

**WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 1993**

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

**PETITIONS**

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

**Designated Dangerous Goods Route, Beams Road**

From **Mr J. N. Goss** (76 signatories) praying that Beams Road be removed as a designated dangerous goods route and that trucks be redirected to the Gateway Arterial road with the urgent construction of an off-ramp to the Bruce Highway at Bald Hills.

**High School, Victoria Point**

From **Mr Budd** (1 094 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will provide for a high school at Victoria Point.

**Miriam Vale Shire Council**

From **Mr Campbell** (269 signatories) praying that councillors and senior administration staff be removed from the Miriam Vale Shire Council and be replaced by an administrator.

**Redevelopment of Historical Sites**

From **Mrs Edmond** (189 signatories) praying for urgent legislation to ensure that redevelopment of historical sites only occur after proper consultation and that unnecessary destruction be not allowed in the meantime.

**Russell Island Bridge**

From **Mr Budd** (725 signatories) praying for action to be taken to construct a road bridge from Russell Island to the mainland.

**Life Education Program, Bundaberg**

From **Mr Campbell** (11 496 signatories) praying that Parliament will urge the Government to fund the salary of the teacher conducting the Bundaberg Life Education Program.

**Child Molesters**

From **Mr Cooper** (242 signatories) praying that the parole period be removed when sentencing child molesters, that offenders are given and serve maximum sentences and that their names be released for publication.

Similar petitions were received from **Mr Livingstone** (278 signatories), **Mr Turner** (1 867 signatories), **Mr Campbell** (6 915 signatories) and **Mr Laming** (7 113 signatories).

Petitions received.

**STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS**

In accordance with the schedule circulated by the Clerk to members in the Chamber, the following documents were tabled—

## Art Unions and Public Amusements Act—

Proclamation—Provisions of sections 61 to 74 and 76 to 86 of the Act commence on 1 January 1993, No.461

## Corrective Services Act—

Corrective Services (Establishment of Prisons) Amendment Order (No.2) 1992, No.447

## Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Act—

Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Amendment By-law (No.1) 1992, No.451

## District Courts Act—

District Courts (Court Fees) Order 1992, No.443

District Courts Rules Amendment Order (No.1) 1992, No.442

## Education (General Provisions) Act—

Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No.1) 1992, No.437

Education (School Support Centres) Amendment Order (No.1) 1992, No.434

Education (Statewide Support Centres) Amendment Order (No.1) 1992, No.436

## Fauna Conservation Act—

Fauna Conservation (Declaration of Approved Institutions) Amendment Order (No.1) 1992, No.458

## Fauna Conservation (Open Season-Deer) Order 1992, No.457

## Gas Act—

Gas (Extension of Franchise) Order (No.2) 1992, No.455

## Griffith University Act—

Griffith University (Gold Coast University College Student Representative Council) Amendment Order (No.1) 1992, No.435

## Health Legislation Amendment Act—

Proclamation—Schedules 1 and 2 of the Act commence on 18 December 1992 and 1 February 1993, respectively, No.450

## Health Services Act—

Health Services (Public Hospitals Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No.2) 1992, No.453

## Health Services (Transfer of Officers) Regulation 1992, No.452

## Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act—

Proclamation—Certain provisions in Schedule 1 of the Act commence on 18 December 1992, No.446

## Lands Legislation Amendment Act—

Proclamation—Schedules 1 and 2 of the Act commence on 18 December 1992 and 31 January 1993, respectively, No.448

## Local Government Superannuation Act—

- Local Government Employees' Superannuation (Amendment of Articles) Regulation (No.2) 1992, No.440
- Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act—  
Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Variation Order 1992, No.454
- National Parks and Wildlife Act—  
National Park 2155 County of Stanley (Extension) Order 1992, No.456
- Nursing Act—  
Proclamation—Provisions of Division 7 of Part 2 of the Act commence on 18 December 1992, No.449
- Parliamentary Members' Salaries Act—  
Parliamentary Members (Annual Rate of Salary) Order 1993
- Public Trustee Act—  
Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No.2) 1992, No.445
- South Bank Corporation Act—  
South Bank Corporation By-law 1992, No.459
- Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (No.2)—  
Proclamation—Certain provisions in Schedule 1 of the Act commence on 18 December 1992, No.439
- Statutory Instruments Act—  
Statutory Instruments Amendment Regulation (No.3) 1992, No.460
- Supreme Court Act—  
Supreme Court Rules Amendment Order (No.1) 1992, No.444
- Queensland Building Services Authority Act—  
Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Regulation (No.1) 1992, No.438
- Trustee Companies Act—  
Trustee Companies (Paid-Up Capital) Order (No.1) 1992, No.441
- Workplace Health and Safety Act—  
Workplace Health and Safety (Handling of People) Code of Practice Approval Notice 1992, No.463  
Workplace Health and Safety (PPE in Building Work) Code of Practice Approval Notice 1992, No.462

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

### Annual Report

**Hon. G. R. MILLINER** (Ferny Grove—Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.33 p.m.): On 5 November 1992, I tabled the annual report of the Department of Justice to 30 June 1992 as I was the responsible Minister at that date. It has been brought to my notice that the financial section of that report contains some editing errors. I now therefore table a replacement document and assure the Parliament that, despite the errors, the integrity of the financial information as recorded was in no way compromised in the material originally tabled.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Compass Airlines

**Hon. K. E. De LACY** (Cairns—Treasurer) (2.33 p.m.), by leave: Following the announcement yesterday of a \$10.953m pre-tax half year loss by Compass Airlines, a number of public comments have been made by the shadow Treasurer which may mislead or confuse the public. For the benefit of honourable members, I wish to set the record straight. The shadow Treasurer argued on ABC radio this morning that the Queensland Government should not have provided financial assistance to get Compass back in the air. She stated that this is not an appropriate role for Government. There may be some in the community who would agree with her, but I must say that her advice is a bit rich, coming from an Opposition which, in Government, lost around \$150m in Qintex and Kern Corporation in what can only be described as politically inspired investments. It is also a bit rich coming from a shadow Treasurer who lectured me earlier this month about my support for the right of the Queensland Investment Corporation to make a commercial decision to sell its Arnott shares.

The Queensland Government has viewed its involvement with Compass as a strategic investment in Queensland tourism rather than picking a particular private sector winner. The Government believes that its approach has been vindicated. There are now new air services to Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and the Gold Coast. Every route on which Compass operates has seen a significant reduction in air fares—the most recent of which was the announcement by other airlines of discounted fares from Sydney to Coolangatta, immediately following the commencement of Compass flights on that route. And, of course, there are several hundred new jobs in Queensland because of Compass' decision to establish its headquarters here in Queensland.

I was also disturbed to find that the shadow Treasurer, six months after Compass' re-entry into the marketplace, has absolutely no grasp of the well-publicised details of the Queensland Government's financial assistance to Compass. On radio this morning, the shadow Treasurer claimed that the taxpayers had invested \$17m in Compass.

**Mrs Sheldon:** \$16.7m, actually.

**Mr De LACY:** They invested \$16.7m in Compass. To ensure that nobody else is similarly confused, let me set the record straight. The main focus of the Government's support for Compass was an agreement to subunderwrite the Southern Cross share float up to a maximum of \$10m. After the float, we were called on to subscribe 13.73 million shares at a cost of \$6.865m. The funds to purchase these shares were sourced from Treasury funds—and I emphasise "Treasury funds"—deposited with the QIDC venture capital fund. The other significant element of our assistance package was temporary loans of \$2.4m. These loans have been repaid. In addition, the Queensland Government matched a South Australian Government offer of a temporary loan of \$500,000. This loan is to be repaid with shares in Southern Cross. Finally, the Government has offered a long-term loan of \$1.1m to assist with establishing terminal facilities at Coolangatta Airport. This offer has in part been overtaken by the Federal Government announcement that a common user facility will be constructed at Coolangatta Airport in the next couple of years. The Queensland Government is currently discussing with Compass the use of part of that \$1.1m to construct interim terminal facilities. These are the simple facts about Queensland Government support for Compass—facts that the shadow Treasurer either does not understand, or refuses to understand.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Basil Stafford Centre

**Hon. A. M. WARNER** (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (2.37 p.m.), by leave: Last week, some parents of clients

at the Basil Stafford Centre at Wacol made statements about the care of clients at the centre. The Basil Stafford Centre provides residential care for children and adults who have severe intellectual disabilities and, in some instances, very difficult behavioural problems. Serious allegations have been made by some staff at the centre and by some parents concerning abuse of clients, including physical and sexual assaults. These allegations, when brought to the attention of my department, were immediately referred to the police for investigation, and the Criminal Justice Commission has been notified.

I am advised that my department first reported allegations of abuse of clients at the centre to the Criminal Justice Commission in December 1990. In all instances, my department has cooperated with the Criminal Justice Commission and continues to assist with those investigations. I await the outcome of the Criminal Justice Commission's investigations. Investigations by police to date have highlighted the need for new procedures for residential care staff to record instances of injury to clients or allegations of abuse. These new procedures have already been implemented. We have not waited for the conclusion of investigations by the Criminal Justice Commission to adopt these improved procedures aimed at protecting the rights of children. Also, new and more stringent procedures have been set down for staff at all levels so that on any occasion when a client is injured, whether it occurs in the centre or on an outing, the injury is reported and followed up immediately by nursing staff and senior staff. I would add that these new procedures were developed by the Intellectual Disability Services Division of the department working in consultation with unions. Also, two additional senior officers have been assigned to the centre and staffing arrangements have been altered to provide increased supervision and guidance of staff within each residential living unit at the centre.

It is not just a matter of new procedures and increased staffing. Police have laid charges. A male member of staff was charged under the Criminal Code with unlawful carnal knowledge of a person with an intellectual disability. The director-general immediately suspended him from duty. He was convicted in the District Court in February 1991. This man breached all trust placed in him and, tragically, the woman who was sexually assaulted by him became pregnant, only adding to her anguish and distress. He was sentenced initially to 18 months' imprisonment. However, the Attorney-General appealed against the leniency of the sentence with the result that, in July 1991, the sentence was increased to five years' imprisonment. I support realistic sentences in such cases. There must be a clear statement to staff, parents and the community as a whole that such behaviour is totally unacceptable and will be punished.

Let there be no mistake: my department immediately contacts the police and the CJC if there is any suspicion that clients have been assaulted, abused or their rights as citizens denied. However, vigilance is always necessary. Our clients with intellectual disabilities are vulnerable people. Often, they cannot speak up for themselves. At all times, staff must be alert and report immediately any suspicions they may have. Given the recent publicity about the Basil Stafford Centre, the public may have been misled into believing that every staff member was under suspicion. This, of course, is not the case. Let me assure Parliament that the majority of the staff at the Basil Stafford Centre are honest, hardworking people, who do a very difficult and at times stressful job caring for people with severe intellectual disabilities. They are specifically trained for this job—a job that most people in the community would shy away from, a job that most people just would not or could not do. They know that their behaviour towards clients is always under scrutiny. I look forward to the conclusion of the Criminal Justice Commission's inquiries at the Basil Stafford Centre. We must all be ever vigilant to ensure that the dignity and rights of clients are respected.

## **TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mr ARDILL** (Archerfield) (2.42 p.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the annual report of the Travelsafe Committee for 1991-92, and I move that the report be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

## PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### Reports

**Mr DAVIES** (Mundingburra) (2.42 p.m.): I lay upon the table of the House pursuant to section 4.7 (4) of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 the report of the Commissioner of the Police Service, Mr J. P. O'Sullivan, being a certified copy of the register of all reports and recommendations made to the former Minister for Police, the Honourable N. G. Warburton, MLA, and his successor, the Honourable Paul Braddy, MLA, under section 4.6 (1) (a) and all directions given in writing to the commissioner under section 4.6 (2) of the said Act, along with the report of the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission, Mr Robin O'Regan, QC.

Mr O'Regan's report notes a number of difficulties of interpretation of sections 4.6 and 4.7 of the Act regarding the content of the register, necessitating an undue commitment of resources by both the Police Service and the Criminal Justice Commission. When the register was tabled in 1992, my predecessor as chairman of the committee, Peter Beattie, informed the Parliament—

“ . . . the Act only requires inclusion of those reports and recommendations from the Commissioner to the Minister 'which have been required by the Minister' pursuant to section 4.6 (1) (a) and the directions from the Minister to the Commissioner pursuant to section 4.6 (2) of the Act. The committee sought the opinion of senior counsel to ascertain the correct view, and includes with this report the advice of Mr Kerry Copley, QC, which confirms the approach taken by Sir Max and the committee.

... .

Accordingly, a strict interpretation of the Act provides that the register to be kept by the commissioner for presentation to the Chairman of the CJC and to be tabled in this Parliament by me should be restricted to the range of reports, recommendations and directions as required by the Act.”

The first committee supported the case for a review of that part of the legislation.

This House is aware that a review of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 is now under way, but I take the opportunity to point out this further comment in Mr O'Regan's report—

“The difficulties of interpretations and applications are such that immediate attention should be given to their amendment to clarify the position.”

I table the report accordingly.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Closure of Hospitals for Elective Surgery over Easter

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer to his comments today that only two Brisbane hospitals, the Mater Adult Hospital and the Royal Brisbane Hospital, will cut elective surgery during the Easter holiday period. I now table a memo from the Princess Alexandra Hospital and also a copy of a memo dated 8 February from the medical superintendent at the Mackay Base Hospital, which advises doctors that the operating theatre and day surgery unit at that hospital will be closed to elective surgery for two weeks from Easter, and I ask: how many other public hospitals

are closing down elective surgery from Easter? Why is it that a four-day break over Easter translates into two to three week delays in elective surgery, which will further extend record waiting lists?

**Mr HAYWARD:** This morning, the Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying that the entire public hospitals system will close from 4 April to 16 April, except for emergencies. That patently is rubbish.

**Mr Borbidge:** Answer the question.

**Mr HAYWARD:** I am answering the question. There are nine public hospitals in Brisbane. Of those nine, two—the Mater Adult Hospital and the Royal Brisbane Hospital—will be closing for elective surgery over that period. All of the other hospitals will be open and will carry out elective surgery over that period. The memo in relation to the Princess Alexandra Hospital, about which the honourable member spoke before, is dated some time in January. It has been around for a long time. Because of the Easter break and the school holiday period after that, the memo seeks to find out which specialists are going on holidays.

**Mr Borbidge:** You told them to take their holidays. It is in writing.

**Mr HAYWARD:** Will the Leader of the Opposition just listen? He wanted an answer; he is going to get one.

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Caloundra will cease interjecting.

**Mr HAYWARD:** The memo asked whether staff would be taking their leave over Easter or in that school holiday period. The simple reason for this is that rosters for nurses and ancillary staff have to be prepared a month ahead. In previous years, we have had the farcical situation of nurses and ancillary staff being put on the roster, which requires them to be at the hospital, and the surgeons deciding, under their award or agreement, that they were going on holidays. As a result, people were being paid to sit around. What I am about, quite simply, is running an efficient and effective public hospitals system. The Leader of the Opposition made the point before about the Royal Brisbane Hospital. He should understand that the Royal Brisbane Hospital—

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to cease interjecting. He has had a fair go.

**Mr HAYWARD:** He should understand that the Royal Brisbane Hospital will in fact be increasing its day elective surgery over that period. Day surgery will in fact be increased over that period. This year, the system will undertake 550 000 procedures in Queensland, a 10 per cent increase on the previous year, which was a record increase on the year before that.

#### **Closure of Wards at Royal Brisbane Hospital**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I direct another question to the Minister for Health.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** Are you prepared to listen to the answer this time?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** No, we just want an answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Chermside will cease interjecting. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition ask his question.

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Clayfield under Standing Order 123A. I am on my feet and talking.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I direct a further question to the Minister for Health. I ask: will be confirm that, in addition to the wards already closed at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital and Chermside, the additional wards of 3B, 7IE, 7FS, 3C and

two orthopaedic wards at the Royal Brisbane Hospital will be closed during a four-week period from 5 April to 4 May? What guarantee can he give, under the current funding crisis, that all these wards will reopen? What will happen to the staff who work in these wards during their closure? What will happen to the staff who work in the five operating theatres that will be closed for this duration of one month?

**Mr HAYWARD:** I assume that the question was without notice.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It was without notice.

**Mr HAYWARD:** On the basis of it being without notice, it will get the answer that I think it probably deserves. Some members opposite probably know this, but let me make the point very clearly that what determines the throughput of surgery now is the availability of theatres and also the availability of appropriate surgical staff. No longer are issues to do with beds an appropriate response. People do not spend the same length of time in hospital as they used to.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have asked the Leader of the Opposition to stop interjecting. I will have to warn him shortly.

**Mr HAYWARD:** On that basis, this year, we have increased our budget by \$80m. That is a record increase in the Health budget. In addition, this year, through our signing the Medicare agreement, we received access to money under the hospital access program. Under that program, we received \$8.67m. Members opposite go around and continually attack Medicare. They denigrate it and do whatever they can to it. It is a disgrace. The reality is that, under that program, we were able to receive \$8.67m, which I was able to allocate to targeted areas to attack those priority lists throughout Queensland. As I said before, this year, the Queensland public hospitals system will treat 550 000 patients. That is a system based on medical priority. That is a record number of patients.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Southport! Is he quite ready?

#### Financial Assistance Grants

**Mr PITT:** I ask the Premier: can he inform the House what financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth are used for? Would a 5 per cent cut in such grants represent a cut in services for Queensland? Is it true, as Dr Hewson asserts, that Queensland will be compensated for such a cut by alleged tax cuts in the Fightback scheme?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** It is very important that all honourable members are aware of the effects that Fightback will have on Queensland's Budget. Members opposite engage in a smokescreen of shuffling and putting their heads down to try to avoid this debate. However, let there be no misunderstanding as to the effects of Fightback on the Queensland Budget. Let there be no misunderstanding as well about the pathetic wimps with whom we are dealing. Can anyone imagine a Leader of the National Party such as Nicklin, Bjelke-Petersen or even good old Mike Ahern, on the basis of a phone call from a Federal Liberal Leader, signing a document which will take away money from Queensland? That is what the National Party has come to! The National Party has a wimp for a leader. He was led by the nose to Sydney by "Dame" Joan to sign a bit of paper which sacrifices \$370m from the Queensland Budget. Mr Speaker, just look at the members opposite! They are deliberately disrupting the proceedings of this House by talking among themselves, turning their backs—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! If the member for Southport wants to have a conversation with the member for Indooroopilly, they should both leave this Chamber. I will not tolerate the noise level in this Chamber. I cannot hear the Premier's answer. During question time, I ask members to desist from having conversations.



**Mr W. K. GOSS:** If members opposite want to talk among themselves, that is all right with me. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to bury his head in embarrassment and talk to "Dame" Joan, that is all right with me, too. However, I will tell each and every Queenslander how, on the basis of a phone call from the Federal Liberal Leader, the State Leader of the Opposition jumped on a plane to Sydney and signed away \$370m of the Queensland Budget. In so doing, he signed away 4 300 schoolteachers, 2 700 nurses and more than 500 police. When I get into the National Party backblocks and tell the people that the National Party Leader took such an action, we will see that he also signed the death warrant of the National Party. The Leader of the Opposition did not even have a speaking part in that pathetic sellout in Sydney. He was placed on the edge of the photo, was told to smile, and he did as he was told. Then he came back to Brisbane. The Leader of the Opposition has signed the death warrant of the National Party, because last week the Liberal Party took the first step towards swallowing Rob Borbidge and the rest of the National Party.

As I stated at the outset, because they do not want to hear about this members opposite engage in the embarrassed shuffling tactic of looking down at the floor, of turning their backs and of talking among themselves. For the last month, members opposite have been fudging on this issue; they have been telling falsehoods; and they have been misrepresenting the situation in every possible way. Yesterday, we saw a classic example of that tactic.

Let me cite three brief quotes that illustrate the way in which the Opposition is fudging. On 21 January on an ABC current affairs program, Mr Borbidge was the first to be asked about the cutbacks to Queensland. After a lengthy interview, he was finally asked by Ms Reynolds—

"But let's look at the facts. If the coalition Government is elected Federally, the State Government will have less money, right?"

Mr Borbidge answered—

"Well that remains to be seen."

Talk about fudging and twisting and misrepresenting! Mr Speaker, this man is to public debate what Luke Shaw is to the jury system. It runs right through the other members of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition does not know the answer to the question, or he does know but he is not saying, so his response is, "Well that remains to be seen."

About a week later, Mrs Sheldon, the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, was interviewed on the same program. She was asked whether Queensland will be receiving a cut in Commonwealth grants. Mrs Sheldon replied—

"Well, they're not cutting back on money under the Fightback plan. There are a couple of instances in which the Commonwealth grant to the State will differ and will change and that is quite true."

The interviewer asked—

"Be reduced?"

Mrs Sheldon replied—

"Yes, be reduced but also changed."

Mr Speaker, "reduced" is "reduced", and \$370m is \$370m! However, the big joke—and it may just be consistent with the sort of economic expertise about the understanding of a float which was demonstrated on radio this morning—is the Deputy Leader of the Coalition's explanation. Under a Federal coalition Government, Queensland will lose \$370m, but Mrs Sheldon maintains that Queensland will be better off. I know it is hard for a lot of people to understand that, so I will go through it slowly. Mrs Sheldon says that Queensland will be better off losing \$370m. As she stated on that program—

". . . Anna, there is this total concept that people are better off creating their own destiny having money in their pocket to spend as they see fit rather than the

Government having the money in its pocket to spend as it thinks should be spent on people.”

I will inform the House about how the Government believes that money should be spent on the people. We think it should be spent on continuing the employment of 4 355 teachers, 2 700 nurses and 560 police officers. However, Mrs Sheldon’s plan is that people can pay for that out of their own pockets. How absurd! Neither the Leader of the Coalition nor the Deputy Leader of the Coalition will tell the people of Queensland the truth. However, the Government will tell them month in, month out for the next three years, if the worst comes to the worst and Dr Hewson is elected. The truth was finally told by Dr Hewson on the same program. After the Leaders of the Coalition both told falsehoods or avoided the question, Dr Hewson was asked by the same interviewer—

“All right now looking at the Commonwealth grants to the States, the grants will be cut to Queensland under Fightback. How will Queensland be compensated?”

Dr Hewson said straight out—

“Well we cut general purpose payments for all the States by about 5% and we do not seek to compensate them for that.”

### **Payroll Tax**

**Mr PITT:** I ask the Treasurer: is he aware of the formula proposed by the Federal Opposition to compensate Queensland for any proposed abolition of payroll tax? Has the State Treasury examined such a formula? Does Dr Hewson’s letter to the National Party Leader reassure the Treasurer that Queensland will not be short changed?

**Mr De LACY:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I believe that all honourable members are aware that a Federal election campaign is going on and that members of the Liberal and National Parties in Queensland have decided to campaign on behalf of their Federal colleagues. This morning, they held one of their celebrated joint party meetings, and they have come up with a strategy which will win the election for their Canberra mentor, Dr John Hewson. Do honourable members know what they are going to do? They will talk and fidget while the Premier answers questions. That is the strategy. They are going to put their heads down while the Premier talks and pretend that they are not listening. Because they cannot debate the issues, they are going to pretend that they cannot hear anything. The only way in which Opposition members can sustain their position is by putting their heads down and running for cover. That is what they are doing today.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the Standing Orders as they relate to question time. I ask the Treasurer to answer the question right now.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I also invite the Premier to suspend the Sessional Orders and debate Fightback now.

### **PRIVILEGE**

#### **Goods and Services Tax**

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I rise on a matter of privilege. The arrangements of myself and various members of the Government are set for today. However, I am more than happy to set down the debate for tomorrow, and it can go all day. We will debate the GST all day tomorrow.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! We will now return to question time. I ask the Treasurer to answer the question. Does he remember it?

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Mr De LACY**, continuing: In case Opposition members do not accept the challenge tomorrow, I will make a few points today. The member for Mulgrave asked me whether I was aware of the formula contained in Fightback for compensation for the abolition of payroll tax. The short answer to the question is, "Yes, I am, and so is the Treasury Department." Treasury has examined it in detail and, on the basis of that examination, has said that the formula will cost the Queensland Budget an additional \$150m. I have also seen Mr Hewson's "Dear Rob" letter in which he answers a series of queries that were raised by the Premier in respect of Fightback. Let me say that I take no comfort from that letter, nor does my department, that the Queensland Budget will not be savaged by a Federal Liberal Party Government, if ever we are unfortunate enough to have one.

For the benefit of honourable members, I point out that yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition made a speech in which he waffled around, trying to refute the fact that the formula would cost \$150m. I am prepared to table in this Parliament an analysis carried out by my department of the Fightback proposal for the abolition of payroll tax. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the Liberal Party to put that—

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr De LACY**: This is their complete analysis.

**Mrs Sheldon**: On the old formula.

**Mr De LACY**: On the formula. I challenge them to put it to Dr Hewson and tell the House whether or not it is valid. The Opposition says that conceivably, under the financial assistance grants formula, there would be two ways of treating the abolition of payroll tax. Under what is called the specific purpose payment treatment, it will cost Queensland \$150m. I will table the information, and the Opposition can ask Dr Hewson to look at it and tell us whether or not that is right.

**Health Cutbacks**

**Mrs SHELDON**: In directing my first question to the Minister for Health, I refer to his repeated claim that service cutbacks in Queensland hospitals over and, in fact, well beyond Easter are not related to his Government's competence but are somehow the fault of problems with the rostering system caused by doctors. I table seven—I repeat "seven"—separate memos which prove conclusively that these cuts in services have nothing to do with rostering or the willingness of medical staff to work and have everything to do with the orders from his department not to work over this period. I ask the Minister: in relation to this conclusive documentary evidence of his deliberate misrepresentation of dedicated health professionals, how is that he has the gall to sit in this place and claim to be in control of his portfolio?

**Mr HAYWARD**: I thought I had answered this question the first time that I spoke. I made the point very clearly then that this department is about running an effective, efficient health system based on the very important notion of clinical priority. I explained what that was all about, and I thought that I had made that absolutely clear. I said previously that of the nine public hospitals that are located in Brisbane, two will be closing for elective surgery that requires beds over Easter and the school holiday period afterwards. I also said that, in fact, over that period the Royal Brisbane Hospital would be increasing its day surgery for elective surgery. As I said before, it is about getting the priorities right. I do not want to see the recurrence of previous problems. Yesterday, the secretary of the Queensland Nurses Union also made it very clear that the problem and the difficulty in organising this surgery is related to the availability of surgeons. Under their award, they are not required to give that amount of notice. I do not want the situation to occur in which people are sitting around and surgery is not proceeding.

**Queensland Health**

**Mrs SHELDON:** I direct my second question also to the Minister for Health. I ask: will he confirm that the \$50m increase payable under the new Medicare agreement for the 1993-1994 financial year will have no impact at all upon the crisis in Queensland Health because it will cover only the 1992-93 financial bungle of his department in underestimating the CRS wage and salary increase?

**Mr HAYWARD:** This morning, on the Henshaw program, members witnessed how the shadow Treasurer does not understand how finance works. We are now into another area of substantial financing. I am talking about a Medicare agreement—a fundamental agreement to the provision of health care based on the concept of medical priority in Australia. That agreement, which is worth over \$700m to this State, will serve Queensland for the next five years. More importantly, it will serve Queensland for the next five years if and when the Labor Government is re-elected. Under Fightback, the Liberals would end Medicare—that essential health-funding agreement to this State. The Medicare agreement makes it very clear that those moneys will be available to Queensland.

If members of the Opposition had any concept of how the Health budget works, they would realise that last year our budget was a record \$2.088 billion. So within the context of the Medicare agreement, it provides roughly 40 per cent of the money towards that budget. It is absolutely important that the Medicare agreement was signed and we were able to secure a minimum of \$50m towards running the State's health-care system, which, as I said, this year will undertake 550 000 procedures. This represents an increase of 10 per cent over the previous year. Next year, with the election of the Federal Labor Government, through Medicare we will continue to ensure that we are able to treat people on the basis of clinical priorities, not ability to pay. The coalition is prepared to have tragically ill people dying in the corridors while people who can afford to pay for treatment go into the system. What those people stand for is an absolute disgrace.

#### **Better Cities Program**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I ask the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning: is he aware that the Federal Leader of the Opposition has said that his alleged guarantee for better city projects extends only to those for which contracts have been signed? What better city projects committed by the Federal and State Governments will be scrapped under this threat?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition released a letter from John Hewson that was supposed to answer five questions that had been posed by the Premier of Queensland. Mr Borbidge claimed that this was a guarantee by John Hewson that Queenslanders would be better off. Paragraph 4.4 of that letter states—

“I guarantee that the Commonwealth funding for any projects already contracted under the Better Cities Program in Queensland will continue under a Hewson Government.”

