

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 1998

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. N. J. Turner, Nicklin)
read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I have to inform the House that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a letter in respect to assent to certain Bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the records of the Parliament—

"Government House
Queensland

10 December 1997

The Honourable N. J. Turner, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

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

"A Bill for an Act to establish the Queensland Crime Commission, and for other matters"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to facilitate the integration of Advance Bank Australia Limited with St George Bank Limited"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend legislation about primary industries"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend legislation about local government"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act 1968"—1 December 1997

A Bill for an Act about the powers and responsibilities of police officers"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act for a framework to integrate planning and development assessment so that development and

its effects are managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable, and for related purposes"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982 and the Gas Act 1965"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend Acts administered by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts administered by the Treasurer"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to appropriate an amount from the consolidated fund for services of the Parliament in the financial year starting 1 July 1996"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to appropriate certain amounts for services in the financial year starting 1 July 1996"—1 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend legislation about education, and for other purposes"—5 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend various Acts administered by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and for other purposes"—5 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts administered by the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts and for other purposes"—5 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister for the Environment and for other purposes"—5 December 1997

A Bill for an Act to amend legislation about natural resources, and for other purposes"—5 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to make various amendments of Queensland statute law and to repeal an Act"—5 December 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Electricity Act 1994 and for other purposes"—5 December 1997

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

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) Peter Arnison
Governor"

ASSENT TO BILLS

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) Appropriation Bill (No. 2)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I have to inform the House that on Monday, 1 December 1997, I presented to His Excellency the Governor the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) for royal assent, and His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, recent events as reported in the Queensland press have concerned me, as I know they have concerned many of my parliamentary colleagues. As Speaker, I am ostensibly the Minister responsible for the Parliament, its precincts and its functioning. The misleading interpretation portrayed in the media must not only be rectified but must be examined in a non-biased nature based on facts. I intend to outline the entitlements of both members and other organisations that work from this building.

Members of the Legislative Assembly are entitled to a motel-style room in which to stay at the Annexe if they live outside the metropolitan region of Brisbane City. This is an entitlement that is not only in the best interest of the members, who are required to attend not only when the House sits but for constituent deputations, committees, party meetings and functions based in the Brisbane area, it is also in the best interests of the taxpayers of Queensland for, with the provision of this accommodation, the Queensland taxpayer is not burdened by the payment of accommodation allowances, as is the case in other parliamentary jurisdictions in Australia.

If we look at other Parliaments in Australia—Federal members receive \$145 per day accommodation allowance to attend Parliament, in Western Australia and the Northern Territory members receive \$160 per day allowance, and in New South Wales country members receive an annual entitlement of \$17,460. The annual—and I repeat "annual"—cost to these Parliaments for accommodation allowances, if applied to 60 Queensland members—and I might point out that it is more than that—is \$522,000 for the Commonwealth model, \$576,000 for the Western Australian and Northern Territory models, and \$1.0576m using the New South Wales model.

Queensland members have been provided with accommodation in the Parliamentary Annexe for 20 years. Using the Commonwealth model, the State would have paid out \$10.44m and, using the Western Australian/Northern Territory models, the State would have paid out \$11.5m for similar accommodation and \$21.15m for the New South Wales model. So the Parliamentary Annexe has saved the Queensland Government and taxpayers paying out between \$10.4m and \$21.5m since it was built—or from paying half to the whole of the total cost to build the Annexe. Of course, the Annexe was necessary in any case for staff offices, such as administration, library and media, etc.

Now let me turn to the accommodation that the media receive in the Queensland Parliament. Queensland provides the media with offices and studios at no charge. If we look at other Parliaments—the Commonwealth charges the media for accommodation on a commercial basis and requires the press to pay for all equipment and furniture. The Northern Territory Parliament also requires the press to rent their workrooms. If Queensland were to likewise charge media on a commercial basis, the bill would be considerable.

In September 1996, an independent evaluation was conducted in order to establish the commercial value of the two main areas used by the media in the Queensland Parliament. The outcome of the evaluation found that the 96 square metres in the Annexe were valued at \$250 per square metre, or \$24,000 per year, and the 92 square metres in Parliament House at \$250 per square metre—\$23,000 per year—a total of \$47,000 free accommodation a year. In addition to this, the media receive six free car parks with unlimited further parking below the freeway. If they were charged just a nominal \$5 per day for the six spaces, this would be worth \$10,950 per year. Further to that, the media are provided with free telephones that cost the Parliament \$9,600 per year. In the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victorian and ACT Parliaments, the media are required to pay the full costs of their telephone accounts. Add the free parking, rent and telephones, and the media are saving \$67,550 a year or, over the 20 years that this has applied, \$1.351m. That is \$1.351m that the Parliament has saved the media. In other jurisdictions the media would have had to foot the bill for this total cost.

I acknowledge the role that the media plays in reporting on Government and the Parliament, and the Parliament happily provides these facilities to the media for free so that they can be located in Parliament at no cost to provide unbiased reporting to the Queensland public. I would just ask that the media present the true

picture in relation to the offices and accommodation that members have at Parliament and what is contributed towards savings in terms of the accommodation. It is time that a true and balanced approach is taken towards this issue.

I would hope that this statement clarifies the situation in relation to the allocation of rooms at Parliament House and that we shall now move on to more important issues.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Sir David Nicholson

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (9.36 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Honourable Sir David Eric Nicholson, a former member and Speaker of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained."

Sir David Eric Nicholson was born on 26 May 1904 in Masterton, New Zealand, son of John, a farmer, and Maria. Sir David received a public school education in Masterton and arrived in Australia in 1926 as a New Zealand professional cycling representative and motorcycle stunt rider. Having competed successfully in three States, Sir David later took up speedway racing at Maroubra and Penrith. In 1933, he became the first person in Australia to ride the infamous "Wall of Death".

After training as an electrical engineer, Sir David settled in Queensland in 1934 with his new wife, Cecile, and established a radio and refrigeration business in Caboolture. Together they raised a family of two sons and two daughters. During World War II, Sir David was a warrant officer in the second battalion of the volunteer defence corps. In the course of his career, Sir David was appointed company director of the Kern Corporation. Although Sir David retired from business in 1955 at the age of 51, he had earlier embarked on a public life which was to keep him occupied for many years to come.

Having first become involved in politics in 1936, Sir David was elected in 1950 as the member for Murrumba and held this position until he resigned in 1972. As a member of the

Country Party, Sir David lobbied for the rights of farmers, improved educational facilities, changes to the education system and the decentralisation of hospitals. He also served for two years as a member on a Government committee on the problems of youth.

Sir David is perhaps best known as the longest serving Speaker in the history of the Queensland Parliament, having held this position from 23 August 1960 until he retired from Parliament on 25 May 1972. Sir David was hailed for his good-humoured discipline in his position as Speaker and had a reputation for having no real enemies on either side of the House.

