture of waste management activities in Queensland. This way we can implement a waste strategy that is informed by a solid evidence base that is obtained from the information that is reported to us by landfillers and recyclers. These amendments introduce a leaner, more streamlined and flexible approach for smaller landfill operators and in relation to reporting requirements for waste facility operators generally. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (4.53 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This amendment bill is about streamlining and increasing transparency within our regulatory framework. Our government is committed to improving services in our great state of Queensland. With achievements across-the-board in reducing red tape, streamlining processes and taking the common-sense approach to the allocation of resources, this amendment bill is another step in the right direction towards getting our state back on track. Our swift action will decisively repeal the former government's failed waste levy. The pre-existing levy was nothing more than an extra cost that put an unreasonable strain on, what was at the time, a struggling economy. As we continue to rebuild our economy and develop the great opportunities that our great state can achieve, we must shed ourselves from such inept and wasteful practices that seemed to be the norm for the former government.

This bill will see appropriate changes to both the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 and the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995. These amendments will maintain the practices currently employed. However, they will remove the regulatory burden that restricts the effective operation of waste management in our state. With the redundant provisions that were in place being removed, our government has sent a strong message to the industry about how firmly we are committed to reassess and open up for discussion the future for waste reform in Queensland. By being an open and inclusive government, we are doing what the Labor government of the bad old

days failed to do—bringing interested parties into the process and seeking input from those who are directly affected such as the Australian Council of Recycling and the Local Government Association of Queensland. This will lower the cost burden for business and allow our economy to develop.

Whilst the state cannot control gate fees of individual disposal sites, by removing this poorly managed waste tax we are doing what we can to help businesses and local councils lower the cost. Waste management in my electorate of Logan is always a matter of concern. Recent natural disasters have shown that the ensuing clean-up places an unusual strain on our waste management services. If not for relief granted by local councils, my constituents would have been faced with an unfair and unjust financial burden to clear their possessions that had been ravaged by the rising floods. Rather than imposing a senseless tax on Queensland businesses, our government is working vigorously with the industry to establish a strategy that will deliver strong environmental outcomes without increasing the cost of living. Every step we take is aimed at returning our state's AAA credit rating. For our great state to progress forward we must firstly clear and rebuild the damage that was left behind by those who find themselves in opposition. We will not shy away from our responsibility—our duty to Queenslanders—in driving policy and regulatory reform with regard to waste management whilst, as mentioned before, incorporating feedback and expertise from the industry.

A significant issue, up until the implementation of this legislative amendment, has been the practice used at weighbridge stations. Weighbridge infrastructure is essential to the improved operation of waste management. This move will see more accountable waste management practices at waste disposal sites and facilities with improved data collection and reporting to inform future planning by the waste sector and all levels of government. The amendment will remove the requirement for sites under 10,000 tonnes to have a weighbridge. Sites that manage over 10,000 tonnes per year will still be required to have a weighbridge, but the time frame for such a requirement, which had been previously outlined by the former legislation as 1 December 2012, will now be extended to 1 December 2013.

The ability to establish a strong base for reporting will better enable our government and the industry to best formulate policy to meet the needs of our growing state and the pressures that growth will have on our state. This amendment will bring our waste management system into the 21st century. The opposition will continue to oppose any real progress. Our government has inherited regulatory waste worthy of its own weighbridge but, unlike the opposition, this government is not harping on about failed policies; we are taking progressive action to both meet the needs of our growing communities and the future economic viability of our businesses, local councils and of course the people that make our great state—everyday Queenslanders.

This can be seen through the reduction of administrative burdens. The amendments will be made to remove the requirement for local governments and planning entities to replicate documentation on their waste management plans to the chief executives. This amendment will change more than just the management of waste in Queensland: the effects of pragmatic and sensible legislation will benefit all Queenslanders for years to come. As we work to get our state back on track, these measures are to ease the burden on our providers and local councils. Our government is about growth—the growth of our state, its economy and its services. I commend the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection for taking the action that the previous government failed to do. Those in the opposition are full of opinion and rhetoric. If their position was sustainable, why was it not implemented when they were in government? Why is it only now they think they hold Queensland's best interests at heart? The answer is that they lack conviction, and our constituents have seen that. That is why they chose our government. They wanted change, they wanted growth and this bill does just that. Viable, reasonable, sustainable: that is what this government and this bill is about. I proudly commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.59 pm): The Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 completes the repeal of the waste levy introduced by the former Labor government in December 2011 and reduces regulatory and administrative requirements on landfill operators, local government and state entities. I thank my fellow committee members for the work that they have done on this bill and congratulate the government on removing this costly legislation. In a time when our economy is slowing and people are struggling to make ends meet, it is important that we all take stock of what is important and how to achieve environmental outcomes without producing unnecessary regulations.

In past years we have seen an increasing number of environmental regulations that have placed significant strain on Queensland's industry with little or no evidence of their impact on environmental problems. The truth is that these regulations had more impact on our social and

economic wellbeing and have been disastrous, particularly for our agricultural industry jobs and regional communities. The removal of the weighbridge requirements for waste disposal sites under 10 tonnes will reduce the burden on smaller local governments and landfill operators who are struggling the most with the accumulation of bureaucracy and paperwork that is burying small business and small councils. At a time when the government is implementing cost-cutting measures, I think it deserves recognition for fulfilling an election commitment to get rid of the waste levy even though it eliminates \$96 million from the state budget.

Issues regarding the cross-border transport of waste from New South Wales into Queensland were raised during the committee process through submissions. I believe that the reduction of environmental bureaucracy is the area where Queensland can lead the way and I hope that New South Wales sees the light in removing cumbersome and ineffective levies and paperwork that achieve no measurable environmental benefit whatsoever. Another potential solution to the issue is the application of tariffs on cross-border waste transport. I will be suggesting that to the inquiry into the development of a new waste strategy for Queensland.

These days, in public policy there is so much environmental regulation that it is hard to keep track of how much environmental policies are costing the economy and it is even harder to determine how effective they are in improving the environment. The submission by the Waste, Recycling Industry Association contained valid warnings about ensuring that the review of waste disposal policies be coordinated and developed in close consultation with stakeholders. I believe that that submission should be heeded and that the government ensures that those who are most affected by changes to waste disposal legislation receive appropriate time frames to make a contribution to the inquiry into waste disposal in Queensland. Lastly, it is anticipated that the new waste management strategy will be in place by June 2014. I urge this government to ensure that there will be no waste levies reintroduced full stop. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (5.02 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on this bill. This legislation is well overdue. It finally removes Labor's waste tax. Labor's waste reduction and recycling legislation was nothing more than a tax. It certainly was a blight on Queenslanders. The introduction of a waste tax on business and households was another blow to the struggling domestic economy, which was already overregulated in terms of environmental legislation. This bill completely repeals the waste tax by removing the head of power for a levy and redundant provisions in relation to the calculation of this job-destroying tax. The constituents of the Albert electorate certainly can now breathe a sigh of relief that this tax on household and business budgets has been committed to the vaults of history.

This tax could not have been introduced at a worse time. At the moment, Europe is getting close to experiencing a double-dip recession. The economy of the United States is still in a very precarious position. This waste tax was certainly a new tax on vulnerable small businesses. Our current federal Labor government is continuing to hit small businesses with the carbon tax, which is set artificially high at \$23 a tonne. In Europe, the carbon price has fallen through the floor. It has gone down to about \$5 a tonne. These taxes are killing businesses. They are killing jobs and they are certainly killing development.

In relation to the argument that the repeal of this waste tax is not helping recycling at all, that is a load of rubbish. I have a recycling business in my electorate called Phoenix Power Recyclers, which is booming. It is looking for—

Mr Powell: It shouldn't need a waste tax. They didn't have a waste tax.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Yes, exactly. They are not even worried about the carbon tax going. This business is booming. It is producing mulch pits and it is recycling green waste. Many local councils in the area are selling their green waste and that company is making a fortune out of it, so much so that it is wishing to expand its business. I can certainly inform the member for Condamine that when it comes to green initiatives for funding, the federal government has the ARENA grants—

Mr Hopper: Try and inform me after the next election.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Furthermore, if the LNP wins the next federal election it has said that it is going to continue the ARENA grants. So there is funding for these initiatives. So if you want to speak to your businesses, go for it, mate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Member for Albert, would you please address your comments through the chair.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, my apologies. In times of global uncertainty, the government's primary purpose is to reduce the financial burden on individuals and to create measures to promote business. We are here to help businesses, we are here to strengthen

businesses and we are here to get people into jobs. The creation of a new levy or tax only fosters resentment in those who work hard for every cent they earn. It creates the philosophy of, 'All I do is work for the tax man.'

The bill continues to fight to reduce the burden of green tape that has been forced upon the community. The amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act will allow low-risk development to proceed with a set of standard criteria, thus negating the need for a development application. As I doorknock my electorate at least a couple of times a week, I can certainly say that the Albert electorate is the home of the boatie. My electorate has pleasure craft all over the place.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr BOOTHMAN: People in the Whitsundays would be jealous of the number of boats there are in the Albert electorate. The amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act will certainly not weaken environmental outcomes.

Most importantly, this legislation provides additional flexibility to the agricultural sector. Life on the land can be tough at the best of times. Circumstances will arise where it is not viable to continue with a particular crop. That is an all-too-common theme for farmers. Operators will now be able to suspend their operations if they feel that it is not viable and there are no ongoing environmental management issues to contend with. Certainly, in recent times farmers have had enough to contend with the floods, especially in the Burnett region, so they need a helping hand. This legislation goes a long way to making life on the land just that little bit more bearable. As somebody who grew up on a hobby farm that grew avocados, I certainly understand the frustrations and the harsh realities of life on the land.

I wish to thank the minister and his department for their continued work on reducing the green-tape burden on our community. I am proud to support this bill. I am certainly proud to be a part of this proactive government. I certainly thank the minister for all his hard work and all the information that he has given me.

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise today in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This is the final stage in fulfilling one of the Newman government's election promises to repeal the former Labor government's green vote grab which was the establishment of a waste levy that increased the cost of living for many Queenslanders and businesses around the state, especially in Lytton. There are five main policy objectives under the amendment, but I will briefly address three which have significant importance to business operators and residents in my electorate.

Firstly I welcome the minister's commitment to remove any reference to the waste levy which validates the repeal of the waste levy from 2012. The Lytton electorate has a high number of industrial businesses around the suburbs of Lytton, Hemmant and the Port of Brisbane. In late 2012 whilst doorknocking small businesses in Hemmant I went to a marine manufacturing business where I heard firsthand the problems facing the marine and manufacturing sector in Queensland due to the bad policies of the past government. The waste levy gave light industry a disadvantage compared to the rest of Australia, let alone the rest of the world, as it was just another burden on business on top of the Gillard government's carbon tax. As I said in my maiden speech in this House, the Port of Brisbane will be the driving force for the Queensland economy in the future, but this can only be achieved by not being slugged with another cash grab that will not have any real benefits to either the Queensland economy or the wider community.

The second objective I would like to highlight from the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is to reduce the administrative burden on local government, state entities and other bureaucratic departments. This provision complies with what the Newman government went to the 2012 state election with as one of our fundamental policy platforms to reduce red and green tape in government administration. For example, the certificates that local councils give to industrial businesses such as local mechanics as an approved waste disposal site will not have to be regularly applied for in City Hall. This will increase the productivity of these local traders, especially around Wynnum with its abundance of smash repairers, mechanics and other industrial workplaces, who will not have to regularly fill out pages and pages of forms and red tape that had stifled these businesses in the local area for too long.

Another objective of the amendment is to introduce provisions that will adequately identify waste disposal sites that will be required to provide data reports to a regulation to enable flexible arrangements to be developed in consultation with the waste industry and other stakeholders around waste management strategies.

I must briefly mention the contribution of the member for South Brisbane which was to support the waste levy in its entirety. I say to the members opposite that on 24 March Queenslanders rejected the Labor Party due to its deals for green votes that disadvantaged businesses and growth in the industrial sector and the people of Queensland are about to reject the Gillard government which won the support of the Greens under a deal to introduce a carbon tax. Businesses in my electorate of Lytton are still doing it tough due to this draconian tax on business. I commend the bill to the House as manufacturing, smash repairers and other industrial businesses will no longer be weighed down by red tape and levies that have affected the business sector for far too long. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (5.13 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In doing so I pay tribute to the work of the minister, who has been a tower of strength in this regard. I will avoid going over ploughed ground by talking about the impacts on business and households. We know that. That is without question. I will avoid talking in depth about the fact that somehow there has been a culture previously that the only way to change behaviour is through tax; the only way to get a result is to flog somebody in the hip pocket. I think those speakers before me have covered that very eloquently. Where I will make my contribution is in the area of local government. I can make this contribution as somebody who lived through the insidious introduction of this tax. It was one of the greatest rush jobs ever seen. Councils were asking, 'Please do not introduce this in the middle of a financial year. Please do not introduce this when you have one side of politics saying they are going to repeal this. Please do not push your green ideology on local government.' Yet there was no movement whatsoever. What particularly upsets me is that in the case of local councils no-one could say they were shy in putting this view forward. Local government said very, very clearly it did not want to collect this tax on behalf of the state. It did not want to be a puppet for the state government. It did not want to be a collection agency for a failed bad tax. It said that very clearly. I can tell members what local government really did not want. It did not want to pay it. That was the irony in all of this. This was the double-edged sword for local councils. They were asked to be a collection agency for something they did not believe in and were asked to foot the bill for their own business units. That was a great shame.

They were then asked to be tied up in some sort of red-tape game where instead of being what local governments used to be, and that is a place where you could go and put rubbish, they became engaged in some sort of paper warfare. In an era when people are disillusioned with what governments have to do, surely it behoves all of us to look for opportunities to make things more simple in everything we do. This had nothing to do with simplicity; it had everything to do with an agenda. It had nothing to do with the environment; it had everything to do with taxation dressed up as green ideology. It was a bad, bad tax. It was an insidious grab. It was an attack on local communities. It was an attack on local government, and nothing gives me more pleasure than to see this removed this evening.