That is a very slick use of words. I would like people to know exactly what that use of words means. Under Keating's commitments to Queensland, the sum of \$139.44m would be spent between 1991-92 and 1995-96. The sum contracted—as is Hewson's reply—or paid to date is \$51.815m. So funding not covered by that guarantee amounts to \$87.625m. I would like Mr Borbidge to get a guarantee now out of John Hewson that he will also meet this \$87.625m to Queenslanders, because they will be worse off under the Better Cities Program. I will tell Mr Borbidge what that means to each part of this State. I seek leave of the House to table this document and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

**Mr Lingard:** Have you shown it to the Speaker?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** He can see it quite clearly.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** As members opposite do not want the document to be incorporated in *Hansard*, I will read it out. As to the Brisbane/Gold Coast corridor project—Keating's commitment is \$73.94m; contracted or paid to date is \$39.415m; funding not covered by Hewson's guarantee is \$34.525m. Mr Borbidge should go back to the Gold Coast and tell the people of the Gold Coast that that \$34m—

**Mr Borbidge:** You've let the projects—

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Is the honourable member quite happy to see that \$34m not go to the Gold Coast? As to the Inala/Ipswich corridor—the sum of \$22.925m is listed under the commitments; contracted to date is \$2.65m, which means that funding not covered for the area which Sallyanne Atkinson expects to win is \$20.275m. I am sure that no-one in the electorate of Rankin would vote for her when she cannot give a guarantee that that money is going there.

In relation to the inner north-eastern suburbs of Brisbane—the sum of \$31m is listed under Keating's commitments; contracted or paid to date is \$7.5m. That means that \$23.5m is not covered by Hewson's guarantee. As to the South Townsville project—the commitment from the Labor Government is \$10m; contracted or paid to date is \$2m. The sum of \$8m is not covered by Hewson's guarantee. In relation to the Mackay project—the sum of \$1.575m is Keating's commitment; contracted or paid to date is a quarter of a million dollars. That leaves a sum of \$1.325m which is not covered by Hewson's guarantee.

Quite obviously, as to what Mr Borbidge attempted to sell to the people of Queensland yesterday, that is, that in some way they would be better off with this letter and with his guarantees—he has a guarantee from Hewson that under only one program the people of Queensland will be \$87m worse off.

#### Urban Public Transport Program

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I ask the Minister for Transport: is he aware that the Federal Leader of the Opposition has limited his alleged guarantee for funding for the urban public transport program to projects currently under way? What impact would this move have on the overall program?

**Mr HAMILL:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Coming, as it does, following the statement by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning on the impact it will have on the Gold Coast railway project that he has outlined, it is important that the House recognises exactly Dr Hewson's undertaking to his mate "Little Robbie" Borbidge. In paragraph 5 of the celebrated letter, Dr Hewson stated—

"I guarantee that the Commonwealth funding for any projects currently under way under the urban public transport program will continue under a Hewson Government."

I suspect that, if one were to ask Dr Hewson what "UPT" stood for, he would say "unnecessary public transport". He does not need public transport when he has a nice red Ferrari to drive around in. Under the UPT program, the Government is anticipating \$31m worth of projects throughout the State. Those projects are not guaranteed; indeed, the letter indicates that they are gone if the Liberal and National Parties get into office in Canberra.

Honourable members ought to realise the sort of projects that are being put into jeopardy. Recently, I was at Caloundra in the company of the Leader of the Liberal Party for the opening of the bus interchange. That project attracted almost \$1.4m from the Commonwealth under the UPT program. The Leader of the Liberal Party in this State is saying that that sort of project is not worthy of funding in the future, and that other centres should not have that sort of funding. In the case of Toowoomba, I dare say that the members for Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South, two National Party members who endorse Fightback and the removal of UPT funding by the Commonwealth, would say that there ought not to have been \$1.5m spent under that

program in Toowoomba at the bus interchange. I dare say that Mr Borbidge, Mr Veivers and Mr Connor from the Gold Coast region would say that the \$15m that has been spent in the duplication of the railway line between Kuraby and Beenleigh should not have been spent; that the tunnels that are being built in Brisbane to increase the capacity of the railway, including the Gold Coast rail link, should not be built.

**Mr Stoneman:** No-one believes you any more. We know you don't tell the truth about railways.

**Mr HAMILL:** The member for Burdekin would say that the \$1.5m that is being spent in Townsville on urban public transport should not be spent, because Opposition policy is not to support those projects. The sort of projects that will not go ahead under Dr Hewson's promise to Mr Borbidge include the interchange at Springwood, \$6m worth of security improvements at park and ride facilities in the urban area, bus interchanges, intermodal facilities, integrated ticketing and so on.

#### Health Department Budget

**Mr HORAN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer to his speech in the Health Department Estimates on 12 November last year in which he failed to make any reference to the severe financial implications of the classification remuneration system on the budgets of Queensland public hospitals. As he had full knowledge of an impending crisis meeting of the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority with the Premier to seek additional funds because its budget was inadequate to cover the wage and salary increases imposed by him and the PSMC on public hospitals, I ask: why did he hide that massive financial bungle and gross mismanagement from the Parliament during the Health Estimates debate?

**Mr HAYWARD:** I assume that all members in the Chamber know what "classification remuneration system" means, so I will not bother to explain it. I will deal with the second part of the question first. I have not had any crisis meeting on the Health budget with the Premier, so that is the end of the second part of the question.

**Mr Horan:** One of your health authorities did—Brisbane North.

**Mr HAYWARD:** The honourable member alleged that I was involved in the meeting; that is not so. Whoever has told the honourable member that story has told him a big "porky". The honourable member has been caught out; it is as simple as that. He does not know what he is talking about. As to the CRS funding—in the Budget, Queensland Health received \$20m. It is no secret.

#### Health Department Budget; Dr P. Stanley

**Mr HORAN:** In directing my second question to the Minister for Health, I ask: in view of the crisis in Queensland's public hospitals caused by budget maladministration and warped health policies, does the Minister have absolute confidence in Dr Peter Stanley? Will he continue as Director-General and Under Secretary of Queensland Health?

**Mr HAYWARD:** For 15 months I have been the Minister for Health. Dr Peter Stanley has been a loyal, hard-working Director-General of Queensland Health, and the honourable member knows that. He has given the honourable member any information that he has wanted on the running of Queensland Health. He has gained enormous respect within the 13 regions of which Queensland Health is comprised. The honourable member has made an outrageous suggestion.

#### Impact of Fightback on Public Housing

**Mrs BIRD:** I ask the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning: is he aware of claims by the Federal Leader of the Opposition that Queensland's housing situation will be better under the Fightback scheme? Is it true that Dr Hewson's claim totally ignores public housing? What will the real impact of Fightback be on public housing?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Once again, we return to the letter that was produced yesterday stating that Queenslanders will be better off under Fightback. I would like to know how I can tell the people on the waiting list for public housing in Queensland how they will be better off under Dr John Hewson's policies. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition released the letter which is supposed to guarantee it. The policy says that the coalition will provide, under the Commonwealth/States Housing Agreement, direct cuts to the States in the first year of \$100m to \$150m, and over the next two to three years from \$250m to \$300m—cuts of \$400m to public housing in Australia. The remaining Commonwealth/States Housing Agreement funds will be directed to emergency accommodation, means tested rent subsidies, and management costs. That will cause a fall in Queensland Department of Housing commencements from 2 400 units this year to 900 units next financial year. That statement is made assuming that the State will still be able to put forward the matching grants of \$67m that it does, taking into account that it will be some \$300m worse off under the fiscal grants that it receives. So the \$67m certainly could not be guaranteed. But if it was there, the number of commencements for new units would drop from 2 400 to 900. We would then have forced sales under the agreement of 2 per cent of the public housing stock, which in Queensland is 800 dwellings, which would leave us with a net increase of some 100 dwellings to rent to people. No-one can say that people on the public waiting list in Queensland are going to be better off under a Dr John Hewson Government. That, once again, shows the letter released by Mr Borbidge yesterday to be a complete farce! It is nothing but a farce and a slick trick by Mr Borbidge, in conjunction with Dr Hewson, to try to hoodwink the people of Queensland before the Federal election.

#### **Bowen Job Training Centre**

**Mrs BIRD:** I direct a question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. Recently, I was able to present \$38,200 in State Government funding to the Bowen job training centre for an employment and training project. I ask: what will the benefits of that funding be to the unemployed, particularly long-term unemployed, in the Bowen area?

**Mr FOLEY:** I thank the honourable member for the question. The Bowen job training centre is, indeed, one of more than 40 groups who have received \$1.1m in funding under community jobs and training programs. Over the next few weeks, another \$700,000 will be allocated to other community group applicants. Those funds form part of the \$150m jobs plan on which the Goss Government was elected by the people of Queensland. That project funds the Tropical Dreams training project. That is a training restaurant in a three-year joint venture with the Bowen Services Club, which has underutilised kitchen and dining room facilities. Those funds will be used to help young people to set up the restaurant and run the first course. The honourable member has shown great support for that project. I wish to pay tribute to her support for the cause of the unemployed in the Whitsunday region and for the job incentive and training programs with which my department is involved. There will be 14-week courses to train long-term unemployed as stewards and kitchen hands for local clubs, pubs and motels.

Those courses will also provide some basic training in literacy and numeracy for those people who are much in need of those skills for assistance in obtaining employment in that region.

The object of the grant is not to duplicate the fine work being done by the Whitsunday TAFE college with regards to the Whitsunday tourist industry, but to complement that work. It is similar to the arrangements which operate successfully at Mission Beach in north Queensland, where the Ingham Skillshare operates a bistro at the local RSL and thereby provides assistance to those people to obtain the skills necessary to gain employment. It is relevant to note that the total funding to the Bowen job training centre over the past three years has been more than \$93,000. That centre has placed more than 30 people from Bowen, Burdekin and the Whitsundays into jobs through previous programs. It is a benefit which arises as part of the \$150m jobs plan, but it is based on the essential approach of working with local community groups at a grassroots level.

### **Elective Day Surgery at Royal Brisbane Hospital**

**Mr BEANLAND:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer him to his answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition today in which he stated that elective day surgery at the Royal Brisbane Hospital will increase; yet the memorandum from the director of surgery clearly states—and I table the memorandum—that elective surgery will cease from Monday, 5 April and recommence on Monday, 19 April, and will cease from Monday, 26 April and recommence on Tuesday, 4 May 1993. I ask: will he now agree that he has misled the House?

**Mr HAYWARD:** The honourable member has great difficulty in grasping any sort of understanding of the complex issues involved in health. I said that there would be an expansion of the elective day surgery. That is extremely clear.

### **QEII Hospital**

**Mr BEANLAND:** I ask the Minister for Health: will he guarantee that the QEII Hospital on Brisbane's south side will remain open indefinitely and continue to provide the range of community services that it has over the last decade?

**Mr FitzGerald:** Don't know.

**Mr HAYWARD:** Of course I know. At this stage, very clearly the QEII Hospital will remain open. The Mater Children's Hospital people are deciding whether or not they want to move out to that particular site. They have not yet made up their mind. When they do make up their mind, they will then have to determine whether or not the functional level should be there and whether or not the cost is there.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The time allotted for questions has expired.

### **ADDRESS IN REPLY**

#### **Third Allotted Day**

Debate resumed from 23 February (see p. 1488).



**Mr SANTORO** (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.29 p.m.): I am pleased to take part in this Address in Reply debate and to once again pledge my loyalty and that of the constituents of the electorate of Clayfield to Her Majesty the Queen, the Commonwealth of Australia, and the State of Queensland. I also take this opportunity to thank the people of Clayfield for their continuing faith in my representations.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I notice that the member for Clayfield is having some difficulty in being heard. I think it would be fair to members who are speaking if other members stopped talking inside the Chamber or went outside. Honestly, it is just getting too much.

**Mr SANTORO:** As I was saying, I also take this opportunity to thank the people of Clayfield for their continuing faith in my representations. I assure them I will never let them down. The campaign in Clayfield was a tough and tiring one. I must thank all those who assisted me, including and particularly my wife, Letitia. I must also thank the ALP for sending an endless stream of Ministers into the electorate during the campaign. I was undertaking electoral tracking research during that time and I discovered that every time a Minister appeared in the electorate—especially if it was the Premier—support for the Liberal Party and me surged upwards. It was very similar to the little worm that appeared on the television the other night. Every time members of the Labor Party came into my electorate, up went the worm, indicating more support for me and the Liberal Party. Over the next three years, I hope to see a lot more of the Cabinet in the Clayfield electorate, as that should greatly help me increase my margin.

**Mr Stoneman:** That is becoming a country Cabinet destination.

**Mr SANTORO:** It certainly is, and I will always welcome a country Cabinet into my electorate. It is interesting to note the number of Government members—ALP members—who have pledged their allegiance to the Queen. They are complete hypocrites, because they favour the severing of the monarchy, the establishment of a republic, and the mutilation of our flag. They might at least be honest enough to stand up for their beliefs and stop draping themselves in our flag for purely political purposes, as the Prime Minister is doing every night on television. Perhaps the Prime Minister thinks that by covering himself in the flag, it will make it look attractive, but it will outlast him by a long way.

During the opening of Parliament last November, Her Excellency spoke at some length about unemployment in Queensland. Indeed, Her Excellency told us that it was the Government's belief that the single most important issue confronting the community is unemployment. The Opposition shares Her Excellency's concern. Sadly, however, it appears the Goss Government does not. This Government has an appalling record on unemployment. In December 1989, when the ALP came to power in Queensland, there were 93 900 Queenslanders officially registered as unemployed. The latest figures—from January 1993—show that 163 700 Queenslanders are unemployed. Unemployment has risen by 74 per cent under the Goss Labor Government.

**Mr Ardill:** There are more people employed now than there were when you were there.

**Mr SANTORO:** These are the official statistics and they cannot be denied in the normal smug and too-smart-by-half manner of many members opposite, including the member for Archerfield. Under this Labor Government, unemployment has exploded and increased by 74 per cent. This is a shameful record. But that is not the end of the story. Arguably, the most devastating effect of Labor and the recession it had to give us is in the area of youth unemployment. In January this year, 31.3 per cent of Queensland teenagers who wanted a job simply could not find one. Almost one in every three teenagers is being consigned to the scrap heap by this Labor Government, which likes to falsely portray itself as caring and compassionate. Tell that to the tens of thousands of teenagers and their families who are suffering because of the ALP's anti-job policies! Bear in mind that the latest figure does not include many school leavers, who will instead show up in the figures released over the next couple of months and who will drive the final nail into the coffin of Keating and his Government. The Labor Party, which

desperately tries to paint itself as the party which cares about young people, has cruelly deceived them.

It is the Labor Party which is preventing the creation of jobs for young Queenslanders, and which refuses to initiate new policies and directions which would lead to the automatic creation of jobs in the private sector. As usual, the ALP is being led by its union mates, many of whom could not care less about anyone but themselves and card-carrying union members. Of course, all the blame for this does not lie only at the feet of the Goss Government. I am quite happy, on just this one occasion, to help in dissipating some of the responsibility. Australia's worst-ever unemployment figures are the result of a decade of Federal Labor government—10 years of hard Labor in Canberra and across this nation. For the first time in our nation's history, over one million Australians are registered as being out of work. The exact figures, taken from the January report by the Bureau of Statistics, show 1 017 600 Australians are listed as unemployed. Of course, that does not include the many people who, for whatever reason, are not registered. They are referred to as the hidden unemployed because they do not show up in the figures. However, as recently as this week, the Australian Bureau of Statistics published its figures on those who are no longer in the labour market, but would like to be—those who have simply given up hope. When these are combined with the registered job seekers, over two million Australians are actually unemployed.

Many of these are people who have given up, in desperation, the search for work altogether, or who have decided to go back to their studies until things improve, or those who are working casually or part time. The way the figures are collated means that anyone who works for even one hour a month is regarded as employed. Once that sleight of hand and the other aberrations are taken out of the system, it is the case that unemployment in Australia is really hovering around the 18 per cent mark. Two million Australians are really in the market for a job, if only those jobs existed. In Queensland, on that basis, over 200 000 people consider themselves unemployed.

**Mr Ardill** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** Paul Keating—the honourable member's Prime Minister—is the king of joblessness. No wonder he wants ALP candidates to drop all references to jobs in their campaign literature. He does not want the Australian public to even think of jobs during this campaign because he knows everyone equates the ALP with a massive loss of jobs. The instructions have gone out: get rid of those slogans that concentrate on jobs. Long-term joblessness and despair are Paul Keating's legacies to Queensland. They are the things for which he will long be remembered, and not very fondly. At least after 13 March he will be only an unpleasant, foul-mouthed memory.

We often hear the Premier and other Government members tell us about what they believe is their wonderful job creation record. Indeed, Her Excellency told us of the Government's so-called jobs plan, which was designed to attract investment and to lead to the creation of new jobs in Queensland, but let us look at just what this Government's record is. Let us look at the Government's record on jobs. It is true that the Bureau of Statistics figures show that there has been an increase in jobs in Queensland since December 1989, and that is not at all surprising. When the Goss Government came to power, 1 322 400 Queenslanders were employed. Over the next three years, that figure rose and dipped but, in January this year, it hit 1 371 200. That means that there are 48 800 more jobs in Queensland now than there were in December 1989.

The Premier and many Government members tell us that that is great. The problem is that the figure sounds considerably more impressive than it is. When compared with the number of jobs available in December 1989, it is an increase of only 3.7 per cent—I repeat, 3.7 per cent. Honourable members should compare that growth in jobs of 3.7 per cent with the growth in unemployment of 74 per cent. It is clear when looked at in a percentage way, or in an absolute way, that job growth has been virtually zero while unemployment has soared. The amazing part of the story—and one which should embarrass all Government members—is that this Labor Government has done nothing to try to fix the problem. Time and time again, the ALP has told us what to do but it

steadfastly refuses to make more than a simple token effort. Almost all of this Government's efforts at job creation have been of a most lazy kind—to throw money at the problem by funding so-called job creation schemes. The problem with those is that they are a mirage. They give people hope and a bit of money but, as suddenly as they have been created, they disappear. I acknowledge Mr Deputy Speaker nodding his head.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order!

**Mr SANTORO:** Providing subsidies to employers for a short, fixed term does nothing to ensure continuing employment, and putting people into a conservation corps or another Government-funded scheme provides only short-term relief and long-term despair. The only real answer is for Government to allow the private sector to operate more efficiently and therefore to create more opportunities and more jobs.

One of the ways in which that can best be achieved is through a comprehensive program of industrial reform. Indeed, in opening the Parliament, Her Excellency spoke of the Government's commitment to its version of enterprise bargaining. Her Excellency outlined in the clearest possible terms the need for more flexible work practices to improve productivity and therefore to provide the basis for more jobs. It is true that, recently, an attempt has been made by this Government to slightly free up the labour market with the introduction of sham enterprise agreements, but they will do little good because they are not real enterprise agreements at all. What is needed is a complete overhaul of the industrial system, including the labour market. The good news is that, despite the whingeing and whining of the ALP, including the member for Everton, those reforms will be introduced across Australia after 13 March. Anyone who tries to stand in the way of their introduction will be trampled in the rush of employers and employees who will see the changes as being to their benefit and who will want to get involved as soon as possible. They will want to form private enterprise unions and negotiate their own enterprise agreements, which will give them the flexibility to suit themselves as to the hours that they work and the conditions that they want.

At this point I come to the diatribe delivered yesterday in this place by the member for Waterford. We have waited for a long time for him to make his industrial relations debut in this place. He came to this Parliament with much promise, but he has delivered so little for his union cronies out there in union land. It is almost a joke to remember that, at one stage, he was talked about as someone who might walk right into the Industrial Relations portfolio. However, yesterday he put his best foot forward and delivered a 30-minute speech with a smidgin—just a smidgin—of industrial relations content. That was the good part of his speech—the fact that he dedicated only a smidgin of his time to industrial relations. However, in every other respect, he blew it and he blew it badly. In the typical style of Government members, he then proceeded to distract, detract and misrepresent. I could even go to the extent of suggesting that he lied, but that would be unparliamentary, so I will not.

Let me simply say that the member for Waterford totally ignored the truth about the Federal Opposition's industrial relations policy. What he said—and I paraphrase for the sake of brevity and because I do not want to disgrace this place by repeating his untruths and his slurs—is this: because John Howard cannot release his draft Bill until a few days before the election, we do not know what the coalition's policy is. That statement by the honourable member demonstrates one of two things: that he has not read the very plain but very detailed Jobsback policy of John Howard and the Opposition, or, alternatively—and this is worse—he has read it and has decided to totally misrepresent its contents and its essential and fundamental commitment to democracy in industrial relations.

The policy is all about commonsense—something which will be introduced into the stewardship of the Australian economy after 13 March. Contrary to the wild, scaremongering, hysterical claims made by the member for Waterford, Jobsback will introduce freedom of choice and flexibility into the labour market. It will not—and I repeat, will not—include the abolition of the Industrial Relations Commission or the

various State tribunals. In fact, in addition to retaining the existing bodies, it will introduce an additional one—the office of the employee advocate. Jobsback will not allow the cutting of adult wages. The minimum wage rate allowed under a workplace agreement will be the current award rate. I am answering all of the points that the member for Waterford made as he misrepresented that document. Wages rates and other essential conditions, such as annual leave, maternity leave and public holidays, will remain exactly as they are at the moment—as minimum conditions. The current award rates of pay will be the minimum rates of pay allowable in enterprise agreements, but employers and employees will be able to negotiate much higher rates, just as they did at Power Brewing and Metway Bank before the politics of greed, hatred and the union movement took over and forced the Government to quash their agreements.

Under the Federal coalition, there will be freedom of choice and freedom to stay in the centralised award system or opt out into enterprise agreements, if that is what the parties want. The important point here is that such a decision, whichever way it goes, is up to them. They have that freedom. They have freedom to negotiate much better pay and conditions. They have freedom to join a union or not to join a union, and freedom to decide whether they want the union to represent them or whether they want to do it themselves. For business, it will mean freedom to increase investment and increase staff numbers because of the lifting of seven taxes. Remember, GST actually stands for “goodbye seven taxes”. Payroll taxes, land taxes, fuel taxes and all the rest will be gone. The member for Waterford also misled the House by claiming that, when Queensland led the way in industrial reform under the previous Government by introducing voluntary employment agreements, each and every one of those agreements lowered award wages and conditions of employees. That claim is false, and demonstrably so. I challenge the member for Waterford and the member for Sandgate to nominate even one specific case where that was so.

**Mr BARTON:** I rise to a point of order. I object to the member for Clayfield indicating that I have misled the House. That is not correct. I object to it and I ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Waterford claims to have been misrepresented by the member for Clayfield. I would therefore ask him to withdraw.

**Mr SANTORO:** If it offends the honourable member, I certainly shall. The truth is that those employees and employers who chose to adopt a VEA benefited greatly from it. Look, for example, at the employees at Power Brewing. Not only did no-one lose money because of the VEAs, but the minimum gain was over \$6,000 a year. The most junior and newest employees covered by the VEA ended up more than \$6,000 a year better off than their colleagues at other breweries. More senior employees ended up \$9,000 better off. And on top of all of that, they only worked a four-day week and had three-day weekends. That is the sort of eroding of pay and conditions that the member for Waterford is talking about.

Metway Bank is another success story for VEAs. Employees there also ended up with fatter pay packets, more flexible hours and an improved career path. Obviously, the honourable member has not listened to the many VEA success stories that have been outlined in this place for quite some time by me and others. Or has the member chosen to ignore the very specific, very detailed evidence about VEAs which I have placed on the record in this place? Why does he continue in his refusal to put up or shut up? When I make these statements again, he piously shakes his head—no, no, no! But the member for Sandgate tried, and I will deal with him some other time. The member for Waterford keeps on getting opportunity after opportunity but he never delivers. He never tells this House. He never names a person. He never names a management individual. He never names anybody to prove that VEAs rape the conditions of the workers, as he constantly says. I say: please, honourable member for Waterford and please, Minister—and I am pleased that he is in the Chamber—come in here and give us the figures, disprove my figures, get stuck into Bernie Power, get stuck into Metway,

get stuck into all of those people and put the figures on the table. If the member for Waterford and other members opposite want to debate this issue and all of the other perversions which they and their cronies have inflicted on the industrial system of this State and this nation, I suggest that they convince the Leader of the House to allocate half a day to a debate, and we will have it out then. I am very happy to debate them tomorrow. I will debate them tomorrow. That would be the courageous thing for them to do rather than continuing to shut their eyes, hiding from the truth and burying their heads in the prehistoric bog from which their fellow practitioners have evolved.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** I take the interjection from the Minister and then I will not take any more because I want to go through a few other things. My challenge to members opposite—and they will have a day tomorrow—is to prove how the people working in Powers and Metway were worse off. That is my challenge to them. That is what the member for Waterford said yesterday. He even had the temerity to suggest that the coalition's policy would threaten the sovereignty of the States. This gem of wisdom came from someone who is a member of a political party led by Paul Keating—the man who is trying to threaten the sovereignty of the Victorian Government and its industrial relations system. Members opposite may be interested to know that, despite the Federal Government's attempts to get people to leave the Victorian industrial system and to jump into the Federal one, not one such application has yet been made to the Federal commission. Yet, the Keating Government persists in its efforts to undermine the sovereignty of the Victorian industrial relations system. It is hypocritical for any member opposite to claim that we would do the same. It is also incorrect, because the Jobsback policy does not apply to the various State systems, which would continue to exist. I suggest once again that the member for Waterford make a supreme effort and actually read the policy.

He might also be interested to read the coalition's policy on vocational education and training. In Australia at the moment, 200 000 people who want a place in a TAFE college simply cannot get one. That will be remedied by a Hewson Government, which will provide an extra \$945m for TAFE, and 220 000 additional TAFE places. We can expect Queensland to benefit from this to the tune of about \$200m and an additional 40 000 TAFE places. This injection of funding will have a very positive effect on the employment market—it will make apprenticeships much more attractive to young people and to employers. In combination with the abolition of payroll tax, the provision of so many extra places will mean many employers will now be able to afford to put on an apprentice for the first time. And there will be an adequate number of college places for them to complete their block training. Only with a properly trained work force can we hope to compete internationally, and there must be jobs for the graduates at the end of their training.

**Mr Foley:** Why are you selling out the Queensland State system?

**Mr SANTORO:** That is what the Fightback and Jobsback packages will ensure. Let us look at the real indicators of whether or not a Government is working, whether or not a Government is providing a sound economic base for growth. The analysis is quite simple. We have to ask people, "Are you better off now than you were three years ago?" Are the small businesspeople along Sandgate Road at Clayfield better off now than they were three years ago? A moment ago, the Minister interjected and asked me, "Are you selling out?" When the Minister was answering a prepared question, he put his head down and refused to take interjections. Government members, who have refused to take my interjections, have the audacity to accuse me of being gutless for not taking interjections. They are cowards! I do not have to take interjections. I do not need to prove anything to Government members.

Are the tradespeople of Hendra better off now than they were in 1989? Are the pensioners of Nundah better off now than they were before the Goss Government came to power? The Government claims that everyone is better off. Try telling that to the business people in my electorate and throughout this State. They find that hard to

believe when they turn up to their businesses in the morning to find that, once again, their stock has been plundered and their fittings and equipment wrecked. That occurs because that most-needed police resource—the cop on the beat—cannot be funded by this extravagantly wasteful Government, which prefers to swell the ranks of the public service and statutory authorities with its highly paid mates and political appointees.

In her Opening Speech to this Parliament, Her Excellency spoke of the Government's supposed commitment to providing a safe and secure community for all of Queensland. Any such commitment does not appear to have turned into reality. Police are working between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. and overtime is restricted because the Police budget is too stressed to be able to pay officers to work at times when criminals work, that is, late at night and on weekends. As businesses are victimised by criminals—many of whom are undoubtedly inspired by the lack of economic opportunity—they openly scorn and mock the Premier's claim that they are better off. From the point of view of business people, the Government has lost the battle and is running far behind the other States. I refer to the battle to provide for the physical security of people, their property and their businesses.

Major crime in Queensland is up by 50 per cent on 1989 figures, and things are getting worse. This State now has the highest rate of assault in Australia. Hold-ups, robberies and burglaries are no longer even newsworthy unless someone is beaten badly or killed. All sociologists and criminologists agree that unemployment is a factor in the explosion of crime but, for many months late last year, this Government strenuously denied that patently obvious and commonsense fact. That denial was very strange in the light of the ALP's 1989 law and order policy, which stated—

“Labor believes that law and order is at present under significant threat. This is the product of several factors, including sustained levels of youth unemployment.”

Despite the fact that that statement appeared in that policy, Government members later absolutely, utterly and totally disagreed with it. Despite the Labor Government's indifference to law and order, I pay tribute to the officers of the Queensland Police Service and to those many hundreds of people who, through Neighbourhood Watch and similar schemes, do a wonderful job to help ensure the security of our suburbs.