In 1972, Sir David received a knighthood. Sir David's varied recreational interests—bowls, gardening, swimming and motor sports—were reflected in his membership of a wide range of clubs. Sir David was a member of the State executive of the QATB, the Queensland Builders Registration Board, the Queensland Picture Theatre and Films Commission, the Royal National Association, the Redcliffe Chamber of Commerce and the Spastic Welfare Committee in Redcliffe. Sir David also held the position of President of the Redcliffe Show Society and was a patron of the Caboolture Ex-servicemen's Club. Sir David received life membership of the Redcliffe Trotting Club and the Redcliffe Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial Society and was a member of the New Farm Bowling Club.

Sir David's wife, Cecile, died in 1987. Sir David is survived today by his four children, 15 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. On behalf of the Government and the Parliament, I extend my sympathy and that of this House to his family.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (9.39 a.m.): I rise to second the condolence motion moved by the Premier and, in doing so, I note for the record that Sir David Nicholson served as Speaker for 11 years, nine months and two days—the longest term of Queensland's 31 Speakers since 1860. In 1950, he was elected for the Country Party, later the National Party, to the near north coast seat of Murrumba, succeeding the late Sir Francis Nicklin, who moved to the new seat of Landsborough. The Courier-Mail of 21 May 1990 noted his interest in the decentralisation of secondary schools and hospitals. He urged the construction of a public hospital at Redcliffe, whether it be prefabricated or any other style.

I was not in the Parliament during any time that Sir David was the Speaker. I have taken the opportunity of consulting former Labor Leader Ed Casey, who served during his period. Ed has

told me that Sir David Nicholson was one of the best Speakers under whom he had ever served in this Parliament. Sir David had a tremendous respect for the procedures of the House. He was very fair in the way he treated members on both sides of the Chamber. He had an excellent knowledge of the Standing Orders and procedures of the Parliament. He would not tolerate any talking in the Chamber. He would not hesitate to advise members talking among themselves in the Chamber that they could go out into the corridors, verandas or the lobby and talk there. That is not a procedure that we would like to see today.

He would not allow any member to read a prepared speech in the House. The only person allowed to read a speech was the Minister introducing a Bill. That would cause a few shocks today. Members could speak from notes only. Anyone who tried to read a prepared speech in the Chamber was stopped. He would watch all speakers carefully, to ensure that they were not reading their speeches. If he deemed that they were, he would stop them from proceeding any further. Any members who tried to plead that they were consulting their notes would be told that they had rather copious notes. Sir David was implacably opposed to tedious repetition in speeches. He listened intently to each debate, making it impossible for speaker after speaker to rise and say the same thing. If there were some attempt at repetition, Sir David would point out that, if the speaker had nothing new to add to the debate, he or she should simply sit down. In light of the rulings of Sir David, I do not intend to repeat anything that the Premier said in terms of Sir David's history in this House. He is survived by two sons and two daughters, 15 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. I pass on the condolences of the Opposition.

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (9.43 a.m.): I, too, would like to speak about a great Queensland, Sir David Eric Nicholson. Sir David's contributions to our State span much of his 93 years, from the time that he and his wife Cecile settled in what was the small farming community of Caboolture. That was 65 years ago, and, of course, much has changed. Sir David not only witnessed those changes but he was also involved in many of the changes that have taken place over the past six decades. Part of my electorate is part of the electorate that Sir David had many long years ago.

Sir David Nicholson was the kind of man who makes one proud to say that one is an Australian and proud to say that one is a Queensland. He was hardworking, self made and a person of enormous integrity. He was the

kind of person who preferred to put others ahead of himself. We have heard from the Premier about Sir David's war service and his active participation in Queensland business. However, what really stands out is his commitment to his local community and to the people of Queensland as a whole.

He championed farmers, better schools, more hospitals, helped disadvantaged youth and worked hard for average Queenslanders. Over many, many years, he was able to help them. His community involvement extended to board and management positions within the Ambulance Service, the Spastic Welfare Committee, the Queensland Builders Registration Board, the Queensland film industry and numerous local organisations, including the Redcliffe Show Society, the ex-servicemen's club and the trotting club. Of course, we here remember Sir David well because of his long and distinguished service to Queensland politics. His political involvement spanned 36 years, during which time he served as the member for Murrumba from 1950 to 1972. During that time, he was Queensland's longest serving Speaker of the House.

Sir David Nicholson was my member of Parliament. He was an inspiration to young people at school. As a student visiting Parliament House, I wrote an essay and was awarded a prize by him. That prize was a book that was inscribed, and I still have it. That is a fond memory that I keep. When I won that book, I did not think that I would end up here as a parliamentarian. That example illustrates his commitment to young people. Looking to him as a member of Parliament—and I was quite young at the time—and knowing how he moved around the electorate, spoke to people and was interested in young people, no doubt encouraged me to follow this noble profession.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (9.46 a.m.): I rise to join this condolence motion to express the sympathies of the people of the Caboolture electorate to the family of Sir David Nicholson on his passing last December. The electorate of Murrumba that Sir David represented so ably in this place included all of the electorate of Caboolture that I now represent. As Sir David left Parliament in 1972 and entered Parliament before I was born, I do not have a great recollection of his term in Parliament. I am grateful to the advices that I have received from a number of National Party identities in my electorate, notably Bruce Page and Eric Bishop, which gave me a little information on the term in Parliament of Dave, as they call him.

In the recollection of one of those gentlemen, Sir David came to Caboolture around the time of World War II. He set up a repair shop for radios and bicycles. I have heard mentioned today that he also did a little bit of refrigeration work. That is news to me. Members might be interested to know that the site of that repair shop is the site of the office currently provided by this Parliament for the member for Caboolture, so, through this Parliament, we still have a connection with Sir David's entry into Caboolture.

When he entered Parliament, he was a great fighter for the people whom he represented. I am told that two particular improvements in his electorate he obtained against the wishes of his party. I know what that is like. Those two were the high school section of the Woodford school, and, importantly for his future, the bridge linking Bribie Island with the mainland. As honourable members know, Sir David saw his last years at the Bribie Island retirement village in my electorate. When I think of that, I am reminded of Winston Churchill, who refused to have a statue built of himself. During his lifetime, he would not allow anybody to build a statue on a certain site in London, where a statue to Sir Winston Churchill now stands. I wonder whether Sir David had a view to his retirement when he was linking Bribie to the mainland. I believe that all of us in the Caboolture electorate and those from Bribie Island particularly would recognise and gladly say what a great difference that bridge has made to our community.

A lot has been said of his sporting prowess. Before he came to Australia from New Zealand, he was a very excellent foot runner and bike rider. In Australia he made his name as a bicycle rider and a "Wall of Death" type rider on motor cycles, having been initially employed to tune the motor cycles for some Americans who came to Australia to bring us that new sport. What is often not heard is that he liked a bit of a stoush. In his younger days, when he was travelling around western Queensland, he liked it when the boxing tent came to town so that he could show people of just what mettle he was made.

Sir David Nicholson is well remembered in our community. As one person said to me, he is also remembered for the fact that, in retirement, as an ex-politician he proved to be a good bloke. I think that all of us would look for that epitaph later. As I said, I would like to express the sympathies of the people of my electorate to the family of Sir David Nicholson on his passing.