The final comment I wish to make is around clarity on this being removed. No-one can say that we did not go with the clearest of intentions to the electorate.

Mr Rickuss: We didn't hide behind a bushel, did we?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Not at all. No-one can say that this was some sort of conceived thing on the run. It was campaigned on the whole way through. Every council in the state knew the position of the LNP. The state government knew the position of councils. We went clearly to the electorate, we asked for their support and were rewarded on a few fronts. One of those was to reduce the cost of living, one of those was to restore some faith in the way government works and another was to reduce red tape. The Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill achieves those three objectives and I give it my full support.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (5.17 pm): I rise to speak on the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The purpose of the bill is to finalise the election commitment to repeal the waste levy, to allow the creation of self-assessable codes for the Integrated Development Assessment System under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and to put into place transitional provisions to facilitate aspects of the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012.

I wish to express thanks to the committee chair, the member for Lockyer, committee members, parliamentary support staff and, most particularly, those who took the time and trouble to provide written submissions and appear at the public hearings. The waste levy introduced by the previous Labor government applied to commercial, industrial, construction and demolition waste delivered to a leviable waste disposal site. In line with the election commitment, the government first amended the regulation to put a zero value on the waste levy and now this bill is designed to remove the head of power for the levy and to reduce green tape and regulation imposed on business, local governments and government entities.

Submissions in relation to this component of the bill focused on the possibility that, as there is now no levy in Queensland but a waste levy applicable in New South Wales, significant amounts of waste will be shifted from northern New South Wales to Queensland landfill sites. Evidence provided to the committee indicates that movement of waste across borders has been happening for many years and for a number of reasons, some of which relate to the actual best management of the waste.

Collection of data is the key to providing a basis for the government to develop a new industry-led innovative waste strategy that will help industry to look for commercial opportunities in recycling and reducing waste. The current bill requires the collection of such data but has made the time frames less onerous for business. However, the committee recommends that the data be retained by the business for more than the proposed year. Given that all businesses are required to keep financial records for seven years, a period of retention of more than one year would seem to be a normal business process.

A levy, which is a cost imposed on business and often times is just passed on to the client, seems to be a blunt instrument for driving waste recycling and reduction. I note the minister's comments in relation to using more sophisticated policy incentives, removing green tape and streamlining business processes, providing for more flexible and innovative waste management. I recently had an example provided where the construction industry at this time is forced, due to chemical treatment, to put some timber offcuts into landfill. There is an alternative that would allow the commercial use of this waste, but it currently requires a change in regulation to achieve that use. It is innovation and the reduction in green tape will drive the conversion of waste into profitable recyclable materials, thus reducing landfill. Of some concern is whether the provision of data by commercial entities to the government recording entity can be guaranteed to be commercial in confidence. Unless this guarantee can be given, it is possible that some commercial waste recyclers will be unwilling to provide accurate data that will be required to inform the development of a waste reduction and recycling strategy.

The bill also eases the requirements for the implementation of weighbridges. These items are very expensive to implement and, while they do produce more accurate information in terms of reporting waste, the relative cost is quite high if smaller facilities are required to implement a weighbridge. Given the geographic nature of Queensland, there will always be the necessity for small waste management facilities. The encouragement must always be for waste to be managed rather than just dumped. Failure to provide a small cost-effective waste management facility is quite likely to result in poor management of waste.

The existing act requires state government departments, local governments and government owned corporations to prepare and implement a waste reduction and recycling plan by 1 December 2012. The removal of the waste levy necessitates a review of the management strategy. This bill will extend the time frame for the preparation of these plans so that any objectives and targets of the new strategy can be considered. The requirement for government owned corporations to prepare a plan has also been removed. This is not because the government thinks that waste management by GOCs is unimportant. It is primarily to ensure that those GOCs, which also compete in the private sector, are not required to do anything that their competitors are not required to do. Understanding waste management activities and recycling opportunities within an organisation is important and the government believes that planning will be beneficial for GOCs. That is why, even though the statutory requirement to prepare a plan will be removed, the government will work closely with those organisations to provide assistance in the development of plans.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of ensuring that, as a government, we understand that, as well as management of waste generated by commerce and industry, the waste streams that government departments are generating and disposing of also need to be managed. The old adage

that we cannot manage what we do not measure holds true. Good waste planning provides significant opportunities for government departments and local governments to identify their waste streams and how much is being disposed of. This then provides the opportunity to implement targeted and appropriate waste reduction and recycling initiatives, which all helps to reduce the overall costs of managing our waste.

As mentioned earlier, this bill also amends the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 to allow for the creation of self-assessable codes for the integrated development assessment system under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. Low-risk development will be able to proceed according to standard criteria. Environmental protection will be maintained through the standard conditions under the self-assessable code. Not only will this mechanism reduce costs due to streamlining; it gives certainty and forward planning as the self-assessable codes will be readily available to anyone intending to plan for and carry out such an activity. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.24 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. A lot has been said already about the bill and I will not bore people by going over a lot of the details of the good things that I think it delivers. I will keep to the points that are very pertinent to my area. I move sideways and talk about an aspect of this bill that applies to a lot of bills that come through this House, which is the different way it affects remote and country areas. A bill may seem to be good and it may enable some things to happen in metropolitan areas, but it can adversely affect remote areas. This is a good case in point.

I will reflect on my own experiences with the tax that was imposed during my time in the Mount Isa City Council prior to my term in this place. I served on the Mount Isa City Council when the waste levy was first introduced. At that time the council worked hard on strategies to minimise the impact of the imposition of the bill and find the best way to offset the costs of the weighbridge, which was funded at that time but there were ongoing maintenance costs. We had to deal with the fact that it was hard enough to get employees to work at the dump in Mount Isa, but adding extra duties to their workloads made the whole process a lot harder. Those costs had to be passed on and they are passed on to small businesses. A lot of the small struggling businesses around Mount Isa certainly made themselves heard.

I point out that there are very few opportunities for recycling at the Mount Isa tip, despite our best efforts. The tyranny of distance was a factor. The closest recycling plant that we sourced was in the Darling Downs, which made all our recycling efforts unviable unless they were heavily sponsored by business. We had some sponsorship from the IGA, but unfortunately it was pushed out by Coles and Woolworths and we had no recycling activities in the end. These things just are not viable for a lot of remote towns and cities. If they are done with an agenda of eventually performing recycling activities or getting energy from those sorts of things, they might seem like a good idea in metropolitan areas, but they create extra imposts and are not workable in some remote areas. Therefore, that bill never helped to achieve any recycling targets in the north-west, but it put a new cost on small businesses, which was inevitably passed on.

At the same time that that bill was passed, the local government was also given the impost of performing a state government activity. It passed on the responsibility of doing environmental checking and monitoring businesses, which we were not funded for. At the same time we put two new costs on businesses, which resulted in everyone complaining to the Mount Isa City Council and the costs were passed straight on to our ratepayers, even though it was imposed by the state government.

Although I sound negative about recycling activities, obviously personally I am strongly in favour of those activities and I am very conscious of my own levels of waste. Like renewable energy and such things, this needs to be developed to a point where they do not put a huge impost on business. Until we reach that point, they may not be viable. I support the bill as it helps small struggling businesses that are constantly battling the environment delivered to them by this government and the federal government and are finding it very difficult. I acknowledge there are opportunities to extend the legislation further and direct it towards many activities in the growing resource sector, which can impact much more significantly on the environment, particularly in smaller and remote areas. Overall, this bill deserves support to the point that it will reduce the immediate

burden on small businesses, but I encourage investigation on taking it further for the waste generated from our growing resource sector. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Katter, adjourned.

MOTION

Newman Government



Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (5.29 pm): I move—

That this House:

- condemns the Newman LNP government for its plans to outsource and privatise essential health services;
- condemns the Newman government for using materials prepared at taxpayers' expense for a LNP fundraiser; and
- calls on the Newman government to donate the proceeds of the LNP health fundraiser conducted on Wednesday, 27 February 2013—estimated to be approximately \$120,000—to the Red Cross Queensland Floods Appeal.

Since gaining office this government has step by step, bed by bed, ward by ward, hospital by hospital set out to destroy our public health system. The processes of national health reform have over the past five years sought to end the blame game over state and federal government responsibility for funding and delivering health services.

This LNP government has nobbled these national reforms by slashing and burning the state Health budget while overall federal funding has increased and will significantly increase under a federal Labor government. Minister Springborg has sought to tuck under the mattress Health budget cuts and resulting service closures. He has claimed work committed by the previous Labor government as overall budget growth while nastily and savagely cutting Queensland health services for the people of this state. Over the next four years from the 2012-13 budget Minister Springborg will inflict some \$3 billion in cuts on the Queensland public health system.

Ms Trad: Shame.

Mrs MILLER: Shame on the LNP government. These cuts include sacking 6,000 health workers to reduce the Health budget by \$1.646 billion. While the budget papers identify 4,140 full-time equivalent positions to go in 2012-13, the Premier met with the Director-General of Queensland Health on 23 July 2012 to discuss the impact of axing some 6,000 jobs.

While the Minister for Health has stunts and photo opportunities galore, \$120 million in community health grants to services to the public, together with the loss of hundreds of jobs in regional centres, was taken from the money jar. Sacking contract staff and other administrative cuts imposed by the minister to save \$283 million has further weakened the ability of our health system to plan for the future needs of this great state.

These mass sackings in Health and Community Services have, together with the efficiency savings imposed by the minister on our hospitals, led to bed closures, to cancelled surgery and to longer waiting lists. The budget papers calculated these costs at—wait for it—\$944 million. These three per cent efficiency cuts have meant budget reductions for the Metropolitan North Hospital and Health Service of an estimated \$60 million in each year and about \$50 million for metro south each year for the next three years. These state budget cuts make the lower than expected federal contribution to hospital funds look like change in a car's ashtray.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I will get to the member for Chatsworth later. Hold your fire, member for Chatsworth. I will be getting to your contribution later.

Blaming the federal government just does not wash in this day and age. It is 1970s Sir Joh political tactics, and we have come a long way since then. This LNP has slashed and burned the state Health budget and walked away from aged care. They have walked away from the mums and dads, the grandmas and grandpas and the great-grandmas and great-grandpas. They have walked away from the facilities that they call home.

The Minister for Health who relishes in cutting and closing services has in the last week displayed hidden talents that I was not aware of—talents not of a manager, not of a foreman. His new talent is as an auctioneer. The so-called blueprint for better health care in Queensland reads like an Elders stock listing before the big cattle sale—a publicly funded sales guide launched at a slap-up Sofitel soiree for the big end of town. How much did the LNP raise for their party coffers? They raised

some \$120,000. Not \$120,000 for the Red Cross flood appeal; no, 120 grand for the toffs and car wavers. LNP members know what I mean. That is all they are good at—waving placards around at cars.

But there was not just one fundraiser. The minister was a keynote speaker at \$75-a-head Chatsworth business breakfast event for 120 people to discuss health services at 7 am on the same day. Whilst the member for Chatsworth may have donated \$500 to the Red Cross flood appeal, his campaign raised, we believe, an estimated \$5,000. So, shame on you member for Chatsworth.

When we read through to section 3 of this livestock listing, the not-so-secret LNP code for job cuts and service closures is joined by mass privatisation of healthcare services. Clearly the minister intends to privatise the clinical management of the new public Sunshine Coast University Hospital even before it is built. It is no secret that the director-general of health visited a privatised public hospital in Perth last year. Can the minister assure the public that if the privatising of the new public Sunshine Coast University Hospital does go ahead that there will be an open and honest tendering process or has some shonky deal been done? It is poddy dodging, that is what it is. The LNP are cattle duffing our health care. They are poddy dodging the assets owned by all Queenslanders.

Where are the cabinet ministers from the Sunshine Coast—Blejje, McArdle, Elmes, Dickson and Powell? They are all silent. But they are as subtle as Ben Teo's shoulder charge when they use the word 'contestability' instead of privatisation of all clinical support services like pathology, pharmacy, radiology, laundry, maintenance of hospitals and medical equipment, catering and infection control services.

But why stop there when the old school tie friends in business can take over IT, e-health, audit, medical records and other business services. There are plenty of opportunities out there for their mates. Contract out everything else to the big end of town. We find that he sacked 50 workers before Christmas. Does he intend to sell the Central Pharmacy Warehouse at Richlands? Is it going to be sold, leased out or the entire current workforce sacked? Will we also see corporate retail pharmacy chains taking over our hospital pharmacies? Can anyone else in this chamber see a conflict of interest? No, they are all silent. These corporations cannot train our medical interns and junior members like the public hospitals system does.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba! There is too much noise from the benches immediately in front of me. I will start warning members under the standing orders. I call the member for Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: It is as simple as that. They cannot train them. The blueprint is a bitter pill to swallow. It shows that the minister has no idea about the role of public hospitals in research, in teaching and in the advanced training of our health workforce for both the public and private sectors. I gather the members opposite, even the ministers opposite, are also still waiting for the same detail. We have the \$2 million report which is the Costello report. I know why the Treasurer has not read it. He is watching reruns of the TV show *To the Manor Born*.

Let me get to something really interesting. The Mavis Bramston member for Sandgate has done ourselves proud again. I would like to quote her latest missive in relation to Eventide. I seek leave to table it.

Tabled paper: Pro-forma letter, dated 28 February 2013, to residents and family members of Ebbtide and Gannett Houses from the member for Sandgate, Ms Kerry Millard MP, regarding the future of Ebbtide and Gannett Houses [\[2165\]](#).

She goes on record as saying—like the true special branch that her office has become—

... if you are aware of anyone making claims to the contrary—

that is the government's spin—

frightening residents or advising them they need to move out immediately I urge you to contact my office—and supply myself or my staff details, such as what was said, by whom and when it was said.

My God, the special branch is alive and well.