Sadly, not all of Queensland's crime-fighting bodies are being allowed to get on with the job, as the Police Service should be allowed to do. I refer specifically to the current threats—and the latest in a series of threats—to the existence of the Criminal Justice Commission. As Her Excellency stated, the Government should be committed to providing a safe and secure community. That is the role of many organisations, including and particularly the CJC. The Premier's continuing campaign to undermine the CJC by refusing to implement the previous parliamentary committee's recommendations, and then complaining when problems occur which the recommendations would have avoided, is evidence of the fear and loathing with which the CJC is held by many Government members. The Premier is calling for a review of the commission's powers—powers which he describes as wide and drastic. At times, he has accused the CJC of acting unfairly, for daring to investigate the travel claims of Labor Party members and for approving of leaks of sensitive material to the media. Now he is concerned because the CJC is taking action to stop leaks which would have placed in jeopardy the safety of some of its informants. All the things about which the Premier complains are those that he had the opportunity to fix but chose not to. If the Premier had followed the recommendations of the previous Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice, all of the latest controversies could have been avoided. Now the Premier is calling for a review, but one has been conducted already. After a full 12-month review of the operations of the CJC, on 3 December 1991, the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice presented a detailed report to this Parliament. That review took into account the views of the Council for Civil Liberties, the Law Society, the Bar Association and all other interested groups. The Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice made 43 recommendations, but the Premier has refused to do anything about the vast majority of

them. He just sits on his hands and does nothing. In a moment, I will return to the reason for that bizarre behaviour.

Recommendation 12 of the report by the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice was that the powers of the Official Misconduct Division of the CJC be widened to include the investigation of organised and major crime. The Premier has done nothing about that recommendation. Because of his inaction, some people have drawn the inference that the Premier does not wish to get serious about cracking down on organised crime. Certainly, whatever the reason, this Government is soft on organised crime, and that is a disgrace. The Government has had the opportunity to do something about it—to tackle organised crime in the way suggested by the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice—but it has chosen to do nothing.

Recommendation 6 of the report was that the parliamentary committee remain in office after the dissolution of Parliament and until a new committee is appointed after an election. If that recommendation had been approved, all of the fiasco surrounding the appointment of a new commissioner would have been avoided totally. Recommendations 27 to 33 deal with the protection of people's rights in relation to natural justice and procedural fairness. Again, the Premier has done absolutely nothing about those recommendations, despite the fact that he bleats and complains about it.

As various members of this place, civil libertarians and media commentators have stated, the Premier wants to close down the CJC. That is his agenda. He refuses to implement those recommendations because he does not want the CJC Act to be finetuned. He wants the CJC to experience certain difficulties, so every time he can do so, he will bash it. The Fitzgerald report clearly concluded that the CJC should be a permanent body to investigate corruption within the public service and public instrumentalities, and it should be a body that should have the definite and powerful brief of cracking down on organised crime. The Premier refuses to take those recommendations into consideration when he calls for inquiries into the CJC and the curtailment of its power.

It is worth noting the words of the Premier's close and trusted friend the member for Brisbane Central who, as former chairman of the parliamentary committee, stated in the foreword to one of his reports—

“Any earlier review would be inappropriate, short-sighted, and possibly destructive of the reform process itself.”

Mr Beattie said that any review before the commission had been operating for five years would be destructive of the reform process itself. Obviously, the Premier at least read that part of the report because he is following that prescription for the destruction of the commission.

Time expired.

**Mr D'ARCY** (Woodridge) (4 p.m.): After listening to the diatribe from the member for Clayfield, it is obvious that the Liberals should stick to what they know best, which is raising taxes or dreaming up insidious new taxes. They have no idea about industrial relations and how they operate in Queensland. They should not waste time channelling their energies in that direction.

The Governor's Speech outlined this Government's program for the next three years. It gave Queensland a vision that can be accepted by all Queenslanders who have, indeed, accepted this Labor Government. After years of neglect by the previous National/Liberal Party administrations, the people of Woodridge have been given a great deal of assistance by this Government. New police quarters have been established in Woodridge. That has allowed for more police in the area, new equipment and decent working conditions. Previously, the police in that area were working under inhumane conditions. It has improved the modus operandi of police and it has increased their presence in the area.

The capital expenditure on schools in the area, particularly those schools that were built during the 1970s, has been a remarkable turnaround. Previously, it was very difficult to achieve funding for those schools. The recent capital expenditure has helped schools such as the Mabel Park State High School, the Mabel Park State School, the Harris Fields State School and the North Woodridge State School, which were all built during the 1970s. This Government has not only trialled but also implemented in schools a security system that works. Prior to the trialling of this new system, the incidence of vandalism and break-ins had grown out of all proportion. The security system is working exceptionally well.

Another great bonus for the people of Logan is the Logan hospital. The second stage has now been completed. The hospital should have been built years ago. The QEII Hospital, which is now experiencing problems, should have been built in the Logan area. Members of the Labor Party told the Bjelke-Petersen Government that when the hospital was being constructed. However, that Government ignored them. The Logan Hospital is a showpiece. Although it cannot—and never will—meet many specialist needs, it meets the day-to-day needs of the people of Logan. Its reputation and the reputation of its staff is growing rapidly. Shortly, a new maternity section will open. Unfortunately, the opening of that section has been delayed for longer than most locals would prefer, but it will open shortly.

My electorate has also benefited by the Government's decentralisation of the Department of Housing. Woodridge was the first area to receive a decentralised Housing Commission office, which is working exceptionally well. I congratulate Peter Videroni, who came from the city, on his work in the Woodridge area. His work reduced the amount of day-to-day complaints that my electoral office received. His office is able to deal with problems first-hand. That office has not implemented the counter system that operates in Brisbane, and people have been able receive attention for their complaints, which are often no more than bureaucratic bungling at the paper shuffling level. Many complaints have been eliminated by the establishment of a regional Department of Housing office.

A workers compensation office has also been allocated to my electorate. It also has worked exceptionally well. The work done by Bob Bird has reduced the number of day-to-day complaints made to electorate offices—complaints that do not go away. The fact that people can put their case to somebody on the spot and have things explained makes a great difference to their problem. As to worker's compensation—lately, I have become aware of limitations in the system that I believe result in wrong and unjust treatment. Recently, a worker who lived in Woodridge was accidentally killed at Capalaba by a refuse truck. He was in his fifties. He and his wife had a grown-up family, and they lived very modestly. His wife worked part-time. Because she had a part-time job, his wife received only \$50,000 compensation for her husband's death, instead of the usual amount of approximately \$98,000. That amount of money will not be sufficient to maintain her. I believe that that is wrong.

Another matter that concerns me is the way in which we allow lawyers to dip into huge compensation payouts when they go to court. It is a matter that frightens me. People are given legal aid, they receive worker's compensation, and they do the right thing. The lawyers go through the procedures of establishing what should happen in worker's compensation cases and then when the payout arrives eventually, somehow or other they seem to receive a large whack of it. Recently, one of my constituents, Lonnie Neilsen, received a payout of \$90,000. I believe that it is worthwhile for members to hear how that amount was broken up. An amount of \$21,113 was paid to the client. The Workers Compensation Board, quite rightly, was paid back the \$21,000 that it had paid him during the period he was on worker's compensation. The Legal Aid Office, which had handled the case originally, received \$5,000, and his solicitor's account of \$43,000 was paid. Out of the \$90,000 payout that the court awarded him, he received only \$21,113. Of course, the worker's compensation payment and the legal aid amount should be taken into consideration. To have to pay a legal bill of \$43,000 is an all-too-common occurrence, particularly in worker's compensation cases. The Government



should consider this problem and the way in which lawyers handle such cases when it knows that there will be a settlement. It is largely Government money that is involved.

The Labor Government has also done a great job in improving the railway stations in my electorate and further south along the Beenleigh line. I look forward to the completion of the railway line to the Gold Coast, now that the Government has committed itself to going ahead with it. My long experience in the Parliament shows that I remember the days when not only did the National/Liberal Party Government pull up the Gold Coast line—

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr D'ARCY:** I point out to the honourable member that I won an election on that issue. The previous Government pulled up that line, and it did so because of a vested interest. Some of the members in this place at that time were involved with transport companies. They are all dead now, so I will not go into their history. The fact of life is that it happened. Not only did the previous Government dig up that line, but it sold the land and the railway cuttings. That was unnecessary, because there was always a promise on the part of the Labor Party to re-establish that line. But that is history now. I am pleased that the Gold Coast railway line will be re-established in time. With the projected great population growth in the south-east corner of Queensland in the next decade—when we are probably all dead and gone—people will thank us for that rail corridor because they will be able to use fast trains as public transport in that area. We are doing this with foresight.

The railway stations on the Beenleigh line have been upgraded. This has been a big help to people in that area, particularly in my electorate. The railway stations at Woodridge, Kingston, Loganlea—which is now in Mr Barton's electorate—and Trinder Park have already been upgraded, with safety buttons and other safety mechanisms being installed at those stations. Public telephones have also been installed at those stations, and the cab ranks are much closer. There is a problem with the Kingston Railway Station, and it is more of a logistical problem than anything else. As I said, that station has been upgraded. It is in an area that adjoins a historical butter factory and a large, vacant block of land with an overpass that was constructed during Don Lane's time in this House, and to which I objected at that time. That butter factory has isolated the railway station. The vandalism problem is out of hand and, quite frankly, for some time it has not been safe for people to alight from trains at Kingston at night. We must overcome that problem with consultation between the various Government departments, including the Transport Department, and local government. The Transport Department has been helpful, but it cannot really offer many solutions until it gets more cooperation from other sectors. Extra lighting at the Kingston Railway Station would help, although lights do not last very long in that area. The expanse of land around the station causes the problem. Many shops closed in that area because of the way in which the previous Government constructed the overpass. We need better planning for safer access.

I turn to roads within the Woodridge area. While the inquiry continued into an eastern toll road, members and their constituents in that area were consulted. We kept quiet. We did not raise merry hell—as some members did—about conservation problems and other issues, yet we are now the ones who are suffering because no decision has been made on that issue. I believe that the Government is looking at alleviating the problem very quickly. But anyone who tries to use the Pacific Highway—and most people do at some time—would realise that during the morning peak hour, traffic travelling to Brisbane does not back up from Springwood, as it used to do; it now backs up from Daisy Hill, and is backing up even further from Brisbane. Attempts to improve the highway in that area by undertaking roadworks have already resulted in several fatal accidents. As soon as the peak hour ends, drums are placed along the road and the workmen come out. As I said, three or four fatalities have already occurred in that area. The road workers are now appealing to the public in an attempt to prevent further fatal accidents. Another problem relates to trying to get to the Gold Coast during holiday

periods. That bottleneck at Springwood and Woodridge is pathetic. Because of the state of those roads, motorists experience hours of delays.

The answer to the problem of animals venturing across roads was solved easily in Europe, and without hysterics. Overpasses and underpasses have been constructed for use by animals. I have shown the Minister photographs of acceptable ways for animals to cross roads. In areas in which forests are located on either side of a freeway, the animals go under them, over them, or are caught in traps and removed to other regions. That is not a problem. The sooner that we build an eastern tollway or freeway, the better it will be for people in areas such as my electorate who have suffered. That is where the high population and traffic densities occur. People in those areas have suffered because other people did not understand what they were doing. Those animal bridges and underpasses are tremendously successful.

I turn to another problem facing people in the Woodridge area. I am sure that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, will be most sympathetic in relation to this matter. My electorate has a growing social problem of which I believe most people in that area are aware. The problem is getting out of hand. Without going into great detail about it, I point out that it has been exacerbated by some Government departments not understanding the social demography of areas such as Inala and Woodridge. There has been an insensitivity by some Government departments, their employees, landlords, private investors and people with vested interests. But there are solutions to the problem. At present, we have a tinderbox situation in that area. The police cannot handle it, and I cannot blame them for that. I have received a letter from the acting superintendent of police in that area who says that he is able to put down trouble spots and overcome drinking binge problems and gang problems in particular areas when we bring them to his notice. But that is not a solution to the overall problem. There are solutions to the overall problem, but this will take the cooperation of all sections of government—local, State and Federal—as well as the community.

Over a long period, the people of Woodridge have had their suburb's name denigrated in the media. People often say, "Oh, it is just Woodridge" or, in your case, Mr Deputy Speaker, "Inala." Many very good people live in those areas, have lived there for many years and will continue to do so. They respect their suburb. They refused to have the name of their suburb changed when Huon Fraser was the relevant Minister for a short period. He could not get that change approved. He wanted to change the name of the suburb because he thought that that would solve the problem. The people of that suburb are proud of its name. The name is not the problem. The issue is accentuated by the demographics and the socioeconomic factors that are sometimes associated with the area. In some instances, they are being accelerated by Government departments, councils and the community. It is an insensitive situation that can be addressed by meetings with the various groups. In recent times, I have mooted that type of action.

As most members would be aware, I have always been concerned about the coastal environment. The Green Party is still a single issue party when it comes to coastal development. It has fought individual issues one by one and has not looked at the broader picture. Thank God the days of the National Party carnage of coastal areas through development have gone and the Labor Government has instigated sensible plans for coastal development. However, it still has not enshrined—it is working on it—a legislative program that sets out guidelines for coastal development so that, if future Governments attempt to change the guidelines, there will be a hue and cry. Many sensible organisations such as the Marine Institute in Townsville are working on problems associated with coastal development that still have not been addressed fully. Before I leave this place, I would like to see those guidelines put in place. I have worked on the project for three years and developed some policies that could easily solve the current problem. Governments are busy, but we should be attempting to enshrine in the next few years a solid plan for coastal development so that planned development can go ahead and both the community and the developers understand what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in environmental conditions.

Unemployment has been mentioned by all honourable members. It presents tremendous problems, but there are answers. We are not addressing the problem in the manner that we should be. The answer to unemployment lies in niche markets. They are small on the international scale, but they are the type of markets that would supply high quality local products with the opportunity to selectively export. Sweden, with 10 million people, has achieved that, but it does not have the geographic problems that we have in Australia. People have finally realised that we are close to Asia. Every day, opportunities are presented to Governments. It is time that we cut the red tape and gave the bureaucrats in Government direct orders to get those industries up and running. If we do not take the opportunities that present themselves, there is no chance of sustainable improvement in our economy. Every member knows of some project that could go ahead if we cut red tape.

There are hundreds of millions of people in the Asian area in countries such as Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. All those countries have emerging and improving economies. It takes only a small percentage to tap into the world market in areas such as tourism. If Queensland took advantage of only a small percentage of the market in those countries, tourism would receive a boost. Opportunities exist for value-added exports to be developed, particularly with processed stock food and fish food. We should concentrate on specialty foods and quality products that other countries do not have. We cannot compete with other countries in the manufacturing area or the bulk product area. However, there are plenty of value-added products that we can develop. Examples that come to mind are dried meat exports to Asia, curtailing seed sales of flora, and other value-added areas in primary and mineral products. We should export a quality finished product. There is a paralysis of bureaucratic will to make decisions. That must change at every level of government.

Recently, I had a problem with the foxtail palm. The Government took the sane line of having the National Parks and Wildlife Service examine the problem. It realised that the matter had got out of hand and that something had to be done. The next step should be to capitalise financially for the State on that seed. The *wodyetia bifurcata* is a most remarkable palm and has a national and international market, as has been proven in the United States. If we ignore it, we will find that we will be buying that palm from the United States, as we are doing with things such as macadamia nuts and other products. At present, the opportunity exists for that seed to be developed.

Queensland should not wait for the world to solve its agricultural trade problems. Matt Foley and Margaret Woodgate believe that "you can't sit around in the jungle and wait for the nuts to fall off the trees into the hats". It does not happen. The Federal Government has realised that in the big manufacturing areas such as motor cars we cannot be competitive with high population nations. However, we have proved that we can compete in the small niche areas. Many politicians have talked about the value-added products in mining and primary industries, but they have not advanced a plan in those areas. Gladstone is the best and largest port on the east coast of Australia. It is a focal point for energy and should be promoted as the centre for value-added industries, particularly mining products. That should have been done in the Bjelke-Petersen years when we built ports and roads to nowhere.

I turn to the performance of our leading financial institutions and banks. The insurance companies are running into the same problems with capital debt in real estate. It is affecting Governments directly in areas such as investment and superannuation. The truth should be told and we should clean out the present system and look at real industries in markets where there are real returns—not returns built on paper, or buildings that do not exist, or budgets that cannot be substantiated. Two and a half years ago, I said that there were approximately \$25 billion worth of non-performing loans in Australia. Recently, the Reserve Bank Chairman, Bernie Fraser, stated that there were \$30 billion worth of non-performing loans. Perhaps he did not include those from National Mutual and a few other companies. The position is getting out of hand. Australia's CBD accommodation has the highest vacancy rate in history, and it is still

rising. If our economy is to be rebuilt successfully, our financial institutions must come clean and give us the real bottom line so that rebuilding can start. Investigations that have taken place to date have not been worth the paper they have been printed on. We have had royal commissions and investigations in various States, but there has not been a coordinated attempt. I praise the work that has been carried out by the NSC because it has made an attempt to make boards in Australia culpable. Unfortunately, it is still happening. We get a Westpac prospectus months before the directors tell us that they did not know or understand what was going on. Being a director of a public company carries with it a huge responsibility, and it could be a high risk job in a volatile economic time. Unfortunately, we have not seen people of enough reputation able to substantiate their position in those fields.

In closing, I want to outline some of the problems that I see with the GST—everyone else has, so I may as well, too. It is an insidious tax. The Liberals are very good at proposing new taxes. If the GST was introduced there is still no guarantee that income tax would be reduced. Similar promises have not been realised, and the promised reduction in income tax is just that—a promise. The Liberals are saying, “Trust us.” Will the GST apply to tradable items? I have asked that question of several Liberals, and I have heard that it has been asked of Dr Hewson at various meetings. A motor car is a typical example. How does Dr Hewson explain to a car dealer the GST to apply to a new vehicle, then when it is resold—perhaps two or three times or even auctioned—in a month? How does the Opposition explain that? Does the 15 per cent apply on every sale? Everyone knows what happens with a motor vehicle when it is traded in; it is auctioned and then it is sold to another dealer who eventually sells it back to the public. What is going to happen? No-one has explained it to me. Quite a few motor dealers are concerned about it.

Honest, straightforward traders have already been complaining about the growth in the third level of markets—markets such as Paddy’s Market. The markets in Queensland have become an accepted way of life. How will the GST affect them? A trader has to pay rent, land tax, sales tax and wages for his staff. Then, on Sunday, along comes the Paddy’s Market type of trader, who has so far managed to survive. In fact, some of these traders have done quite well. But how will they get on with the GST? No-one has explained to me what will happen to the flea markets and markets such as Paddy’s Market if the GST is introduced. There has been no explanation of how the tax will be collected from the traders at these types of markets.

**Mr Santoro:** I will give you a simple form tomorrow.

**Mr D’ARCY:** I thank the honourable member very much. It is just what I need. I have seen the honourable member in action before. His groundwork leaves a lot to be desired. When I think about the policies of the Liberals, the issue that always comes to mind is Medicare. At present, they are having a lot to say about Medicare. We should consider what happened when those opposite were in Government. It took Bill Hayden to get the doctors of Australia and the AMA, kicking and screaming, to the stage at which they eventually accepted the Medicare system. Our Medicare system is regarded by the Americans, the English, the Canadians and New Zealanders as one of the best systems in the world. Some problems might have been experienced in the short term, but it is working. Under the Liberals’ health system, the costs blew out.

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Mr D’ARCY:** The member for Clayfield can say what he likes; it will happen again. The problems with the present Medicare system are only short term and they can be fixed by the Government. If the Liberals were in Government, there would be a massive blow-out in costs that could not be fixed. The community cannot afford it. Hewson is saying that he will abolish bulk-billing except for pensioners and other welfare beneficiaries. Do honourable members know who is paying for the bulk-billing system at present? The doctors are paying for it. One can quite easily work out what happens, particularly in areas such as my electorate. The doctors in Woodridge have always bulk-billed because the local people could not afford to pay for their services. Honourable

members should visit some of the places along the coast and find out whether doctors bulk bill. Doctors on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast do not bulk bill; in fact, they send a bill. That practice halves their turnover. Those specialists who are concerned about their patients' welfare bulk bill. That has been borne out in this debate.

The Opposition does not have a leg to stand on when it comes to Medicare. The problems about which the Liberals complain are inherent in the system. From time to time, Governments have to deal with them. That can be accepted. What cannot be accepted is the massive blow-out in costs that will occur if the Opposition is allowed to wreck the Medicare system. One of the reasons why the Liberals never polled well in Queensland is that the ALP emphasised the fact that a Labor Government would ensure the retention of a free hospital system in this State. Following every election, the Liberals started to erode that system. During every term he spent here, Gordon Chalk wanted to get rid of it. The fact is that we have a system that is working—a system that was introduced at the national level. The Liberals want to ruin it. As I said, the GST is an insidious tax—a tax that many Australians will not be able to live with.

**Mr COOPER (Crows Nest) (4.27 p.m.):** I am happy to take part in this Address in Reply debate. I acknowledge and thank the people of Crows Nest. I moved from the west to take that electorate, and I took it in great style. But I could not have done it on my own. Obviously, the people gave me tremendous support. I acknowledge their support and pledge that I will work very hard for them.

**Mr Elder:** You were very accommodating.

**Mr COOPER:** I like the place. I think it is a wonderful electorate. It is a great pleasure to work for the people of Crows Nest. I also enjoy the shadow portfolio of Police and Emergency Services. It is an extremely important portfolio, which is concerned with the delivery of services to the people—which is supposed to be what we are all about. Unfortunately, I hear a lot of complaints about morale in the services, as well as delivery of those services to the people. I have listened to the people, and they are speaking out quite strongly. That is unfortunate, because emergency services are essential services, and we have to ensure that they are provided. Those services include the Ambulance Service, the Fire Service, the Rural Fire Service, the State Emergency Service and the Police Service. Today, I want to speak about police and the crime factor because that is something that is of major concern to the people.

This morning's *Courier-Mail* published an article under the subheading "Study rejects crime claims", which refers to an independent study by the International Crime Victims Survey. Six hundred and fifty-six people were polled and the survey organisation claims that that number gives a pretty fair indication that Queensland is the safest State in Australia. Of course, it does not, and any person in the community would know that that is not the case and would regard that report as a rather sick joke. The official crimes statistics published by the Police Department are based on 3.5 million to 4 million people. Those official figures indicate a totally different scenario.

Comments that have so far been made on the article have come from the Police Union President, Senior Sergeant John O'Gorman, who said on the release of this Dutch survey on 27 January that Queensland had one of the highest crime rates in Australia per capita, which is borne out by the facts. The vice-president of the Victims of Crime, Mr Ian Davies, said that he did not believe the survey's figures were a true reflection of the situation in Queensland, and he would know. As an official of the Victims of Crime, he is always under tremendous stress. The Senior Citizens Centre welfare officer, Judy Ryland, said that in some Brisbane suburbs up to 25 per cent of the elderly were crime victims. In addition, an executive officer of the Police Union, Senior Sergeant Charlie Grimpel, stated yesterday that, based on Woolloongabba's crime figures, that suburb's police station should have almost double its present number of officers. I do not believe that people should take notice of silly surveys such as the one cited in that article. I believe that people should deal with official figures, which show a totally different situation.

I turn now to the matter of police superannuation and retirement. I noticed in the *Police Union Journal* of February 1993, a case study comparison has been made between the Federal Government's policies and the coalition's policies, including Fightback, relative to superannuation and retirement. I have in my possession a letter correcting the information in the article. Although the article was published with the best intentions of informing members—which is accepted and understood—in fact, the journal got it wrong and I have now put it right. The letter was written by Richard Alston, who is the shadow Minister for superannuation. The letter states—

“You may have seen an article in the February edition of the Queensland Police Union Journal, which suggests that police officers wishing to retire at age 55 will be worse off under a Coalition Government.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our original Fightback proposals always recognised that some professions place unique physical and emotional demands upon their members. Accordingly, upon genuine retirement from the workforce, police officers will continue to be able to access their lump sums from age 55 without incurring any penalty.

In fact police officers will be substantially better off under the Coalition's new lump sum tax approach under which all current taxes will be immediately abolished on amounts up to \$300,000. Any amount in excess of that figure will be taxed at 5%, rising to 10% over a 10 year period.

This means that if we use the case study in the police journal . . . (the person concerned there) will pay \$2200 under the Coalition, compared to \$12,384.36 . . .”

In other words, a police officer will be five times better off under the coalition than he will be under the Federal Government's policies. The letter goes on to state—

“If . . . (the person used in the survey) is a 55 year old retiring in 2005, he is even better off. Using current tax rates, under Labor he would pay . . . \$26,022. This compares with the Coalition tax (of) . . . \$4,000.”

I table that letter. Having now put paid to the article, I sincerely hope that the message gets through to police officers who are obviously concerned about the matter. Under the coalition's Fightback policy, they will be so much better off that it will not be funny.

The evidence is overwhelming that crime in our society is rampant. Our citizens are living in daily fear of their lives and are concerned about their safety. In the period between 1988-89 and 1991-92 in Queensland, an appalling increase of 91 per cent occurred in reported robberies and there was a chilling 43.4 per cent leap in the number of reported serious assaults. These official figures give the lie to any pathetic claims by this Government that there is no law and order crisis. They are official figures and are not the invention of a hysterical mind. The breakdown of the will of law and the fragmentation of the system of order is beyond any dispute. Society is facing its biggest challenge from this rampant lawlessness. I appeal to the Government not to try to dismiss the community concern and fear that presently exists in its desperate attempt to excuse its own failure. It is one thing for a Government to fail in meeting a community demand, but it is quite another thing for that Government to appear foolish by trying to be deceptive and untruthful about that obvious failure.

The Queensland Police Service is in crisis as it struggles to stem the tide of increasing lawlessness. Queensland is very fortunate to have a dedicated and highly professional police service which goes well beyond the normal call of duty to serve. As community anger, fear and frustration swells, I am deeply concerned that the blame for any lack of an immediate and comprehensive response to lawlessness is being directed to these overworked, under-resourced and dispirited officers. Mr Keating's recession that we had to have has resulted not just in hidden unemployed which go beyond the official figures but has also meant that many of the crimes that are simply not reported are hidden. In the community, there is a strong belief abroad that it is often pointless to report a crime because of the bitter realisation that police will not have the time or the

resources to investigate the report adequately. One can only shudder when contemplating what the real crime figures are. Anecdotal evidence suggests that crimes are unreported on a massive scale.

Police officers are caught between a rock and a hard place while trying to meet community expectations and Government priorities. It is an indictment on this Government that on far too many occasions an enormous gulf exists between those two demands. This Government's ideological blinkers have resulted in the setting of wrong priorities. Therefore, there has been mismanagement of existing resources. The celebrated case of the Malayta family which was reported recently in the *Sunday Mail* illustrates the point I am making. The family lives in Ayr and has 10 children under the age of 17 who have held the community to ransom. Yet this Government has conspicuously failed to take any necessary, effective action. A report by Detective Sergeant Murray Verrall, the officer in charge of the Ayr CIB, paints a grim picture of a community that has been abused, terrorised and intimidated by a family that openly laughs at this State's so-called law and order system. Sergeant Verrall noted in his report of 29 January 1993 that this family's children had committed some 300 offences in the past two years, ranging from housebreaking, shopbreaking and enterings, stealing, wilful damage, unlawfully using motor vehicles and assaults. The *Sunday Mail* published a photograph of one of the young people concerned which showed a nice, shiny new bike with lots of gears on it, and my information is that it was pinched, too. His report has highlighted the consequences of this Government's failure to maintain a serious law and order policy. His report states—

"A number of these children have been charged with numerous offences and have appeared in the local Childrens Court."

**Mr Fenlon:** Are you serious about this?

**Mr COOPER:** Absolutely. The judicial system does not appear to support police who do their duty, and members of the community often express their disgust at the sentences handed out to those juveniles. The juveniles themselves openly laugh at the judicial system and the sentences that are handed out to them as a result of their court appearances. Sergeant Verrall's report also pointed to another consequence of this Government's failure, because of plainly ideological and political considerations, to take the necessary action to rid the Ayr community of that gang of thugs. He wrote—

"Police at Ayr, and in particular the CIB, have voiced their opinions on numerous occasions that, at the minimum, an application for care and protection be taken out on all of the children of this particular family. Police have considered taking this application out on their own initiative but have been advised that the Family Services would not support such an application. Police are aware that, without the support of the Department of Family Services, such an application would be doomed to failure under the current judicial system, where almost carte blanche credence is placed on the submissions of this Department in court."