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur) (9.49 a.m.): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make some comments about

David Nicholson in this condolence motion. In common with the member for Caboolture, I never met David Nicholson, but I have never ever met any long-term residents of my electorate, which took in the Murrumba area, who have had a bad word to say about him.

I think that the best example of that is the one which came to my mind this morning and which relates to a mate of mine who is also well known to Mr Gibbs. He loves to tell a story about when he was working on a polling booth at Narangba. At that time, it was a very small community. Terry would be handing out the Labor Party how-to-vote cards and David's son—I think his name was Bruce—would be handing out the Country Party how-to-vote cards. Basically, they knew who was going to vote for which party because, as I said, it was a very small community. During the day, Sir David came down to introduce himself to his booth workers. He came over to Terry and said, "Hello, my name is Dave Nicholson, what is yours?" Terry gave him his name. Sir David asked, "What do you do?" Terry said, "I sell motor vehicles for a living", and then Sir David left. A few weeks later at Terry's work, the phone rang. The caller said, "It is Dave Nicholson here, Terry. I am just giving you a ring because I am interested in a car. Could you do something about giving me a quote on a new motor vehicle?" That is basically how Terry came to know Sir David. After that, Terry not only sold many cars to Sir David but also quite regularly people would ring Terry and say, "I am a mate of Dave Nicholson. He told me to give you a ring", or "My name is Roy Armstrong, would you give me a quote on a car as well?"

The point I wanted to make is that Dave Nicholson had a very balanced view of politics and life. I think that the comments made by the Premier, by Mr Beattie and, of course, by Mr Sullivan emphasise that. My friend is never, ever going to vote for Dave Nicholson's party, but he has never had a bad word to say about him, nor have many of the long-term residents of my electorate who came in contact with him. If we can learn something from that, it is certainly that Dave Nicholson was not small minded in his contact with his political opponents.

The Premier commented that Dave Nicholson never had any enemies on either side of the House. From what I have learned, he never had any enemies within his electorate, which he represented so well. I think that that was one of the strengths of Dave Nicholson and I think that we in this Parliament can all learn from that. Certainly in the electorate of Kallangur, which I represent, Dave Nicholson will be sadly missed, as I am sure that he is sadly missed by everybody in this Parliament.

On behalf of myself, my wife Janet and all the residents of the Kallangur electorate, I take this opportunity to pass on our sympathies and condolences to the Nicholson family.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Government Advertising

From **Mr Beattie** (107 petitioners) requesting the House to immediately cease politically motivated, taxpayer-funded advertising being used solely to promote the National and Liberal Parties and request instead that the money go toward (a) improving funding for TAFE to give young people an opportunity to gain important skills training, (b) increasing resources to improve the police presence in Queensland towns and communities and (c) improving health services to reduce accident and emergency waiting times and ballooning waiting lists in our public hospitals.

Inner City Rail Loop

From **Mr Beattie** (144 petitioners) requesting the House to agree in principle to fund the inner city rail loop service connecting the central business district of the city to the Valley, Bowen Hills, RNA Showgrounds and RBH and on via Normanby Terrace to the CBD by the year 2000 and instruct Q Rail accordingly.

Lady Ramsay Child Care Centre, Royal Women's Hospital

From **Mr Beattie** (171 petitioners) requesting the House to ensure that the Lady Ramsay Child Care Centre at Royal Women's Hospital, Brisbane, will continue as a public sector service when a new centre is built on campus and that this centre be used as a model for other hospital-based child care centres built as part of Queensland Health's capital works agenda.

Torres Shire Council

From **Mr Bredhauer** (228 petitioners) requesting the House to reject the recommendation for the abolition of the Torres Shire Council and leave it to the people of the

shire and the established local government procedures for councils in Queensland to decide how our future Government services should be delivered and paid for.

Mr Subota, Dental Surgeon

From **Mr Campbell** (65 petitioners) requesting the House to overcome the denial of natural justice to Mr Subota, dental surgeon serving the residents of Bundaberg, to practise freely in Queensland as a dental prosthetist.

Boonah-Purga Road and School Road, Purga

From **Mr FitzGerald** (165 petitioners) requesting the House and the Minister for Transport to intervene to ensure the Boonah-Purga Road and School Road, Purga, are upgraded and improved in the interests of road safety.

Police Beat Shopfront, Strathpine

From **Mrs Lavarch** (140 petitioners) requesting the House to urgently address the need for an increased police presence in the community of Pine Rivers by calling on the Minister for Police to immediately establish a police beat shopfront in Strathpine.

Mary River Catchment Area, Tip Location

From **Mr Littleproud** (2,275 petitioners) requesting the House to take action to safeguard the communities and the environment downstream of the Mary River against the impact of locating a tip (mega-dump) within the Mary River catchment area at Belli by protecting access to safe water.

Commonwealth Powers (Family Law—Children) Act 1990

From **Mr Mulherin** (202 petitioners) requesting the House to repeal the Commonwealth Powers (Family Law-Children) Act 1990.

Public Housing

From **Mr Nuttall** (84 petitioners) requesting the House to direct the Minister for Public Works and Housing to abandon the proposed changes to the public housing system which attack the most vulnerable and genuinely needy in our community.

Coonarr Beach, Coal Port Proposal

From **Mr Slack** (694 petitioners) requesting the House to discard the coal port proposal at Coonarr Beach and conserve the Burnett Coast.

Rail Noise, Townsville

From **Mr Smith** (21 petitioners) requesting the House approach the Railway Department to investigate ways of reducing the noise from trains rounding the corner on the railway bridge adjoining the properties at 14 Stanley to 26 Stanley Street Townsville.

Warwick Shire, Prison Proposal

From **Mr Springborg** (925 petitioners) requesting the House to recognise the opposition of the residents of Warwick Shire to the proposed SEQ 2 medium to high security prison and remove Warwick Shire from the list of possible shires for the new prison.

New Shire, Sunshine Coast

From **Mr Turner** (3,847 petitioners) requesting the House to direct the Electoral Commissioner to carry out a review under the Local Government Legislative Amendment Act 1996 for the formation of a new shire including the hinterland divisions of Caloundra and Maroochy Shires.

Deception Bay, Police Numbers

From **Mr Wells** (25 petitioners) requesting the House to call on the Minister for Police to take urgent action to provide the State with sufficient police numbers to remedy the shortfall of police in the Deception Bay area.

Petitions received.