(Time expired)

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.39 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by the shadow minister for health. The so-called Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland is a waste of public

resources, used to prop up an LNP party fundraiser. The document itself combined motherhood statements and the attempt of the LNP to claim credit for several areas of Labor's health reforms. The only contribution from the LNP was their clear commitment to privatising public health care in Queensland.

The LNP government, under the health minister, has imposed upon the Queensland health system drastic cuts to hospitals and front-line services. The minister is desperate to hide from the decisions of his LNP government. Time and time again we see the minister try to blame local boards for implementing the government's decision. After the drastic cuts the LNP government imposed on hospitals were revealed to cause massive job losses and service reduction, the minister has been desperate to point the finger at Canberra. But the minister cannot hide from the very simple fact that the three per cent efficiency dividend imposed on local health and hospital districts has cost \$17.4 million for the Cairns and hinterland area alone—that is, the state government has cut \$17.4 million out of the Cairns health system. Then there is the \$2 million from the Cape York service and the \$2.4 million from the Torres Strait services. Yet the minister and local LNP members of parliament refuse to take responsibility for their cuts.

I was in attendance at the rally in Cairns the week before last and essentially what this was about was people coming forward saying, 'We don't want this to be a blame game. We want to see an end to the blame game.' Let me recap: the LNP have tried to blame staff sackings and service cuts and closures on adjustments in federal funding announced last year. But they refuse to acknowledge, as I said, the \$3 billion in cuts they have ordered over four years that were outlined in the 2012 state budget. Over four years it is not hard to see that an increase in funding of \$600 million by the federal government will have a more positive impact on Queensland's health and hospital services than a cut of \$3 billion. As I said before, I know patients are tired of the blame game. They are Canberra bashing and they have had it with governments point-scoring with complex formulas and those sorts of things—me too. But, when I saw the response given by the chair of the hospital board in Cairns to media inquiries, I changed my mind.

When finally going on the record, the chair of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital Health Service issued a media statement which included an answer to the question: 'If we get the funding back from the federal government, what would happen?' He said in summary—

The board will not reverse the decision to implement cost-saving measures identified by Ernst & Young and our executive team if the federal funding is returned to us at a local level.

I table that for the record.

Tabled paper: Queensland Health media statement, undated, regarding health issues in relation to the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service Board [\[2166\]](#).

What this says is that this is all about the \$3 billion in funding cuts to regional health boards across Queensland. That is really concerning to me because essentially Canberra—sometimes they do the right thing; sometimes they do not—has been getting an awful shellacking. But the chair of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital Health Service is saying that it would not matter if the federal money came back. This is all about the Health cuts that have been put in place by the LNP in the 2012 budget. I think somebody has some explaining to do. I would certainly like to hear that explanation because either the chair of the health service is wrong or what we have been hearing from the Minister for Health has been wrong all along. So let us hear from the minister what the explanation is.

The minister and the LNP government cannot escape the fact that they are ripping out \$3 billion in funding over four years from regional health boards including the following: staff cuts calculated and imposed by the minister—\$1.646 billion; scrapping of health grants by the minister—\$120 million; sacking of consultants, contractors and other administrative savings, including travel calculated and imposed by the minister—\$283 million; 'efficiency savings' calculated and imposed by the minister—\$944 million.

But we know that with the release of the so-called blueprint the minister has plans for far-reaching cuts to services and privatisation. For health staff and for patients alike, there is more pain to come. The ideological obsession of this government has yet again reared its ugly head. As I said earlier today, the LNP are not waiting until the next election to start privatising Queensland. They are already privatising the hospital system—like the Sunshine Coast University Hospital—and they are outsourcing core clinical areas of health care across the hospital system.

This is not some theoretical or political debate. At stake here is the very future of public health care in this state. Queenslanders do not agree on all political issues and they have different ideas about what a government should do. But let me be clear: the opposition is speaking on behalf of the

majority of Queenslanders who believe that one of the core responsibilities of government, one of the most sacred roles of government, is the provision of safe, accessible, quality public health care.

Certainly we have heard comments from the Premier in the past to the effect that this is outsourcing; it is not a sell-off. Well, no, it is not a sell-off; it is a sell-out. The LNP is selling out Queensland's future. It is not good enough for the tens of thousands of health staff who work hard every day to deliver a 24-hour modern Health system to be sold out in this way.

(Time expired)



Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (5.44 pm): I move—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted:

'endorses the state government's Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland which delivers more jobs, a healthier lifestyle and better services into the future.'

One thing that we have become a little accustomed to in this place in recent times in this weird parallel universe which members of the Labor party live in—and we have seen it happen here again tonight. I do not know where they dream this stuff up from. Insofar as the function which was hosted by the LNP the other day is concerned, my office requested that they actually put on such a function for the launch of this blueprint after we requested that the Queensland Media Club host it late last year. They said at that particular stage they were not able to fit it in because they had Kevin Rudd on the agenda for some particular future time. Because of the urgency of being able to put our program out there, which was something I was most keen to do earlier this year, we set it down for 6 February. Indeed, because of the floods and in deference to that, we decided to shift it to 27 February.

Before those people who went along to that particular function actually saw it, we broadcast it to every single one of our 80,000 Queensland Health staff and the people of Queensland had full access to it online. The other thing is that not one single cent of public money was actually used on any publication at that function at the Sofitel. So again we have honourable members opposite who are dreaming it up.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That was not available then. That was not available there. That is the document which has been disseminated to our staff. If we want to talk about the only person in this place who has actually been forced to pay back public money because they overstepped the rules, it is the honourable member for Inala who was forced to pay back \$4,300 because she misspent her ministerial allowance on publicising stuff in her electorate. It must have been pretty bad if Anna Bligh actually said it was not kosher. It must have been really overstepping the mark.

As far as the honourable member for Bundamba is concerned, Gordon Nuttall's apprentice, the person who learnt her trade when she was subordinate assistant minister to Gorton Nuttall, what can I say! The honourable member ignores the fact that since 1911 there have been arrangements with the Mater Hospital for the delivery of health services in Queensland. Indeed, 5,300 babies, public babies, were born at the Mater last year, funded by the public purse. And nowhere have we actually seen anything from honourable members opposite. Over \$400 million was committed by the previous government. Not only that; almost \$1 billion in its entirety was committed by honourable members opposite for outsourced services, including radiation oncology, including radiology, including dental, including other surgery on time, because they partnered with the private and not-for-profit sector out there, because it actually works.

What would the alternative be? Come into this place and move a motion saying that the LNP should run the Queensland Health system the same way that Labor did, with an abundance of fake Tahitian princes, with Health payroll blow-outs, with the \$300 million of overspend in 2010-11? Indeed, we have heard some extraordinary propositions come forward in the last week with regard to the number of people who were going to be sacked. We had the honourable member for Rockhampton saying 3,000 and the honourable member for Mackay saying 2,000. The board chair said, 'We don't even employ probably 2,000.' There is a great cartoon in the Mackay *Daily Mercury* quoting the honourable member as saying, 'We're going to sack them twice.' That is the logic that we have from those opposite.

When pressed by Steve Austin the other day on ABC Radio, even Wayne Swan admitted that the Queensland government had increased health funding this year by \$600 million. Even he admitted it although he was pressed to do it. The Commonwealth government originally committed an extra \$200 million this year, but took \$100 million away midyear. That is what has brutalised our health system.

(Time expired)

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (5.49 pm): I rise to support the minister's amendment to the motion. I want to paint honourable members a picture. Imagine coming home to find a message on your answering machine from the bank saying that your payment for your house had not been made because there were insufficient funds in your bank account. Imagine going to the day care centre and saying to them, 'Look, I have put a full week in, but I don't know why there is no pay in my bank account. Could you please spot me for a week or so until I can work out how to make that payment to you?' Imagine the embarrassment—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr RUTHENBERG: Member for Bundamba, you can laugh but these things occur and they were reported to me. Imagine going to a grocery store and trying to use your ATM card to pay for groceries for the week and it being rejected. Imagine the embarrassment of that. Not only did these things happen but they happened for 18 months under the former government—time after time after time after time. Where were the unions? Were they out on the street protesting in support of their members? They were not. They were silent. That same silence now pervades this state where the unions are silent on the \$103 million cut from Queensland Health mid-budget. Where are the unions?

I did a bit of research to try to find out who actually authored the quote that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and still not having any results. In fact, it seems that Einstein was the person who first penned a similar quote. We see Labor and the unions perpetuating the same insanity year after year after year when it comes to health care and health funding. This is absolutely ludicrous.

I say to the honourable health minister: more power to you. Finally, we are starting to see sanity prevail. It is phenomenal that those opposite would have the gall to come into this place with a motion like this when, under their watch, we saw an absolute catastrophe occur in the health system and under the current watch we see Mr Swan as the federal Treasurer and Ms Plibersek as the federal health minister dare to put their head up and talk to us in this place about health management when they are the ones cutting \$103 million, or the equivalent of 2,000 jobs, out of our health system—front-line positions. For goodness sake!

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr RUTHENBERG: I would ask the member for South Brisbane to please go and ask the federal health minister and the federal Treasurer to reinstate the \$103 million that they had already promised us. This government has presided over the revitalisation of the health system in Queensland. There is a plethora of examples. If we want to talk about sacking nurses, let us go back to the \$103 million ripped out of our health system that has required us to start looking at those front-line positions because the Labor federal government refuses to support this House in its efforts to improve the value of health in this state. What an absolute shame!

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! We will wait for the House to come to order and for the interjections to cease. I call the member for Kallangur.

Mr RUTHENBERG: Privatisation of health functions is not a new thing. In fact, it has been around for a while. I simply hold up to honourable members the example of the Mater Hospital, a very proud health institution in this state. It is a private organisation that has been delivering quality health outcomes for a long time. I say that I support wholeheartedly the minister's efforts and his amendment to the motion.

(Time expired)

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (5.54 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Bundamba condemning the LNP's plan to outsource and privatise Queensland health services. Privatising the health system in this state will mean only one thing and that is putting profits

before people, putting your mates' profits before Queenslanders—pure and simple. Clearly that is the priority of this LNP government's health strategy. This is their blueprint. Having already taken an axe to vital health services across the state this is where they want to go.

I have seen the impact of Health budget cuts locally in my electorate of South Brisbane, which includes the Princess Alexandra Hospital. A memo sent to all PA staff last week stated that 66 beds have been closed at the hospital. That is 66 beds including three entire wards. Thirty procedures have been cut weekly—that is over a 10 per cent reduction—and all category 3 surgeries have been cancelled including joint replacements and back operations.

Make no mistake, those opposite are presiding over a real health crisis on Brisbane's south side. For the PA Hospital to go from enjoying a reputation as a world-class tertiary hospital to now cutting surgery by 10 per cent, closing more than 60 beds and sacking health workers is deeply shocking, and it is happening on this minister's watch.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for South Brisbane, there are too many interjections from the members in front of me. I will start warning members as the member with the call is not taking their interjections. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: The surgery cuts will mean in real terms that almost 400 south side locals will not get the surgery they were promised. But what is the health minister doing about it? He is looking everywhere to blame someone else. I do have to commend the health minister because his spin machine is obviously far more advanced and effective than even this Treasurer's. At least the health minister can go out and perpetuate an untruth whereas the Treasurer cannot even do that. First, those opposite blame the former government for the health system. Then they blame the health boards for sacking thousands of workers. Now they are blaming the federal government. I am sure it will be no time at all before they start blaming the private contractors they are bringing into our public hospitals for a decrease in services. In fact, it has already started.

Instead of playing politics, the Minister for Health should get on with his job, the job that he is paid to do, the job that he promised to do for Queenslanders: ensuring Queenslanders have access to a strong public health system in this state. Instead of going around and spinning out of control, the health minister needs to simply hop on a plane, fly down to Canberra and sort this out. But instead he wants to be out there—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms TRAD: I would love to. I take the interjection from the health minister. I will come with him; he can just book the tickets. As is always the case, the political spin trumpeted by the health minister is not backed up with facts. The 2012-13 state budget included a three per cent efficiency cut for the metro south health region which will see almost \$50 million cut from south side hospitals, including the PA, this financial year. This is the health minister's gift to the PA Hospital and metro south: a three per cent efficiency cut—\$50 million cut from their budget.

In comparison, by the minister's own figures, the federal contribution in metro south was \$18 million less than was originally calculated in the forward estimates—\$18 million versus \$50 million. It is clear to anyone who can count past 50 which would have the biggest impact. So it is a falsehood that this government is not responsible for the increasing decline in health services in Queensland.

It is not just beds and surgeries being cut. A report commissioned by metro south reported a maintenance backlog of over \$70 million. And what are they doing? They are outsourcing maintenance workers. That is a taste of what is to come: if there is a problem outsource the problem, blame the private providers and sack a few workers along the way. That is your Health blueprint.

(Time expired)

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (6.00 pm): It does give me great pleasure to rise this evening to contribute to the debate and speak to the amendment moved by the Minister for Health. I begin my contribution by commending the minister for the great work he has done in his department over the past 11 months. Fixing Labor's messes is never easy and it is certainly not an enviable task, but the honourable minister is excelling in his role.

It strikes me as a great irony that members of the Labor Party would come into this House and criticise what the Newman government is doing as we work to revitalise health services for Queensland while their federal colleagues continue to ignore Queensland. Apparently we are simply

not as important as western Sydney. But it is Gillard, Plibersek and Queensland's own Swan who continue to cut millions of dollars from Queensland's Health budget. The member for Bundamba, herself a former parliamentary secretary to the—please bear with me, I am being slightly sarcastic—illustrious former health minister Mr Nuttall, should take advantage of the resources that are available to her—and there certainly are plenty—and perhaps take a look at the positive outcomes Queensland can expect as part of our blueprint for better health in Queensland.