We can, I believe, reasonably assume that, if that sort of outrage is happening in Ayr while the Government sits idly by, it almost certainly could be happening elsewhere. I really feel for the people in that region. The police have not been able to move. I hear so many stories of similar happenings round the State. The reason why nothing has been done in that case is plainly that the family concerned is Aboriginal. The Government trembles with fear at the very thought of being accused of racial prejudice, despite the fact that responsible members of the Ayr Aboriginal community are disgusted by and alarmed at the behaviour of that family. In that one community, police resources are being wasted; the public is being terrorised; and racial tensions are close to the point of explosion simply because the frightened, incompetent and inept Government is too nervous to take the obvious necessary action to cut out that cancer. Recently, I checked whether any action had been taken. Although there is certainly a greater awareness of the problem in that area, at this point nothing has been done.

**Mr Fenlon:** You would support our juvenile justice legislation.

**Mr COOPER:** I will go on with this but, yes, I have something on that subject, too.

**Mr Fenlon:** That would, of course, alleviate those problems.

**Mr COOPER:** I do not think that it would, but we can discuss that later. Before I am accused of racism and before the sanctimonious Government makes pious noises about how wonderful it has been to Aborigines, I remind the House that in January this year the Police Minister's own spokesman told the *North West Star* in Mount Isa that funds allocated in last year's Budget for Aboriginal police liaison officers had been "all used up". That astounding admission, especially in the International Year of Indigenous People, when Governments are supposed to make an extra effort, is yet another example of what can be described only as gross mismanagement. By the Government's own admission, more than \$1m allocated in last year's Budget for that very worthwhile program has simply vanished, and the Government is not saying who or what used it up.

A spokesman for the Police Minister told the Mount Isa newspaper that Aboriginal police liaison officers would "probably begin work in Mount Isa by July and definitely before the end of the year". He did not give any indication as to when similar officers might begin work elsewhere in the State where substantial groups of Aboriginal people would benefit from that program. As I say, I believe from my discussions with people in those areas that the program is certainly very worth while. It is the sort of program that has been operating for quite some time in other areas. Some years ago, a similar program operated in the Woorabinda area. Aboriginal police liaison officers form a very, very important link between the two groups. To promise people one thing and then not to deliver, especially in this International Year of Indigenous People, is nothing short of disgraceful.

Again, the Government has been embarrassed by its own monumental failure, because the Police Minister's Cabinet colleague the Minister for Mines and Energy and member for Mount Isa said last November that those officers would start work in Mount Isa early this year, so we can only be left open-mouthed with astonishment at that self-admitted bungle. The Aboriginal community throughout Queensland has been left wondering how important it is on the Government's list of priorities. In this matter, as with so much else, performance does not come anywhere near promise. We hear it so often: promises are made but the delivery does not happen.

Elsewhere, we can see the consequences of inadequate police resources. A report that was written late last year by the officer in charge of the Caboolture Police Station, Senior Constable T. F. Roberts, makes very sad and very alarming reading. He writes of police having to ignore serious offences happening literally in front of them because of a prior competing demand. Writing about gangs of local louts rampaging through the streets at night, Constable Roberts said—

"Trying to control these groups is nearly impossible with only one crew, and these groups know this and take advantage. Officers, both under my direction and with whom I have discussed this matter, have expressed frustration, apprehension and anger at being unable to perform their job in a satisfactory manner and having to 'back down'. This gives the hoodlum element a perceived victory, which only encourages these persons to get worse. I personally am getting frustrated and very tired of trying to explain to irate complainants why their complaint is not being attended to."

What makes that report even more distressing is the acknowledgment by its author that there are other places in Queensland that are worse off. So much for the Government's absurd claim that it has crime under control and that the community is not living in fear. Honourable members need only ask the people and they will find out.

The lack of resources for police at the local level is well known and well documented. At the headquarters level, there is a similar story. For example, in the technical support division, which has as its program goal the improvement of the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the police organisation, staff numbers



were slashed from an actual 552 in 1991-92 to an estimated 342 in 1992-93. I understand that the cutback of 180 staff went to a non-policing section, corporate services, which has grown from 1 316 actual staff in 1991-92 to an estimated 1 496 in 1992-93. Technical support is a fundamentally vital area for an effective and efficient Police Service, providing information technology as well as technical, scientific and legal services, and transport. Obviously, that division needs every assistance that it can get, yet it has been virtually gutted by the Government, which has set different priorities. It is not just the lack of resources that often cripples and always impairs police efficiency. There is a strong belief among rank-and-file police officers that the Government, again for ideological and political reasons, has an abiding suspicion of police. Within the Government, powerful elements not only distrust police but also are prepared to openly regard them as the enemy.

There are crackpots and criminals who can peddle almost any fanciful story about police corruption and police brutality—honourable members must have heard of this—and they will find a sympathetic ear at the highest levels of government. These criminals and crackpots can thumb their noses at police and lodge, quite frankly, very bizarre accusations with the Government and with the Criminal Justice Commission, and then return to their community knowing full well that the police there then have to spend a lot of their valuable time preparing a defence. That happens in many areas. The police officers say that they simply do not want to go on with their job. The effect on police morale is devastating. Unfortunately, it is not just the police who are suffering from a serious fall-off in morale, it is the wider community that suffers as a result. A Police Service that can scarcely take a deep breath for fear of being accused of stealing air is not a Police Service that can serve its community well. Many officers are now prepared to often turn a blind eye to some offences simply because they know that any action they might take would probably result in their being dragged before some form of commission, be it the CJC—

**Mr Beattie:** I don't think that's true.

**Mr COOPER:** It is true. It is happening now. It could be the Human Rights Commission, it could be for breaching the Anti-Discrimination Act, or there could be accusations of racism. Police have to face that hurdle. Quite frankly, it does impede them in their task. Recently, we had the spectacle—and I use the word "spectacle" advisedly—of the CJC Chairman giving the Police Commissioner what amounted to a public lecture—and it appeared in the press—about how to handle internal disciplinary procedures. To say, as the CJC Chairman did, that the Police Commissioner should guard against Queenslanders getting the impression that the service was soft on officers who misbehave was to hand out gratuitous advice, to say the least. I can only wonder what the reaction would be inside the CJC if the Police Commissioner felt the need to hand out some public advice about how the CJC Chairman should conduct his administration. I think it is absolutely critical that there be a close and effective working relationship between the CJC and the Police Service, if Queensland is to be given the law enforcement protection it deserves; but that relationship will, to put it mildly, be put in extreme jeopardy if this sort of advice on internal matters by the CJC becomes standard operating procedure, especially when the offence by the police officer was for poking a lout in the chest, and for this he was supposed to be dismissed from the service. In fact, that officer had to perform 200 hours' community service for just poking a lout in the chest. It took him nine months to complete that community service. If that is not severe enough, I do not know what is.

I can only wonder, really, at the marvellous self-restraint that the Police Commissioner showed in the face of that public rebuke. As far as that matter is concerned, the Police Minister managed to make a complete fool of himself. In the first instance, he supported the Police Commissioner, Jim O'Sullivan, and then, I guess by implication, repudiated the CJC Chairman. A few days later, he put out another press release reversing the original view and saying that the CJC should reopen the original case. I am afraid that any Police Minister in a situation such as that has to be utterly

confused. It was a complete turnaround and only served to remind everybody that the Minister does have a problem with drift in his thinking.

As the Government has slowly, but never publicly, come to terms with the fact that there is a crisis in law and order, there have been the beginnings of negotiations with the Police Union on a more flexible rostering and overtime arrangement to reflect the obvious fact that the four days from Thursday night to Sunday night inclusive are, as we commonly call it now, prime crime time. It has been another example of the Government's having to agree with the Opposition's long-held contention on the crime wave explosion that flexibility is urgently needed. Regrettably, the Minister had a great rush of blood to the head and boldly announced some time ago at the beginning of these negotiations that the matter was close to finality when it simply was not anywhere near it. They had only just started. They will continue for quite some time. I am pleased to see that negotiations are going on.

**Mr Ardill:** It hasn't changed from your time. It's exactly the same.

**Mr COOPER:** There has to be flexibility in the system, and that is something that I think all of us have to support. I understand, with these negotiations taking place, that the Government has made an offer and the union has also made an offer in relation to rationalising weekend work. I think the next step is a matter of reaching a compromise. While the negotiation process goes on, we wish them well. The fact that the union has reportedly been prepared to vary and negotiate existing award conditions is solid evidence of the professionalism and concern of its members. It is a truly remarkable precedent for a public sector union to enter into negotiations with any Government by making significant concessions. The union and its members deserve the undisguised and unanimous praise of the community for taking this position. The Opposition believes that an acceptable compromise can be achieved by negotiation, but I ask the Minister to contain his exuberance until such time as an agreement is reached.

**Mr Robertson:** They couldn't negotiate when you were the Minister.

**Mr COOPER:** We got along well, and the honourable member knows it. We got along well with the fire services as well.

**Mr Robertson:** You don't know how to negotiate. I remember too well trying to negotiate with you.

**Mr COOPER:** Yes, we do—my oath! I still have a very good relationship with them. Steve and I still have plenty of good contacts in there, too. They have never stopped feeding me information and things such as memos that come through from where the honourable member used to be. The AWU is starting to give him a bit of a touch up, is it not? Yes, it is. It is starting to sneak in on the UFU, and the honourable member does not like it one little bit. He is from the Socialist Left and those in the AWU are much, much more responsible than people like him.

**Mr Santoro:** Do you think it is fair to say that he left his union in a total state of disarray—ballot rigging?

**Mr COOPER:** He sure did. Unfortunately, this was his bolthole. He was probably doing better out there. We believe that a new award package for police should be based on a roster of five days out of any seven, with a financial recognition for weekend rostering. We ask our Police Service to take on the most difficult and demanding tasks. It is a case of making sure we support it. It is a profession that imposes a lot of stresses and strains about which civilians can only wonder. It is a job that requires commitment, understanding, dedication, self-sacrifice and, all too often, outstanding personal bravery. A Police Service that is hampered by a lack of resources and constrained by a lack of confidence from its political masters is a Police Service that is not able to perform to the outer limit of its capabilities. I am aware that the Public Sector Management Commission is undertaking a review of the service at this time. We can only hope that the review team has the very good sense to listen carefully to experienced officers who can advise on any changes to the administrative structure.

Although I do not wish to pre-empt any response to that report by the PSMC, I strongly urge that the review team not propose any new structure that would appoint civilian administrators over senior police. Rather, as a general principle, I believe that senior civilian administrators can play a role by providing financial planning, resource management and forward planning advice to the Commissioner and his command team. In that way, they may gain a different perspective and may have a different range of options to consider when preparing strategic plans to meet the responsibilities of the Police Service. I believe also that an enhanced level of civilian support in those disciplines would allow senior police to get on with their primary task, which is preventing and detecting crime. I trust that Government members agree with my general statement in that regard.

Today, there has been much talk about the principle of truth in sentencing. The community rightly believes that, once a criminal is sentenced after conviction, he or she will serve the full sentence imposed. It is nothing short of a complete farce to impose a substantial sentence for a serious crime and then to allow the criminal to serve only a fraction of that sentence. In many cases, remission is approved literally before a criminal begins to serve a sentence. Honourable members are aware that this is a major source of frustration for police. They try desperately to do their job, even though many barriers are placed in their way. Serious offenders may be convicted and sentenced to imprisonment after as many as 10 or 11 unsuccessful court cases. However, before long, such offenders are released from prison and the police have to start all over again. One cannot blame police for their frustration. Ineffective sentences are a cruel and insensitive fraud perpetrated by the system on the community, on the victim of crime and on the victim's friends and family. More consideration must be given to the victims of crime. They receive far too little consideration, if any at all. The early release of serious offenders makes a complete mockery of any realistic notion of justice. Police officers share the community's concern. Their emotions range from dismay to disgust as they see hardened criminals given light sentences which are in no way an appropriate penalty for the crime committed. The community and the police are perfectly correct in believing that this Government puts the rights and conditions of the convicted person above the rights of the victim and the demand of society for proper retribution.

It is high time that serious consideration was given to writing into the statute book of this Parliament minimum sentences for serious crimes which are a true reflection of the will of the community. Honourable members will recall that the Government repealed the former mandatory life sentences for drug dealers and, as a result, those serving life sentences for drug offences were released. That was indicative of this Government's attitude. In the five years from 1988 to 1993, the rate of robberies alone has almost doubled. That is an incredibly large increase, and something must be done about it. When such criminals are caught, they must be imprisoned for a reasonable period. The public must feel safe. I am the first to agree that the judicial system must have discretionary powers over sentencing. Nevertheless, the judicial system must take account of the sentences that society wants imposed. The most effective way to achieve that is the provision of minimum mandatory sentences for serious offences such as murder, serious assault and rape.

The parole system also needs review. I believe that parole is too easy to obtain. In theory, parole and remission are good concepts. However, remission should be granted only at the end of a sentence and not at the beginning. Community service orders, release-to-work orders, home detention and bush camps are necessary programs, but those alternatives should be considered in appropriate cases only and should not be used as a convenient solution for gaol overcrowding. Watch-houses are also full to overflowing. Police are expected to act as gaolers. Just because gaols are full, police cannot be expected to take on that role. I cannot understand why Woodford Prison was mothballed. That prison had high standards and was very acceptable. Because watch-houses and gaols are overcrowded, its facilities are needed desperately.

If members of the community are shocked and disgusted by the sight of hardened and habitual criminals being released after a token sentence, they should reflect on the

reaction of the police officers responsible for the capture of those criminals. It is no exaggeration to say that because they know that they will not be spending too much time away from their haunts and their mates, many criminals laugh openly at the police who arrest and charge them. That grim reality eats away at police morale like acid. The public and the members of the Police Service deserve a better deal. It is a clear and urgent responsibility of the Government to ensure that the expectations of both are met. At a later date, I will speak about ambulance services and rural fire brigades.

Time expired.

**Mr NUNN** (Hervey Bay)(4.58 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Address in Reply to the Governor's Opening Speech to Parliament. In her Speech, Her Excellency signified that she expects her Government to be both caring and responsible. I am pleased to say that this Government has lived up to her expectations. It is important that the Governor be kept informed as to what is occurring in her beloved State and that she be made aware of the assault that is about to be made on the rights of the citizens of this State.

In a letter to the constituents of my electorate, the Federal member for Wide Bay, who is a National Party representative, tried to deny that John Hewson's "gobble savings today" package will wipe out Queensland's sugar industry, close its free hospitals, destroy the jobs of its citizens and devastate its booming tourist industry. The member for Wide Bay stated in that letter that Fightback and the dreaded GST will make holidays cheaper. I am sure that the many holiday makers who visit Hervey Bay will contradict that statement when they find themselves having to pay an extra 15 per cent for everything that they purchase. He claims that because the 20 per cent sales tax which now applies to such items as caravans, camping gear and swimming pools—I do not know anybody who takes their swimming pool with them on a holiday—will be abolished, holidays will be cheaper, even after the 15 per cent tax rate is applied.

I will give an equation to honourable members. Currently, camping gear, which has a wholesale price of \$1,000, attracts 20 per cent sales tax, which is \$200. A mark-up of approximately 75 per cent of the wholesale price makes the real retail price \$1,950. Under Hewson's horrifying tax, \$1,000, plus the same \$750 mark-up, plus 15 per cent of the retail price of \$1,750 makes the price for the camping gear for the poor old wage earner \$2,012.50. The poor old fellow has gone on holidays and before he even gets up the tent, he is worse off by \$62.50. Wait until he has to start paying for the holiday.

**Mr Welford:** And that compares with a 20 per cent wholesale sales tax.

**Mr NUNN:** It does. By the time he goes home, he will be worse off by \$250. This is under the Liberals' great scheme, which is supposed to make it easier for everybody to have a holiday and will improve the prospects of the tourism industry in Queensland. What a load of balderdash! I believe that the member for Crows Nest should disappear at this time. It should not be forgotten that Hewson will take away the 17.5 per cent leave loading. He will do that because party politics is all about philosophy. That bloke in Victoria—I have forgotten his name—

**An Opposition member:** Kennett.

**Mr NUNN:** Kennett. He followed Liberal Party philosophy when he took the 17.5 per cent leave loading away from the workers down there. When the time is right, and when it suits Hewson, he will do the same. Make no mistake, the 17.5 per cent leave loading is gone. The Aussie battler will most probably have to go down to the beach and throw rocks at the fish to get a catch. He will not be able to afford the hooks and sinkers, which will be loaded up with the GST. Who takes a swimming pool on holidays? The poor buggler would not be able to own a swimming pool, let alone be able to cart it with him on holidays. When he goes on holidays, he takes his wife, his kid and his money. The assault will be on his money. Every time he puts his hand in his pocket, such as when his kid wants a bucket and spade, he will pay 15 per cent. If he wants some suntan lotion, 20 per cent will be taken off and 15 per cent will be put on.

**Mr Ardill:** There's no sales tax on suntan cream.

**Mr NUNN:** That is good. If he wants a sun hat for his kid, and he wants to take his wife to a restaurant, it will cost him more dosh. The Liberals have knocked about his holidays before he starts. It should not be forgotten that his 17.5 per cent leave loading has been taken away from him. He will save a few dollars on petrol getting to his holiday destination. However, those dollars will be very few. Anybody who runs a motor car will say that the cheapest part of running a motor car is buying the petrol. He may save a few dollars, but Hewson will get that money back by putting 15 per cent on his tyres, 15 per cent on his car parts, 15 per cent on his registration and 15 per cent on his insurance.

**Mr Welford:** And his servicing.

**Mr NUNN:** If there is anything that the Liberals have forgotten later, they will whack it on top of that.

**Mr Laming:** Read the document.

**Mr NUNN:** It is an unreadable document. Nobody understands it, and it cannot be explained to the Australian people. People find it very easy to explain anything that they understand. However, the Liberals cannot explain Fightback to the public because they do not understand it. Hewson does not understand it, Reith does not understand it, nor does anybody else. Hewson will not only take back what he gives with one hand but also take back more than he gave. John Hewson is an Indian giver, pure and simple, and the people of Australia have come to recognise him for what he is.

Honourable members would notice that I have called the GST Hewson's tax. It is not Hewson's and Fischer's tax. I say that advisedly because, in common with his National Party colleagues in this place, Mr Fischer does not want the GST. They made that very clear at the beginning. They did not want it then and they do not want it now. Mr Fischer does not want a tax that will crush the family man and cripple the nation, not to mention the farmers and graziers who will take it out on the National Party in this State for the National's jelly-legged attitude in the party room in Canberra. The Federal member for Wide Bay, who is a member of the National Party, does not want the goods and services tax. The Nationals rejected the tax, but after a whipping by Hewson in the coalition room down in Canberra, those brave men caved in. They ratted on Queensland and they ratted on the rest of Australia. They now want to introduce Fightback, which redistributes wealth upwards. It will destroy Medicare, a health system which is the envy of America, the greatest nation in the Western World. In the lower income areas of that country, people whisper, "If you are not rich, kid, do not get sick." In that country, if people do not have the money, they do not get into a hospital. If people who are in hospital run out of money, their medication is withdrawn. The Americans have recognised the worth of Australia's Medicare system and they are coming over to copy it.

I wonder whether honourable members have seen the disgraceful MBF ads that have appeared on TV. God help us! Those ads are not only disgraceful but also humiliating. The MBF is a front for the AMA, which is a front for the Liberal Party. In those ads they have the arrogant hide to say to Australians, "If you have not got the money, you can damned well wait." Those ads target the mothers of young children and people who are in pain. They threaten people by saying, "If you are not in a private health fund, you can go without." Those ads mirror what is happening in real life. Private specialists throughout Queensland are carrying out a larger percentage of private operations than public ones. Some specialists have even refused to operate on public patients. They are a damning indictment of the system that they promote. To think that they can get away with this in Australia! It is an iniquity, and it is a shame on Australia. It may sound like a solution to join a medical benefits fund and have instant peace of mind. Like hell people will!

Recently, I had a fellow and his wife in my office. They were in tears. She had had an operation. They had been told by the specialist—just like the ads—"You do not have private health care. You do not have the money to pay. You can wait 18 months." He told them, "If you join a private health fund, I can do it straightaway." I remind members

that those people are pensioners. They did as they were commanded, and joined a health fund. Although they could not afford it, they joined because the wife was in pain. Guess what! They found that they were not covered for that operation because it related to an existing condition. Twelve months down the track, they went back to the doctor. They waited and waited, and finally the operation was performed. But then, because they could not afford the top medical cover, they had to pay the gap between the cost of the operation and the refund that they received. The doctor presented them with a bill for \$400. That is what they came to see me about. They were in tears in my office, clutching in their hands a pitiful bankbook with a balance of \$200. That was all the money that they had in the world. They were fearful that they were going to be hauled before the courts and jailed for not paying that powerful specialist. How could such a situation arise in Australia? That couple were terrified. They thought that they would be hauled before the courts and jailed. My advice to them was to send the refund cheque to the doctor, explain that they could not pay the full amount, and request that he take that cheque as full and final payment. I hope that he did. I have not heard from them since that day.

However, there is more. I noticed that the old bloke had trouble hearing me, and I asked him why he did not get a hearing aid. He said, "I had a hearing aid." It was apparently one of those old-fashioned ones with a bulky apparatus behind each ear. He told me that he had lost one, and that the other one fell into the bath and was ruined. There is a \$25 up-front charge on the free list for hearing aids which covers batteries and maintenance for the first 12 months. That is fair enough. But that poor old chap was not game to take that sum out of the \$200 which the specialist wanted from him for his wife's operation. He was afraid that the specialist would demand it. That is the sort of system to which the coalition would apply even greater screws by bringing Medicare down on its knees. I say to the members of the coalition, "Don't do it, boys. Don't do it."

That old fellow's concern for his wife was such that he would rather go without a hearing aid and suffer the humiliation of saying "eh?" to everyone who spoke to him. If ever there was a practical demonstration of one human being's love for another, I saw it in my office that day. But these fellows opposite would knock those people about even more. They have a hide. That man now has his hearing aid—no thanks to Dr Hewson, no thanks to Fightback, which will destroy Medicare, and certainly no thanks to the National Party's member for Wide Bay, whose support for a system and philosophy that will deny proper medical care to the poor is disgraceful. That woman was on the waiting list about which the member for Toowoomba South spoke. Where is he? He is probably in Toowoomba prostituting himself to the AMA while his pimps in Maryborough tout for him. Who put that woman on the waiting list? The doctors did that by the very actions that I have outlined. It is more than likely that the specialist was a member of the AMA, which is a front for the silvertail Liberals. We should sheet home the blame to where it belongs—the Liberal Party of Australia and the mansions of Toorak and Vaucluse. We should not sheet it home to that pitiful crowd of Liberals in the back corner of the Chamber. They are only in coalition because the Nationals need them now. The Nationals cannot stand them. There is one even more visible and evident reason why those two parties are in coalition, that is, because misery loves company. Those members are desperate for someone to cuddle up to, and anybody will do.

Let me examine a letter from Mr Warren Truss, the National Party member for Wide Bay, who said—

"We will subsidise private health insurance to enable more Australians to use the empty beds in private hospitals."

There we have it. The Liberals, aided by the Nationals, would use our taxes—our money—to prop up their private hospitals. They would use our money to line the pockets of the silvertails and blue bloods of the medical industry in Australia. I use the word "industry" advisedly because, as far as the Liberals and Nationals are concerned, it is no longer a health service, it is a money-making machine. I challenge Dr Hewson, Mr Tim Fischer and Mr Michael Horan, the member for Toowoomba South, to deny what

Warren Truss has put down in black and white for the people of Hervey Bay to read. I ask them to come clean with the people of Australia and admit that their health policy is about using taxpayers' money to build up privately owned hospitals at the expense of the public hospital system. The coalition has finally admitted that its health policy is not about health at all; it is about increased profits for wealthy entrepreneurs in the private hospital industry.

Let me compare Labor's attitude to Medicare with what Dr Hewson and his crowd have in store for us. This will take a bit of time, but it will be worth reading. Labor is strengthening Medicare, which provides every Australian with equal access to GPs, hospitals and necessary medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. It is retaining bulk-billing for all Australians. On 1 July, it will increase the Medicare levy from 1.25 per cent to 1.4 per cent of earnings to pay for a \$1.6 billion boost to public hospital funding. Labor is using that extra funding to ensure that public patients are admitted on the basis of need, not insurance status. That is the difference in the two philosophies. In cooperation with the States and Territories, Labor is making hospitals more efficient and responsive to the needs of the community. This includes more day surgery, better capital planning, better management procedures and shorter waiting lists. This year, Labor is also providing \$70m to help the States better manage their waiting lists, resulting in 25 000 extra procedures in orthopaedics, ear, nose and throat, and urology. Labor is strengthening general practice with a \$68m support package which includes funds to relocate GPs to country areas. That is an important step. It is spending \$123m on women's health, including breast and cervical cancer screening, women's health centres, alternative birthing services and family planning. It is also reforming mental health services under the \$135m national mental health plan; tackling dementia with a \$31m national action plan to support both sufferers and their carers; supporting the carers of the frail, aged and disabled with a \$93m package, including an increase in the domiciliary nursing care benefit; maintaining the national HIV/AIDS strategy; supporting the \$232m national Aboriginal health strategy; and setting up an Office of Rural Health to plan and coordinate rural health services, and continuing support for rural health workers under the Rural Health Support, Education and Training Program.

On the other hand, although Dr Hewson claims he is not going to dismantle Medicare, I cannot help casting my mind back to the days of Malcolm Fraser. In 1975, Fraser said that he would not dismantle Medibank, but he did. Dr Hewson plans to dismantle the arrangements that keep health costs down and health services accessible to all; that is the strength of his statements. He will certainly dismantle Medicare. He has promised also to abolish bulk-billing for 13 million Australians, to make people pay their bills up front and to cut the Medicare rebate by 10 per cent. He will encourage GPs to charge the AMA fee of \$32 a visit—more if they like. Under Dr Hewson's plan, 13 million Australians would end up \$14 out of pocket for every visit to a doctor; and, even with gap insurance, they would have to pay a compulsory charge of \$4.60. The coalition would slash public hospital budgets by \$1.3 billion a year, which will be a cut of \$221m for Queensland alone. A cut of \$1.3 billion will mean 10 000 fewer public beds, with 1 730 being lost to Queensland. That means a dwindling number of beds for public patients and longer waiting lists. I have already demonstrated who has caused the waiting lists.

Labor is giving the States and Territories \$4 billion a year over five years for public hospitals, and a further \$1.6 billion on top of that. That is why Opposition members' mates in Victoria and New South Wales mooched in on the last day and signed the Medicare agreement with Labor, because they are guaranteed funding over five years. Dr Hewson will take \$1.3 billion from hospitals to pay for his tax credits. That money will go to private insurers and doctors. Not much of it will go back into hospitals. Dr Hewson is offering a family earning \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year a tax credit of \$200 towards basic cover costing \$850 or top cover costing \$1,600. How magnanimous! He is going to increase their bill by \$1,600 and give them \$200 to help them. Only top cover pays for private hospital treatment. Under the coalition, health would cost families an extra \$22 a week and Australia another \$2.3 billion a year.

As to employment, I wish to make a point which was brought up recently in general discussion at a Neighbourhood Watch meeting that I attended. The Liberal/National Party coalition has promised to create two million jobs. That is interesting, because we are informed that there are 1 017 600 people unemployed. Where are the 982 400 job applicants to come from to fill those vacancies? The coalition expects either to have a pool of unemployed much greater than we have now or wages will be so low under Fightback that everybody will need an extra job to help pay his or her way. With prices up and wages down, the ordinary labouring man will be greatly disadvantaged. To the workers of Australia, I say simply this: "When you get to the poor house, tell them Doc Hewson sent you." He will give them a note; he is proud of it. I do not know how members opposite can go home and face their families at night after publicly supporting Fightback. The people in the families whom they would deny the right to a decent living wage and an adequate level of health care are the same sort of people as those in their own families. There is no difference between the families; one family is just not as well off. In conclusion—it can be truly said of the members of the coalition that first they got on, then they got honour and then they got honest. The Fitzgerald inquiry found that out.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (5.19 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in the Address in Reply debate. Firstly, I congratulate Her Excellency on her appointment as the Governor of Queensland. I pledge the loyalty of the citizens of the Lockyer electorate and that of myself to Her Majesty and to her representative, the Governor of Queensland.

**Mr McElligott:** Should she pay tax?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member asked, "Does she pay tax?"

**Mr McElligott:** No. I said, "Should she pay tax?"

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I do not believe that is a subject for discussion in the Address in Reply debate. I noted some of the flowery phrases that were used by the mover and the seconder of this motion but which were not supported by one other member of the Labor Party. Anyone would think that the motion was a traditional phrase that should be supported only by the mover and the seconder. I will support the motion that has been moved and seconded so ably by the two Labor members in this House, and I note that no other Labor members have been prepared to use the particular turn of phrase contained in the motion.