PAPERS TABLED DURING RECESS

The Clerk announced that the following papers were tabled during the recess—

1 December 1997—

Golden Casket Lottery Corporation—
Annual Report for the period ended 31 July 1997

Perpetual Trustees Australia Limited—
Annual Report 1996-97

Townsville/Thuringowa Water Supply
Board—Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Natural Resources regarding the 1996-97
annual report of the Townsville/Thuringowa
Water Supply Board

2 December 1997—

South East Queensland Water Board—
Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Natural Resources regarding the 1996-97
annual report of the South East
Queensland Water Board

3 December 1997—

Childrens Court of Queensland—Annual
Report 1996-97

Freedom of Information—Annual Report
1996-97

Office of the Director of Public
Prosecutions—Annual Report 1996-97

Supreme Court of Queensland—Annual
Report 1996-97

4 December 1997—

Health Rights Commission—Annual Report
1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Health regarding the 1996-97 annual report
of the Health Rights Commission

Prince Charles Hospital Foundation—
Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Health regarding the 1996-97 annual report
of the Prince Charles Hospital Foundation

8 December 1997—

Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations—
Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry
regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the
Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations

Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers—
Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry
regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the
Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers

Darling Downs—Moreton Rabbit Board—
Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Natural Resources regarding the 1996-97
annual report of the Darling Downs—
Moreton Rabbit Board

Valuers Registration Board of
Queensland—Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for
Natural Resources regarding the 1996-97
annual report of the Valuers Registration
Board of Queensland

9 December 1997—

First Report of the Auditor-General on
Audits Performed for 1996-97 (including
Performance Management Systems)

National Road Transport Commission—
Annual Report 1996-97

- 10 December 1997—
 Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council—Annual Report 1996-97
 Late tabling statement from the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council
 Queensland Government Progress Report On Implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody—October 1997
 Public Works Committee Report No. 44—The construction of a standard gauge rail line to Fisherman Islands
- 12 December 1997—
 Report of the Auditor-General on A Special Audit of the Residents' Trust Accounts at the Basil Stafford Centre Wacol
 Travelsafe Committee Report No. 22—Compulsory BAC Testing, Inquiry into whether Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) testing of people who attend a hospital for examination or treatment as a result of a motor vehicle accident should be compulsory
 Travelsafe Committee—submissions made to the committee for the compulsory BAC testing inquiry
 Travelsafe Committee—transcript of proceedings for the compulsory BAC inquiry
- 15 December 1997—
 Travelsafe Committee Report No. 23—Brisbane's Citytrain Network—Part One—Safety of the Rail System and Infrastructure
 Travelsafe Committee—submissions made to the committee for the train safety inquiry
 Travelsafe Committee—transcripts of proceedings for the train safety inquiry
 Grainco Limited—Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 1997
 Trustees of the Local Government Debt Redemption Fund—Operating Statement 1996-97
- 18 December 1997—
 Final Report on the 1997 Review of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 1995
- 19 December 1997—
 Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 13—Report on a matter of privilege referred to the committee on 22 September 1997
- 23 December 1997—
 Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 14—Report on study tours by two delegations of the committee June and July 1997
- Trustees of the Albion Park Paceway—Annual Report 1996-97
 Late tabling statement from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the Trustees of the Albion Park Paceway
 Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 1996-97
 Late tabling statement from the Minister for Health regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation
 Townsville General Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 1996-97
 Late tabling statement from the Minister for Health regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the Townsville General Hospital Foundation
 Queensland Law Reform Commission Report No. 52—The Law of Wills
 Department of Main Roads—Annual Report 1996-97
 Late tabling statement from the Minister for Transport regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the Department of Main Roads
 Department of Transport—Annual Report 1996-97
 Late tabling statement from the Minister for Transport regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the Department of Transport
- 24 December 1997—
 Bore Water Boards, Drainage Boards, and Water Boards—Summary of the 1996-97 Annual Reports and Financial Statements
 Late tabling statement from the Minister for Natural Resources regarding the summary of the 1996-97 Annual Reports and Financial Statements of Bore Water Boards, Drainage Boards, and Water Boards
- 5 January 1998—
 Explanation from the Minister for Natural Resources for the granting of an extension of time for the tabling of the 1996-97 annual report of the Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission
- 7 January 1998—
 Explanation from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts and the Acting Minister for Mines and Energy for the granting of an extension of time for the tabling of the 1996-97 annual reports of the Queensland Generation Corporation, Queensland Transitional Power Trading Corporation, Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited, Capricornia Electricity Corporation Limited, Far North Queensland Electricity Corporation Limited, Mackay Electricity Corporation Limited, North Queensland

Electricity Corporation Limited, South East Queensland Electricity Corporation Limited, South West Queensland Electricity Corporation Limited and Wide Bay-Burnett Electricity Corporation Limited

8 January 1998—

Gladstone Area Water Board—Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for Natural Resources regarding the Gladstone Area Water Board—Annual Report 1996-97

19 January 1998—

Explanation from the Minister for Natural Resources for the granting of an extension of time for the tabling of the summary report for the River Improvement Trust Annual Reports for 1996-97

27 January 1998—

National Committee for Uniform Succession Laws (co-ordinating agency for the project being the Queensland Law Reform Commission)—Consolidated Report to the Standing Committee of Attorneys General on the Law of Wills

National Committee for Uniform Succession Laws (co-ordinating agency for the project being the Queensland Law Reform Commission)—Report to the Standing Committee of Attorneys General on Family Provision

29 January 1998—

Criminal Justice Commission—Reports on Aboriginal Witnesses and Police Watchhouses: Status of Recommendations

4 February 1998—

Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission—Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for Natural Resources regarding the 1996-97 annual report of the Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission

Public Accounts Committee—Issues Paper No. 1: Strategic Review of the Queensland Audit Office

12 February 1998—

Queensland River Improvement Trusts—Summarised Annual Report 1996-97

Late tabling statement from the Minister for Natural Resources regarding the 1996-97 summarised annual report of Queensland River Improvement Trusts

25 February 1998—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee Report No. 8—The Criminal Law (Sex Offenders Reporting) Bill 1997

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—submissions made to the committee in relation to The Criminal Law (Sex Offenders Reporting) Bill 1997.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 438

Arts Legislation Amendment Act 1997—

Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 19 December 1997, No. 447

Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971—

Auctioneers and Agents (Exemptions) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 402

Auctioneers and Agents (Exemptions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 3

Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997—

Body Corporate and Community Management (Commercial Module) Regulation 1997, No. 480

Body Corporate and Community Management (Small Schemes Module) Regulation 1997, No. 481

Body Corporate and Community Management Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 482

Natural Resources Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 12

City of Brisbane Act 1924—

City of Brisbane Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 405

Coal Legislation Amendment Act 1997—

Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 5 December 1997 and 1 January 1998, No. 419

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

Community Services Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 450

Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984—

Community Services Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 450

Crime Commission Act 1997—

Proclamation—certain sections of the Act commence 2 March 1998, No. 16

Criminal Investigation (Extra-territorial Offences) Act 1985—

Criminal Investigation (Extra-territorial Offences) Regulation 1998, No. 8

Criminal Justice Legislation Amendment Act 1997—

Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 8 December 1997, No. 416

Criminal Offence Victims Act 1995—

Criminal Offence Victims Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 488

- Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Act 1991—
 Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1997, No. 460
- District Courts Act 1967—
 District Court Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 428
- Drugs Misuse Act 1986—
 Drugs Misuse Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 459
- Education (General Provisions) Act 1989—
 Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 467
- Education (School Curriculum P-10) Act 1996—
 Education (School Curriculum P-10) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 6
- Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Act 1988—
 Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 463
- Education and Other Legislation Amendment Act 1997—
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 1 January 1998, No. 464
- Electricity Act 1994—
 Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 8) 1997, No. 473
 Electricity Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 17
- Electricity Amendment Act (No. 3) 1997—
 Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 19 December 1997 and 1 January 1998, No. 472
- Environmental and Other Legislation Amendment Act 1997—
 Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 12 December 1997, No. 432
- Environmental Protection Act 1994—
 Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 1997, No. 468 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 468
 Environmental Protection (Interim) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 434
 Environmental Protection (Interim) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 469
 Environmental Protection (Interim Waste) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 404
 Environmental Protection Regulation 1998, No. 29 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 29
- Fair Trading Act 1989—
 Fair Trading Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 455 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 455
- Fire and Rescue Authority Act 1990—
 Fire and Rescue Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 412
- Fire and Rescue Authority Amendment Act 1997—
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force (other than sections 7 and 13 and the schedule, amendment 3) commence 28 November 1997, No. 411
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 19 December 1997, No. 487
- Fisheries Act 1994—
 Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 10) 1997, No. 476
 Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 11) 1997, No. 477
 Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 7
 Fisheries (Torres Strait Emergency Closed Waters) Declaration 1998
- Forestry Act 1959—
 Forestry Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 1997, No. 422
 Forestry Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 1997, No. 483
- Fruit Marketing Organisation Act 1923—
 Fruit Marketing (Committee of Direction Levies) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 27
 Fruit Marketing Organisation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 26
- Gaming Machine Act 1991—
 Gaming Machine Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 401
- Gas Act 1965—
 Gas Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 474
- Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—
 Government Owned Corporations Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 449
- Guide Dogs Amendment Act 1997—
 Guide Dogs Regulation 1997, No. 451
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 5 December 1997, No. 415
- Health Services Act 1991—
 Health Services Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 1997, No. 461
- Hospitals Foundations Act 1982—
 Hospitals Foundations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 5
- James Cook University Act 1997—
 James Cook University Statute No. 1 (Membership of Convocation) 1997

- James Cook University Statute No. 2 (Conduct of Council Elections) 1997
 Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 1 January 1998 and 13 April 1998, No. 465
- James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970—
 James Cook University of North Queensland (Statutes Repeal) Statute 1997, No. 466
- Jury Act 1995—
 Jury Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 429
- Justice and Other Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (No. 2) 1997—
 Proclamation—part 22 of the Act commences 19 December 1997, No. 452
 Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 20 February 1998, No. 13
- Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1996—
 Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 430
- Justices Act 1886—
 Justice Legislation (Variation of Fees) Regulation 1997, No. 457
 Justices Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 456
- Land Act 1994—
 Land Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 410
- Land Tax Act 1915—
 Land Tax Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 427
- Local Government Act 1993—
 Local Government Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 406
- Magistrates Courts Act 1921—
 Magistrates Courts Amendment Rule (No. 2) 1997, No. 453
- Medical Act 1939—
 Medical Assessment Tribunal Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 462
 Medical Board of Queensland Amendment By-law (No. 2) 1997, No. 403
- Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997—
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 8 December 1997, No. 417
- Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Act 1997—
 Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 1 January 1998, No. 479
- Natural Resources Legislation Amendment Act 1997—
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 5 December 1997, No. 421
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—
 Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 418
 Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 436
 Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 470
 Nature Conservation (Protected Plants in Trade) Amendment Conservation Plan (No. 1) 1997, No. 435
- Nature Conservation Amendment Act 1997—
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 12 December 1997, No. 433
- Officials in Parliament Act 1896—
 Proclamation—that certain officers of the Crown are liable to retire from office on political grounds and are capable of being elected members of the Legislative Assembly and sitting and voting in the Legislative Assembly at the same time, No. 15
- Petroleum Act 1923—
 Petroleum Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 437
- Plant Protection Act 1989—
 Plant Protection (Bactrocera Philippinensis) Notice 1998, No. 1
 Plant Protection (Bactrocera Philippinensis Introduction Prohibition) Regulation 1998, No. 9
 Plant Protection (Papaya Fruit Fly Introduction Prohibition) Notice 1997, No. 426
 Plant Protection (Papaya Fruit Fly Introduction Prohibition) Regulation 1997, No. 478
- Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 1997—
 Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 19 December 1997, No. 475
 Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 28 February 1998, No. 25
- Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926—
 Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing (Queensland Cane Growers' Organisation) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 420
 Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing (Queensland Cane Growers' Organisation) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 11
- Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Act 1982—
 Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 4

- Public Service Act 1996—
Public Service Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 400
- Public Trustee Act 1978—
Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 9) 1997, No. 458
- Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991—
Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 445
- Queensland Law Society Act 1952—
Queensland Law Society (Solicitors Complaints Tribunal) Rule 1997, No. 454
- Recording of Evidence Act 1962—
Justice Legislation (Variation of Fees) Regulation 1997, No. 457
- Recreation Areas Management Act 1988—
Recreation Areas Management Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 471
- River Improvement Trust Act 1940—
Natural Resources Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 12
- Sewerage and Water Supply Act 1949—
Sewerage and Water Supply Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 14
- State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971—
State Development and Public Works Organisation (Bikeways Project Board and Metropolitan Transit Project Board) Repeal Order 1997, No. 399
State Development and Public Works Organisation (Gladstone State Development Area) Regulation 1997, No. 446
- State Financial Institutions and Metway Merger Facilitation Act 1996—
State Financial Institutions and Metway Merger Facilitation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 10
- Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1994—
Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 19 December 1997, No. 448
- Stock Act 1915—
Cattle Feedlot Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 28
- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—
Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 5) 1997, No. 413
Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 6) 1997, No. 414
Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 2
- Tow Truck Act 1973—
Traffic Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 440
- Traffic Act 1949—
Traffic Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 440
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—
Transport Infrastructure (Management of Harbour Works) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 441
Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 485
- Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991—
Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 442
- Transport Legislation Amendment Act 1997—
Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 12 December 1997 and 2 February 1998, No. 439
Proclamation—certain provisions of the Act commence 19 December 1997 and 1 January 1998, No. 484
- Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—
Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1997, No. 443
Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 444
Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1998, No. 18
Transport Operations (Marine Safety—Commercial and Fishing Ships Miscellaneous Equipment) Standard 1998, No. 22 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 22
Transport Operations (Marine Safety—Crewing for Commercial and Fishing Ships) Interim Standard 1998, No. 19 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 19
Transport Operations (Marine Safety—Designing and Building Commercial and Fishing Ships) Standard 1998, No. 21 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 21
Transport Operations (Marine Safety—Recreational Ship Masters Licence Approvals) Standard 1998, No. 24 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 24
Transport Operations (Marine Safety—Recreational Ships Miscellaneous Equipment) Standard 1998, No. 23 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 23

Transport Operations (Marine Safety—Qualifications for Accreditation for Ship Designers, Ship Builders and Marine Surveyors) Standard 1998, No. 20 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 20

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 425

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 486

Trust Accounts Amendment Act 1997—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 19 January 1998, No. 431

Valuers Registration Act 1992—

Valuers Registration Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 423

Water Resources Act 1989—

Water Resources (Rates and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 424

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1997, No. 407

Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997, No. 409

Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Act 1997—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 1 February 1998, No. 408.

RESPONSES TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Clerk laid upon the table of the House the following responses to parliamentary committee reports—

Whole of Government response from the Premier (Mr Borbidge) to a report of the Public Works Committee entitled The provision of infrastructure in Cape York

Interim response from the Acting Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lingard) to a report of the Public Works Committee entitled A re-evaluation of the South East Transit Project

Response from the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport (Mr Veivers) to a report of the Public Works Committee entitled The construction of a joint Emergency Services head office at Kedron Park

Interim response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Beanland) to a report of the Public Accounts Committee entitled State

Government Grant Funding Supplied to 99 FM Community Radio Association Inc.