When the Newman government went to the election the people of Queensland put their trust and faith in us to restore Queensland's health system—to revitalise it and to ensure it was offering quality health care to the people in our communities. All that Labor seemed to offer health care in Queensland was nurses who were not being paid, budget blow-outs, neglected facilities and a culture in dire need of transformation.

Mr Cox: Waiting lists.

Miss BARTON: And of course the incredibly long waiting lists. The year 2013 will be a very exciting year for the Queensland health system. We will see the establishment of an independent Mental Health Commission. Mental health is a highly specialised area, and it is very refreshing that I am able to be part of a government that is establishing a commission which will guide policy development and investment in this very important area. We will also be calling for expressions of interest with regard to the redevelopment of the Royal Children's Hospital site as well as the establishment of a Ministerial Health Infrastructure Council. I and my Gold Coast colleagues will continue to work towards the opening of a new state-of-the-art facility in the Gold Coast University Hospital.

The Newman government is governing for all of Queensland. I appreciate that this is a novel concept for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Brisbane. But we have a plan to ensure that country Queensland can be offered emergency, around-the-clock access to high-quality health services in small and remote communities for the first time. This is quite simply a game changer.

One of the other things we are focused on is building community support for local health services. The reality is that flying in expensive short-term locums is not the solution. That is why we will be using telehealth to bolster the multipurpose health service model. This means that Queenslanders right across Queensland will have 24/7 access to some of our best doctors and specialists. There will be six remote trial sites linked to emergency departments of major Queensland hospitals that will be pioneering these new procedures in 2013. It is a very exciting development indeed. Telehealth is already been used in remote and regional communities, and what we are doing is taking advantage of the technology that exists so that we are able to upgrade services for these small centres for the first time.

Then of course there is the long-awaited commission of inquiry into the Health payroll debacle which is due to be finalised this year. Members of the opposition should hang their heads in shame. Not only did we see as a result of the payroll debacle nurses and hospital workers that were not being paid; the cost blow-out means that overcoming the inequities in the prices of procedures in Queensland will be more difficult. It was difficult enough before Julia Gillard, Tanya Plibersek and Queensland's own Wayne Swan cut more than \$100 million from our health funding.

This blueprint will enable us to better invest our money in health care in Queensland—so that we can repair neglected health facilities right across Queensland, so that we are not paying \$1,000 more for a procedure than is being paid in New South Wales or Victoria, so that we can meet the national average for efficient delivery of health care, so that we can see a collaborative approach between public and private providers so that we can deliver better outcomes for the people of Queensland. Queensland is a great state with great opportunity, and this blueprint for better health care in Queensland is a great opportunity for us to reinvest in quality health care and services across Queensland. We are focused not on inputs but on outputs.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.05 pm): Every regional job in health services in Queensland is under threat from the LNP government's plan to outsource or privatise essential health services. Up to 2,000 jobs in the Mackay hospital and health service area alone are under threat from this government's callous Health blueprint that puts profits before patients. The LNP blueprint is a recipe for either handing over to private conglomerates all hospitals or outsourcing large proportions of services that the public health system currently provides, particularly in the Mackay hospital and health service region.

Of course, Mackay Hospital is ripe for handing over to a private conglomerate to run because it is a brand-new hospital. The previous Labor government invested \$408 million to redevelop the Mackay Base Hospital, to increase its bed capacity from 160 beds to 318 beds. The redeveloped Mackay Base Hospital, covering almost 40,000 square metres, is designed to meet the projected growth in demand for health services out to 2020 in the Mackay region, and there is capacity to further expand the hospital to meet our requirements to 2050 without interrupting the spine of the redeveloped hospital. The redeveloped Mackay Base Hospital is also equipped with leading-edge technology to assist staff to provide the highest level of care and comforts to our patients. So over the last few years the previous Labor government invested millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to provide this state-of-the-art health facility for the region, to provide vital services for the future. And now we see the LNP government coming along to flog it off. Taxpayers' money was invested in vital services that this government is looking to sell to private bidders.

The introduction of the contestability units for health services across all regional hospital and health services in the state plus access to 'new capital sources' is LNP code for outsourcing and privatisation. The contestability units will force every part of every hospital in the Mackay hospital and health service region to justify why it should not be replaced by a private contractor whose aim will be to turn a profit. The easiest way to do that is to have fewer jobs, lower wages and conditions or a casualised workforce whereby people cannot budget properly from week to week, which will then have an impact on the local economy. It also will lead to reduced service standards.

No hospital services—medical records clerks, pathology, pharmacy or any other services—are quarantined from this contestability unit under the LNP's outsourcing privatisation plan. The Newman government has made it clear that it has plans to outsource laundry, catering and cleaning positions in Brisbane hospitals in the next 12 months. Regional Queensland will be next. The Mackay hospital and health service's laundry, catering and cleaning positions could be outsourced to larger companies that are based in Brisbane. Locals will not get a look-in because it will be a contract that could be provided across a number of hospital locations.

There is no guarantee that, particularly if it is laundry and catering, local people will be employed or former employees of the local health and hospital services network will be re-employed. Last week the health blueprint was the beginning of the Newman government's Americanisation of our health system. The Newman government needs to explain if people will have to pay to be seen by a doctor or a nurse when they arrive at a hospital. It also needs to explain what it means for nine smaller rural and regional hospitals in the Mackay region. The LNP government needs to explain if regional hospitals such as Collinsville, Dysart or Bowen in the Mackay hospital and health service will be closed or if their services will be downgraded or outsourced if they cannot turn a profit. We already know that the health minister plans to outsource and close Moura and Eidsvold hospitals in Central Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to support the minister's amendment to the member for Bundamba's cynical piece of grandstanding. To be lectured in this House by Gordon Nuttall's apprentice is beyond the pale. The member for Bundamba sanctimoniously stands there and rails the LNP and what we are doing with health, all the while her main claim to fame when it comes to the Health portfolio was being parliamentary secretary for health during the glory days of convicted criminal Gordon Nuttall. Her legacy is the Bundaberg Base Hospital debacle and 'Dr Death'.

It is important to reiterate the ongoing cost to today's Queensland Health budget that the previous government's incompetency is continuing to impose upon the people of Queensland. Because of the Health payroll debacle and rather than being able to employ 860 front-line medical staff, today Queensland Health has to employ 860-odd admin staff just to ensure people are paid correctly and on time. The ALP and its incompetency is the party that keeps on giving long after its demise. Shame these gifts are so toxic! Many of those opposite presided over the health system—a health system so bad that the Premier of the day was left to say, 'No more reviews, no more task forces or committees. Queensland Health as we know it will be abolished.' They presided over a system so sick that the only option of those opposite was to euthanase it.

I am proud to be part of a government that is not going to put Queensland Health down but is prepared to do some radical surgery to get the patient back on its feet, strong and healthy. What is

this government seeking to implement? Simply, placing the patient at the centre of the health system, to be patient outcome focused when it comes to health care—what a novel approach, what a novel idea—not unions, not vested interests but sick people being made well. And how are we doing that? By putting our money where our mouth is. There is an extra \$816 million investment in the Queensland Health budget this year, an increase of approximately seven per cent on the last budget of the Labor government. Some \$11.862 billion has been sown—

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Sub Judice

Mrs MILLER: Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your matter of privilege suddenly arising?

Mrs MILLER: With regard to the member who rose and spoke about 'Dr Death', that comment is sub judice. The matter is at trial at the moment.

Madam SPEAKER: I take your point of order. Member for Capalaba, I will ask you to be careful in respect of current court cases and sub judice rulings.

MOTION

Newman Government

Resumed.

Mr DAVIES: Some \$11.862 billion has been sown into Queensland Health this financial year compared to just over \$11 billion in 2011-12. This has enabled us to increase the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, making it the most generous in Australia; to increase investment in mental health, enabling us to create a newly independent Mental Health Commission from 2013; to implement local hospital boards; and ambulance bypass is now banned. This investment in the health of Queensland is already achieving important health outcomes for patients. Since Queenslanders put an end to the incompetency that was Labor's mismanagement of Queensland Health, we have seen a dramatic reduction in the time patients take to be seen in emergency departments from 64 per cent within four hours to 74 per cent. That is a 10 per cent improvement.

What is the biggest threat to the ongoing success of the patient centred health system we are creating? Three letters—A-L-P, not the Queensland variety this time but the cancer that is federal ALP. That is right: Labor and its shareholding health unions seem determined to return Queensland back to the same health models that it wanted to euthanase. The jobs of up to 2,000 employees are threatened today because Mr Swan, who, it is sad to say, is a Queenslanders, has cut \$103 million from Queensland Health. By concentrating the effect of two years of cuts over a six-month period, Labor has maximised the damage that these cuts will cause. Some \$103 million will be taken from hospital and health services in Queensland by the end of June. An additional \$278 million will be cut in the following two years that follow. After five months of denying federal Labor's cuts and the \$103 million impact, the Queensland Nurses Union has at last acknowledged the cuts in an official submission to a Senate inquiry.

In closing, I call on those opposite, for the sake of those in their electorates, to get on the phone to their federal cousins and possibly even their union friends and demand that they reinstate the funding, as has happened in Victoria. I commend to the House the amendment to the motion moved by the minister.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.15 pm): I rise to support the member for Bundamba's motion—a very good motion that reflects the very bad nature of this new blueprint for Queensland hospitals and for Queensland Health public servants right across this state. What we know from this blueprint is that it is basically a recipe for privatisation and for outsourcing. Health is one of the core fundamental services that governments deliver, and the health minister is clearly washing his hands of health. He is saying, 'Not my business. Nothing to do with me.' First of all he outsources his responsibilities to the health boards but forgets that the health boards actually

report to him as the minister. The next step is that he looks at core essential services and he says, 'How can I get rid of my responsibilities here?'

We are very clearly going to see the outsourcing of services such as pathology, such as pharmacy, such as radiology, such as linen services. This is not about creating jobs. This is about creating a cloud over every health worker who is currently working in Queensland Health in the delivery of these services as part of our hospital network. The member for South Brisbane touched on the impact of these cuts at the PA Hospital. I have been speaking to some people at the PA Hospital and they are shocked. They are shocked at what this government is doing, and these are senior people. This will mean closing down operating theatres—closing them down—which means that between 10 and 40 operations cannot be performed each week. This will mean closing beds and putting extra pressure on the staff of these hospitals.

I am sorry, but did we ever hear about these plans before the last election, and honourable members may want to think about this very carefully? Was there anything that was said to the public about privatising health services? Was anything said? Absolutely not! But not content to privatise health and not content to put a cloud over people's jobs, what did the LNP also want to do? It wanted to make a profit! I have never before heard that when a public policy document is launched by a minister the LNP organisation profits from the proceeds. We saw a large function held at the Sofitel, and people have said to me that they did not know it was an LNP fundraiser and were shocked when they turned up at the Sofitel and were greeted by protesters. Have those opposite been misleading people in relation to this fundraiser? Then on the other hand we have the Premier saying quite clearly to people, 'Donate to the Red Cross appeal. Donate.' There are people in Bundaberg who have been very hard hit and people right across the state. We have just seen Dalby flooded again and Mundubbera. Right around this state, people are hurting.

Not content with fixing up those areas, the LNP wants to profit from public policy. Then we find out today that, not content with the LNP raising about \$120,000—and I am happy to stand corrected if it was more or somewhat less—we also now hear that the member for Chatsworth did something similar. Someone said to me, 'We couldn't afford to go to the \$200 a head lunch so we decided we would go to the \$75 a head breakfast.' This is cash for access: \$75 a head. They said to me, 'I'm sorry, I didn't know that I was going to an LNP fundraiser.' That is misleading the public again.

Firstly, the LNP misleads people in relation to privatising essential health services in this state. Secondly, it misleads people by creating a cloud of uncertainty for 80,000 health workers in this state. And, thirdly, it misleads Queenslanders by running an LNP fundraiser when that money should be going directly to the Red Cross appeal. The members opposite should go back and explain that to the people in their electorates. I know that it will not go down very well. This health minister should hang his head in shame for what he has done in relation to this issue.

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (6.20 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment to the motion moved by the honourable health minister. The Newman government's blueprint for better health care in Queensland provides an action plan to establish Queensland as the leader in Australian health care. At its heart are structural, cultural and financing improvements that will provide much needed change—change that the people of Queensland demanded and voted for. The people have spoken, this government has listened and the blueprint is the answer. It is all about the delivery of quality, accessible and value-for-money health care as well as vital teaching and research assisted by unlocking funds so that they flow to the best-performing providers, whether operated by government or non-government organisations.

The honourable member for Bundamba's motion is clearly and seriously out of touch with the wishes and the best interests of the people of Queensland. It is also fundamentally flawed in condemning the outsourcing of essential health services. For example, every member of this House is familiar with general practice. This is a fine example of an essential health service substantially funded by government, but predominantly provided by private medical practices. One only need look at the so-called superclinic at Redcliffe to see what happens when government interferes with an efficient market.

The other reality—and a very important reality—is that the public hospital system ought to be able to perform at least as well as the non-government sector and should have no difficulty in successfully competing for healthcare funds. Sadly, the biggest threat to government providers is

dinosaur unions and their supporters. The greatest opportunity for government providers is to embrace and master the policies and practices outlined in the blueprint. In the interests of public hospitals, I appeal to the unions to be part of the solution rather than part of the ongoing problem.

Another error in the member for Bundamba's motion is to suggest that the blueprint materials were prepared to raise funds for the LNP. What nonsense! As the minister has reminded us, Queensland Health staff saw it first and free via a video broadcast. At zero cost, both prior to its launch and subsequently, anyone can access it from the Queensland Health website. The LNP did, of course, provide an opportunity, as is very appropriate, to hear from the Premier and the health minister and at the same time raise funds. Why would they do this? Because now that the Newman government has begun fixing Queensland Health, the largest residual impediment to fixing the nation's health care and so much more is a federal Labor government. The LNP needs the resources to excise that malignancy.