The Address in Reply debate is occurring at a strange time. Her Excellency delivered her Speech to the members of the Parliament assembled on Wednesday, 4 November 1992. Yet here we are on 24 February 1993 responding to that Speech. That has occurred because we did not debate the Budget when it was delivered. The Budget debate was taken up by new members of Parliament delivering maiden speeches before the Parliament went into recess. Therefore, we did not have an opportunity to debate the Budget fully. Originally, the Government brought down a Budget that it did not want to debate before the election. After the election, it allowed new members to make their maiden speeches during the Budget debate. We all know that members making maiden speeches will not devote much time to a Budget debate. It is rather curious that we are conducting the Address in Reply debate after the Budget debate when Her Excellency opened the Parliament on 4 November.

**Mr Mackenroth:** The Address in Reply is before the Budget debate this year.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The Budget debate was held after the Budget was presented and after the Governor's Speech.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Yes, but the Address in Reply is before the Budget debate this year.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I am referring to the address that was presented last year. I want to rebut some of the statements that have been made by previous speakers in this debate. I am not sure where the members who support the Government are coming



from. The member for Hervey Bay made a very heart-rending attack on the existing problems with the medical system. He indicated that they would get much worse if Dr Hewson and Tim Fischer were elected as Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Australia. He told us how bad things are at present. He told us about an elderly gentleman and his wife who were in his office in tears. That is the system that exists at present. Why does it exist at present? I will tell honourable members why: because the waiting list is 18 months long. The honourable member for Hervey Bay said that the gentleman was told that the waiting list was 18 months long. After 10 years of Labor, the waiting list is 18 months long.

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** So now it is back to the 35 years! The Government had 10 years and it was not able to fix it. I admire the honourable member's sincerity, and I know that he is sincere. But I do not admire his logic. He is sincere, but he is certainly not very logical. There is an 18 months' waiting list, and the proposed scheme, as I understand it, is to try to encourage as many of those people off the waiting list to allow the waiting list to be shortened. The honourable member for Hervey Bay referred to the silvertails and the blue bloods. I suggest that those silvertails and blue bloods who are on that waiting list are the reason why that gentleman's wife could not get any attention. Do honourable members know who else is among those silvertails? Their Prime Minister of Australia! He does not have any private insurance, so he is on the public list. Therefore, if anything happened to him or his family, they would go on that waiting list, as does the elderly gentleman who was in the office of the member for Hervey Bay. Obviously, any system that will improve and shorten that waiting list is to be commended. I ask the member for Hervey Bay to see whether we can get a better system than the present one.

The other point that I want to make concerns Fightback and the GST. I know that we are going to debate this matter tomorrow, but it has been raised in this debate. We have not heard much about One Nation. What happened to One Nation? It died because the figures were out of date within a month of their release. All those jobs have been created for the construction of that four foot eight-and-a-half inch railway line to the port of Brisbane. That was in One Nation; it has not even materialised. The Government runs around looking for black spots on roads because it cannot spend enough money quickly enough on that rail project. We know that those projects take some time to get up and running. It just shows how poor the planning to create jobs was.

I want to refer to some of the illogical comments made by previous speakers in this debate. Firstly, I draw the attention of honourable members to the Governor's Speech, part of which was prepared by the Government. The Speech included a segment about payroll tax exemption levels and how they will be raised over a period from \$600,000 to \$700,000. The increase to \$700,000 will apply from 1 July 1993. The Governor stated—

“This measure will benefit an estimated 6000 Queensland enterprises employing 100 or fewer people.

By July next year, the payroll tax exemption level will have increased by 40 per cent in three years.”

That is part of the job creation package that was presented by Her Excellency to the assembled members of Parliament. I cannot understand why members on the other side of the Chamber are now claiming that the abolition of payroll tax will not increase jobs. The Speech that they gave the Governor to read stated that the Government will increase jobs because it is going to raise the exemption levels for payroll tax. That implies that the lower the payroll tax, the more jobs will be created in Queensland. A number of Government members have since asked the question: how on earth will the abolition of payroll tax do that? Mr Keating is on record as saying some time ago that the abolition of payroll tax would create 200 000 jobs. I think that the argument of honourable members opposite that payroll tax abolition will not create jobs has been well and truly sunk. The Government has said that unemployment is a problem. Mr

Keating is going around saying that he will solve all the unemployment problems in Australia. His Government has been in office for 10 years, and unemployment has continued to increase. We are just about at the end of the J-curve.

**Mr Quinn:** We have fallen off.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** As the honourable member for Merrimac just said, we have fallen off the J-curve. The problem is that no-one believes Mr Keating any longer. He makes statements, such as the one he made in *One Nation*, about how many more jobs he is going to create, but nothing happens. It goes on and on. I am very surprised that no member on the other side of the Chamber has recognised the main aim of the GST and the Fightback package, which is to improve and increase the competitiveness of Australian exporters. That is the major aim of that project. If we can increase exports, Australians will be better off; we will have better education, better health systems, better police, better roads and better everything. We have to earn more money.

**Mr Briskey** interjected.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member's Labor crowd in Canberra presided over the greatest increase in the level of debt in this nation's history. The present level of debt is \$200 billion, and if he believes that we could be classed as responsible citizens while leaving that level of debt to be inherited by our children and grandchildren—because that is how long it will take to pay off those debts—I feel very sorry for him. Those of us who know from experience the tough side of business also know that if high levels of debt are incurred, a business cannot continue. If this nation can become more competitive in terms of international trade, future generations will inherit a much better country.

Today's *Courier-Mail* contains an article stating that the Prime Minister visited the Driza-bone factory. The article contains some interesting facts indicating that the company exports to 20 countries including Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The article goes on to state—

“Mr Keating said Driza-Bone's success was an inspiration to other small companies in Australia, particularly those in the clothing industry.”

I quite agree with him; Driza-bone has been a great success. However, I believe it is most unfortunate that it is foreign-owned. I stand to be corrected if I am wrong, but my information is that the Driza-bone company is owned by a foreign company. Mr Keating was saying how valued his cutback in taxes will be to the company—or should I say the owners who live overseas and who will receive the benefits of reduced taxation levels that Mr Keating claims he will introduce. I can tell honourable members what will happen. GST will be fully rebated on all exports. The Driza-bone factory exports to 20-odd countries, and that will result in more profitability for its foreign owners. I can imagine that people who work in the Driza-bone factory and in other factories will be all smiles. I welcome the efforts of those who have the get-up-and-go that is behind the success of the Driza-bone company. Why did Mr Keating recommend a goods and services tax in 1985? Can members of the Labor Party tell me that?

**Mr Welford:** Because there was not a recession then, you dill. There was no recession then. That is the whole point.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member for Everton says that we had to have a recession. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to allow me to refer to some notes which relate to some comments made by members on the Government side of the Chamber.

**Mr Mackenroth:** That is a daily pull from *Hansard* that you are not allowed to refer to.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I am referring to a daily pull from *Hansard* to refresh my memory. I recall that the member for Archerfield—

**Mr Mackenroth:** You cannot quote.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I certainly will not quote what he said. He referred to the fact that in New York bottles of Coca-Cola were selling at \$1 and when the GST was added on to that, they were sold for \$1.30 or \$1.40. Prior to that, the mover of the motion, the member for Currumbin, said that a goods and services tax applied in Canada and is known as the "go south tax". She indicated that many Canadians go to the United States because of that tax.

**Mr Ardill:** That is correct.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member should wait a moment. Later, the honourable member for Archerfield told the House that the United States also has a GST. I think members of the Government should get their stories straight because both countries have GST. The honourable member for Currumbin put the motion very sweetly and correctly, and she spoke very passionately.

**Mr ARDILL:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Lockyer has misrepresented what I said, and I denied it at the time. In fact, the GST in Canada is generally higher than that applying in the United States, but in some areas there is a State tax as well as a city tax on top of the general VAT.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk):** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I take the point made by the member for Archerfield, but I may not take another interjection from him. In fact, he has refreshed my memory. My understanding is that a GST applies in the United States and there is a State GST which applies in the individual States. What he has just said could have meant that that situation applied in Canada, too, and I am just trying to get the position straight. The honourable member for Currumbin stated that the level of GST is much lower in the United States, but the point is that some type of goods and services tax can be found all over the world. Twenty-one of the world's leading 25 economies have that type of tax. However, I will not pursue the topic of GST because there will be a debate on this issue tomorrow.

It is my belief that with or without GST, unless primary production and mining industries are returned to a profitable level, Queenslanders will not enjoy a decent standard of living. I do not mind what the Government pays nurses, teachers or police officers or how much overtime is paid. However, if this Government continues to pay more and more to politicians and people such as cleaners and insurance salesmen, etc, our standard of living will continue to decline and the value of the dollar will continue to be devalued. Producers need to get greater income from exports. Australia needs to export more than the amount that is presently being paid for imported goods. It is absolute nonsense to say that salaries and wages are the only things that matter. Salaries and wages are pegged to a standard of living which is dependent upon how much this country's producers can earn in export income, and that is all there is to it.

I turn now to discuss the running of this State by the present Government since the last State election. I judge a Government on the way it provides services that are required in terms of health care—which was discussed in this House earlier today—education, and law and order. The member for Crows Nest has already referred to law and order issues. For the life of me, I cannot understand why the Minister for Education allowed QTAC officers to take holidays at Christmas-time when so many school-leavers were hopeful of obtaining a place in a tertiary institution. The students were telephoning through their preferences to a computerised recording machine which broke down. Because all the QTAC staff were on holidays, the students could not record their preferences within the prescribed period.

Honourable members talk about elderly people in tears coming into their offices. I am talking about the number of people who came to my office or rang me up, saying desperately, "I cannot get through to that number. I cannot get through to that number." What happened to the staff? They were on holidays. If people have a busy time in their office, they engage extra staff. The staff works full time; no holidays are taken during that busy time. Why on earth the Minister for Education allowed those staff to be away

on holidays during that peak work period, I will never know. I guarantee that it will not happen again. The Government introduced a new system and was testing it out, but no backup was available if it were to fail. That is a major problem.

**Mr Briskey:** Do you want some facts?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** There was no fax number. People were told to ring telephone numbers. The other problem that I want to raise with regard to education is the difficulties that have been arising because a number of severely to moderately handicapped children have been welcomed into classrooms. I am not saying that I oppose it; I am saying that difficulties arise. I have a letter from a nine-year-old lad who suffers from cerebral palsy. He attends for two full days in a classroom and three half days at the school. I will not name the school and I hope that the Minister does not ask me to table the letter, because I do not want to identify the lad. He said that he wants to attend the science and social studies courses at the school, which he misses at present. When I made inquiries, I learned that, because of the number of aide hours that are allowed, the school does not have anyone to attend with that lad. That lad and another girl at the school are in wheelchairs. That lad is reasonably bright. He will get on in life, but he needs an education. The extra aides are not available at the school, so the lad cannot attend school for five full days.

Life is difficult for anyone with a handicap. Previously, such people were probably not accepted into the schools, so they suffered even greater disadvantages than they do now. They would have had to go to a special school—if they were lucky enough to have one in their area. I am not saying that the Government cannot do anything about the problem. However, if children with handicaps who need extra care and attention are to be accepted into classrooms, the Government must accept that extra costs will be incurred. I cite the example of a girl with a problem who lives in a town close to Gatton. She has repeated Year 1. She has some difficulty because at times she is incontinent. She has been assessed as being marginally bright enough to go to school. It has been considered that she can repeat Year 1 but that she should not go to a special school where she could receive the attention that she needs. Her mother is distraught because she would like her daughter to attend the special school.

If that girl could travel to the Gatton school, she could attend the ordinary, mainstream class and backup facilities would be available. If she were to have an accident at school, staff would be available to help her. Naturally, in a classroom children who have incontinence problems are embarrassed. If that girl were more severely handicapped, she could catch a bus to Gatton. However, she has been assessed as not needing to attend the special school. Therefore, the lass cannot get a bus pass to travel to the school, and her family would have to pay for her to travel on the bus to Gatton. Those unfortunate things happen. One feels for the people who face those problems. If the Government is to offer those people equal opportunity, it must accept that it has to pay more. The Government must provide more in its Budget to achieve that result.

**Mrs Edmond:** You better tell Dr Hewson that.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** This is a State Government matter. We have been surviving for 10 years under a Federal Labor Government. I am not laying blame. I am saying that, as a community, we must accept that those things have to be done. I turn to the increase in taxes and charges imposed by the Government. I will cite one example. An elderly gentleman has a grazing lease on a 4.4-hectare piece of forest land next to the Kentville State School. It is beside a property that he owns. A lot of subdivision is taking place in the area. On 25 March 1992, the gentleman wrote to the Lands Department because his lease was due for renewal on 1 July. He had been paying \$50 a year for 4.4 hectares of grazing land only. He had not received a reply by 1 July. He has to pay the rates on the land to the Laidley Shire Council, so he paid those rates. On 27 November, which is quite a few months after the lease was due to be renewed, he received an offer from the Lands Department that, if he were to pay the sum of \$485.80, he could continue to lease that particular piece of land. The yearly rent was \$360. In addition, a fee of \$79 would be

charged for renewing the lease; the department would charge him \$41.80 for informal occupancy rent; and the cost for postage of the new lease would be \$5.

The conditions are all stated in this document that I have with me. The land is pure grazing land. That man cannot do a thing with it. One condition of the lease is that the lessee shall use the leased land for grazing purposes only. He cannot put any improvements on the land and he cannot farm it. The land was the site of an old arsenic dip, which was closed down, so it is a contaminated site. For the benefit of members who do not know the Kentville area, I will describe it. It is extremely poor grazing land. The land that old gentleman has been leasing is a hungry sandstone ridge. He said that he did not think that it was worth \$50 to renew the lease and he did not know whether he should continue to pay that \$50. Of course, the department then gave him a bill for more. Naturally, I advised him that he would have to make the economic decision as to whether or not he wanted to renew the lease on the land. That was his decision.

What will the Lands Department get from the land? That gentleman will take up his fence that he put on the land 20-odd years ago. The block of land is sitting in the middle of a very hungry sandstone ridge. I say to the honourable member for Gladstone that it is another indication of how hungry the Government is. The Government thinks that it can continue to increase charges for such leaseholders. The man could not build on the land. I am trying to find out how the department assesses those rents and whether they are assessed as a percentage of the market value. I do not deny that the market value for subdivision certainly would be worth 10 times more than the value of the lease. However, the man can not use the land for subdivision. He cannot build on it. He cannot do anything with it. It would be different if he had a lifetime rent on the land; then the charge would be reasonable. However, that charge is certainly not reasonable for land used for grazing purposes.

The Government has lost the plot with regard to rents on small blocks of land. I have received a number of complaints from people in my area concerning the rents charged by the Government for school grounds that are no longer used and for five or 10 acres of unused Crown land on which a person is only allowed to graze a cow. If the Government wants to sell off that land instead of leasing it, that is fair enough. It is a better use of Government funds if the land can be sold for subdivisional purposes. The Government should go right ahead and do it. I support the proper use of land in that manner. If the land is part of a contaminated site, it could be rectified at a reasonable price or the contaminated area could be fenced off. That would be quite reasonable. By putting up charges, the Government indicates to me that it does not know what it is doing.

Health is also a very important issue to my constituents and to me. There is a grave concern that this Government will cut back on health services. I will cite an example of that concern. I will refer to the town of Laidley, which is now within the new boundaries of my electorate. When the National Party went out of office, Laidley had a hospital that had 42 beds. As all of those beds were not used, it was obvious that the hospital needed to be downgraded. This Government reduced the number of beds to 26 or 27. That lasted a few months, then the number was reduced to 15. Over the last couple of years, the maximum number of patients in that hospital has been about 16 to 19. So 15 beds might have been a reasonable number. It is an older hospital. There are many reasons why the number of patients using that hospital decreased. I believe it was mainly because of the actions of the doctors in town. For instance, other doctors who came from Gatton found difficulty in using the hospital because the local doctors kept the two private beds for themselves and other patients were sent away. However, everybody wants an existing hospital to remain, particularly when the next major hospital is 40 minutes away.

The West Moreton Regional Health Authority indicated that the number of beds at that hospital would be reduced to seven. One doctor who stood up and spoke at the meeting that was held has been accused of being a friend of the AMA. I do not care if he is a friend of the AMA or not; he is a friend of the people of Laidley. He said, "You

have got seven beds in the hospital. Two of them are private, two beds are intermediate and you have a male ward, a female ward and a children's ward. Where do you put your extra patient if there happens to be another one?" I will use the words that the doctor used at that public meeting, because there were 500 people there. He said to the chairman of the health authority, "If you have a 13-year old daughter who happens to be in the hospital and I have to admit a 19-year old local stud, do I put him in the same room as that lass?" I know that is a rather crude term, but everyone can understand the difficulty a doctor would have if he had to admit an active young lad under those circumstances. Seven beds are available in the hospital. How would they be adjusted to accommodate that person?

The department has claimed that it will increase services in the area by providing physiotherapists, social workers, etc. I welcome any improvement to the services, but if the department is reducing the number of hospital beds to seven, it might as well tell the locals to turn the lights out when the last one goes home, because I think the hospital will close fairly quickly. However, Des Freeman, the chairman of the authority, gave an assurance that he will increase the number of beds immediately another patient is admitted and no bed is available for him. I can assure him that the growth in the Laidley area is dramatic. It is one of the fastest growing shires, percentage wise, in southern Queensland. It will continue to grow in the future. It is absolutely absurd to close down the Laidley Hospital. One of the Laidley Shire councillors who was at the meeting read a letter which indicated that a young lad's life was saved because of that hospital. The lad had suffered a fall, his parents were not very concerned about him but decided to take him to the local hospital. He was in big strife. In fact, if he had not been treated immediately, he would have lost his life. Very shortly after that he ended up in intensive care at a major hospital. The fact is that his parents took him to the local hospital, where he stabilised, and his life was certainly saved because of the existence of the Laidley Hospital.

I know that this debate on the Address in Reply has covered a wide range of subjects. Basically, I am saying that unless we get the major economy right in Australia, no matter how good a Government is in Queensland, it will not be able to manage and deliver the services to its citizens. Our exports need to rise and our mining industries, our primary industries and any other manufacturing industries have to become world competitive and able to export throughout the world so that we can have a profitable future for all Australians.

Time expired.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central) (5.49 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak in the Address in Reply debate. I intend to deal with a number of issues that pertain to my electorate of Brisbane Central, as well as some general issues. In the Address in Reply debate, members usually express the desire to assure Her Excellency of their continued loyalty and affection and their thanks for the Speech that was delivered for the opening of the Forty-seventh Parliament, and I do that. I reject the suggestion by the honourable member for Lockyer that Labor members were not doing that. We were in fact doing that. The mover and seconder had covered that adequately and members were in fact endorsing the remarks that they had made.

Before I move on to other things, I will deal with the topic of royalty and the royal family. I think it is important on these occasions that we remember that on 1 January 2001 it will be 100 years since Federation, since the Australian States got together. Some people have suggested that we should, over the next few years leading up to that centenary of our Federation, have a debate on a range of issues such as republicanism and the flag. I support the contention that that debate should take place. The outcome of that debate, of course, is a matter for the Australian people. In the end, they will make a determination.

However, I think it is important to say that, in recent times, notwithstanding what respect we may have for the Queen and the royal family, recent events involving the royal family could best be described as a circus. I think it is important that, if the royal

family is to maintain the respect and credibility that it has across a large part of Australia, it be mindful of the fact that respect and credibility are directly related to the behaviour and conduct of the royal family. I do not say that in any adverse way. I think like every other member in this House—I wish them well. Having visited England in December with my family and having spent some time visiting Westminster looking at the committee system and reading the British press, one could be forgiven for thinking that the British press wanted to destroy the royal family. Whatever comments and criticisms people have about the recent statements by Paul Keating, our Prime Minister, they pale into insignificance when one reads the tripe that was published in the British *Sun* and a number of other papers. If anyone has been offended by comments which have been critical of the Royal family, they should read the British press. Royal watching could be described only as sport. One day it is Princess Diana then Prince Charles; and the next day it is topless pictures of another Royal. The British press is worse than the Australian press. In relation to the Royal family, the British press has a field day. The respect for and credibility of the Royal family is put at risk when such reports are published as a result of certain Royal behaviour.

Now to move to some positive comments about a scheme established by the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland titled "Workplace Rehabilitation". All too often in the political history of Australia and Queensland, adverse reference to and use of industrial relations has occurred. Many politicians, including one who was Premier of this State for nearly 20 years, sought to use industrial relations as a political football. Through the Federal Liberal Party's industrial relations policy, John Hewson seeks to once again use industrial relations as a political football. Frankly, his industrial relations policy will lead to industrial anarchy in this country, similar to that which resulted from the policies adopted by the Liberal Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett. He set about systematically destroying the award system in that State. He has been responsible for the sacking of nurses, teachers and others. Indeed, many former Victorian teachers are coming to Queensland seeking employment.

Notwithstanding the background that I have just outlined, it is pleasing that in October 1991 the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland developed a scheme which has brought together in a very cooperative, voluntary sense employers, employees, unions and the Workers Compensation Board to provide for voluntary workplace rehabilitation. That is commonsense industrial relations. It is the sort of policy needed federally and in Victoria.

In the 12 months or so before being elected to this honourable place, I returned to the practice of law and represented people involved in workplace accident or personal injury claims. In this common law area, I witnessed first-hand the suffering of employees and their families who suffered the anxiety and hardship of rehabilitation. Therefore, in my view, any scheme that helps with workplace rehabilitation has to be worth while. This scheme deserves special commendation.

The advantages of the scheme are basically these—

Employers are able to keep good staff. They are able to reduce their premiums and they get extra productivity.

Employees have greater job security, and their convalescence is managed.

The insurer, the Workers Compensation Board, also receives benefits, because it can offer cheaper insurance and it can reduce administrative overheads.

Later, I will deal with the benefits in more detail.

The bottom line is that all three groups—employers, employees and the board—benefit. From Queensland's point of view, this cooperative approach of employers, employees and the board leads to an increase in productivity. In Queensland, the scheme is voluntary—unlike some other States, which have made it mandatory. To encourage participants, the Workers Compensation Board runs courses to train people in its workplace rehabilitation course, and certificates are presented to participants. It is a four to five-day training course. Certificates are presented also to

accredited employer organisations which encourage people to participate in the courses.

At the last presentation ceremony on 17 February at the Greek Club, the board was kind enough to ask me to present the certificates, although I had presented certificates on a previous occasion during 1992. During the course of the presentation ceremony, I had the opportunity to speak to a wide range of employers, course participants and representatives from the board. All were very enthusiastic about the operation of the scheme. The Workers Compensation Board offers these four to five-day courses on workplace rehabilitation in conjunction with TAFE colleges throughout Queensland. No cost is involved for course participants.

The course is designed to provide participants with a background of the benefits of rehabilitation in the workplace. The course provides a thorough working knowledge of rehabilitation principles, practice and services, and the opportunity to apply those within a workplace setting. The board encourages firms and companies to nominate a workplace rehabilitation coordinator from their organisation to attend the workplace rehabilitation course. The board supplies a course manual, and all tuition to the participants is at no charge to them.

In evaluating the importance of this course, it must be remembered that every year five million working days are lost in Australia through accidents at work. By spending just four or five days at no cost to the participants or to the company, the board is making an attempt—and quite a successful attempt, in my view—to save company money and time as well as to assist in the rehabilitation of employees. Even the wages of the person attending the course can be claimed by companies under the training guarantee levy.

This commonsense approach by the board is based on the fact that the cost of an injury escalates with the length of convalescence. This is important. Twenty per cent of claims last longer than six months. However, this 20 per cent accounts for 70 per cent of the overall cost. Early intervention is essential to prevent depression and deconditioning which interfere with an employee's recovery. The longer injured workers are away from their place of work, the more their self-esteem and conditioning deteriorate, reducing their likelihood of a return to work. Therefore, the ultimate aim of the board is to start the recovery process immediately, that is, getting the injured worker back in shape and back on the job as soon as possible. The board places much emphasis on occupational rehabilitation, which aims to restore the injured worker to an optimum physical, psychological, social and vocational potential. Research has proven that the earlier injured workers can be referred to a rehabilitation program, the more likely they are to return to work, and sooner than would otherwise be the case.

The workplace rehabilitation program offers immediate access to a comprehensive, coordinated program for rehabilitation. Naturally, the medical profession is an integral component of the workplace rehabilitation program. Individual rehabilitation plans are implemented in consultation with the injured worker's doctor, so that getting back to work is a carefully reviewed part of therapy. The thrust of the board's workplace rehabilitation scheme optimises the conditions for recovery, enabling workers to return to work as soon as possible. In time, effort and cost efficiency, it makes more sense to rehabilitate than to replace. It is better to have injured workers back at work and productive than at home and non-productive.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum present.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Workplace rehabilitation maximises the return from an injured worker's skills while minimising the costs associated with the injury. Savings in



compensation claims are passed on to the employer while at the same time containing premiums. The merit bonus system enables employers to reduce their assessed premium. Workplace rehabilitation also helps to prevent a shortage of skilled and experienced workers. The disruption to both the employer and the employee is minimised. As I have said, workplace rehabilitation combines the efforts of employers, employees, unions, the medical profession and occupational health and rehabilitation professionals. The program works in the best interests of business and industry, individuals and family. It also provides the opportunity for increased benefits. The board encourages companies to appoint a workplace rehabilitation coordinator, who should have the authority to implement rehabilitation strategies. That means liaising with injured workers, management, unions, medical practitioners, various other service providers and the board. After completing the board's course, the workplace rehabilitation coordinator would be the one person in the company who would help to make any workplace injury much less painful for everybody concerned. The workplace rehabilitation coordinator works to get injured workers back in shape and on the job. It is not often that such schemes are praised in this place. However, I believe that from time to time it is important that these schemes, which work effectively, be acknowledged in this Parliament.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate some of the advantages of the scheme. For employers, the advantages of workplace rehabilitation are: firstly, less down time and lost productivity; secondly, reduced absenteeism and shortage of skilled workers; and, thirdly, savings in compensation premiums, increased merit bonuses and improved industrial relations and workplace morale. The advantages of workplace rehabilitation for employees are: firstly, faster recovery and reduced suffering; secondly, minimum disruption to family, social and working life; thirdly, prevention of depression and deconditioning; fourthly, productive again as soon as possible through multiskilling; and, fifthly, job and financial security and less likelihood of future injury. I congratulate employers, employees, unions and the board on this important initiative.

I turn now to matters that relate to my electorate of Brisbane Central. I wish to deal specifically with Fortitude Valley. As honourable members would know, my electorate of Brisbane Central is the most multicultural electorate in Queensland. What we see in the Brisbane Central electorate is, in fact, the future of Queensland and the future of Australia. It is the future that my children and the children of other members will see. However, I must say that I am concerned about the policy that has been adopted by a number of insurance companies in relation to people who run businesses in Fortitude Valley. Honourable members would be aware that for some time, along with my colleague the Alderman for Spring Hill David Hinchcliffe, the Brisbane City Council and the State Government, I have been urging the rejuvenation of Fortitude Valley. It is about time that certain insurance companies got their act together and decided to give the necessary insurance cover to businesses that operate in Fortitude Valley. To illustrate my point, I wish to table a letter from Mr Wayne Lu, the manager of Grand-Wealth International Pty. Ltd., which also trades under the name of Chinatown Carpark. He wrote this letter to my colleague David Hinchcliffe, which states—

“I have corresponded with you in the past regarding my company's ardent support of your plans to revitalise the Fortitude Valley area.

It is therefore particularly disturbing for us to report that despite your efforts, we have experienced considerable difficulty in renewing our insurance policy in respect of the carpark and office building comprising our premises at 31 Duncan Street, Fortitude Valley. Please find enclosed a copy of a letter sent to us by our insurance broker, Westpac Insurance Services (Brokers) Limited, dated 11 December, 1992 informing us of the situation. This was the first, albeit untimely, indication that our current insurers, NZI Insurance had declined to offer a renewal of the policy.

During the ensuing days our brokers experienced considerable difficulty in securing an underwriter for our policy despite the fact that in the three years since

our purchase of the complex our total amount of claims made (gross) \$4,485.24 was considerably less than the total amount of premiums paid \$16,663 over the same period. Among the companies which refused us cover were AMP, Zurich, MMI, Mercantile Mutual, Suncorp, QBE, Lunlies, Royal and GIO insurance."

I table that letter for the information of the House because I have been concerned, along with my learned colleagues, about the attitude of certain insurance companies. Indeed, an article in the *Courier-Mail* titled "Valley crime rate deters insurers" outlined that that attitude was not supported by the facts. The article states—

"Lord Mayor Jim Soorley last night blasting insurance companies over their refusal to insure some Fortitude Valley businesses because of the area's"—

supposed—

"high crime risk. At least two Valley businesses, Lucky's restaurant"—

who approached me about this matter—

"and the Cosmopolitan Coffee shop have had their insurance cover dropped without notice. The owner of Lucky's restaurant said he had made one claim in 18 years."