Interim response from the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care (Mrs Wilson) to a report of the Public Accounts Committee entitled Aboriginal Councils and Torres Strait Island Councils: Review of Financial Reporting Requirements;

Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing (Mr Cooper) to a report of the Travelsafe Committee entitled Compulsory BAC Testing; and

Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing (Mr Cooper) to a report of the Travelsafe Committee entitled Brisbane's Citytrain Network—Part One—Safety of the Rail System and Infrastructure.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The Clerk laid on the table of the House the following responses to petitions received by the Clerk since the last sitting day of the Legislative Assembly, 27 November 1997—

Fireweed

Minister for Natural Resources

8 December 1997

I refer to your letter of 8 October 1997, concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on the biological control of fireweed.

I have previously written to the principal petitioner, Mr Patrick Barry, and his local MLA, the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, on the matter of biological control of fireweed. As fireweed has been extremely difficult to manage effectively, first in New South Wales and now in Queensland, attempts have been made to locate suitable biological control agents. This has not proved an easy task.

A basic problem is the very close relationship between fireweed and native *Senecio* species. The natural enemies from Madagascar that have been investigated at Alan Fletcher Research Station do not confine their attack to fireweed and consequently it is considered highly unlikely that permission could be obtained for their release.

Recent research conducted by the CSIRO Division of Entomology, in conjunction with the University of Sydney, has determined that Australian fireweed has originated from the Kwazulu-Natal region of South Africa. It is hoped that by surveying for natural enemies in this source region it will be possible to find agents with the highest degree of specificity to fireweed.

Preliminary surveys in Kwazulu-Natal have identified a rust fungus and several insects as potential biological control agents. On the basis

of this work, CSIRO has made application to the Subtropical Dairy Program of the Dairy Research and Development Corporation (DRDC) for funding to undertake further surveys and to test the specificity and effectiveness of promising natural enemies.

The Chairman of the Rural Lands Protection Board has written to the DRDC, stressing the need for biological control and supporting the application made by CSIRO. I have also suggested to Mr Barry that it may be beneficial to present a case to DRDC for its consideration.

Mount Mee State Forest

Minister for Natural Resources

23 December 1997

I refer to your letter of 10 October 1997 to my Cabinet colleague, the Honourable Trevor Perrett, MLA, Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry regarding horse riding and cycling in the Mt Mee State Forest. As the issues you have raised fall within my portfolio responsibilities, Mr Perrett has referred a copy of your letter to me for direct reply to you.

I have recently met with a delegation of the petitioners representing the horse riding fraternity to resolve this issue.

As a result of the meeting, I have directed my departmental staff to meet with this group to determine a compromise. Such compromise will continue to permit limited access to Mt Mee State Forest for horse riding at Dayboro and Mt Mee.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Jim Dale of my department on (07) 3224 2937.

Crown Land R250

Minister for Natural Resources

16 January 1998

I refer to your letter of 21 November 1997 concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on preservation of Crown lands in Alexandra Hills for the protection of native fauna habitat and the enjoyment of future generations.

Following the implementation of State Planning Policy 1/97 Conservation of Koalas in the Koala Coast, my department has been investigating the future use options for Crown lands in the conservation area.

Recently, Cabinet decided that the Crown lands should be placed under the Special Protection designation in the Redland Shire Strategic Plan and made into environmental reserves. The petition is accepted as an expression of public interest in environmental issues within the Redlands area and seen as support for Cabinet's decision.

Nerang State Forest

Minister for Natural Resources

12 January 1998

I refer to your letter of 20 November 1997 to the Honourable Trevor Perrett MLA concerning a Petition to the Parliament by Gold Coast residents requesting the reopening of tracks within Nerang State Forest.

In July 1997 a number of cycle tracks were closed by my department for rehabilitation. The majority of these tracks were on steep slopes and were eroding badly. Other tracks had been substantially damaged by mountain bike use.

Officers of my department have had on-going negotiations with the Gold Coast Mountain Bike Club in relation to the provision of tracks for mountain bike riding. These negotiations have led to a commitment by my department to construct a multi-purpose recreational trail suitable for use by cyclists, horse riders and bushwalkers. This trail will supplement the 35 kilometres of trails which are already available for recreational use within Nerang State Forest.

Petitioners can be assured that officers of my department are not acting in self interest but only in the public interest. It is in the public interest that important natural areas such as Nerang State Forest are managed sustainably and my department will take action wherever recreational use becomes unsustainable.

Waste Disposal, Maroochy Shire

Minister for Natural Resources

12 January 1998

I refer to your letter of 24 November 1997, concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on the proposed acquisition of part of State Forest 1239, near Yandina, for waste disposal purposes.

I have previously written to the Honourable the Speaker who presented the petition to the House advising of a number of issues that confront the Government and the maroochy Shire Council in dealing with this matter.

Forestry reserves are community land which are permanently reserved under the provisions of the Forestry Act 1959 and administered by my Department and the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry for the benefit of all Queenslanders. Under the legislation, the principles to be observed in the management of State forests are the production of timber and associated forest products in perpetuity, watershed protection and other compatible uses such as conservation of the soil and the environment, recreation and grazing.

In addition, the Commonwealth and all Australian States are committed through the National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS) to maintain an extensive and permanent native forest estate

and to increase the total area of forest in Australia. The goals and objectives of the NFPS are being implemented by the Commonwealth and State governments through the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process aiming to identify and protect areas of old growth, wilderness, natural and cultural significance in a secure, comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system.

I also conveyed to the Honourable the Speaker that on the signing of a Scoping Agreement for Queensland RFAs by the Prime Minister and Premier, in January 1997, Interim Management Arrangements (IMA) for State forests with old growth, wilderness or significant biodiversity values were introduced. State Forest 1239 was identified in the IMAs report as containing rare and threatened flora and fauna species and was therefore included as an IMA area. The intent of the IMA is to ensure that the identified values of an area are not compromised during the RFA process.

I intend to submit proposed amendments to the IMA areas to Cabinet early in 1998 with the possibility that new guidelines may be introduced for dealing with development proposals over forestry reserves that will more closely equate to the guidelines that apply in other States, that is, development proposals may be considered subject to normal legislative and planning requirements.

However, given the rare and threatened species of flora and fauna present in the State forest, my support for the proposed transfer of land to a land fill site would be contingent upon the outcomes of a full Environmental Impact Study and, if necessary, the approval of a Management Plan detailing how any environmental impacts will be managed. The views of my colleague the Honourable Brian Littleproud, MLA, Minister for Environment may also be required because under the Environmental Protection Act 1994, a land fill is classed as an Environmentally Relevant Activity and requires licensing.

Cairns City Council

Minister for Local Government and Planning

9 February 1998

I refer to the petition presented by Ms J Carr of Gordonvale regarding water charges made by Cairns City Council.