As the editorial in today's *Australian* newspaper points out, despite enjoying the biggest resources boom in the country's history, federal Labor has ensured \$10 billion deficits every year until at least 2017. So if it were not for the squanderings of federal and state Labor, imagine what financial support might have been available for the Queensland Red Cross flood appeal.

The member for Bundamba's motion fails on every count whilst the people of Queensland will be well served with the implementation of the Newman government's healthcare blueprint. I commend the honourable minister's amendment to the House.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 70—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dillaway, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seene, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorenson, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Young. Tellers: Kaye, Menkens

NOES, 10—Byrne, Douglas, Judge, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

AYES, 70—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dillaway, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seene, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorenson, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Young. Tellers: Kaye, Menkens

NOES, 11—Byrne, Douglas, Judge, Knuth, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House endorses the state government's Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland which delivers more jobs, a healthier lifestyle and better services into the future.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (6.36 pm), by leave: I advise the House that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly has today, in accordance with standing order 136(2), agreed that the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee's report in respect of the Land, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is to be tabled by the committee by 23 April 2013.

Sitting suspended from 6.37 pm to 7.40 pm.

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 351, on motion of Mr Powell—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (7.40 pm), in reply: I thank all my colleagues who have taken part in today's debate on the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Before I go too much further and so I do not forget, I thank the EHP staff who participated in preparing the bill for our consideration this evening, particularly Elisa, Kylie, Kate and Laurie. To the team back at 400 George Street, thank you for your work as well. I thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its thorough consideration of the bill. Today, members on this side of the House—and I do note Katter's Australian Party as well—have stood in support of this bill that once and for all removes the inequitable waste levy of the past. This bill is good for business and industry, good for regulators and good for the environment. I hope that by commending this bill to the House, and in doing so delivering on the government's election commitment to remove the previous government's waste tax, we will now be able to get on with the job of developing an innovative and inclusive waste reform agenda in Queensland.

I think most members in the House today will agree with the words of the member for Maryborough that this levy was a blunt tool and that it is not the only or the best policy option available to us. There are plenty of opportunities for Queensland to now get the policy framework right, opportunities that we may have lost sight of or not fully explored if the levy was still in place. Fundamentally, many aspects of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 are good. The act itself provides a solid platform from which we can achieve the best environmental, social and economic outcomes for waste management in Queensland. We now have the opportunity to think creatively and to be more sophisticated in the use of the policy tools available to us.

Today, by burying the waste levy of the past, we can lay solid foundations and begin to build a sustainable future of waste management and resource recovery in Queensland. This government is committed to working in partnership with industry to get the framework and policy settings right. The amendments in this bill are an important step in this direction. Not only do they remove some very prescriptive requirements, but also they allow for flexibility and a more streamlined approach to some activities. It is on that note that I start to reflect on some of the comments made by members in their contributions this evening.

In the spirit of streamlining arrangements, the member for Whitsunday spoke of the amendments to the Coastal Management and Protection Act to create self-assessable codes for minor developments under the integrated development assessment system, IDAS. Under this process, the coastal environment will still be protected through the use of acceptable outcomes in the codes. However, the process for the applicant will be faster and streamlined, and the costs will be reduced. I also thank the member for Whitsunday for sharing how repugnant the waste tax was for the people in Whitsunday. He mentioned walking the streets with the now Premier and hearing first-hand from businesses how despised this tax was and how much of an impost it was on their business.

The members for Pine Rivers, Logan and Dalrymple spoke of removing some of the more onerous requirements for operators of smaller waste disposal sites. These amendments provide more flexibility for operators to determine the best approach to managing their sites. Once again, it is not about government telling people how to run their businesses; it is about getting the best environmental and economic outcomes that we can and reducing the regulatory burden for people.

Now I turn to the comments of the member for South Brisbane. The member for South Brisbane suggested that a waste strategy was not a priority of this government—that we had rushed to remove the waste levy but had failed to get going on a strategy. That is absolutely ridiculous. At the same time last year that we initiated the regulatory changes to the waste tax, we initiated our discussions with the industry—and by 'industry' I do not mean just the waste industry but all the industries under construction, agriculture, resources and tourism, across-the-board—as to what an industry led waste strategy would look like. That has progressed, and had the member listened to my second reading speech she would have received an update on it.

The member for South Brisbane spoke about the data and said that it was an essential component of driving a waste strategy. I could not agree more, which is why we are leaving it in the act. It is a very important tool. I wish it had been in place before the previous government jumped to

the conclusion of a waste tax. Had it been there, we may have had a more sensible and rational debate around policy options that could assist us in delivering waste strategies for this state.

The member for South Brisbane spoke of some of the outcomes she has seen with us removing the waste levy. I will speak of some of the outcomes that I have seen because of the waste levy. Sunday was Clean Up Australia Day. Many of the members in this chamber would have participated in Clean Up Australia Day. I see a thumbs up from the member for Murrumba, who obviously attended something locally in his electorate, which is great to hear. I, too, attended a number of activities in my electorate, including with the great kids of year 6 and year 7 from Wamuran State School and also with our littering and illegal dumping unit and HQ Plantations at the state forest. Later on I will give some details as to how much we found, but to give an indication: in 1.2 kilometres of one forestry track, some 26 one-tonne utes were filled. Everything from fridges to bicycles, washing machines to timber, and green waste to a bag full of used nappies was found in our state forests. Why? Because whilst we have done our job in removing this abhorrent tax, there are still fees on landfill put there by local council but more so by the carbon tax. I acknowledge the number of members who mentioned that this evening. The outcome of a levy is not necessarily good environmental outcomes. It includes illegal littering and dumping.

The member for South Brisbane mentioned that it was not designed to impact on domestic residents. That is simply not true. During the debate on the original bill and in my capacity as the shadow minister, one of the key areas that we were representing in our objection to the tax was the fact that a number of aged-care and retirement villages have their waste collected by a commercial operator and, by doing so, they had to pay a tax. The operators, owners and managers of those retirement villages say that they had no solution other than to pass that on to their residents. People who could potentially least afford to pay a tax of this nature were going to be paying it.

The member for South Brisbane mentioned that Labor is progressive. If Labor is progressive, its only solution is a tax, by the sounds of it. Every time they say, 'We are being progressive,' what the nation and the state end up with is yet another tax. As I said, it is a very blunt policy tool. It is not progressive at all. It was lambasted by absolutely everyone, as we saw when we considered the original bill when I was the shadow minister. It was flawed, as the member for Thuringowa rightly pointed out. It was draconian, as the member for Lytton rightly pointed out. It was an insidious rush job, as the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience spoke about. Because of his dealings with local government, no-one would know better than he how much of a rush job it was towards the end. It was not tax that local government wanted to receive or undertake to collect on behalf of the state government. Certainly it was not a tax that they wanted to administer.

The member for South Brisbane spoke about creating jobs in the waste industry. They would have come at the expense of jobs in other industries such as tourism, agriculture and construction for starters. I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Gladstone and the member for Lytton. In particular, it would have impacts on our significant industrial sectors such as in the electorates of Gladstone and Lytton—around the Port of Brisbane. Those businesses were going to be paying extraordinarily high levies to remove their waste.

Then of course we came back to the old chestnut of cross-border waste disposal. This was mentioned by the member for Dalrymple and the member for Maryborough. I thank the Maryborough for clarifying some of this, but I will go into it in a little more detail. We can go back to the debate on the original legislation. I as the shadow minister asked during consideration in detail of the legislation what was occurring and no-one could give me data on this. No-one could tell me how much was coming across the border. Cross-border trade in waste is not illegal. It has actually been undertaken for some time in a regulated manner. The reality is that some states are predisposed to dispose of certain kinds of waste. Certain states have facilities designed to receive certain kinds of regulated waste. It has been occurring. We can certainly track that regulated waste.

We are always hearing anecdotal evidence of highways full of trucks bringing up waste from down south. When I have asked for concrete data no-one has been able to provide it to me. Does that mean that I put my head in the sand and do nothing about it? No, it does not. I do work with my colleagues down south, including the minister for environment in New South Wales. I come back to what the member for South Brisbane said herself: data is king. Where is the data to support this? If anyone has that data then I would love to see it.

Mr Rickuss: The transport costs are too high.

Mr POWELL: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. It is a commercial business decision, surely. Even at \$90 a tonne a company is not going to constantly truck waste from Sydney to Queensland on the basis that fuel—

Ms Trad: Where is your data for that assertion?

Mr Rickuss: \$120 a tonne.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Minister, take your seat for a moment. Member for South Brisbane, he is not taking your interjection. Allow him to continue. I call the minister.

Mr POWELL: Let me give the member for South Brisbane some data. The member for South Brisbane quoted in her speech recycling rates of 33 per cent. Those are 2007 figures. The 2011-12 waste data figures show that for municipal solid waste, MSW, we are now at a 40 per cent recovery rate, for commercial and industrial waste we are at 40 per cent, and for construction and demolition waste we are at 53 per cent. That is a total recovery rate of 42 per cent. In terms of our 2014 targets for commercial and industrial waste, we have met that target of 40 per cent already. We have met the target for construction and demolition waste of 50 per cent. We have already achieved the targets set for 2014.

I will come back to the container deposit legislation later. A number of members have mentioned that. If members bear with me, I will come back to that.

I will now move to the comments made by the member for Gladstone. The member for Gladstone is right that there are other ways to create incentives in this industry. There are other ways that we can drive policy change and drive industry change in terms of waste. We certainly will be doing that by working with councils, not against them. I am very happy to talk to the mayor of the Gladstone Regional Council—I have spoken to her about a number of matters—about this issue as well. I also note that the member for Gladstone and a number of other members mentioned the flooding impacts. I certainly take those comments on board as well.

We are responsible for and we do need to get smarter around how we manage waste. I acknowledge the work that we have been able to do with organisations like Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland and the Australian Packaging Covenant, particularly the rollout of the Queensland bin network. We have successfully trained people—many of the people in this room included—to recycle their home waste, their municipal solid waste. Everyone has become used to having a yellow bin and having it collected every second week or every week if you are lucky.

The problem is that when people go out into public spaces they look for those recycling bins. They look for an opportunity to put their can or bottle or newspaper into a recycling bin and they are not there. We have started to see them in the Queen Street mall. We have a commitment from the Australian Packaging Covenant to roll that out across the state. We are starting with a couple of key locations, particularly shopping centres, entertainment venues and sporting stadiums. They are some of the innovative ways that we are looking at doing this.

The member for Gladstone in particular looked at the container deposit legislation. I need to update her on a recent development in this field. The beverage industry—Coca-Cola Amatil, Schweppes and Lion Nathan—challenged the introduction of container deposit legislation in the Northern Territory's environment protection beverage containers act. They did that on the basis of inconsistency with the Mutual Recognition Act. The Federal Court has recently found that the legislation is inconsistent with the Mutual Recognition Act. The court found that the differential labelling provisions in the Northern Territory legislation were contrary to the MR Act. Costs were awarded.

This finding does not affect the operation of the South Australian scheme, which has been grandfathered under the Mutual Recognition Act, but it does have quite serious potential implications for the independent introduction of container deposit schemes in each state or territory jurisdiction. It makes it unlikely that anything other than a national scheme would be introduced with any degree of certainty. Member for Gladstone, what has occurred is a ruling by the Federal Court on the Northern Territory legislation. It has meant that, given the provisions of the Mutual Recognition Act, a state is very unlikely to succeed in implementing its own container deposit legislation. This means that it would have to be a national system if there is a system at all. I will acknowledge that the Northern Territory government has stated that they intend to appeal the findings if there are sufficient grounds.

In terms of a national scheme, there have been a number of RISs, regulatory impact statements, undertaken. A decision RIS is currently being prepared for consideration later this year. To date, the outcomes of the cost-benefit analysis in the consultation RIS indicated that container deposit legislation is not the most effective option to implement at a national level. It actually recommends other options, including strengthening the packaging, covenant, product stewardship framework. That would provide greater benefits to the community than CDL.

We are now in a situation where it is only likely that other states will gain a CDL if the federal government implements one, but that is looking increasingly unlikely given that the documents going out in terms of the impact on the community show that it is the most costly option, not the one that will produce necessarily the best outcomes. I am happy to talk to the member for Gladstone in more detail about that at some other time.

I must at this point acknowledge that the member for Condamine has also suddenly come on board as a CDL fan. It is interesting that it is not something I ever heard in my time in our shared party room. He must be a new convert to the idea of CDL. But I do thank him for his party's support of this bill this evening.

The member for Lockyer talked about considering new strategies because we are a decentralised state. He rightly pointed out, as a number of members did, that ultimately this levy was all about a tax on the people of Queensland.

I mention the member for Condamine again. I thank him for welcoming this cut in the cost of living for Queenslanders. He, too, picked up on the point about illegal dumping and spoke about some of the back roads out his way.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr POWELL: You are seeing some of that, member for Gregory. As I said earlier, I am seeing that all over my patch.

I will pick up on the member for Condamine's suggestion that we have no long-term strategy. As I have said before, we have been at it from day one. But, as I said, it is also going to be industry driven. I am very much working with industry, with local government, and with both waste generators and waste receivers and recyclers to come up with the best outcome. We will have something out for consultation later this year. My intention is to deliver it as soon as possible.

I agree with the member for Condamine that we need to look at waste not as waste but as a resource. I think one of the most exciting opportunities that we could explore as a government is the idea of an industrial ecological precinct where one industry's output in terms of waste becomes the raw materials for a neighbouring industry's product and subsequently the waste that comes from that industry gets passed onto a neighbouring industry that needs that waste as its raw product. In the end you end up recycling each of the wastes along the way and reducing the need for landfill.

Somewhere along the line the member for Condamine started to get on his old hobbyhorse of coal seam gas. I think he was getting his bills mixed up. His suggestion that water was a waste again belies the work that we have been doing around beneficial re-use of the water from the coal seam gas industry. Again, it does not surprise me that we went down that track. I do agree with the member for Condamine that it is about education as well. Many members here would well remember the 'Do the right thing' campaign. It has been at least a generation, if not longer, since we have had a public-wide campaign around doing the right thing. I am working with Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland around options there and will continue to look at ways that we can educate both the next generation, our school students, and those in the current generation who have forgotten what it is to do the right thing.