It was good enough for Suncorp to cover Lucky's, which is an institution in this town, for 17 years and then suddenly find that the restaurant is too high a risk. One wonders how insurance companies make such assessments. I love the restaurant's pizzas.

**Mr Briskey:** The best food coordinators.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take that interjection from the honourable member who lives a little further away from the city heart. Yes, it is the best food in Brisbane. The article continued to state—

"The owner of Lucky's restaurant said he had made one claim in 18 years. Ald Soorley said that the stance adopted by some insurance companies was 'totally unreasonable' and was undermining efforts by the council, the Police Department and Fortitude Valley business groups to revive the area.

Fortitude Valley Business Association marketing manager Samantha Goddard said that the attitude was bewildering as the suburb's image was better than it had been for many years. Ms Goddard said police presence in the area was at an all-time high and crime had dropped dramatically."

Those remarks are statistically supportable. The number of break and enter offences was down by 21 per cent, and the number of thefts was down by 25 per cent. Mr Luciano Morselli, who is Lucky, the owner of Lucky's restaurant in Ann Street, said that insurance companies—

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** We heard the honourable member's speech—the interjection speech. If he did not answer interjections, he could not make a speech. I would be quiet if I were him. The owner of Lucky's said that because of outdated perceptions of the suburb, insurance companies were discriminating against Fortitude Valley. The owner of Cosmopolitan Coffee in Brunswick Street, Ms Carmel Narciso, said that her business insurance cover had been cut. She was told that she would have to look overseas for insurance. What a disgrace! Suncorp chief executive Bernard Rowley said that his company had regrets about its move to cut Lucky's insurance cover, but that it was a commercial decision. I table that report also for the information of the House.

I took the opportunity to discuss this matter with Suncorp. Together with other insurance companies, Suncorp has developed a totally unreasonable approach to the Valley. The Valley has less crime today than it has had in the past decade. The fire risk in that area is no greater now than it has been over the past 18 years. If we took the approach taken by Suncorp and other insurance companies—because I am not singling out Suncorp—in relation to insurance of premises in the Valley, we would not insure any restaurant in Queensland that was in an old building. When I say "old", I mean one that

has not been constructed specifically for the purpose of running a restaurant or similar business. Quite frankly, if insurance companies in this State cannot perform better than that and cannot get behind local authorities such as the Brisbane City Council and the State Government in their attempts to rejuvenate the Valley, then they deserve the criticism and scorn of Queenslanders. I would have thought that T. J. Ryan and the previous Labor Governments who were responsible for establishing the SGIO, which became Suncorp, would be absolutely appalled at this policy being adopted by Suncorp in relation to Fortitude Valley.

For the information of members of this House, I table a newsletter from the Valley Business Association which outlines the activities in which it has been involved to improve the perception of the Valley and what is happening there. For example, on 27 and 28 June 1992, the Valley Business Association held the inaugural Valley Fiesta, which was held in the Valley and Chinatown Malls, attracting crowds that had not been seen in the area for a number of years. The overriding theme of the weekend festival was one of multiculturalism—something that I support totally—celebrating the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region. The highlight of the weekend came early on the Saturday morning with the fiesta street parade boasting more than 50 floats and pedestrian entries that weaved their way from the city fringe at Cathedral Square into the heart of the Valley.

One of the other important matters raised in the *Valley Business Association News*, and one of the initiatives of this Government, is the fight to re-route heavy vehicles from the Valley. The report from the association states—

“The fight to re-route heavy vehicles from the Valley has come one step closer to reality with the announcement from State Government that trucks carrying dangerous goods will be banned from Brisbane’s inner city and Valley areas during the day.”

I hope that insurance companies in this State will adopt a more realistic approach. The people who operate in the Valley area are entitled to more respect than they are getting from the current insurance companies.

There has been some confusion about recent changes to the Liquor Act as they apply to Queensland, and because the legislation previously had specific impact in terms of the Valley area, I wish to make its provisions very clear to honourable members. I refer to a statement made by the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing. He said—

“Section 164 of the Liquor Act specifically gives police the same powers as the old Act”—

that is in relation to drunkenness in a public place. He stated further—

“Police still have the power to arrest people who are: a) drunk in a public place; b) causing a public nuisance; or, c) endangering themselves or other people.

The offence of public drunkenness will remain a crime for about a year until alternative custodial arrangements are in place, in line with the Black Deaths in Custody Royal Commission recommendations.”

I hope that that clarifies some concern.

One of the things that I can say with some pride tonight in this debate is that in recent times the State Government has spent a great deal of time, effort and money making certain that community groups, particularly sporting groups in my electorate, are funded adequately. I shall mention some of those tonight, because I believe that the Minister, Bob Gibbs, and his department have carried out a comprehensive review of this scheme and are providing groups in my electorate with the sort of support to which they are entitled. For example, in December 1992, the Wilston State School Amateur Swimming Club received \$3,349. That was provided under the Sports Assistance Scheme operated by the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. In December 1992,

the Mayne Australian Football Club received a subsidy of \$3,750 towards its junior coaching program. In October 1992, the Youth Advocacy Centre—an important centre in my electorate—received for specific purpose funding for the 1992-93 financial year the sum of \$36,050 to fully support the administration of the centre. The grant enables the Youth Advocacy Centre to employ a full-time administrator and thus enhance the provision of legal services to young people in Brisbane. In October 1992, the Skate Arena Roller Club received \$1,372.75 for junior coaching. The Brisbane Migrant Resource Centre received \$6,700 towards financial assistance for the staging of a Statewide youth conference titled Non-English Speaking Background Youth Access in the 90s, which is something I fully support. In addition, other very significant grants have been made. The sum of \$175,854 has been paid to the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc. towards the operational costs of its organisation for the period 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1993. The network is a peak body for youth organisations and agencies in the State, and the idea of the funding was to support the Youth Affairs Network in ensuring that the youth organisations in Queensland were provided with a mechanism for coordination of their services and consultations with Government.

But it does not end there. The Girl Guides Association of Queensland received the sum of \$7,980. The Anglican Youth Ministry received \$1,710. The Lutheran Youth of Queensland received \$10,180. The Servants and Leadership Training received \$4,040. The Playground and Recreation Association of Queensland received \$2,050. Life Be In It received \$5,410. They are significant contributions. The sum of \$204,397 has been made available to local organisations under the Community Youth Work Development Grants Program towards the cost of employing community youth development workers. The Anglican Youth Ministries, for example, received \$40,600. The Contact Youth Theatre Incorporated received \$43,938. Crossroads Christian Fellowship received \$45,038. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme received \$20,300. The Queensland Young Homeless Fund received \$54,521. The list goes on. An amount of \$34,000 has been made available to local organisations under the Youth and Community Grants Program. They include organisations such as the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the Contact Youth Theatre Incorporated, the Filipino Community Coordinating Council of Queensland and the Queensland Youth Performing Arts Association Incorporated. I point out that those financial commitments cover only the period from June 1992. I did not want to go back too far past that date. But that is not all. The grants did not all come from Bob Gibbs' department. Matt Foley's department, the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, also contributed significant amounts of money to my electorate for employment creation schemes. One amount of \$40,700 and another for \$50,700 were contributed so that 1 000 unemployed Brisbane people could receive advice, guidance and job opportunities. They were under two schemes: Bridging the Gap Job Help Incorporated (Brisbane City) and the Volunteer Centre of Queensland (Brisbane City). I thank both those Ministers.

**Mr Bennett:** A great scheme.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take that interjection from the honourable member. They are both great schemes. That gives honourable members some idea how the targeting of State Government funding has been effective not only in creating opportunities for employment, but also in assisting employment groups, community groups, and the young. The list goes on. The Western Districts Amateur Swimming Club received \$525. It is really doing something positive for youth in this State and creating employment opportunities. The Government is putting its money where its mouth is. That is the difference between us and past conservative Governments.

**Mr Briskey:** It didn't happen before.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take that interjection. It certainly did not happen under conservative Governments. I will move on and deal with the issue of police. I am happy to say that, since we have been in Government, the different Ministers—firstly, Terry Mackenroth, and then Paul Braddy—have spent a great deal of time in improving policing to the electorate of Brisbane Central. Indeed, I received a letter dated 20

January from the Acting Minister for Police pointing out that actual police presence in New Farm has greatly increased and a marked decrease has occurred with respect to the length of time taken to respond to urgent calls—a matter that previously was of some concern to my electorate. The senior sergeant of the Fortitude Valley Police Station, R. N. Watson, points out—

“There has been a significant increase in personnel and resources interjected into the scheme. The total number of operational personnel”—

this is for the inner-city area of three suburbs: Fortitude Valley, New Farm and Newstead—

“is 102: 77 uniform and 25 plain clothes staff who are supported by 5 civilian staff. The structure was designed to have five vehicles and four beat crews operational per eight hour shift. These personnel and resources are supported by other units such as the Mounted Police and Dog Squad.”

I table that document for the information of the House. Again, we are seeing the State Government give a firm commitment to doing something about policing and crime. It is not the sort of heated rhetoric that we had earlier from honourable members opposite; we have substance. We have put in extra police numbers, and I am delighted about that.

I am also delighted that we have been able finally to get something done about problems that were ignored under previous Bjelke-Petersen Governments. For example, for the last 20 years, the Brisbane Central State School has had a problem with rising damp. Paint would fall off and it would destroy cupboards. The State Government allocated \$25,000 to the school and sorted out the problem. It is no longer a difficulty. We have done substantial things in relation to education, health and the policing area. It is about time that the members of the National and Liberal Parties in this House stopped whingeing and accepted what is being done. I must say that I am terrified about the effect of the GST and Fightback on education, health and police numbers in this State.

Let me conclude my remarks by saying that I believe that, over the last three and a half years that I have been the member for Brisbane Central, this State Government has given Brisbane Central constituents the sort of support that they deserve, not only in terms of schools but also in terms of hospitals, police, roads and so on. My electorate was sadly neglected because of the prejudice of previous National Party Governments. At last we are finally getting the sort of support that the residents of the inner suburbs deserve. I am happy to say that, unlike previous National Party Governments, a Labor Government stands for fairness and equity.

Time expired.

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah) (7.49 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to respond to the address given by Her Excellency the Governor to mark the occasion of the opening of the Forty-seventh Parliament last year. It is a pity that so much time has elapsed between that delivery, which was both eloquent and interesting, and our response to it. It makes it a little difficult to be entirely spontaneous. However, as most areas of a Government's responsibility were at least touched upon, it does give members the opportunity to range around rather freely.

The first responsibility of Government is law and order. Without law and order, education, health, welfare and other services are of little use. Law and order is made up of our laws and their enforcement. This enforcement includes education, vigilance, protection, apprehension and court action which, in turn, leads to either acquittal or conviction and sentencing. In recent years, there has been much debate on penalties. Should penalties be seen primarily as punishment, a deterrent, the protection of society or, as is more recently accepted, an opportunity for rehabilitation? I believe that the protection of society is the most important of these functions when we are dealing with crimes of violence—in particular, crimes of violence against those in the community who are least able to defend themselves: women, the aged and children. Of those, the crime of child molesting must be the most abhorrent. The House is aware of the large number of petitions that have been presented recently. Those petitions, referring to a case in

Gladstone, ask that the Parliament of Queensland "remove the parole period when sentencing convicted child molesters and ensure that offenders are given and serve maximum sentences and that their names be released for publication".

**Mr Budd** interjected.

**Mr LAMING:** I am coming to that. To date, the number of petitions has passed 45 000, and there are more to come. It will probably reach 50 000. I believe it is the largest petition since 1916, when 87 000 petitioners asked for the hotels to close at 6 p.m. I was personally involved during the collection of signatures on the Sunshine Coast. I made myself available mainly to answer questions about the format of the presentation of the petition, but was surprised at the number of people who came forward willingly and enthusiastically to sign the petition—men and women of all ages, and children, too. Many people requested that they might be allowed to sign the petition a second or third time, and many others took copies of the petition away to gather their own signatures so that they might return more signatures to me.

I believe that the petition is now spreading to other States. I personally witnessed many expressions of anger from the public who were signing the petition, and calls for hanging, castration and flogging were occasionally heard. I believe that the public generally are angry at the current position. Primarily, they are angry at the perpetrators, but they are also angry with judges and with politicians, and they feel frustrated by their powerlessness. Many people said that they do not believe that we will do anything about it at all. What an indictment of representative Government!

Those 50 000 signatures are equivalent to everyone in this House receiving 500 letters on the same day, each begging for action, and we are the only ones who can answer that call. The signatories to that petition obviously cut right across party lines. The parliamentarians who have brought the petitions to the House also cut across party lines, and I want to acknowledge the initial role played by the honourable member for Gladstone. Should we not ensure that our response also ignores party allegiances? Should we not now respond to the obvious will of the people? Despite many of the strong comments by the individuals, I do not see that this petition is in any way a widespread endorsement of capital punishment or corporal punishment, but I can tell this House that I believe that it clearly states that the people of Queensland demand maximum gaol sentences be imposed on convicted child molesters. It is also clear that they do not want those offenders released while there is any reasonable chance of them re-offending. They also demand that parole be abolished for those convicted of this sad crime. The aspect of releasing the names of offenders for publication is, of course, a matter which should be considered and debated carefully. I call on the Honourable Attorney-General to bring this matter forward for debate in the House on behalf of the petitioners of this State.

On another front in the law and order area, as outlined in the opening of the Forty-seventh Parliament, members on this side were no doubt pleased to learn that police numbers will increase in line with population growth. I trust that the responsible Minister also takes into account population movements. I refer to such movements of people into and around the State at holiday times. Areas such as the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast are particularly vulnerable, being as they are within striking range of the State border and the main bulk of local population in Brisbane City. This problem culminated at Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast on New Year's Eve when 80 police officers had to contend with 20 000 high-spirited revellers. The situation did become ugly, and resulted in tonnes of broken glass being left from one end of the place to the other, particularly on our lovely beaches. The council, the traders, residents and our regular visitors are determined that this will not happen again.

Mooloolaba in particular, and the Sunshine Coast in general, will once again become the prime holiday destination for families. But we will need a police presence during holiday periods that is within some proportion to our temporarily swollen population. This applies equally to activities on the water, as it does to those on land. It is essential that the Sunshine Coast gain a water police depot. This would be ideally

situated at Mooloolaba so that regular patrols could be organised at Caloundra, Maroochydore and Noosa.

I would not care to debate whether, after law and order, health or education is the most important duty of Government. For the purpose of this debate, I have opted for health, if for no other reason than the fact that it does affect all of us from cradle to grave. I noticed in Her Excellency's address that the Government had not allocated much time to health. The question, when it is addressed, usually hinges around doctors and hospitals. I have no problem with this, accepting that we are really talking about sickness, and not health. Health is the absence or avoidance of sickness, and is not really achieved by the provision of bigger and better hospitals. One of the most insidious sicknesses along our coastal areas is Ross River Fever. It certainly costs the community a lot in both social and economic terms. I do not profess to be an expert, but I am told that it is spread by a salt marsh breeding mosquito. Local councils have been left to deal with this problem without sufficient assistance from the Government. Recently, we have had record levels of the virus across the Sunshine Coast. The environmental health officer of Maroochy Shire Council has stated that his council spent \$22,000 on mosquito control this year and—honourable members should listen to this—40 per cent of that was spent on Crown land. The Government needs to take more responsibility for land which falls under its own control. Disease control before it breaks out is more effective and costs less than treatment.

Having covered law and order and health, I can quite confidently turn to education. Education is of critical importance to a young country and to a young State. As outlined in my first speech in this House, the electorate of Mooloolah is one of the fastest-growing in this State.

**Mrs Woodgate:** Why don't you do something about the Tollbusters up there?

**Mr LAMING:** I covered the Tollbusters in my maiden speech. I have nothing further to add on that subject. For those who know the area but have not visited it for some time, the once scrub-covered slopes of Buderim Mountain are giving way on all sides to quality housing estates. Over recent years, whole new suburbs have appeared such as Mountain Creek, Hideaway Waters, Headland Park and Buderim Meadows—mainly on the eastern slopes. As our new proposed university takes shape over the next few years, a new spurt of building activity and its attendant population growth will take place not far away on the southern slopes of Buderim. That is good for our economy, and it generates a huge amount of activity in the building industry. However, it brings with it tremendous demands in local and State Government infrastructure.

Let me address a topic to which I propose to give attention tonight, that is, education. The need for a new primary school in the area known as Mountain Creek, between Buddina, Mooloolaba and Buderim, is reaching a critical stage. Although the strain on Buddina and Mooloolaba has plateaued out, the Buderim Mountain school has reached and passed its effective capacity. This year, it will probably exceed 1 100 pupils. In 1994, the figure could exceed 1 200. Fortunately, land has already been set aside near the Mooloolaba TAFE College for this facility, but for the area to be ready for the 1994 school year, some action must be taken very soon. I accept that these matters must fit within the Capital Works Program of the Budget, but other considerations should be taken into account. If this school is at or near the top of the list of priorities for the State and if it must be operative for the 1994 school year, surely some advance decisions should be made now so as to avoid problems in nine months' time. An announcement made now that the Mountain Creek primary school is to proceed would allow plans to be drawn up and tenders to be called so that construction could commence straight after the Budget is brought down—indeed, if not before. This would ensure that a builder could be ready to proceed as soon as funding was announced.

As I said earlier, there are other considerations, and it is not simply a matter of completing a building. We have to ensure that council facilities such as water supply, sewerage and drainage are in place. Buildings must be furnished and equipped. Parking

and bus bays will be required as well as playgrounds and landscaping. I have not even mentioned staff, but taking into account the number of unplaced teacher trainees who are available at the moment, the provision of staff should not be a problem. In addition, it would help the smooth commissioning of the school if matters such as bus routes were worked out well in advance. What a great start it would be to the school year if the p. and c. was also established in advance. If these matters are not set in motion early, I can see logistical problems ahead. I saw this happening in relation to the Kawana Police Station when a year was lost owing to unforeseen logistical problems. I request the Minister for Education to make the commencement of the Mountain Creek primary school project a matter of urgency so that early planning can get under way.

This problem is not confined to primary schools only. Similar growth rates are causing accommodation problems in high schools in my electorate. Although the need for additional high schools is not as critical as the need for a new primary school in the Mountain Creek area, a new high school is needed very urgently. Maroochydore High School is rapidly reaching maximum capacity. Although it may cope throughout the 1994 school year, the 1995 school year is another matter. Today, I take this opportunity to bring this urgent need to the notice of the Minister so that planning can commence.

No address to this House on general affairs pertaining to the Sunshine Coast would be complete without reference to the proposed new university. No other project could have excited the imagination of the Mooloolah community so completely as the proposal for a new university. Last year, I was able to relate the many benefits of this project to the House, so I will not reiterate them today. Since that time, we have been advised of a \$9.5m funding grant from the Commonwealth for 1994-95. The funding has been ratified by the Hewson Government-in-waiting.

**Mr Robertson:** There is no such thing.

**Mr LAMING:** The member is a bit slow. Because the funding is approximately half of the amount which was estimated to be required to launch an effective, freestanding university, there have been suggestions that this funding should be redirected to a tack-on facility which would be attached to one of our coast TAFE facilities. This thinking has arisen because of comments that have been made by the Federal Government, namely, that funding is for a higher education facility on the Sunshine Coast in cooperation with TAFE. Just last week, I spoke to the incoming Minister for higher education, Mr David Kemp. I can assure this House that in cooperation with or having close ties to TAFE will be all about course structures and student options. It will be all about the flexibility of students to move between the two institutions. It will not mean that there will be a necessity to share buildings, land or facilities. Of course, it can include these features, but not at the expense of the primary objective. Our primary objective has always been and will continue to be our own freestanding institution which will be autonomous as soon as practicably possible. I trust that the Minister will take on board this clear message from the Sunshine Coast community when the working party is set up to study this project and makes its deliberations.

I was encouraged to hear that it is the Government's belief that the single most important issue confronting the community is unemployment. Yet, at the same time, I hear that this Government is following the dreadful lead of the Federal Labor Government in phasing out funding assistance for group apprenticeship schemes. This is to be progressively reduced and completely abolished by 1995.

**Mr Dollin:** What about the \$3 an hour stuff?

**Mr LAMING:** The member for Maryborough knows all about this. What manner of concern is this? There are more than 3 000 operating, working and learning under this scheme at the moment.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Simpson): Order!



**Mr LAMING:** Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very nice that members of the Government have not gone to sleep. Of all the schemes operating to subsidise employment and training, the group apprenticeship scheme would have to be the most worthy of retention. But all is not lost. The Government has at last recognised the punitive effect of payroll tax on employment. The exemption level will be raised to \$700,000 from 1 July this year. The Government claims that this will generate employment opportunities over the next three years, and I say to that, "How true!" Obviously, the Government will endorse and embrace the Hewson incoming pledge to completely abolish payroll tax, together with six other input taxes that will also be abolished. Now, that is the creation of job incentives!

Let me now turn to my own region and comment on another important area of Government responsibility, namely, emergency services. I believe that it is time for regional headquarters of this State's emergency services to be put under one roof on the Sunshine Coast. It is incredible that police headquarters are at Maroochydore, SES is at Gympie, the fire services are at Maryborough and the ambulance headquarters are up on the northern rim at Bundaberg. Perhaps the situation has evolved gradually over many years, and perhaps local politics has had a part to play in it.

**Mr Dollin:** The fire services people are extremely happy where they are.

**Mr LAMING:** The honourable member must be talking to different people from the ones I have been talking to. As I was saying, perhaps local politics had more than a little to do with this situation in the past, but it is time to introduce some common sense. I am not attempting to have all these facilities moved into my own electorate. In fact, Maroochydore or Nambour might be more appropriate, but all these emergency services must be located in the one place. The highest population is mainly in the central coast area. That is where growth and activity are occurring, and that is where these important people who provide emergency services should be. Each department seems to be going about its business in an efficient and enthusiastic manner, but surely this will be enhanced by a central, multifunction liaison centre.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr LAMING:** It is equally inappropriate to have the regional headquarters of the Department of Transport at Gympie and the TAFE headquarters at Maryborough, but at this stage I particularly wish to draw to the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services the situation with emergency services.

The major upgrading in the area of rail, as referred to on the first day of Parliament, was a little short in detail. I recall the claim that work will start on a seven-year plan to upgrade Queensland's main railway lines, yet the Minister delays any announcement of a rail corridor through the Sunshine Coast. The longer it is left, the more difficult and expensive it will become. Is not the Sunshine Coast the largest urban area into which a commuter line is not planned in Queensland? When is the Government going to bite the bullet? I would like to refer to another aspect of the Transport portfolio that I believe requires attention. I suggest that Government members should listen to this because they would have to agree with me. It is the subject of taxi subsidies. At the moment, a person has to be confined to a wheelchair to qualify for that subsidy. Unfortunately, there are thousands of elderly and infirm people who, although they can stagger about with the help of a stick, have no hope of getting to a bus stop even on a nice day, let alone climbing up into a bus. The tears are not entirely on the Government side of the House.

**Mr Springborg:** They don't care what you say.

**Mr LAMING:** No, obviously not. Many of those people now live alone and cannot go shopping, visiting or to church without the help of friends or relatives. Where such assistance is available, the problem is not so evident. However, as those people get older, those who might have helped in the past either pass away or find themselves in the same circumstances. I am sure that, if the Minister were to check with welfare

agencies, he would find that that problem is quite common. I realise that funding is always a problem, but perhaps the strict guidelines for that service could be reassessed.

Lastly tonight, I would like to say a few words in support of the RSL, but not the RSL in general, as I am sure that all honourable members would be well aware of the good work that that organisation does. Of particular note is the assistance given to Legacy and war veterans homes. We have in my home area of Kawana Waters a gallant band of men and women who make up the Kawana Waters RSL sub-branch. In three months' time, they will celebrate 10 years of fellowship and service to the community. The sub-branch has more than 360 members, including the ladies auxiliary. In a rapidly growing area such as Kawana Waters which attracts a lot of retirees, that figure is sure to grow. Unfortunately, there are those in the community who mistakenly believe that RSL clubs are only social organisations. Such a belief could not be further from the truth. Just last year, the Kawana Waters sub-branch made donations totalling approximately \$5,000 to worthy charities such as the Salvation Army, Blue Nurses, the ambulance, Legacy, war veterans homes and the Queensland Cancer Fund. That is not a bad effort for a group that is labouring under a distinct handicap. The handicap to which I refer is that the Kawana Waters sub-branch has no clubhouse facility. It has no place to call home.

**Ms Power:** Won't they have an opportunity with GST?

**Mr LAMING:** Honourable members will have the opportunity to debate Fightback tomorrow, and we look forward to that. At the moment, we are talking about the RSL. The sub-branch commenced meeting at the Kawana Waters Bowls Club, then moved to the Kawana Waters Surf Lifesaving Club. Despite several efforts in the past, the sub-branch has been unable to secure its own clubhouse. Recently, however, an opportunity presented itself. The management of the developing company, Kawana Estates, has offered a suitable block of land free to the sub-branch—yes, a free block of land. I must compliment the company and its general manager, Mr Paul Marquenie, on that generous offer for the benefit of the community at large. However, it is a gift that has what one might call a technical hitch. Kawana Waters is being developed under a development lease and 10 per cent of the sale price is paid as a commission to Government bodies: 7.5 per cent to the State Government and 2.5 per cent to the Caloundra City Council. To its great credit, Caloundra City is considering waiving its 2.5 per cent commission and it will come as no surprise to attentive listeners—if we have some attentive listeners—

**Ms Power:** I'm listening with both ears.

**Mr LAMING:** I thank the honourable member. It will come as no surprise that I now call upon the Minister for Lands to match the spirit of Caloundra City and Kawana Estate's generosity by waiving the Government's 7.5 per cent commission on that block of land.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr LAMING:** The formal request will, of course, come from the sub-branch through the Regional Director of Lands, Mr John Hall. Might I also be so bold as to add that, surely, the most efficient form of welfare assistance possible is to redirect a small item of revenue rather than to gather it and to go through the complicated process of finding an expense account from which to allocate it. In that way, 100 per cent of the Government's generosity is received with little or no administrative costs. What an excellent opportunity for the Government to show that it will cut red tape!

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr LAMING:** Do not worry about that, Madam Deputy Speaker. Naturally, the Minister will be looking for some security and guarantee of performance in the matter, and I seek leave to table a copy of a letter detailing Kawana Estate's conditions. This is not merely a case of revenue forgone. It is an investment in the delivery of social welfare services to the community by community members. The construction phase, which cannot proceed without that grant, will bring jobs or, translated into today's language,

ease unemployment. I believe that the Government has a responsibility to assist organisations made up largely of veterans. In this case, the assistance will be well directed and will provide assistance to the wider community. I urge the Minister to give that matter his favourable consideration.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK** (Albert) (8.14 p.m.): You would not be dead in this place for quids, would you? I welcome the opportunity to participate in the Address in Reply debate of the Forth-seventh Parliament as the continuing member for Albert. On 19 September, the people of Albert had their say and re-elected me as their representative. I pledge to them that, as their member, I will endeavour to act in their best interests. I wish to thank my wife, Linda, and my children, Shayne and Chris, for having supported me in my endeavours over the past three years. Also, I am happy to announce the birth of our third child, Justin, on 1 January of this year. Mother and child are doing well—too well at times. I wish also to thank my campaign director for getting me over the line on 19 September with an increased majority. Without his help and guidance, election time would have been a much more difficult affair.

Albert is growing. In fact, it is growing at such a fast rate that it is hard at times to keep track of the many projects which are under way, or just beginning. Albert is a community whose infrastructure and population are expanding at an enormous rate. With the turmoil currently affecting places such as Victoria, many families are opting to try for a new lifestyle by moving to the surf and sunshine of the Gold Coast or the warmth and friendliness of Brisbane. We all know that Brisbane and the Gold Coast are growing together. I am sure that electorates all over the south-east corner of Queensland are experiencing massive growth. However, I feel that Albert, with its choice of attractive lifestyles, is bearing the brunt of the southern migratory onslaught. The Brisbane-Gold Coast region is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia. As an example, the Stockland Trust Group has recently started work on Pacific City, a housing development to the south of Studio Village Estate. Stage 1 consists of 103 allotments. However, the developer is projecting that, in 10 to 15 years' time, the population of this estate alone will reach 25 000, spanning the estate's 800 hectares. It is one of the largest residential developments ever undertaken on the Gold Coast, and strategically located in a major growth area.