Water is increasingly being recognised as a valuable resource and one where efforts must be made to ensure that the available supply is used efficiently. This can be achieved by pricing which reflects consumption. In addition, charging people who use larger quantities of water more than those who use less is seen as more equitable than charging the same amount to everybody, or charging amounts which vary on some other basis such as property value.

Under the requirements of an agreement reached between all the States and Territories and the Federal Government, the larger Councils are required to consider introducing two-part tariffs for water. These are charging structures which have no base allowance. The charge comprises an access fee and a consumption charge based on all the water used.

What is important to the user is not how the charge is structured but the amount they pay. With a two part tariff, or a tariff with a low base allowance, the amount paid is to a larger extent under the control of the user. Obviously, if more water is used the charge will be higher, if less is used it will cost less.

The basis used by Cairns is fairly typical of charging structures used in other areas of the State. A comparison prepared by my Department (attached) shows that the charges now made by Cairns City Council are in line with those in other parts of the State.

I understand, as a result of community reaction to the charges, the Council has embarked on broader consultation and explanation of its decision including the impact on larger families and I understand it is investigating measures to reduce the charge in these cases for introduction in Council's next budget.

I would be hopeful that the Council, now being more aware of community concerns, will take these into account in setting its charges in the future.

Since the setting of charges for water is a matter which lies within the discretion of the local government under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, I do not consider an investigation is necessary and I do not intend to take any further action in respect of this matter.

Comparison of Domestic Water charges 1997-98

Annual Usage Kilolitres	City			
	Cairns \$	Ipswich \$	Townsville \$	Hervey Bay \$
100	119	153	322	187
200	119	185	322	248
300	174	216	322	310
400	230	248	322	371
500	285	290	322	432
600	340	344	322	493
700	395	438	322	554
800	451	531	344	616
900	506	625	434	677
1000	561	719	525	738

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

(a) Premier (Mr Borbidge)—

Report on overseas visit to Los Angeles, London and Paris from 4 to 13 December 1997

- (b) Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Beanland)—
Electoral Commission of Queensland—
Research Report No. 1: Statistical Profiles of Queensland Electoral Districts
- (c) Minister for Economic Development and Trade and Minister Assisting the Premier (Mr Slack)—
Report on attendance at the International Economic Conference in Muscat, Oman from 27 November to 1 December 1997
- (d) Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport (Mr Veivers)—
Report on overseas visit to the United States from 1 to 9 November 1997
- (e) Minister for Public Works and Housing (Dr Watson)—
Report on overseas visit to the United States of America from 3 to 15 February 1998.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Changes in Ministry

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (10 a.m.), by leave: I desire to inform the House that on 13 February 1998, His Excellency the Governor—

- (a) Dismissed the Honourable Kevin Rowson Lingard as Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care;
- (b) Terminated the appointment of the Honourable Kevin Rowson Lingard as a member of the Executive Council;
- (c) Accepted the resignations of—
the Honourable Trevor John Perrett as Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry and
the Honourable Howard William Thomas Hobbs as Minister for Natural Resources; and
- (d) Accepted the resignations of—
the Honourable Trevor John Perrett and the Honourable Howard William Thomas Hobbs as members of the Executive Council.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary of 13 February 1998 containing the relevant notifications.

I also inform the House that on 16 February 1998, His Excellency the Governor—

- (a) Appointed—
the Honourable Marcus Hosking Rowell to be Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry, the

Honourable Lawrence James Springborg to be Minister for Natural Resources and the Honourable Naomi Kate Wilson to be Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care; and

- (b) Appointed—

the Honourable Marcus Hosking Rowell, the Honourable Lawrence James Springborg and the Honourable Naomi Kate Wilson to be members of the Executive Council of Queensland.

I also inform the House that in accordance with the Constitution Act 1867—

- (a) the appointment of Naomi Kate Wilson as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care ended on 16 February 1998; and
- (b) on 16 February 1998, the Governor in Council appointed Graham John Healy as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary of 16 February 1998 containing the relevant notifications.

I also lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary of 18 February 1998 containing a copy of His Excellency the Governor's proclamation made under the Officials in Parliament Act 1896 on 18 February 1998.

DEPUTY LEADER OF NATIONAL PARTY

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (10.03 a.m.): I also advise the House that the honourable member for Toowoomba South and Minister for Health has been elected Deputy Leader of the National Party.

GOVERNMENT WHIP

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (10.04 a.m.): I also advise the House that the member for Charters Towers has been elected Government Whip.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Economy

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: It is with great pleasure that I rise to tell the House, in this its first week of sitting of 1998, that the latest economic data shows that Queensland's economy is again

the best-performing economy in Australia. Under the Borbidge/Sheldon coalition Government, Queensland is experiencing its second consecutive year of outstanding economic growth. Because of the sensible, practical and successful policies of this coalition Government, Queensland is on track to achieve economic growth of 4.5% in 1997-98. This follows hot on the heels of 4.3% growth the year before and is a clear cut, black and white, set in concrete contrast to the dismal 1.9% slump created by the economic vandals sitting opposite.

Based on the latest ABS data, State final demand in Queensland grew 6.4% in the September quarter. That is up on the previous year's result and is way above national growth of only 5.7%. In fact, annual growth in final demand has been better than national growth for the past five quarters. These figures, coupled with strong growth in forward indicators, reassure Queenslanders that their economy will achieve my Budget forecast of 4.5% growth in 1997-98. Again I compare our 4.5% growth to the Australian national average of just 3.75%.

This continued strength is expected to be supported by sound 4.3% growth in private final consumption expenditure, along with the continued recovery in the housing sector. Then there is the continued increase in retail turnover, which is up 6.8% over the year to December 1997, which is consistent with this Government's forecasts of stronger consumer confidence in Queensland.

Dwelling investment is expected to continue to grow during 1997-98 by around 12%, compared to growth of only 1.4% previously. This greatly improved outlook for Queensland is supported by recent dwelling approvals data showing a 9.3% rise in approvals over the first six months of 1997-98.

Another comparison between the performance of the coalition Government and the previous Labor Government is necessary. The Borbidge/Sheldon team has delivered dwelling increases—in other words, a bigger, healthier housing industry with increases of 9.3%. In Labor's last year in Government, there was a 22.6% decline. Under the coalition Queensland goes forward; under Labor the economy went backward.

Much has been said about the effect of the Asian financial crisis, yet Queensland's economy remains strong. In the first half of 1998, exports of goods and services are expected to increase by 4.5%, up on growth of 3.2% the previous year. In other words, despite the dampening effect of Asia's problems, Queensland continues to move ahead. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Queensland has experienced very

strong growth in the value of overseas merchandise exports in the first half of 1997-98. Secondly, our exposure to the most affected Asian economies is limited. Thirdly, the bulk of Queensland exports is raw material and we expect those trading partners to be the quickest to extricate themselves from their economic malaise. Finally, a lower exchange rate has improved the competitiveness of Queensland exports, not only in Asia but around the globe.