I thank the member for Logan for his contribution. He is right: we cannot control all the gate fees, as we have said. Unfortunately, while we took away a state levy, the federal government imposed the carbon tax, and that was also mentioned by the members for Albert and Lytton. The members for Albert and Maryborough also talked about the fact that without the waste levy they are seeing some recycling industries in their parts of the world that are absolutely booming. So the idea that you need a price trigger to initiate these things and sustain them is absolutely ridiculous.

The member for Lytton also talked about reducing the administrative burden, and that is what this bill that we are debating this evening is all about. The member for Mundingburra succinctly summed up the impacts on local governments. We were talking to a number of them about this when it was first introduced by those opposite and we have certainly been talking to them since.

The Newman government has undertaken to develop a new industry led waste strategy for Queensland. I have said that on a number of occasions. This strategy is about the industry's issues as a whole, not the government's issues. This is what an inclusive, industry led strategy is all about, and by 'industry' I mean everyone who has a stake in waste management, including the community, businesses, local governments and the waste sector. The government wants to make sure that it is focusing on the right areas and delivering what Queensland needs and wants. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all of the industry representatives who have participated in the waste forums I have held to date. Some excellent issues and opportunities have been raised in these forums.

The Queensland government values the economic contribution the waste and resource recovery sector makes to Queensland and its genuine efforts in diverting valuable resources from becoming waste. Together we can create a strong waste and resource recovery sector which will provide the building blocks for the implementation of innovative, cost-effective and efficient solutions to help us minimise our waste, increase our recycling and reduce unnecessary disposal in the longer term.

I particularly see this government's role as giving industry an environment of certainty and security with respect to the policy settings. This government's role extends to removing regulatory barriers to ensure we are growing a strong, sustainable industry and not just rewarding lowest common denominator practices. We see this as the best opportunity we have ever had to get the regulatory framework right. This bill is the start of that process.

By getting the policy settings right we can provide the certainty that will attract more investment into Queensland's resource recovery industry. The Queensland government also acknowledges that avoiding producing waste in the first place is a sign of efficient business practices. That is why this government will be working with businesses and waste generators to help improve waste avoidance and increase resource productivity.

We need to start thinking about wastes as resources, as I said previously, and looking for opportunities to keep these materials in the economy for as long as possible. We need to start looking to Queenslanders for the solutions, locally and regionally, and not rely on interstate or overseas markets and processes in quite the same way. This is the way we can maintain and build jobs, skills and investment in Queensland.

Just before I conclude, I look to the gallery and would like to welcome some people who potentially in the very near future will be assisting us in coming up with great solutions for our waste industry here in Queensland, and they are the Young LNP clubs of UQ, QUT and Griffith University. I welcome them to the chamber this evening.

We have an opportunity now to change the past and focus on the future. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 74—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Katter, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Young. Tellers: Kaye, Menkens

NOES, 7—Byrne, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 18—



Mr POWELL (8.16 pm): I seek leave to move the following amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr POWELL: I move the following amendments—

1 After clause 1
Page 6, after line 5—
insert—

1A Commencement

Section 28 commences on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

2 Clause 6 (Act amended)

Page 8, after line 10—

*insert—**Note—*

See also the amendments in the schedule.

3 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 8 (Insertion of new chs 5 and 5A))

Page 10, after line 27—

insert—

(4A) Section 8, inserted section 167(2)—

omit, insert—

(2) The decision stage for the application starts on the later of the following days—

(a) the day the Coordinator-General gives the proponent a copy of the Coordinator-General's report under the State Development Act;

(b) the day after all other stages applying to the application have ended.

4 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 8 (Insertion of new ch 5 and 5A))

Page 12, after line 26—

insert—

(9A) Section 8, inserted section 278(2)—

insert—

(ba) the administering authority has, under section 306, required the holder of the environmental authority to change the amount of financial assurance and the holder has not complied with the requirement;

5 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 8 (Insertion of new chs 5 and 5A))

Page 16, line 1, after 'a person'—

insert—

or another entity

6 Clause 15 (Amendment of s 60 (Insertion of new ch 13, pt 18))

Page 21, after line 4—

insert—

(3A) Section 60, inserted section 678(2)(b), from 'enacted'—

omit, insert—

enacted.

(3B) Section 60, inserted section 678(2)(c)—

omit.

(3C) Section 60, after inserted section 678—

*insert—***678A Application to convert particular existing conditions into environmental authority**

(1) Subsection (2) applies if—

(a) immediately before the commencement, a development permit for a chapter 4 activity is in effect, but no registration certificate for the activity was issued; or

(b) after the commencement, a development permit for a chapter 4 activity comes into effect under section 678.

(2) A person may apply to the chief executive to convert the development conditions of the permit into an environmental authority for a prescribed ERA.

(3) Subsection (4) applies if—

(a) immediately before the commencement—

(i) a UDA development approval for a chapter 4 activity is in effect; and

(ii) UDA development conditions (the **relevant conditions**) of the UDA development approval nominate the administering authority to be the nominated assessing authority for the conditions under the ULDA Act, section 58(a); and

(iii) no registration certificate for the activity was issued; or

(b) after the commencement—

(i) a PDA development approval for a chapter 4 activity, applied for before the commencement, comes into effect; and

- (ii) PDA development conditions (also the **relevant conditions**) of the UDA development approval nominate the administering authority to be the nominated assessing authority for the conditions under the Economic Development Act 2012, section 88(a); and
 - (iii) no registration certificate for the activity is issued.
- (4) A person may apply to the chief executive to convert the relevant conditions into an environmental authority for a prescribed ERA.

- (5) In this section—

PDA development approval see the Economic Development Act 2012, schedule 1.

PDA development condition see the Economic Development Act 2012, section 85(4)(b).

678B Requirements for conversion application

- (1) An application under section 678A must—
- (a) be written; and
 - (b) describe all environmentally relevant activities for the application; and
 - (c) describe the land on which each activity will be carried out; and
 - (d) state whether the applicant is a registered suitable operator for the carrying out of the activity; and
 - (e) if the applicant is not a registered suitable operator for the carrying out of the activity, include an application, under section 318F, for registration as a suitable operator for the carrying out of the activity; and
 - (f) state whether the applicant wants any environmental authority granted for the application to take effect on a day nominated by the applicant.
- (2) No fee is payable for an application under section 678A.

678C Criterion for decision

An application under section 678A may be granted only if the applicant is a registered suitable operator for the carrying out of the activity.

678D Grant of environmental authority for conversion

- (1) If the chief executive decides to approve an application under section 678A(2)—
- (a) the chief executive must grant the applicant an environmental authority for a prescribed ERA; and
 - (b) the development conditions of the permit become the conditions of the environmental authority.
- (2) If the chief executive decides to approve an application under section 678A(4)—
- (a) the chief executive must grant the applicant an environmental authority for a prescribed ERA; and
 - (b) the relevant conditions under section 678A(3) become the conditions of the environmental authority.

678E When environmental authority takes effect

The environmental authority has effect—

- (a) if the authority states that it takes effect on the day nominated by the holder of the authority in a written notice given to the chief executive—on the nominated day; or
- (b) otherwise—on the day the authority is issued.

678F Notice of decision

- (1) This section applies if—
- (a) the chief executive decides to refuse the application; and
 - (b) the application was made together with an application, under section 318F, for registration as a suitable operator for the carrying out of the activity.
- (2) The notice that the chief executive must give the applicant under section 318I(2) must include notice of the decision.

- (3D) Section 60, inserted section 681—

insert—

- (5) If subsection (4) does not apply and a registration certificate is given for the application, the registration certificate is taken to be one to which section 677 applies.

I table the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes to Hon. Andrew Powell's amendments [\[2167\]](#).

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 18, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 19—

 **Ms TRAD** (8.18 pm): This clause seeks to delete from the objectives of the act the actual preparation and implementation of a business plan to support the waste reduction and recycling strategy. Further, this clause also seeks to delete section 5(c), which is the price signalling, including through the introduction of a levy, on waste disposal. In essence, this is our major objection to this amendment bill, and that is taking the teeth out of any capacity to reduce rubbish disposal and to incentivise recycling and better waste management throughout Queensland.

It is common knowledge that putting money on the table, whether that is to incentivise people to engage in the construction market, as this government has done through its new homeowners construction grant, or whether it is to change behaviour or shift in a seismic way public policy, as John Howard did with the gun buyback scheme, a levy actually enables government, policy makers and law-makers to achieve objectives quickly. It puts money on the table, it makes people think about their behaviour and it actually gives government the flexibility and the opportunity to engage in the public policy reform process with grunt and with speed.

It is apparent that this government is resting on its laurels in terms of developing a strategy. This minister has admitted today that it will be two years from when he took over the reins before he is actually able to produce a document to consult on around a new waste strategy for Queensland. Given that his department has been significantly reduced since this government took over, given that his budget is a mere shadow of what it used to be under Labor, I ask the minister what, in fact, has he been doing resting on his laurels in terms of developing a waste management strategy for Queensland. Quite frankly, he is going too slowly on an issue that is a pressing issue for Queensland and it is quite indicative of his performance to date in one of the most important portfolios in the Queensland government.

Mr POWELL: It is a bit rich coming from Labor that I am taking my time in developing an industry driven waste strategy. How long was Labor in power for?

Government members: Twenty years!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr POWELL: Twenty years!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Honourable members on my left and my right, please observe the courtesy of allowing the minister to speak.

Mr POWELL: Twenty years, colleagues. When did we see any effort by those opposite to bring in anything of the nature that we are talking about—an industry driven waste strategy? Never. When do they bring something in? They rush something in in the dying days of their government. Why? There are two reasons. The first is to bring in a tax to shore up their coffers and the second is to make sure their Greens mates are there on polling day to ensure the preferences flow. So it is a bit rich to say that this government is taking its time, that it is delaying in developing an industry driven waste strategy, when consultation takes time. But we are not, unlike those opposite, going to take 20 years to deliver a solution for Queensland when it comes to waste.

I again pick up on the point about a price signal being required. Apparently it is only those opposite who believe that price signals are required. As I said before, Labor say they are progressive. What are they progressive in doing? Implementing new taxes: 'Oh, we have a problem. Let's introduce a new tax. We have another problem. Let's introduce a new tax. Let's keep taxing and taxing.'

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, as I recall you have given your speech. Please allow the minister to continue. I will warn you—and this is the last warning.

Mr POWELL: As I was saying, Labor's solution to everything is a tax. It is as simple as that—another cost-of-living increase on each and every Queenslander, whether it be a business owner trying to run a restaurant or a retirement village wanting to offer quality accommodation for people over 50 or the industries we heard about from the member for Gladstone and the member for Lytton. These were the businesses that were going to be slugged again and again—not just through federal Labor's carbon tax but also through the previous Bligh Labor government's waste tax. That is not how we believe the best outcomes can be achieved for this state. It is certainly not the best way to achieve economic outcomes for this state, for creating jobs in this state, and it is certainly, as I said in my speech previously, not the best way to achieve environmental outcomes.

I would have loved for the member for South Brisbane to join me on Sunday in Beerburrum State Forest, but I suspect her vehicle does not know how to get up the Bruce Highway let alone find Beerburrum State Forest.

A government member interjected.

Mr POWELL: Well, she says that she loves Beerburrum but I note that in one of her tweets she suggested that it was a state forest that was remnant and that we were up there logging it. In fact, the member for South Brisbane knows full well that it is a plantation forest and that it was sold by her colleagues in the Labor Party. It is HQPlantations operating that plantation forest. It is as simple as that.

What are we seeing in places like Beerburrum? People from the Moreton Bay Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Brisbane City Council areas are driving up, finding a small back road in those forestry areas and dumping their rubbish. Fortunately the littering and illegal dumping unit in DEHP, one of the areas the member for South Brisbane assumes has been cut and slashed by this government, is doing fantastic work. They are working with HQPlantations, installing CCTV in the forest—they are moving them around so people do not get used to the camera locations—and they are catching criminals, catching people who are dumping in our state forests. Why are people dumping? Because of the taxes Labor put in place. We have removed this tax. The federal government put in place a carbon tax. These taxes just keep hitting businesses and individuals across Queensland.

The clause that started the member for South Brisbane on this tirade does remove two objectives from the act. Those are the objectives that relate to the levy. There is no point having an act that is designed to remove a head of power if you do not remove that head of power. Clearly in these objectives are the price signal through the levy and the business plans. The business plans, for the sake of the member for South Brisbane, were those documents that outlined the levy funded programs. We do not need legislation to talk about business plans. We have removed those business plans because they were put in place to provide transparency around where the proceeds of the waste levy were going.

Division: Question put—That clause 19, as read, be agreed to.

AYES, 72—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Blejje, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Johnson, Katter, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Walker, Watts, Young. Tellers: Kaye, Menkens

NOES, 7—Byrne, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 24—



Mr POWELL (8.34 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr POWELL: I move the following amendments—

7 Clause 21 (Replacement, renumbering and relocation of s 27 (Meaning of levyable waste disposal site))

Page 28, lines 2 to 4, ', whether' to 'otherwise,'—

omit.

8 Clause 21 (Replacement, renumbering and relocation of s 27 (Meaning of levyable waste disposal site))

Page 28, lines 5 and 6, 'a registration certificate'—

omit, insert—

an environmental authority

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 24, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 25—

**Mr POWELL** (8.35 pm): I move the following amendments—**9 Clause 25 (Replacement of ss 42–43)**

Page 29, lines 8 and 9, '1 December 2013'—

omit, insert—

a day prescribed under a regulation

10 Clause 25 (Replacement of ss 42–43)

Page 29, after line 13—

insert—

- (5) Despite subsection (2), the operator of a waste disposal site is not required to ensure that a weighbridge is installed at the site if it is planned to close the site within 1 year after the operator would otherwise be required, under the subsection, to ensure a weighbridge is installed at the site.