As one of the fastest growing electorates in the State, Albert is experiencing significant problems which must be addressed. During the period leading up to the 1992 State election campaign, my monthly electoral roll updates were reflecting the massive population explosion. Once the election was called, people scrambled to get on the electoral roll. In the four-week election period, more than 2 500 people registered on the electoral roll so that they, too, could have their say in the future running of Albert, which is basically a semirural community spanning the gap between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. From Beenleigh in the north to Nerang in the south, it is an area which in the past had been forgotten by many. Most of us see Albert only briefly from the Pacific Highway, as we travel from one city to the other. Not many have ventured off the highway to discover just how much Albert has to offer. Certainly, Albert's environment is a beautiful asset, as are the small acreages and the houses on them. Communities such as Alberton, Jacobs Well, Cedar Creek, and Guanaba all have much to offer, such as quiet fishing spots, small acreages for the hobby farmer, the rugged beauty of the Gold Coast hinterland, and a thriving cane farming industry. This valuable industry had its humble beginning back in 1867 and has since gone from strength to strength. The cane industry surrounding the Rocky Point sugar mill is expanding, and I am very pleased to see the mill injecting \$50m into the local community each year. This Government and I are committed to preserving the way of life of the many families of Jacobs Well/Woongoolba and this valuable industry.

In the past, Albert has lacked identity, direction and purpose. But now, as the urban sprawl is becoming more apparent, people are sitting up and taking notice. As a Government, the challenge to us is to ensure that the families opting for a new beginning are provided with homes and have somewhere to send their children to school. The challenge of costly infrastructure is the key to building a community of

which all of Queensland can be proud. Responsible planning by the local authority, the Albert Shire Council, and the Goss Government will ensure that the necessary roads, police stations, ambulance stations, shopping centres, sewerage lines, sewerage treatment plants, schools and housing developments are all built in the best interests of those using these facilities. Perhaps in the future this Government should seriously consider legislating that as part of their development approval developers be required, at least in part if not fully, to supply some of the major infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and police stations. As a Government, at present we have little control over what is happening within these developments. Developers buy large tracts of land, get it rezoned, and then we as a Government go in afterwards, and are forced to buy the land for schools, etc., at inflated residential prices. As a Government we must be innovative and at times set the trend. Therefore, another alternative would be to encourage our Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning to seriously consider buying large undeveloped areas of land in my electorate and in other electorates within the south-east corridor. As the owner of this land, the State Government could enter into agreements with business to develop portions of the land. The Government would be better able to control the planning of these areas, and would get a return on its investment with which to fund the necessary infrastructure.

At times, I have been known to be quite critical of the local authority on an array of issues. While I am sure that it sees me as a thorn in its side, I honestly believe that it, too, can see the need for someone to be yelling from the sidelines telling them, "You're heading off the track!" Although at times I have been critical, I, too, admire the Albert Shire Council's willingness to tackle these tough problems head on. The council's biggest problem—and I am sure that Albert Shire Chairman, Mr Bill Laver, would agree—is finding the money to provide much of the multimillion-dollar infrastructure which is so desperately needed. This council is tackling enormous problems and continues to be the most rapidly growing local authority in Australia. Much responsibility rests on its shoulders, as I am sure my colleague Mr Mackenroth, the Honourable Minister for Housing, Local Government, and Planning, would agree. It is a very rare day indeed when I do not address a letter to Mr Mackenroth pertaining to some housing and planning or council decision. It is the Albert Shire Council which must approve the many housing developments and rezonings—a hard job for which I do not envy it.

It would be a brave man who stood up and said that all of the council's decisions have been right. Quite clearly they have not. The recent Pimpama Lagoons fiasco is a perfect example. Once the council had approved this housing and marina development without having first seen an environmental impact assessment, all hell broke loose. Facing the possibility of a development which would have destroyed 37 hectares of mangroves and put at risk a further 120 hectares, with grave consequences to the Pimpama River and the surrounding ecology, residents and environmental groups rallied side by side lobbying their local council to back away from its approval. Finally, with a lot of push from a lot of electors, the council relented and expressed its concerns about the project to the State Government. The result was that the State Government refused the current proposal on environmental and strategic planning grounds. I offer my thanks to the council and its chairman, Bill Laver, for admitting its responsibility to the community on that issue. I take this opportunity to thank all those who campaigned so strongly against this project: Mr William Heck, of the Jacobs Well Progress Association; Mr Peter Farrell, of the Gold Coast Environmental Centre; the communities of Pimpama and Jacobs Well; television personality and Jacobs Well resident Mr Frank Warrick; and the local newspaper.

I cannot stress enough the need for the Albert Shire Council to work more closely with the State Government and vice versa. The obligation for responsible planning rests jointly on the shoulders of local authorities and the State Government. However, when decisions are made which the community believes are not in its best interests, one can expect the people to start saying so. At this point, I advertise the fact that the Albert Shire Council is reviewing its strategic plan. I urge the community to get involved. After all, it is their future that is being planned.

I applaud the Minister for Environment and Heritage for the official launch last weekend of the Moreton Bay Strategic Plan, which covers all of the coastal side of my electorate. Beautiful islands such as Woogoompah Island, Eden Island, Kangaroo Island and South Stradbroke Island are now protected, along with the communities of Jacobs Well and Cabbage Tree Point. I was pleased to hear also that under this plan the significant pristine condition of the Pimpama River will be saved from the encroachment of development. As a by-product, this plan will save the million-dollar oyster farming business operating from the mouth of that river.

In the future, many problems will be faced by the Albert electorate. One very important issue is the road system in the area. All members have experienced the problems associated with a Sunday trip to Brisbane or to the Gold Coast. The onslaught of people brings increased traffic volumes to the Albert area. Current predictions relating to the future volumes of traffic on the Pacific Highway do not look good. In the next 10 years, the volume of traffic travelling in the Brisbane-Gold Coast region is expected to double.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I rise to a point of order. Members opposite are interjecting from other than their correct places. Madam Deputy Speaker, will you keep order and ask those members to return to their correct places?

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** As an example, at present 65 000 vehicles per day use the Coomera stretch of the Pacific Highway. My constituents have asked me many times what will be done about that problem. The Government's solution has been to devise an alternative route to and from the Gold Coast—the eastern corridor tollway.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Simpson): Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** The tollway will be located roughly parallel to the eastern side of the Pacific Highway and will eventually join with Smith Street at Gaven. The eastern corridor represents planning for future growth in a way which will preserve the environment and the quality of life of the people of south-east Queensland. Certainly the Government's decision to proceed with this enormous project will prove to be a contentious issue.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** People agree that the road has to be built, but many suffer from the NIMBY syndrome—"not in my backyard". I congratulate my colleagues on this decision, because the tollway will deal with future traffic volumes. I know that the Goss Government is committed to the responsible planning of Albert. The route chosen for the tollway is the one which impacts the least on the community and on the environment.

The Brisbane-Gold Coast rail link is another very important project with which I am proud to be involved. Recent discussions with the Honourable the Minister for Transport, David Hamill, and representatives of Queensland Rail have revealed that the project is running to schedule. Stage 1, to Helensvale, will be ready in 1995. That very necessary rail link is a great thing. A trip from Brisbane Central station to Robina is expected to take between 60 minutes and 70 minutes. It will be a fast, comfortable and safe trip which will compete well with the time taken to travel by road between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

I place on record that the commitment given by Dr Hewson in regard to that project is not to be trusted. For many years, the Gold Coast community has looked forward to the completion of this project. If the previous National Party Government had not been so blinkered as to pull up the train line in the first place, the present problem would not exist. One fear I have is that if the outcome of the Federal election on 13 March is not a win for the Australian Labor Party, a coalition Government may not continue the present obligation under the Building Better Cities program to fund this

immensely important project. The Federal Government's current commitment towards the project is approximately \$73m. As one travels between the Gold Coast and Brisbane, one can see clearly the amount of work and the millions of dollars which have been spent already on the project. This enormous \$300m project will be put at risk if a Federal coalition Government decides not to fund it any further. At least Mr Hamill has a commitment in writing that a Labor Government will complete this project on time.

The education of Albert's young people is terribly important to me. With so many young families moving into the area, I was glad to have the opportunity recently to tour the electorate with the Education Minister, the Honourable Pat Comben, to show him first-hand the education problems which Albert is facing in the near future. One example is the Windaroo State School, whose principal is Mr Gordon McKeown. That school has been operating for one year. On day one, 120 students were enrolled. This year, enrolments increased to 450 students. I lobbied long and hard, and I was very pleased to hear that a new high school would be built at Windaroo. The yet to be named high school will be open for the 1994 school year. Additionally, I am pleased to hear that negotiations for a State school site in Studio Village are under way. I believe that I have the best group of school principals of any electorate. Their ability to be dynamic in their thinking and their willingness to change with the times makes them one of my greatest assets.

Another issue that I wish to touch on briefly is the Wolffdene dam. Three years ago, this Government gave a commitment to the people in the proposed Wolffdene dam area that it would not proceed to build the dam. This Friday, 26 February, will see the start of auctions to sell off the properties that the previous National Party Government resumed in haste. The health dollar is another extremely important issue that faces the people of Albert. On behalf of my constituents, I wish to commit the rest of the time that has been allotted to me discussing this subject. As a registered nurse and a member of the Minister's health committee, the discussion of health issues is very important and close to my heart. In recent times, stories have appeared in Gold Coast newspapers about the health dollar on the Gold Coast. One such story involved patients across the border using the facilities of Gold Coast hospitals. Queensland is, in part, bearing the brunt of health dollar cutbacks in other States. I read those stories with a keen interest. Recently, at a parliamentary health committee conference I took the opportunity to discuss those stories with my colleague the Minister for Health, the Honourable Ken Hayward.

As part of the ongoing planning for the future of Albert, it is very important for this Government to consider seriously building a hospital within the Albert electorate. I am not talking about a massive concrete structure, but a small hospital to service the needs of the Albert community well into the future. Again, I must stress the need to plan for the projected 300 000 people who are expected to be living in Albert in the next 20 years. To begin with, perhaps a small community health facility could be built. At present, Albert is in medical limbo. When constituents require urgent medical attention, it means either a long ambulance ride to Brisbane or the Gold Coast. A small hospital or health facility situated in the centre of Albert, near the site of the Pimpama ambulance station, would be very well received. It is very much needed. The need for health facilities exists already. With the projected population explosion, we need to plan now.

In mid-1992, I distributed a community issues survey to learn more about the community's concerns. I kept one letter aside in anticipation of reading it to members today. A constituent of Helensvale wrote the following letter—

"I am more than reluctant to fill in the questionnaire. I have lost faith in a Government that can allow my wife to suffer in terrible agony because insufficient funds are allocated to hospitals. To ease the pain, a complete knee replacement is required, but the surgeon at the Gold Coast Hospital has a four year waiting period for patients. My wife has now been waiting for many months while the pain worsens. As pensioners we cannot afford private health cover which would have allowed my wife to have immediate attention paid to the problem."

I do not have an answer to this constituent's dilemma, nor do I pretend to have an answer. However, debates on such topics must be held. It is only through talking about these issues that, as members of Parliament, we can collectively reach some solution. However, any solution to such problems will never be 100 per cent correct. As a community, we must consider the social implications of the path that we are treading currently.

Recently, the South Australian Parliament debated a Bill concerning health problems in that State. It is a perfect example of a debate that needs to be held—where we spend our health dollar. Do we pour money into expensive heart transplants, or do we spend the money on simple facilities that will increase the quality of a person's life? In regard to the South Australian Bill, the Minister in his second-reading speech stated—

“How we die is now very influenced by modern technology and patient management. Terminally ill people can be kept alive for long periods, even though there may be no prospect of returning to a reasonable quality of life or even, in some cases, consciousness. Such technology can be highly invasive and inconsistent with our beliefs in human dignity. In these circumstances, the family and friends of the patient, and society in general, are faced with a moral dilemma:

Should every known technique be used to maintain life, whether recovery is possible or not, and at considerable discomfort to the patient and anguish to the friends and relatives of the patient?

Should there be agreement to a request from the patient that life be terminated painlessly and prematurely so as to avoid the suffering and loss of dignity which can be associated with a slow, lingering death?

Should the above options be rejected, but every opportunity be taken to maintain the comfort and dignity of the patient as the inevitable approaches?”

I reiterate those questions to this House because, as a nurse, I have seen such patients in the community, and the community must discuss such problems. I do not believe that we should discuss it as a political matter; a bipartisan approach must be adopted. The South Australian Government is a forward-thinking Parliament, and as the issue is not going to go away, I believe that the Queensland Parliament should discuss the matter also. We do not have the dollars to do everything that we need to do. I do not believe that Australia has sufficient funds to be able to afford to do everything. We are looking at billions and billions of dollars. I do not have the answer to the problem, but I believe that we need to talk about it.

I must talk about the important decision that people will be making on 13 March, and the effect that it will have on the health dollar and the future of health care in this State. The ideology behind Medicare is that, as a right, everybody should have access to health care regardless of race, wealth or the nature of sickness. The Federal Opposition wants to destroy a scheme under which I operated for many years as a registered nurse. Nobody wants a user-pays system such as that operating within the United States of America. Before a patient is treated there, that patient is asked whether he or she has private insurance and the ability to pay. If that patient cannot pay, he or she is out on the street. Thirty-five million people in America have no access to health insurance. I cannot stand by and let that happen here.

The Federal Opposition says that it is not removing Medicare, because it will stay in place for pensioners, who will still be able to bulk-bill. My question is: what about the rest of us? Mr Bob Wood spoke on ABC radio of a congested waiting list of 100 000 people for elective surgery. Of course, there are people on those lists who desperately need surgery, and they are attended to as soon as possible, mostly within a month or two—as was the case with my constituent from Helensvale whom I mentioned earlier. Others, however, are not as desperate, and are further down the list. At the very bottom of the list would be someone who suffers only from a minor ailment. It is important to note that waiting lists are largely controlled by medical specialists, not hospitals or health authorities. The lists frequently contain duplicated bookings, the names of people

who have already been treated elsewhere, or people who no longer want treatment. Also, the lists often contain the names of people who are not waiting for surgery but are simply waiting until their babies are born, or waiting for a donor organ.

Waiting times for elective surgery have always been part of the life of a public hospital. They are necessary for efficient and economic use of expensive hospital resources. Although the management of waiting lists is the responsibility of State Governments, in its 1992 Budget the Federal Labor Government allocated \$70m nationally to help State Governments to develop efficient ways of managing waiting lists. With our share of this money, the Goss Government is addressing the issue of waiting lists and prioritising the needs of patients and their need for surgery. This is a step in the right direction. I applaud the Health Minister, Mr Hayward, for his initiatives. The Federal Labor Government's contribution is being used by all States to set up a national data collection system so that once and for all waiting lists can be accurately measured for the benefit of all. The Opposition will no longer be able to use its overexaggerated figures.

The issues that I have raised here tonight might not win me a popularity contest amongst my colleagues. I do, however, feel that these matters had to be raised in this forum so that all members are aware of the problems facing Albert. Basically, we have the opportunity to plan properly and responsibly for the region. However, with development moving at rocket speed, we must act now. At the moment, much of Albert is still bushland. However, the developers and developments are encroaching. We will ultimately be held responsible. The message is that we must make some tough decisions. These problems will not go away.

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego) (8.41 p.m.): It is certainly my pleasure to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I take this opportunity on behalf of my constituents and myself to express loyalty to Her Majesty and Her Excellency. Tonight, I shall cover many issues within the electorate of Warrego that I believe are very important. I believe that tonight is an ideal opportunity to canvass many of those views and put our concerns to Government members. In many cases there are solutions to the problems that I shall raise. I certainly hope that Government members will take some notice of them. There is one major problem that affects not only my electorate. I believe that the issue of law and order throughout Queensland and the rest of Australia is facing some problems. But Queensland certainly has more law and order problems—

**Mr Dollin** interjected.

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** Heckle and Jeckle are interjecting at the back of the Chamber. We know how good the honourable member for Hervey Bay is, because we heard him speak earlier.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Simpson): Order! There is too much audible noise in the Chamber.

**Mr HOBBS:** Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. There is a complete breakdown of law and order in Queensland—no thanks to Government members and their attitudes to the social environment.

**Mr Johnson:** They can't handle the truth.

**Mr HOBBS:** The member for Gregory says that Government members cannot handle the truth. That is quite true. But that is what they will hear tonight—the truth. Juvenile crime is completely out of control. Government members know that as well as I do. They have no hope of controlling it with their present attitudes, particularly with the police force and the sentencing provisions. Juvenile crime has gone completely out the door.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members must not interject from other than their correct seats.



**Mr HOBBS:** One of the main problems facing us at the moment is the manner of sentencing for juvenile crime. Those offenders are being released after a very short time. Although they might be sentenced to a few months at Westbrook or some other detention centre, they come home within a few weeks and are out on the streets the very next night. Something must be done about that. Quite frankly, this is a very serious problem. Although this issue might not worry the member for Hervey Bay, the point is that some people have serious problems which we must address. Parents must be more responsible for their children. As well, there should be more serious sentencing. When particular juvenile repeat offenders are released from detention centres, instead of their coming home early and being allowed out onto the streets the very next night, they really should have a curfew placed on them for a particular period—not necessarily for the full term of their sentences, but simply to get them out of circulation. We must break the cycle, and that can be achieved sensibly and compassionately. It is far better to take those few people out of circulation and break the cycle rather than have curfews applied to the whole town. That has been tried at Pittsworth and Cloncurry. Soon Cunnamulla, Charleville, Ayr and other towns will be imposing curfews. We should not have to disrupt the whole community because of this issue. The Government should be attempting to help the 99.9 per cent of the population who are law abiding citizens.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** How would you police that? Take Brisbane, Toowoomba or Rockhampton—how would you police that?

**Mr HOBBS:** Firstly, if offenders were found out on the streets between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., they would have to return to the detention centre or lose other privileges that they might have.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** So you have to have some form of identification for teenagers?

**Mr HOBBS:** The police would know them. Quite frankly, as honourable members all know, in many cases one or two families are causing the problem.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is correct. Recently, one family caused problems in Ayr. In many towns in the west, half a dozen kids are the ringleaders and are causing all the trouble. It has been proven that, if we break the cycle, the trouble will stop. The police know most of the offenders but they do not have the resources to catch them. There is no reason why individuals could not complete their sentence at home, but the imposition of a curfew during the parole period would be reasonable. In that way, the public would be aware of their circumstances. If they reoffended, they would be subject again to the processes of the law.

Recently, I received from Cunnamulla a petition which I will read for the benefit of honourable members who do not believe what I am saying. It stated—

“Dear Sir,

I would like to draw your attention to the appalling number of break and enter offences in the town of Cunnamulla. The way it appears at the moment is that the criminals seem to be the ones that are protected, while the law abiding people are discriminated against.

We choose to live in this town and have our Businesses here because it is a friendly place. We all work very long hours to keep our heads above water and with the Recession and the Drought we cannot afford to tolerate the crime situation.

Very little appears to be being done to correct the situation and Court day in Cunnamulla is a great social occasion for the offenders.”

**Mr Livingstone:** Don't you believe the police have to have all those resources that you didn't give them?

**Mr HOBBS:** The honourable member should listen to this, because it has come from the people in a democratic manner. The petition continued—

“Juveniles are apprehended receive a slap on the wrist then walk down the streets laughing and taunting at the business people who at times have suffered great financial loss at their hands.”

That is quite serious. The petition stated further—

“To rectify the situation we must have more police and these police must have more power, the parents of Juveniles should be made to pay any restitution. The laws need to be changed so that stiffer penalties are given to both Juvenile and Adult offenders.”

Attached to the petition are several pages containing the signatures of the business people of Cunnamulla. Is that not a reasonable request from people whose homes have been broken into on many occasions without any action being taken? I am led to believe that 70 per cent of juvenile offenders do not reoffend after they become adults. I wonder why that is. Perhaps it might be because they are then subject to adult laws and may be liable to be imprisoned, or they might just grow up. I do not know the answer, but I pose that question for honourable members to consider.

Recently, a restaurant at Charleville was broken into on a Friday night, a Saturday night and the following Tuesday. What is the world coming to! Witnesses have been harassed and residents have received threats that their houses will be burnt down. In fact, one house was burnt down. The police scientific squad visited Charleville and a report is pending. The convent school at Cunnamulla has been broken into twice on two weekends in succession. Why would anyone want to break into a convent school? They break in, smash windows and furniture and urinate on the walls. A genuine problem exists in those places. I am attempting to convince honourable members that something must be done before those people take the law into their own hands and defend their possessions. I am afraid that a nasty incident could occur if a local resident attempted to defend his possessions from an offender.

The police are doing what they can about the matter, but they have their hands tied behind their backs. When they make an arrest, they are accused of harassment and are investigated either by their superiors, the CJC or the racial discrimination group. It is difficult for the police. They need more resources. However, they need more than that; they need more ability to be able to apprehend and keep those offenders in gaol where they should be. The criminals and the rogues rule our streets, not the law-abiding citizens who should be able to walk down those streets without fear.

I turn now to the recession which is causing great heartache in rural communities. This recession is the most severe that has occurred and many people have excessive farm debts. In 1980, when interest rates were 25 per cent for working capital and 23 per cent for property mortgages, people were encouraged by experts to engage in risk management practices such as enlarging or drought-proofing their properties. They have now found themselves in desperate trouble.

**Mr Nunn:** Dodging tax is your game.

**Mr HOBBS:** I rest my case. I will not call the honourable member at the back of the Chamber a fool, but what more could I really say? Asset values have fallen, equity values have fallen, debt repayments have risen and debt, of course, has risen. dramatically The average equity in south-western properties has fallen from 79 per cent in 1985-86 to 58 per cent in 1992-93. Honourable members can see what has happened with regard to the real asset value of those properties. The banks are obviously very concerned and are also watching what is happening.

Currently, the price of wool is under 500c per kilogram, and ABARE has estimated the cost of production to be 610c a kilogram. Even the honourable member at the back of the Chamber with all the brains can work out that we will lose money. We are looking at being at least \$40,000 behind every year; we are looking at about 1 000 properties

and businesses in that area with average debts of about \$350,000—an enormous amount. The flow-on effect on the towns has a very serious effect—the whole problem is really bad—particularly in Charleville, where this has come on top of the 1990 flood which virtually wiped out the town.

**Mr Johnson:** Then Kerin pulled the rug on the wool industry.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right. I will come to Minister Kerin soon. Small business is hurting desperately. It is quite serious. It is hurting everywhere across Australia, but it is certainly much worse in those areas that rely on the wool growing industry.

**Mr McElligott:** Where do you shop, Charleville or Brisbane?

**Mr HOBBS:** I shop at Charleville and locally at Tambo as well.

**Mr Livingstone:** I hope that's a woollen suit you're wearing. Mine is!

**Mr HOBBS:** Of course it is wool! There are other problems as well. Local authorities are applying pressure in the collection of rates. Recently, the Murweh Shire unfortunately reached the stage at which three people had to be pressured to pay their rates. I do not blame the shire for that; it has its responsibilities and it must abide by its laws and regulations. The shire has to survive as well. It is a vicious circle. Local authorities will desperately need some assistance to be able to get through later on. A number of contractors such as fencing contractors, earthmoving contractors and livestock contractors are having a difficult time. In fact, many have left country towns. With the infrastructure that we have in western towns, such as schools, police, health and the DPI, we cannot afford to let them go.

I am not just being critical—we do have some solutions that will work. We have three major problems: debt, drought and prices—DDP, if one wants to look at it like that. We can fix debt in the rural industry with a rural reconstruction authority. That did work—and it worked very well—back in the 1970s. The authority was able to reconstruct the rural industry, and many people today are successful and have survived because of the help that was given at the time. We are talking about an industry, generally speaking, that has very low returns, but it does have export value, which is something that Australia needs. We can put together a rural reconstruction authority. Governments can borrow money at a very reasonable rate. We do not need massive profits such as those made by the QIDC. What is needed is some assistance which is meaningful and which will certainly work. It is not a case of saying, "Well, let's go and see whether it will work." It does work, it has worked, and it can work.

In relation to the drought—obviously we cannot make it rain, but we can certainly give meaningful assistance to help keep livestock alive. A few things must be done in future, such as allowing the forward movement of stock to agistment. We have to utilise existing resources because properties in places such as the mulga country can sustain a lot of livestock. Later, rental assistance will be needed when the Government increases its rentals. I give the Government fair warning that if it increases the rentals, it will have to subsidise them back.

Price is an important issue. We know that we need to get a reasonable price for our product and we need an orderly marketing system for wool. For 20 years, the reserve price system worked. In that time, only one mistake was made. The reserve price was increased to 870c. One mistake in 20 years—surely that is not all that bad! The system was buoyant, the producers were okay and the towns were all right. We can do things to help that. We can have a \$20m boost, which has been promised in the Fightback package, which will certainly be of some assistance. However, we need to change the attitude to this massive problem. A while ago, the member for Gregory mentioned Minister Kerin. We should never forget that Minister Kerin, along with Treasurer Keating, were the two who really undermined the wool industry. Confidence in the marketplace is very important. They ruined that confidence.

**Mr Bennett:** Do you really believe that?

**Mr HOBBS:** I do believe that; it is quite true. I do not know what the honourable member knows about the wool industry, but honourable members on this side of the Chamber are very involved in it. If the Government listened to us, perhaps we would not be in the position in which we find ourselves now.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** Members opposite think it is a joke! It has worked very well.

**Mr Johnson:** This is no laughing matter. There are people out there with the seat out of their pants.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is quite right. It is a very serious problem. We need to——

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The House will come to order. I am on my feet.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

#### **ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (9.01 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr W. K. Goss, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (9.02 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

In July 1992, the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review presented its review of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act. The Electoral and Administrative Review Amendment Bill 1993 implements one of the recommendations contained in that report. In its report, the parliamentary committee recommended that EARC be abolished upon the completion of its current review program scheduled to be completed by June 1993. The parliamentary committee considered that amendments to the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989 were desirable to allow more flexible arrangements during the wind-up period, particularly in relation to the appointment of commissioners.

The parliamentary committee recommended that the Electoral and Administrative Review Act be amended so that EARC commissioners could have their terms of appointment extended by up to six months, and so that the minimum term of appointment for commissioners could be removed. Currently, commissioners are appointed for a term of not less than two years and not more than five years. They are eligible for reappointment, but the position must be advertised and interviews held before any appointment can be made. The Electoral and Administrative Review Amendment Bill implements the parliamentary committee's recommendation. Under the Bill, if the term of a commissioner expires between now and the wind-up of EARC in the middle of the year, it would be possible to extend his or her term for a short period without the time and expense of the usual advertising and selection procedures. In

addition, if a vacancy occurred on the commission in the remaining months of EARC's operation, it would be possible to appoint a commissioner for a period of six months rather than the minimum of two years, which is currently prescribed.

The parliamentary committee also recommended a number of other minor amendments to the Electoral and Administrative Review Act in its report, such as the amendment of the definition of "a unit of public administration". The Government did not object to these proposals. However, given the limited remaining period of EARC's operations, we have decided not to proceed with these amendments.

In its report, the parliamentary committee also recommended its own abolition and the establishment of a Queensland Administrative Review Council to perform some of EARC's functions after EARC's abolition. The Government is awaiting EARC's report on administrative appeals before considering the establishment of an Administrative Review Council. The issue of parliamentary committees has been examined in EARC's report on its review of parliamentary committees, and we are currently awaiting the parliamentary committee's report on this review. Legislation related to the wind-up of EARC will be introduced into Parliament later this year. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Borbidge, adjourned.

### **LAW COURTS AND STATE BUILDINGS PROTECTIVE SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (9.05 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Law Courts and State Buildings Protective Security Act 1983."

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (9.06 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The objective of the amendment Bill is to repeal the anti-strike provision contained in section 17 of the Law Courts and State Buildings Protective Security Act, thereby instituting industrial relations reform in line with the current industrial relations policies. The amendment Bill also makes two minor amendments to the interpretation provision, deleting the definitions "Minister" and "Department" which are contained in the Acts Interpretation Act. Section 17 of the Act provides that, in certain circumstances, disciplinary action may be taken against an officer of the State Government Security Service if that officer engages in or participates in a strike or other industrial action. In the current industrial relations climate, there is a commitment by the Government to consultation and co-operation between workers, unions and employers. The anti-strike provision contained in section 17 is an impediment to this.

The repeal of section 17 will bring conditions for the State Government Security Service in line with those for other employees of the State, such as officers in the ambulance and fire services, and is consistent with removing a similar condition imposed on workers in the electricity industry. This kind of provision has no place in the Queensland industrial relations system. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

### **CARRIAGE OF DANGEROUS GOODS BY ROAD AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (9.07 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act 1984.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Hamill, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (9.08 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This Bill provides for the transfer of responsibility for the road transport of liquefied petroleum gases and other hydrocarbon gases from the Gas Act to the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act. The objective of the Bill is to consolidate responsibilities for the road transport of dangerous goods under the administration of the Department of Transport. This consolidation is consistent with the recommendations of the Public Sector Management Commission which were contained in its report on its review of the Department of Transport. In particular, the report recommended the transfer of responsibility for the road transport of LPG and other hydrocarbon gases to the Department of Transport.

There are currently nine classes of dangerous goods listed in the Australian dangerous goods code and the Department of Transport has the responsibility for road transport of the majority of these. The following are the nine classes—

- Class 1 are explosives;
- Class 2 are gases, liquefied or compressed, including flammable gases and poisonous gases;
- Class 3 are flammable liquids;
- Class 4 are flammable solids, spontaneously combustible substances and water reactive substances;
- Class 5 are oxidising agents;
- Class 6 are toxic substances;
- Class 7 are radioactive substances;
- Class 8 are corrosive substances; and
- Class 9 are miscellaneous dangerous goods not otherwise classified.

The three exceptions for which the Department of Transport has not been responsible are: radioactive substances, which are covered under the Radioactive Substances Act administered by the Department of Health; explosives, which are covered under the Explosives Act administered by the Department of Minerals and Energy; and liquefied petroleum gases, or LPG, and all other hydrocarbon gases, which are covered under the Gas Act administered by the Department of Minerals and Energy. It is the transport of liquefied petroleum gases and all other hydrocarbon gases that is the main subject of this Bill.

The inclusion of responsibility for the transport of these gases in the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act will enable the Department of Transport to address

virtually all dangerous goods commodities in a consistent policy context. The two exceptions to that—radioactive substances and explosives—make up less than 5 per cent of dangerous goods movements. It further provides consistency in the administration of road transport of dangerous goods and simplifies the consultative process for the road transport industry in its dealings with Government decision makers. Clause 4 of the Bill amends the Act so as to cause it to apply to the road transport of all gases, subject to some limitations of quantity. Small quantities—that is, cumulative quantity of 1 000 litres or less—of LPG in cylinders will remain under the Gas Act so long as no other dangerous goods are being carried on the vehicle. Under this arrangement, up to nine domestic-sized gas cylinders would still constitute a small quantity.

Consultation with gas specialists from the Department of Minerals and Energy and with gas industry representatives has resulted in the present amendment, where small LPG distributors, tradespersons such as gasfitters, and primary producers, will remain under the Gas Act. The reason for this is simply because it is neither the spirit nor intent of the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act to subject carriers of these types of quantities to undue prescription in their transportation. Those carrying LPG cylinders in larger quantities, or LPG in bulk containers, or LPG with other dangerous goods—excepting under certain conditions, tradespersons or primary producers—would be required to do so under the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act. My parliamentary colleague the Minister for Minerals and Energy, senior officers of his department and local representatives of the Australian LPG Association, have given support to these arrangements. Indeed, the Department of Minerals and Energy will benefit from this amendment as the Gas Act will now have more complete application to operations which take place in a gas terminal, such as the transfer of any gas to, or from, bulk tanks while filling or emptying is taking place.

This Bill also amends the definition of two key terms. In Clause 5, the terms “dangerous goods” and “the code” are redefined so as to permit any necessary future changes to these terms to be made by amendment of the regulations rather than the Act. This will allow greater flexibility as these definitions are subject to change from time to time. I am pleased to present the initiatives contained within this Bill before the House today and I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

#### **EDUCATION (CONSULTATION ON CURRICULUM) REPEAL BILL**

**Hon. P. COMBEN** (Kedron—Minister for Education) (9.12 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to repeal the Education (Consultation on Curriculum) Act 1988, and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Comben, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. P. COMBEN** (Kedron—Minister for Education) (9.13 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

I seek leave of the House to table my speech notes and to have them incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This Bill provides the mechanism to formally conclude the affairs of the Ministerial Consultative Council on Curriculum. Although the Education (Consultation on Curriculum) Act 1988 will be repealed, the Bill provides for the annual report of the council for the 1992 year to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative responsibility for school curriculum and the certification of student achievement in Queensland is distributed across the Department of Education, the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies and the Ministerial Consultative Council on Curriculum. The Minister for Education was also advised by the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Curriculum Development. The duplication and associated inefficiencies of the operation of these bodies were reflected in the Department of Education's report entitled *Focus On Schools: The future organisation of educational services for students* (October 1990). This report recommended a review of departmental structures and statutory authorities to ensure that their roles and functions were being effectively performed and implemented.

Significantly, these operational concerns were investigated by the Public Sector Management Commission. In reviewing departmental administrative operations the commission recommended that the council be abolished and the Education (Consultation on Curriculum) Act 1988 be repealed. The current review of Queensland school curriculum being undertaken by Professor Ken Wiltshire and his review team will result in recommendations about possible new structures to replace the council. An interim report is scheduled for July and the entire review process will be completed by the end of this year, with a view to implementing the review's recommendations from the beginning of next year.

The other committee members are Associate Professor Marilyn McMeniman from the Griffith University, who has extensive experience as an educational researcher and lecturer, and Mr Tom Tolhurst, a senior public servant with experience in public sector management and accounting. The review team's full staff of seven have now been appointed, including highly experienced school principals from all over Queensland. A reference committee has also been appointed, representing all the major education interests in the State. The review has commissioned several papers examining curriculum issues and the review team will travel throughout Queensland to examine the delivery of curriculum. In addition, it will examine curriculum matters in other Australian States, New Zealand, North America and the United Kingdom. Interested groups and individuals are encouraged to make submissions to the committee. Approximately 100 submissions have been received so far and the closing date for submissions is mid-March.

The focus of the curriculum review is on educating children to lead Queensland into the 21st century. The committee will assess how to develop and implement a curriculum to maximise students' individual potential as well as the cultural and economic potential of this State. Equally, the committee will address any need to improve students' access to acquiring the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. At a time of great social and technological change, matched with high unemployment, it is appropriate that the Government establishes an independent examination of school curriculum. The issues being addressed include the national educational agenda which is developing key competencies for the transition from school to work or further studies, literacy and numeracy skills and the scope of curriculum. Reforms introduced by the Goss Government over the past three years have created an education system now clearly focused on students, schools and teachers. Now it is time for Queensland to capitalise on these past reforms and look to the future by focusing on what is taught in schools.

Despite excellent standards in Queensland education, there remain community concerns about how we support low achievers and how to assist them in the transition from school to work. There also remain concerns about the relevance of teaching school-based subjects such as aquatic and recreation, aerobics and street theatre. At the same time, there are enormous pressures on today's children because of the speed of technological change and a more complex society. The curriculum committee must address both ends of the spectrum. It will examine:

- curriculum development, management, assessment and accreditation in Queensland;
- the relationships with national curriculum developments and progress in the post-compulsory schooling area;
- the content and scope of the Queensland curriculum for pre-school to Year 12;



- the most effective forms of remedial intervention to help all children achieve their literacy and numeracy potential;
- the resource implications of the current and future curriculum for schools, school authorities and the Government;
- the current and possible roles of schools and school authorities in curriculum matters in Queensland; and
- the relationship, so far as it can be determined, between schooling and the basic skills required in the employment market and the wider economy.

I take this opportunity to place on record my appreciation and that of the Government for the efforts of the Chair and members of the Ministerial Consultative Council on Curriculum. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. M. J. ROBSON** (Springwood—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (9.14 p.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

#### Effect of Housing Commission Rentals on TPI Pensioners

**Mrs GAMIN** (Burleigh) (9.15 p.m.): This is not the first time that problems facing returned service personnel have been brought to the attention of the House, and I should not be doing so this evening if the Deputy Premier had kept the commitment that he made last year to a group of residents who receive war disability pensions. I refer particularly to such ex-service personnel who rent accommodation from the Department of Housing in Queensland. In the normal course of calculating its rentals, the Queensland Housing Commission takes into account the income of its tenants. However, in dealing with tenants who receive a war disability pension, it also considers that war disability pension as income instead of compensation.

War disability pensions, whether in part or in whole—that is, totally and permanently incapacitated pensions—are granted to the recipients as compensation, and this is clearly stated in the Repatriation Act. Such disability payments are not classified by the Australian Taxation Office as income for the purposes of assessing income tax. But in Queensland, the State Government housing agency exploits ex-service personnel by counting into income such gross receipts for the purpose of assessing Housing Commission rentals. As a result, people who have served their country in time of war and who have been recognised as suffering injuries of sufficient magnitude to either partly or totally incapacitate them are paying much more rent than they should, and certainly more rent than ordinary civilians who did not fight for their country.

Recently, I received a deputation of ex-servicemen and they have agreed that I may cite the following examples. All these examples live in the same one-bedroom Housing Commission units. The only differences are the colour of the paintwork and the fact that some face east and some face west. Mr Bob Yuill, who is now 69 years old, has been totally and permanently incapacitated—TPI—since he was 20 years old. Part of his stomach was shot away. He was classified as TPI before World War II was even over. He receives a TPI pension and a war service pension. He lives alone and he has recently been advised that the rent of his Housing Commission unit will increase from \$190 to \$200 per fortnight.

Mr Stan Greig, who receives an 80 per cent disability as well as a war service pension, lives with his wife, Gwen, and they pay \$150 per fortnight for their Housing Commission unit. The neighbours of these two gentlemen, an ordinary pensioner couple, pay \$106 per fortnight in the same block of Housing Commission units. The

reason for these anomalies is that the disability allowances are being treated as income and not as compensation.

A similar anomaly used to exist in New South Wales, but it was corrected in 1988. A report in the *Glebe* newspaper dated 16 June 1988 describes the three-year battle an Erskinville war veteran won against the New South Wales State Department of Housing under a Labor Government in that State when a 40-year-old public housing policy was overturned. The department had taken legal action against a Mr Frank Watts to recover outstanding rent. The case was dismissed, but still the incumbent Government refused to take any action. The subsequent Minister for Housing in the new Government, Mr Joe Schipp, advised the New South Wales Returned Services League annual State conference that, effective from 10 July 1988, war disability pensions would be excluded as income for the purpose of assessing rental rebates for tenants of the department's properties. As a result, every war pensioner in New South Wales has benefited.

The war veterans who came to see me last week described a meeting they had with the Deputy Premier last year, and at that time the Deputy Premier was also the Minister for Housing in the Queensland Labor Government. At the Share and Care Centre at Palm Beach, Mr Burns assured them that their rent would not go up. The war veterans followed this up by telephoning the Housing Commission. They were told, "We're going to do something about it." They were also told that allowances would be made for overpayments over past years. They were told, "Don't worry. Don't do anything. It will be okay in January." That was supposed to be last month, January 1993. Now they have been notified that their rents will increase. I am not saying that the then Minister for Housing, the Deputy Premier, was unsympathetic—obviously he was sympathetic—but he did not confirm his sympathy with instructions for appropriate action.

I do not know just how many partly incapacitated ex-service personnel there are in Queensland. I do know, however, that there are only 3 396 totally and permanently incapacitated—TPIs—in this State and that the number is reducing every year. Out of a total Queensland population of 3 037 400, TPIs represent only 0.1 per cent of the total population, and not all of them are in Housing Commission accommodation. But it does not matter how few or how many receive disability compensation for injuries suffered as they fought for this country. Much is made of our returned service men and women when we celebrate Anzac Day. We have just gone through the commemoration of 50 years since the fall of Singapore.

Time expired.

#### **Effect of GST on Tuckshops**

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank) (9.19 p.m.): If the Liberals were to have their way after the Federal election, they would impose their GST on a most dedicated group of volunteer workers who contribute so much to the running of our schools. Simply put, the Liberals want to make our tuckshops into tax collectors. Most honourable members will be aware of the time and effort put in on a voluntary basis by a small band of dedicated workers to provide a tuckshop service at our schools. These are unpaid workers who give freely of their time to ensure that our children have access to a decent, inexpensive meal at school. Although their profit is marginal, p. and c. associations rely on this income to provide extra equipment and facilities in the school. Dr Hewson wants to transform these volunteers and, indeed, school p. and c. committees, into tax collectors for the Government. Can honourable members imagine what this will mean? It will be an accounting nightmare for those people whose only wish is to make a contribution to their local school. Tuckshops will be required to pay GST on most incoming goods. They would then be required to collect GST when those goods are sold.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member for Merrimac and the member for Caboolture will cease their cross-Chamber interjecting.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Can one imagine the volume of work involved in filling out the complicated reconciliation on tax paid and tax collected by the tuckshop? There will have to be accounting for every slice of bread, every piece of cheese, every pie and every sachet of tomato sauce and the tax paid on those items and the tax collected will have to be calculated. Remember that these people are volunteers—the parents and carers of children attending our schools. Because they are volunteers, they are therefore unable to take advantage of the supposed benefits of Dr Hewson's new tax, for example, the abolition of payroll tax which he keeps assuring us is to offset not only the increased prices but also the increase in administrative costs. Imagine the work required to calculate the GST payable on a hamburger, with some of the ingredients being GST free whereas others will have an input tax applied. The ingredients that go to make hamburgers will all be subject to GST when they are sold. For the volunteers who staff our school tuckshops, the GST will be too much to stomach. Already, because of a lack of volunteer support some tuckshops struggle to keep their doors open. Such is the workload already imposed on the school community that many tuckshops can open only three days per week.

Because of the added administrative burden of tax collection on the few dedicated volunteers who staff tuckshops, they may find themselves unable to provide the current level of service to our children. This is an onerous and odious tax which creates an unfair workload for those dedicated workers. The same p. and c. that organises tuckshops also takes on responsibility for the supply and sale of school uniforms. For the local tuckshop convenor, that means another set of books and another accounting nightmare to reconcile the GST paid on purchases against sales.

I turn to the impact of the GST on the parents of children who patronise tuckshops. Obviously, prices will increase. Independent Treasury figures demonstrate that the application of the GST will represent an increase of up to 9.5 per cent on items sold by tuckshops. When tuckshops are no longer an economical alternative to packed lunches, who will bear the brunt of the Hewson nightmare? Of course, for the most part it will be women, for it is women who pack school lunches and women who do the shopping. It is women in the work force and women who have commitments to community groups and sporting organisations who will suffer from the inevitable reduction in services provided by their children's school. The record of the coalition parties has never been good—

**Mr Connor** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Nerang will cease interjecting.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** —when it comes to gender equality or economic justice. Dr Hewson would effectively abolish the Affirmative Action Agency, the Equal Pay Unit and the Work and Family Unit. Those bodies were established by Labor to promote equal opportunities for women. In common with the Liberals' overall attitude to women, Dr Hewson's tax is discriminatory. It discriminates on the basis of economics and, importantly, it discriminates on the basis of gender. Of course, Dr Hewson's tax on schools does not stop at the tuckshop. Barbeques, pie drives, lamington drives and even sales of charity chocolates will be subject to his GST. Even fetes will not escape this insidious tax. The GST is unfair, unjust and discriminatory and it is imposed on just about everything.

Time expired.

### **Noxious Weeds**

**Mr HEALY** (Toowoomba North)(9.23 p.m.): I rise to speak in this Adjournment debate to highlight a problem that is being experienced on the very edge of my electorate of Toowoomba North. It is a potentially alarming environmental problem on the Toowoomba Range escarpment and it has the Toowoomba City Council extremely concerned. The problem is the damage being done to the natural bushland by the infestation of three types of exotic weed varieties, namely, lantana, privet and cat's claw.

One area in particular, namely, Redwood Park, which is a 197-hectare area of bushland under the management of the Toowoomba City Council, has been particularly affected by these weeds, to the extent that part of the natural bushland has been so damaged that the Toowoomba City Council has sought permission from the Rural Lands Protection Board to have those three varieties declared as noxious weeds under Category P2 of Part 5 of the Rural Lands Protection Act 1985, which deals with declared plants and declared animals as a by-law for the council's area. To date, the department, and indeed the Minister for Lands, have not seen the need to accede to council's request.

I wish to deal with two of the lesser-known varieties of these pests, namely, privet and cat's claw. Most of us know a little about lantana. Broad leaf privet is an imported British weed and a native of southern China. It is an overstorey tree which germinates in very low light intensities, grows rapidly in shade, soon overtops native shrubs and tree seedlings and, where dense, rapidly eliminates all native plants except the established trees. Its heavy shade prevents regeneration of all native plants, resulting in monospecific stands of this exotic tree. On the other hand, cat's claw creeper, another imported variety, is an evergreen woody vine which also germinates in shade. It grows rapidly across the ground to form an impenetrable blanket, and it climbs, smothers, kills and pulls down trees by its sheer weight, especially when rain-laden in windy conditions.

Most experts know that the infestation of these varieties on the escarpment is caused by the seed being spread by certain bird varieties from the many parks and private gardens on the eastern side of the city. It is pretty simple: the birds eat the fruit and deposit the seed over the escarpment. To have these varieties declared as noxious weeds would allow the council, firstly, to implement part of its extensive weed management plan of destroying the species on the escarpment and, secondly, to develop its program of educating householders in the city to remove the privet and cat's claw from their gardens and replace them with native varieties.

May I stress that, from the council's point of view—as outlined in its weed management plan for Toowoomba's escarpment parks which was adopted in October 1992—very few, if any, existing practices for control will be totally successful in the eradication of any particular introduced species. The current knowledge and available practical techniques can only achieve the control, not the eradication, of introduced species. The proposal to have these species declared has received broad community support, not just from community groups involved in environmental management but also from nurserymen and retailers who regard the species as no more than a pest.

The Toowoomba City Council, under the guidance of its Director of Parks and Gardens, Mr Ken Rogers, has developed almost 10 kilometres of graded walks through the city's bushland parks, so that ratepayers and tourists can enjoy the marvels of this unique piece of native bushland so close to the city. The fact is—and I have seen it first-hand—that part of this area has been turned into a dead forest because of the infestation. It a pretty eerie atmosphere. There are no birds, no animals and no native grasses and plants, because the weeded areas are not conducive to natural flora and fauna.

On behalf of the Toowoomba City Council and other concerned groups, such as the Friends of the Escarpment Association, Toowoomba Field Naturalists, and the Society for Growing Australian Plants, I again appeal to the Minister for Lands, through his department, to reconsider the declaration of privet, cat's claw and lantana under the Rural Lands Protection Act by way of by-law, which I believe the department is preparing under the Act, containing provisions relating to noxious weeds for the council's control area.

### **Education in Gladstone Region**

**Mr BENNETT** (Gladstone) (9.29 p.m.): At the outset, I thank the honourable member for Mooloolah for his endorsement and support of the petition relating to the penalties for child sex offences. In that regard, I am proud of the response by the Gladstone community and indeed by the rest of Queensland. I believe that response shows that Queenslanders love and care for their children. I am also pleased with the response by the Attorney-General, Dean Wells, in relation to the extension of the review of the Criminal Code regarding child sex offences. I urge all Queenslanders to express their view to the Criminal Code review committee so that penalties meted out to offenders in courts reflect the level of revulsion felt in the community over those offences.

Today, the Gladstone region is entering a new era in education. On 8 February, the Premier announced a \$58m joint State/Commonwealth education package aimed at improving educational opportunities in regional Queensland. The announcement signalled the birth of the University of Central Queensland Gladstone Marina campus. I was more than pleased with the Goss Government's contribution of \$1.25m towards the Gladstone Marina campus. That sum of money will go towards \$2.5m allocated by the Australian Government to build the general purpose building, which will be completed by the start of the 1994 year. During this year, design work will take place for the first specific engineering building, to which the Australian Government has allocated \$3m. The \$26.25m funding program will see the establishment of three engineering buildings during 1995 to 1997. The Gladstone Marina campus will become a centre for engineering excellence and marine studies. At this point, I will read a letter from the UCQ Gladstone Advisory Committee, which states—

“On behalf of the Gladstone Advisory Committee of the University of Central Queensland I wish to thank you most sincerely for your role in the grant of \$1.25 million toward the cost of construction of the Gladstone Marina campus of the university.

The funds, together with money previously allocated by the Federal Government, will enable the university to begin immediate construction of a facility which will benefit the residents of the Central Queensland region and in particular will benefit the industries of the Gladstone region. It is our aim to establish, in conjunction with local industry and with the support of the local community, an Engineering and Technology centre in Gladstone which will earn national and international recognition for its excellence.

The initiative of your Government in supporting this enterprise is most warmly welcomed by my committee and by the whole of the Gladstone community.

Yours sincerely,

Leo Zussino,

Chairman,

Gladstone Advisory Committee.”

The Gladstone and Calliope communities are definitely excited about the project, because of the obvious opportunities for local people to educate their children to a tertiary standard locally, and the income that it will generate for my electorate. However, this campus will be put at risk by the election of a Hewson coalition Government, which has not yet signalled any commitment to the extended project. The Fightback package, through the imposition of fees and a voucher funding scheme, will fundamentally change higher education. Under the proposal outlined by the Opposition spokesperson, Mr David Kemp—a well-known Right Winger—all students could end up paying full fees up front. It has been estimated that the fees for courses such as medicine and veterinary science would range between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year. The average fee would be \$12,000 a year. Such fees would make it impossible for thousands of Queensland students to attend university, particularly Year 12 school leavers. The numbers of Queenslanders participating in higher education are likely to be reversed. The Fightback proposal favours the wealthy, and it will destroy equal access for all students. It is

blatantly discriminatory and elitist. I fear that the hard work that has been carried out by the Chancellor of the University of Queensland, Bruce Hiskens, the UCQ Gladstone Advisory Committee and the Federal member for Hinkler, Brian Courtice, will come to nothing if a Hewson Government is elected.

The statement by the Federal coalition Education spokesman, David Kemp, on ABC's *Lateline*, to the effect that the fee for service principle that Hewson advocates is better than the competency based system for entering university because the children of lower-income earners are typically lower achievers is deplorable. To use this as an argument to promote an inequity in educational opportunities smacks of class warfare.

I congratulate everybody involved on bringing the UCQ Gladstone Marina campus to reality. I believe that the people of Gladstone will see the election of the Hewson Government as a threat to their chances of having a centre for engineering excellence set up in Gladstone. I also wish to thank the Gladstone Port Authority, which has made land at the marina available for the campus. The completion of the bridge across Auckland Creek, which was funded by the port authority to connect the marina with the central business district, will be of great benefit to students, lecturers and other staff.

Time expired.

### School Buses

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (9.34 p.m.): in joining the Adjournment debate tonight, I draw to the attention of the House the plight of some people who have moved into the rural residential areas at the northern end of the Laidley Shire. The people who have settled in that area are not of wealthy means. They were attracted to the area because of the cheap land prices. Many people have settled in this area and have built lovely homes. They enjoy the environment in which they live. However, a number of those people are unemployed, or are on low incomes. The land developers, as they call themselves, subdivided much of this land into five-acre blocks. I do not call them developers; they are only subdividers. They chopped up the land, sold it and left the councils to cope with the problems. Of course, one problem is that although this area is serviced by good roads, it is relatively remote from any shopping centre. Because of the sparsity of houses, it is not profitable to operate a bus service through the area. Many families are one-car families. If one member of the household works, that person needs the car to get to work. Consequently, the wife or husband is left behind in the house all day without any transport. The area is well serviced by a school bus run. However, the rapid development of the area means that the bus runs are fairly long. I have received complaints from my constituents who have children in their first year at school. Sometimes those children have to travel on a bus for an hour and 10 minutes to get to the Hatton Vale State School. That means that the children have to travel on the bus for an hour and 10 minutes in the afternoon. It is no wonder that five-year-old children are asleep by the time they get home and parents have to carry them off the bus. This has occurred particularly during the early part of the school year when the children are not used to the extra tension and effort that is involved in attending school.

I believe that a second bus run for children who attend the Hatton Vale State School would provide a solution to the problem. If a bus could service each of the two main collection areas, the children would not have to be on the buses for such a long time. It has been suggested that the bus that services those two areas could drop off children from one area halfway to the school, and then collect the children from the other area. However, teachers are not available at schools before 8.30 a.m. to look after children and no teacher wants to stay back after school to wait for the bus to come back after it has completed its first run. The only solution will be a second bus. With the population expansion in that area, two buses will be needed sooner or later.

To give members some idea of the expansion that has occurred in that area, I point out that, during a three-year period, the Glenore Grove State School, which is the next school along, went from a primary school of 54 children to a school of 180 children. Not

all those children live on farms; many are the children of people who have gone to live in the subdivided rural areas. Whilst many people enjoy that type of lifestyle, which I believe is excellent, it also has the disadvantage of being remote. If one does not own a car, it is a long way to the nearest shopping centre. The area is not wealthy, and the Government should be providing extra support for the region, because I envisage some problems occurring there. The region is isolated from shops and other services. As well, because some parts are not serviced by water, there are problems with obtaining water. Before councils allow that type of land to be developed, the subdividers should be required to provide more infrastructure for those areas.

I also give a warning to people who are moving to those areas. They should look carefully at them and ensure that that is the lifestyle that they want. Sometimes there are disadvantages in living in a relatively isolated area, even though it might be only 10 or 15 minutes from a shopping centre. If a vehicle is not available at all times, people can feel rather isolated. That can create a problem, particularly for people who wish to take their children to school and bring them back afterwards. Over the years, the Government has made a commitment to transport children to schools. However, the demand for those services will increase more and more as people move to rural residential areas.

Time expired.

### **Fightback Policy on Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders**

**Mr BREDHAUER** (Cook) (9.39 p.m.): Tonight, I am not going to talk about an aspect of Fightback about which Dr Hewson is trying to convince the electorate. I intend to talk about an element of Fightback that the Liberal Party has done absolutely nothing about. It has made no mention of it in its campaign to this point in time. I refer to the Liberals' attitude and policies as enunciated in Fightback in relation to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I do not blame the Liberals for not being out on the street corners talking about this issue. If one had a close look at their policies, one would be ashamed of what they propose to do with the programs that have been operated by the Federal Government over the past 10 years to help probably the most disadvantaged group in our society, that is, Australia's Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. In fact, if it were not for a couple of derisive comments made by people such as Tim Fischer about the Mabo case and legitimate land justice claims that have been made by Aboriginal people, and if it were not for a few derogatory comments made by Dr Hewson in the past about red, green and black tape holding up development—he seems to blame Aboriginal people for having reasonable expectations that the system will take their concerns into account—one would believe that the coalition basically does not care one hoot for Aboriginal people. The reality is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Leichhardt electorate and throughout Australia will see through the coalition's policies. I am quite confident that they will vote accordingly on 13 March.

What that motley crew in Canberra, who call themselves a coalition, and their supporters opposite are proposing for Australia's Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders is a cut of \$90m in the program. That is just under 20 per cent of the funds that are currently allocated for important initiatives for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. I know that it is quite topical to get stuck into Aboriginal people for having their own bureaucracies and those sorts of things, but we really need to look at the sectors that the Federal coalition would cut. The sum of \$25m would be cut from the Aboriginal housing program. I invite any member opposite and any member of the Federal coalition to take a drive around my electorate to see the housing conditions of Aboriginal people and to justify the cutting of that \$25m. I invite Bill Cummings, the Liberal Party candidate for Leichhardt, to get out of his airconditioned office in Cairns, get out there amongst a few of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and visit a few of those people in their homes to see the poor quality of those homes and the overcrowded

conditions in which those people live. Then I challenge him to justify the \$25m cut in funds for Aboriginal housing.

I could talk about the \$20m for Aboriginal education employment programs that the Liberals would cut, and the sum of \$7m which would be cut from Abstudy by restricting eligibility. As a result, fewer people would be eligible for Abstudy. A total of \$5m would be cut from the Aboriginal student support and parent awareness schemes, which provide information on what is available and help with study skills, so that those people have the prospect of achieving in our education system and perhaps obtaining meaningful jobs. The sum of \$3m would be cut by applying stricter tests for Aboriginality. I love that one! We would have people who are more Aboriginal or less Aboriginal than others, and we would save \$3m by having some people who are more indigenous than others in Australia. For Dr Hewson to say that he can set himself up as the judge and jury on what is Aboriginality in a person in Australia is absolutely disgraceful. The sum of \$3m would be cut by discontinuing Abstudy for Years 7 and 8, together with a further \$3m in running costs for Aboriginal education employment programs.

I could talk about the \$20m that the Federal coalition would cut from the CDEP—the Community Development Employment Program—which has given some status to Aboriginal communities. Instead of receiving the dole, they have been able to do a little bit of community work and get themselves organised. If they manage their funds properly, they can turn those funds to other projects in their community. That gives them a little more self-respect and the opportunity not to be constantly receiving hand-outs but to achieve something for their community. The sum of \$5m would be cut from the ATSIC Development Corporation; \$4m from ATSIC efficiency demands; \$3m from Aboriginal land purchase; and \$3m from Aboriginal legal aid. So when an Aboriginal or Islander person in Queensland got into trouble, he or she would not be able to seek legal redress, as he or she should be entitled to do and as is the right of every Australian.

I am not surprised that the Federal coalition is not promoting this policy, because it is an absolute disgrace. I will be campaigning throughout the Leichhardt electorate telling the Aboriginal and Islander people there about the absolutely appalling position that is being adopted by the Federal coalition. I would like Bill Cummings and Ben Wilson to get out there, sit down and talk to a few Aboriginal people in my electorate and the Leichhardt electorate. But they do not have the guts to do that, because they know that the policies of their leaders are absolutely indefensible.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.45 p.m.