Amendments agreed to.

Ms TRAD: In relation to the amended clause, I ask the minister to provide a bit more detail in the time line for the installation of weighbridges. This is obviously an issue that will delay the full functioning of the waste strategy and the full effect of the commencement of it, so I am just wanting a bit more information and detail from the minister.

Mr POWELL: The decision to delay the installation of the remaining weighbridges for those landfills that receive 10,000 tonnes is about working with those local governments. There are only a handful of weighbridges that are remaining. I believe it is some five weighbridges at landfills over 10,000 tonnes that are required to be installed, but this is about working with those local governments to ensure they have the capacity to be able to do it and in certain time frames. We have not stipulated a particular time frame. We on this side of the House are happy to work with local governments rather than against them.

Ms Trad interjected.**Mr POWELL:** You asked me how long it would take for us—**Mr Bleijie:** Because we want to empower our local governments.

Mr POWELL: Thank you. I take the interjection from the Attorney-General. We on this side work with local governments. Any number of members on this side would be quite happy to remind those on the other side of what the other side does when it deals with local government. Where is my good friend the member for Mundingburra and the Minister for Local Government? He spoke at length about the impact that this waste levy had on local governments—the way it was rushed in, the way there was an imposition on those councils to not only collect the levy but also then pay the state that levy—that is, to pay the state that levy on waste that they collected—the imposition on councils to actually install the weighbridges in time frames arbitrarily set by the Labor government of the time. We on this side of the House do not operate in that way. We work with local governments. We are talking about five councils that need to put in a weighbridge on landfill sites. I hardly think that five weighbridges are going to be the breaking point for the waste strategy in this state.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr POWELL: I note that the member for Whitsunday is sharing in the mirth of this moment—the suggestion that delaying the installation of five weighbridges is going to bring down a whole industry-driven waste strategy in this state. We are working with the industry. Let me remind the member for South Brisbane again that I am talking about not only those who deal with waste and do the recycling or the resource recovery but also those industries responsible for generating the waste in the first place. We are delivering an industry-driven waste strategy in partnership with those interest groups, in partnership with those businesses, in partnership with local governments. If local governments have asked us for a bit longer to implement a weighbridge in five locations, then I think that is a very acceptable outcome for those councils and for the ratepayers of Queensland.

Clause 25, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 31—



Mr POWELL (8.41 pm): I again seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr POWELL: I move the following amendments—

11 Clause 28 (Replacement of s 52 (Submission of waste data returns))

Page 30, lines 11 and 12, 'before the due date'—

omit, insert—

on or before the day prescribed under a regulation

12 Clause 28 (Replacement of s 52 (Submission of waste data returns))

Page 30, line 27 and page 31, lines 1 to 3—

omit.

13 Clause 29 (Amendment of s 53 (Requirement for operator of levyable waste disposal site to keep particular documents))

Page 31, lines 4 to 14—

omit, insert—

29 Omission of s 53 (Requirement for operator of levyable waste disposal site to keep particular documents)

Section 53—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 31, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 32—



Ms TRAD (8.42 pm): In relation to clause 32, I am mindful of the fact that the government has funded the development of an industry waste strategy to the financial year ending 30 June 2016. My question to the minister is whether local government's waste reduction recycling plans are tied to the completion of the state's ultimate waste reduction and recycling plan. Given that the minister has articulated that a draft strategy or a discussion paper will be out later this year, will Queenslanders have to wait until the financial year of 2015-16 to see the finalisation of that plan and, in turn, will local governments not be obliged to put forward their recycling plan obligations under the legislation until after the state has completed its plan?

Mr POWELL: The member for South Brisbane is correct. This amendment extends the time frame for local governments in relation to developing waste reduction and recycling plans. I need to clarify that the new time frames will be prescribed in regulation. So there will be time frames set for local governments in which to prepare those plans.

This clause states that a local government in preparing or adopting a plan must have regard to certain things, including how the goals and targets of the state's waste strategy will be achieved. As such, because we are still in the process of developing the state waste strategy, the extension of time will allow any changes to the strategy to be taken into account in the preparation of those local government plans.

Basically, we are removing the time frames from the legislation and placing them in the regulation. Once we have a clearer picture of this strategy—what that strategy is setting in terms of goals and targets that councils will need to work with us on achieving—that will then set time frames for those local councils to implement their plans accordingly.

As I said in my previous answer, we are working to have a strategy out for broader consultation with Queenslanders later this year. The intention is to have the strategy finalised as soon as practicable after that. So for all intents and purposes, it could be a case of sitting down with local governments and certainly achieving that 2016 time frame that the member spoke about. But really, that will be a call once we have completed our waste strategy and once we have started those negotiations with local government following the completion of the consultation.

Clause 32, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 33 to 50—



Mr POWELL (8.45 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr POWELL: I move the following amendments—

14 Clause 43 (Amendment of s 245 (Definitions for ch 11))

Page 35, line 4, '53,'—

omit.

15 Clause 46 (Amendment of s 253 (When waste audit required))

Page 36, line 4, '53,'—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 33 to 50, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule—



Mr POWELL (8.46 pm): I move the following amendments—

16 Schedule (Acts amended)

Page 42, after line 9—

insert—

Environmental Protection Act 1994

1 Sections 37(1), 60(2), 150(g), 151, 161(b), 162(3)(b), 163(1)(a), 163A(b), 203(1)(e), 205(1)(a), 206(b)(iia), 210(2), 222, 309Z(5), 310E, 310M(d), 310O(5), 310V and 310Y(1)(c), 'significant project'—

omit, insert—

coordinated project

2 Section 37(1)(c)(ii), editor's note—

omit, insert—

Note—

See the State Development Act, part 4, divisions 2 (Coordinated project) and 3 (EIS process).

3 Sections 162(3)(b), editor's note and 310E(5), note—

omit, insert—

Note—

For EISs for coordinated projects, see the State Development Act, section 28 (Application of divs 3–8) and part 4, division 3 (EIS process).

4 Sections 363N(1)(c), 482(2), definition authorised person, paragraph (b) and 486(1)(c), 'section 467(2)(b)'—

omit, insert—

section 467(1)(b)

5 Schedule 4, definitions Coordinator-General's report and significant project, 'significant project'—

omit, insert—

coordinated project

17 Schedule (Acts amended)

Page 42, line 10, 'Environment'—

omit, insert—

Environmental

18 Schedule (Acts amended)

Page 42, after line 14—

insert—

1A Section 8, inserted section 112, definitions eligible ERA, paragraph (b) and ineligible ERA, paragraph (c), 'significant project'—

omit, insert—

coordinated project

19 Schedule (Acts amended)

Page 43, after line 12—

*insert—***6A Section 8, inserted sections 142, 143, 167, 190(2), 192(b) and 205(1)(b), 'significant project'—***omit, insert—*

coordinated project

20 Schedule (Acts amended)

Page 45, after line 18—

*insert—***22A Section 62(2), inserted definition application documents, paragraph (c), 'significant project'—***omit, insert—*

coordinated project

21 Schedule (Acts amended)

Page 49, after line 2—

*insert—***10A Section 258(7), definition prescribed offence, '53,'—***omit.*

Amendments agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (8.47 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (8.47 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (8.49 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Rockhampton Regional Council, Deamalgamation

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (8.49 pm): I rise to speak on the issue of deamalgamation of the Livingstone shire from the Rockhampton Regional Council. This is an extraordinarily important issue for my electorate and those adjoining it. It is simply incredible to me that the minister has enabled the prospect of this course of action. I use the word 'incredible' because any informed source of information available to the minister screams out that deamalgamation would be a retrograde move. So much for making the hard decisions. Needless to say, I could not be more firmly opposed to the notion. My opposition is not because I have some tribal need to defend the actions of the previous government. The facts speak for themselves. The core of my hostility is about the issue of a lack of leadership. Members of this government swan around the community with fence posts in hand like

the proverbial wise monkeys. The member for Keppel is out there trying to suggest that he is neutral. In fact, he used this issue relentlessly during the election campaign in cooperation with ALP-hating local government figures to attack the previous member. Everything that has been done to this point must be considered within that context.

The member is on the public record saying that deamalgamation is in the region's long-term interest and then unsuccessfully blamed the media again for being misquoted. What about the key proponents of the yes campaign all with strong LNP affiliations? For the minister's benefit two things are evident, the first is that deamalgamation will be disastrous for the local government area; the second is that his local member is out there working against the common good. More important is the damage done to the minister's credibility after such a relatively bright beginning. I am starting to suspect the minister may not be all that good with numbers. After all, I recall the minister's contribution during estimates regarding the financial position of Brisbane City Council, a performance that tried to suggest that Brisbane City Council was in a superior financial position.

Mr Crisafulli: One question, Billy, please.

Mr BYRNE: Well, mate, you said it. Members can imagine my surprise when a local newspaper featured a paid advertisement with the minister and the member for Keppel with the headline 'New council can absorb added cost'. The minister is quoted as saying, 'A new council would not necessarily have to increase rates to cover the costs.' Is the QTC information the best information provided? Does the minister agree with that?

Mr Crisafulli: Yes.

Mr BYRNE: Does the minister support the QTC advice?

Mr Crisafulli: Yes.

Mr BYRNE: Great. I am very pleased to hear that because today I call on the minister to go out in public and say it unequivocally. I call on the member for Keppel to get out there and say it unequivocally and stop this weak approach to this important issue.

Leukaemia Foundation

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (8.52 pm): I rise in the House this evening to raise the profile of a very important event occurring in the electorate of Ferny Grove next Thursday, 14 March. As many members may be aware, next Thursday is one of the highlighted days for the Leukaemia Foundation's Shave for a Cure. Whilst there are many members in the House who have very little to contribute in that regard—and I myself may be a little vain to actually offer up my head to be shaved off—I do have a number of worthwhile contributors in my electorate. The team that we are presenting is called the Shuttleworth Shavers. Heading up the team is my wife Emily who eight years ago undertook the shave. She is going almost completely bald—down to about a number 1 comb. I have seen that before so it should not startle me too much.

I would like to raise the fact that there is another team member who, at his very young age of six years, is himself a sufferer of a debilitating medical condition. Dominic White, who is in grade 1 at the St Andrews Catholic Primary School, around the corner from my office, has joined our team and as part of his fundraising campaign has raised the profile of my team enormously. He is being sponsored and ably supported by people from the Children's Hospital, Queensland Health and the Abi Group. He himself has a complex heart condition, basically he has half a heart, and has spent many months of his short period of life in both of those medical institutions. It is through his outstanding fundraising capacities that we have obtained an amount over \$2,000 as of eight o'clock this evening. I did rather rashly at the beginning of this campaign state that I would offer up my bollard as a sacrificial lamb should we reach an enormous sum of money. That was prior to understanding that the Abi Group was coming on board to sponsor Dominic. I am a little nervous at this stage with one week to go. I may look rather ordinary at the next sitting of parliament. However, as I said, I will not be alone in my rather short hair. It is a very worthwhile undertaking and I suggest that many members engage in it and raise money for a very worthwhile cause. The Leukaemia Foundation needs our and the community's support.

Ollis, Mr N

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (8.56 pm): Retirement opens up many diverse possibilities. For some, it is travel—maybe becoming a grey nomad—while others turn to volunteering, with some becoming busier than during their lifetime occupation. We have all heard the comment, 'I don't know

how I ever found time to go to work.’ Some find a new career or maybe develop an inherent skill or creativity. In the case of Nev Ollis, a Logan City resident, he has just published his first book, a great read set in New South Wales during the rich historic era of 1856 to 1868. Nev is a fifth generation Australian with a wealth of experience in the arts—as a landscape painter, jazz musician and journalist—in his own words when referring to his earlier careers, ‘forsaking the more conservative lifestyle of printing compositor and sales and marketing.’

While enjoying a lifetime interest in history, Nev learned through meticulous research that much of what he thought to be accurate historical knowledge was indeed inaccurate and so to a great extent this novel will correct much of previous folklore. *John Pond of Oaks* is an engaging historic novel with fictitious characters living in this well-researched historical setting. John Pond is an English schoolteacher and father of seven who becomes a deacon in the Church of England. He is a man who shows great empathy towards Aboriginal people, never accepting that they should not be educated and at times going against the explicit orders of his superiors. In the author’s words—

He survives savage racial differences, catastrophic gold rush disruptions to his flock, the ever-present bushranger dangers, the arrogance of infinite and unbridled police power and the bush in its rawest form. Through Pond the reader sees the chronic differences between original settlers and Indigenous Australians, while observing Britain’s empirical growth worldwide.

Interestingly, Nev Ollis grew up in Liverpool, New South Wales and worshipped in the very church where he had John Pond give his first sermon. Nev arrived in my office some months ago seeking my support and it was a pleasure to order a number of his books and place them in a number of our local libraries. Since publication he has received huge encouragement with books now in many of our schools and libraries. I intend to present this volume to our Parliamentary Library for the interest of members and I commend his book as a great read and a look at the era which made Australians who they are today.

Teviot Downs

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (8.59 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the approval of Teviot Downs at Greenbank. Unfortunately it is an approval that has been quite controversial in the area and there has been an organised campaign against the development. It went to the ULDA and it was approved. It was under the previous state government’s legislation. I have tried to tell people that only issues relevant to the legislation can be looked at, not hearsay or not-in-my-backyard issues.

One of the main instigators of some of the issues is Mike Kelly. He ran as an Independent against our good member for Logan, Mr Michael Pucci, at the last election. As stated in one of the local papers, he believes the process leading to the approval of the application was corrupt.

I will look at some of the other issues. He ran as an Independent against the LNP. In this email he states how it is wrong and how it is corrupt and it is about the different DAs et cetera. I also have an email from Mike Kelly, which he sent to the developer. In that email he states—

So essentially I am asking for a figure or deal the developer thinks would be sufficient, suitable and practicable for me to simply sell my current executive house and land to them and silence my efforts to delay the process and reduce the density.

Really, what he is saying is, ‘Buy me out.’

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: He also writes—

Personally, I think it would be much easier to simply be bought out. I look forward to your prompt response.

He has been one of the main instigators of the protest against this process. He wonders why it is difficult to take the protest group seriously, yet as one of the main instigators of the group he is saying, ‘If you pay me out, I will dull the noise.’

Tabled paper: Email, dated 1 February 2013, from Gary McDonald to Natalie Plajbes, regarding 144 Sentinel Drive, Greenbank [\[2168\]](#).

Mr Crandon: ‘I’ll go away.’

Mr RICKUSS: ‘I will go away.’ As politicians, we have to deal with this sort of thing. An email was sent to me at 4.53 today. It suggests that I am reading the emails but am choosing not to reply. I have replied to this issue numerous times and I will be replying to it again. The area is not flooded, they are not in trouble, there are no disasters. The ULDA has approved this process through the proper legislative process. It is not an issue that is of high importance. They do not seem to realise that my electorate goes from Greenbank to Toowoomba and a lot of areas are flooded and need a lot of attention at the moment. My office has been extremely busy and my staff have been working very

hard. I am more than happy to meet with them, but, as I said, it is a shame that people who are on the committee, such as Mike Kelly, are virtually trying to leverage funds for themselves. It is disappointing and corrupt.

(Time expired)

Queensland Inspiring Women Speaker's Award; Hobson, Mrs H

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (9.02 pm): This Friday, 8 March marks International Women's Day, and may I say it has been gratifying to have this opportunity to nominate a local resident within my electorate for the inaugural Queensland Inspiring Women Speaker's Award for 2013. At a time when the Queensland Parliament is being served by its first woman Speaker, it is fitting that we take the chance to honour pioneering women with this award. I understand the Queensland Inspiring Women Speaker's Award is represented by a sapphire, our state gemstone, which is a stone that is both strong and beautiful. The logo shows a gem that is multifaceted, like the many amazing recipients of the award.

As some members may have noticed, I am not a woman, but I was raised by an incredibly strong and inspiring woman, I married an absolutely fantastic woman and I am the father of an awesome young woman who brims with such potential for greatness. In making my nomination for the Queensland Inspiring Women Speaker's Award, I was looking to name a woman who has made a significant difference in the lives of others; someone who is a leader for whom a smile of gratitude is thanks enough; someone who has dedicated herself to helping the community in Thuringowa. One name came to mind.

In the 1970s, Helen Hobson saw a need to set up a facility for young mums and their children in the growing area of the Upper Ross. She was part of the steering committee that set up the Upper Ross Community Centre to meet this need all those years ago. Not content to limit the services available to locals, Helen has overseen the centre's outreach expand to offer a range of health services, counselling and vocational assistance, a juvenile support program, legal advice and adult education courses, to name but a few. There is even a community garden project. Now, under the broader banner of North Queensland Community Services Incorporated, Helen has the Community Visitors Scheme coordinating in-home visits to elderly members of the community who are at risk of isolation.

Helen Hobson is a woman of boundless energy, a fact that, Madam Speaker, you will recall from meeting with Helen and staff at the Upper Ross Community Centre during a visit to my electorate last year. I am now working with Helen on a project to relocate the Upper Ross Community Centre to a site nearby, where it will share grounds with the local PCYC and Men's Shed. When it is built, the new centre will create a community hub catering to all residents of the Upper Ross, young, old and at any stage in between. People such as Helen inspire others to do similar work in their lives and within their communities. I appreciate the opportunity I have been given to recognise her and her work. I commend to the House the work of Helen Hobson, a pioneer and a truly inspiring woman.

Electricity Prices

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.05 pm): Last week the government announced a hike in electricity prices, which will see farmers paying an extra \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year for electricity. The Queensland Farmers Federation attributed the hike in electricity costs to the inherited policies of the former government. However, I would like to remind the House that when the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011 was debated, the LNP voted with Labor to restructure the way electricity pricing was determined in Queensland and paved the way for the energy sector to pass on the federal Labor government's carbon tax directly to consumers.

Obviously, they were anticipating being in government and knew that the regulatory risk of a carbon tax would scare away a potential buyer when it came time to sell our energy assets. The LNP also privatised the retail arm of the energy sector, which saw the Competition and Consumer Commission make the decisions on price regulations. It used to be the minister who set the prices, but the LNP supported that move to ensure that you have to go back—

Mr Johnson: You were a part of it.

Mr KNUTH: That is right, and that is why I am here and you are there, Vaughan.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Dalrymple, take your seat. Member for Gregory, I warn you. You are not interjecting from your seat. I call the member for Dalrymple.

Mr KNUTH: They passionately voted for the privatisation of the retail arm of our energy sector, which now sees a massive price rise for electricity consumers. Although they are blaming the Labor Party, they also supported Labor and passionately did so. The Treasurer was frothing at the mouth in his determination that not only should we privatise the retail arm of our energy sector, but also we should sell everything. That was back in 2006 and they supported it. Despite the fact that they point the finger, the evidence is there. It is all in *Hansard*. They can look it up. Peter Costello has given the Treasurer and the Premier the ammunition they need to continue with the plan to privatise the energy sector. The argument that the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr KNUTH: Meanwhile, the LNP continuously fought and attacked the government of the day for its decisions. It opposed the sale of Queensland Rail and the sale of the ports. It said that this was hypocritical. It said how terrible it was, that it was low and disgusting. What is the LNP going to do now? Sell the energy sector! Sell our ports! Sell our profitable assets! It is the people of Queensland who have fought. It is the taxpayers' hard work that contributed to this—

(Time expired).

A government member: Is that why you ran away?

Mr KNUTH: I hope you do, too, and take a stand for your electorate.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Dalrymple, take your seat.

Waterford Electorate

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (9.08 pm): I am afraid that my speech will not be as colourful as that. In the last month and a half, the state has been afflicted by natural disasters and, indeed, flooding rains ever since. In fact, in the last parliament the Premier passed a condolence motion and certainly I pay my respects to those who have been impacted by that disaster. Today, I would like to thank and acknowledge the hard work that has gone on in Waterford and, indeed, Logan City from that point through to now. In the past few weeks, a lot of people have given of themselves, volunteering their time and efforts to assist constituents and members of the public in need. I acknowledge our local Muslim community and our Mormon community who have worked side by side to deliver outcomes in that space. I also thank our local church groups that have got involved. The CentroCentre were fairly instrumental in delivering outcomes and food packages in my region. I acknowledge them.

While Logan copped some criticism in terms of the way it managed the floods, I have to say that I was greatly impressed with my local council—Logan City Council—Mayor Pam Parker and all her councillors. I note that all of the councillors were doorknocking during the rain and checking on residences that were expected to be flooded or impacted in some way. In fact, a great effort was put into making sure that people were notified of the risk. I commend them for those efforts.

It was wonderful to see that Logan City Council was not impacted to the same extent as other areas of the state. But, in saying that, some businesses were impacted to quite a degree. I am pleased to say that I was able to lobby and consequently get support from Minister Crisafulli, Minister Stuckey and Minister McVeigh, among others. I acknowledge them now and thank them for their assistance, particularly with regard to making sure that Logan City Council was declared a category C area. This assists those small businesses of mine that have a genuine need at this time.

I have to say that it pleased me greatly to see the community pull together, to see my neighbour members—the member for Albert and the member for Logan—also out there during the rain assisting with the clean-up and put forward such a fine effort in this region. It was wonderful to have the support of the cabinet and the Premier at that time. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Whitsunday Electorate, Tourism Industry

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (9.10 pm): I rise in the House tonight to sing the praises of tourism operators in my beloved Whitsundays, including those operators who cleaned up at the recent Qantas Australian Tourism Industry Awards. In particular, congratulations to our three gold medal winners from the Whitsundays.

The Big 4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort which is owned and operated by Greg and Naomi McKinnon, an amazing community minded couple, took out best tourist and caravan park. Their outstanding staff share in this victory. Ocean Rafting won the category of best tour. It is one helluva tour. You need to hang onto your hat for that one. Well done to business owners, Peter and Jan Claxton, and their great staff. Last but not least, Hamilton Island was a gold medallist for business tourism. To resort owner Robert Oatley, the chairman of Hamilton Island Enterprises Sandy Oatley, CEO Glenn Bourke and their wonderful team, well done.

Tourism is, of course, one of the four pillars of a re-energised Queensland economy under the Newman LNP government. In the Whitsundays it is our lifeblood. After years of struggle, there are green shoots starting to appear in places such as Airlie Beach with our main street upgrade coming together, multimillion dollar plans to redevelop old resorts such as Lindeman Island and the emergence of China as a major source of international visitors. In fact, we saw evidence of this just recently during Chinese New Year. Many Chinese tourists descended on Airlie. From all reports, they had a great time, thanks largely to tourism focused businessmen such as Greg Waites and Councillor Kevin Collins.

I would also like to pay tribute to a great figure in Whitsundays tourism Mark Bell. His local chapter of the international tourism body SKAL has rolled out an exciting new campaign to attract tourists in the all-important drive market. New billboards promoting Airlie Beach as the 'Heart of the reef' can be found up and down the Bruce Highway throughout the Mackay-Whitsunday region. They are pretty cluey in their wording too. I was delighted to attend the launch of this new, locally funded campaign at the multiaward-winning Capers at the Airlie Beach Hotel, alongside our Minister for Tourism and tourism operators. I am very confident that this campaign will reap plenty of rewards—rewards that are long overdue.

Finally, tonight I call on Australia's airlines to start smelling the roses and have another look at what the world famous Whitsundays have to offer, specifically in relation to the Whitsunday Coast Airport. Last year when Tiger Airways celebrated its much awaited return to Mackay I personally raised the issue of bringing back direct flights to and from Sydney and Melbourne with a senior airline representative while in Mackay. We used to have direct flights before Labor presided over a disaster in tourism. But I believe the time is now right to get these planes back in the skies over the place I call paradise.

Child Protection

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (9.13 pm): I rise to speak on a serious child protection problem for the government—that is, how to manage the ever-increasing number of known child sex offenders living in our communities throughout Queensland. Over the past decade, state and territory governments throughout Australia have enacted laws to collectively underpin the Australian National Child Offender Register. The general objective of the legislation is to ensure that persons convicted of sex offences and other serious offences against children are registered and able to be monitored once released back into the community.

Jurisdictional legislation determines what a registrable offence is. This may vary between states and territories. The ultimate aim is to prevent reoffending by imposing and enforcing strict reporting obligations through compliance monitoring. In Queensland this work is performed exclusively by our police. Basically the police register, monitor, investigate and prosecute child sex offenders and other persons convicted of serious offences against children in Queensland.

The program is not infallible however and the jury is out on how successful it really is. Arguably it is premised on stranger danger whereas in reality most child victims know the offender. Statistically, a very high proportion of child abuse offences occur on an intrafamilial basis. Some experts, including senior police, are concerned about the oversight of many people, including politicians, that these offences typically occur in-house. It is beginning to be suggested that alternate or at least modified approaches should now be considered.

In this era of ruthless government job cuts, especially in the area of policing, new approaches are needed. To provide some perspective, as at 1 March 2011 there were 12,596 registered offenders being monitored in Australia. In Queensland the registration scheme commenced on 1 January 2005. Every year another 500 offenders are being entered onto our register. So far in Queensland there are over 4,400 offenders on the register. Because police are solely responsible for registering and monitoring reportable offenders as well as investigating and prosecuting them, it is foreseeable that the present approach will soon exceed the resource capabilities of the QPS.

I would argue that more focus is needed to discover what actually works so that we can properly protect the most vulnerable members of our community into the future. This is the only hope we have of sustaining child protection into the future. I would ask the House to consider this in the future.

Murrumba Electorate

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (9.16 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise tonight to talk about a great place—Murrumba. Yesterday I welcomed the federal shadow minister for education, apprenticeships and training, Christopher Pyne MP, to my electorate, along with a great young man called Luke Howarth, who is the LNP candidate for Petrie. We met 20 school principals from Murrumba and the surrounding suburbs for an open forum with the shadow minister. I would like to acknowledge Executive Principal Tracy Corsbie for hosting the shadow minister's visit and the efforts of the following staff: Nicole Readman, Alison Hobson, Tanya Aylwood, Teriesa Benn and the students from year 12 certificate III in hospitality and year 11 certificate II in hospitality who prepared a great breakfast.

As an aside, we went to the school assembly where I was asked to award the trophy for the staff versus students cricket game. For the record, the staff won and Tracy Corsbie even shared with me that she had bowled out a very embarrassed young man during that game.

As the House would know, it was Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday, 3 March. While many Clean Up Australia Day events were cancelled due to heavy rain on the day, Peggy Campbell, Jackie Hines and their band of determined volunteers were out cleaning up Uhlmann Road boat ramp. I was pleased to help at this great community event.

On Friday, 22 February I had the pleasure of presenting the 2013 student leader badges for the great kids at a great school called Deception Bay State School: school captains Gabriella Cook and Jack Patmore; student leaders Elifasa Leilua and Taalolo Tupai; library monitors Amber Clewley and Jolie Ma; and sports monitors Bethany Membery, Bailey West and Tamara Malcolm. The school is very proud of producing three of this year's four school captains for Deception Bay State High School, being John Batalabasi, Zoey Tah and Colleen Grant. As an aside, they attended and delivered great speeches after being put on the spot.

Since the last session of parliament I have spent a weekend in the North Burnett town of Mundubbera and saw firsthand the destruction in that town and community. I spent a weekend volunteering with a great organisation called BlazeAid and have taken the opportunity to promote this great organisation here in the House. Vicki Kelly is the local coordinator and deserves praise. Madam Speaker, I never tire of speaking about the great place that is Murrumba.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.19 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, Davis C., Davis T., Dempsey, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holwich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young