It is not only the Government that is saying great things about this great economy of ours. A recent report from Access Economics shows that Queensland's real output growth is expected to significantly exceed national growth in 1997-98. Access Economics believes that Queensland will achieve growth of 6% compared to only 3.9% for the rest of the country. It goes on to report that Queensland's medium-term outlook is also strong, averaging 4% over the next five years compared to a national forecast of 3.1%.

As if all that did not already constitute an outstanding financial management report card, let me tell the House about the real star performer, Queensland's employment growth. In January our trend annual employment growth of 3.4% was more than twice the national rate of 1.4%. These are the facts that blow apart Labor's scurrilous misinformation campaign about jobs.

Since May 1996 Queensland has recorded stronger employment growth than the rest of Australia. In fact, for the first seven months of 1997-98, we actually did better than our own employment forecasts, and that means that the Budget forecast of 2.5% is looking very sound indeed. The people of Queensland will want to know that 74,900 new jobs have been created since this coalition Government took office in February 1996, and that is with less than one in five of the nation's population.

Leading employment indicators, including the ANZ Employment Advertisement Index and the DEETYA Skilled Vacancy Index, all suggest that employment growth is going to be sustained in coming months. In addition, latest ABS estimates of job vacancies show a huge rise in the December quarter of 74.4%, compared to the same period a year ago. This is better than every other State in Australia, because Queensland's 74.4% increase in job vacancies compares to a national increase of just 9.3%.

This Government got serious about creating jobs and the facts confirm that we have done more than any other State. Having said that, I should also say that a trend unemployment figure of 9% remains unacceptably high. Therefore, the Borbidge/Sheldon Government gives the people of Queensland an ironclad undertaking that we will maintain the pro-jobs,

pro-business, pro-growth policies that have already delivered the biggest economic turnaround that this State has seen for years. Of course, we have to provide jobs for the people who are crossing our borders and for the huge numbers of young people who have left school and are entering the job market. However, we are facing that and we are delivering jobs—as I said, 74,900 of them.

Queensland was in front of the pack last year and Queensland is going to be in front of the pack again this year. Queensland does have the best-performing economy in Australia because it has a State Government that is determined to deliver a better quality of life to all Queenslanders.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Electricity Load Shedding

Hon. T. J. G. GILMORE (Tablelands—Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Forced interruptions to the electricity supply to customers throughout Queensland occurred last week as a result of plant failures at four of the State's base load power stations. The failures resulted in a combined generation loss of more than 1,100 megawatts at a time when demand was very high due to the hot weather.

In unrelated incidents—

on Saturday, 14 February 1998, a 350 megawatt unit at Stanwell Corporation's Stanwell Power Station failed due to a superheater tube leak;

on Thursday, 19 February 1998, a 125 megawatt unit at CS Energy's Swanbank Power Station failed due to a broken turbine oil pump, a 68 megawatt unit at Swanbank suffered damage to a main steam valve, and a 280 megawatt unit at Gladstone Power Station, which is operated by NRG, was forced off line due to boiler tube failure; and

on Saturday, 21 February, a 350 megawatt unit at Tarong Energy's Tarong Power Station suffered boiler tube failure.

During this period, another 280 megawatt unit at Gladstone Power Station was also off line, having shut down for planned maintenance on 16 January 1998 with a scheduled completion date of 30 March 1998.

The generating entities concerned endeavoured to return the failed generating plant to service at the earliest possible time. However, following the failure of the unit at Tarong on the Saturday evening, it was apparent that there would be insufficient generating capacity to meet the electricity demand that

would usually occur during a normal working day. On Sunday, 22 February 1998, customers were advised through the media that rotational load shedding was expected to occur the following morning.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr GILMORE: Let me assure the member that it is an entirely forgettable term.

Rotational load shedding throughout the State commenced at 7.30 a.m. on Monday, 23 February 1998, in an effort to alleviate pressure on the electricity supply system. At the same time, an appeal through the media was made to customers asking them to exercise restraint in the use of electricity and for those with stand-by generators to consider using them where possible. On that day, electricity load of about 500 megawatts, which is about 10% of the total demand of 5,500 megawatts, was shed uniformly across the State.

While the Queensland System Operator, Powerlink Queensland, determined the load each electricity distribution corporation was to shed in its particular supply area, the distribution corporations were responsible for rotational load shedding arrangements in their areas. Generally, the corporations endeavoured to spread the power supply interruptions uniformly across their supply areas to minimise the inconvenience to any particular customers. As far as possible, however, power supplies were maintained to essential services and other priority customers such as hospitals.

Voluntary reductions in electricity usage by customers, and in particular the mining industry, helped considerably in limiting the demand on the electricity system during the power shortage, and this in turn reduced the extent of the load shedding necessary. The arrival of cooler weather in many parts of the State on Tuesday also helped to reduce electricity demand on that and subsequent days. The lower demand on Tuesday meant that only about 300 megawatts, or 6% of the total demand, was shed that day. Only minimal forced interruptions to power occurred on Wednesday, with none on Thursday.

On Thursday afternoon the Queensland System Operator advised that, with the return to service of some of the failed generating plant, there was now sufficient electricity being generated to meet the entire State demand for power and there was no longer any need for customers to limit their electricity usage. The way in which the various parties involved worked with the Government to manage this difficult and unprecedented situation, and to minimise the impact on customers, is commendable.

The efforts of the generating entities concerned in getting the failed generating plant back into service as quickly as possible is appreciated. In particular, thanks and congratulations are extended to the many employees who worked extremely long hours in very uncomfortable conditions. Thanks are also extended to customers for their patience and their assistance in limiting their electricity usage during the power shortage, which helped to ease the situation for all. The assistance of the media throughout Queensland in keeping customers informed of local load shedding arrangements is also greatly appreciated.

The inconvenience and losses suffered by customers throughout Queensland because of the power shortages were most unfortunate. Queensland's power stations have high availability by world standards and the chances of four major units failing within a few days are extremely low. No power system anywhere in the world is designed to withstand a quadruple contingency as happened here. The current Queensland system reserve plant margin, that is, spare generating capacity, is 18%, only slightly below the typical figure of 20% for similar systems worldwide.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! How much longer is the Honourable Minister's statement?

Mr GILMORE: It is not much longer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask that the Minister resume his seat.

Mr GILMORE: I seek leave to table the remainder of my speech and to have it incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Since coming to power in 1996, this Government has put in place a number of initiatives to ensure adequate generating capacity is installed to meet the forecast needs of Queensland.

Projects presently under way for additional generating plant will increase the reserve plant margin to about 25%.

These projects include the successful outcomes of a competitive bidding process for additional generating capacity initiated by this Government in 1996—a 283 megawatt power station at Mount Stuart near Townsville, a 158 megawatt power station at Yabulu near Townsville, and 303 megawatt power station near Oakey.

The two Townsville projects are on schedule and are due to be commissioned in January 1999. The Oakey project is also proceeding on schedule and is due for commissioning in January 2000.

To complement these three new generation plants, the Collinsville and Callide A power stations, which will provide Queensland with a further 300 megawatts of capacity, will be recommissioned in the next month. Indeed,

three of the four 30 megawatt Callide A units were used last week, prior to completion of their recommissioning, to help meet the State's electricity needs during the power shortage.

These five projects, which will add 1044 megawatts of capacity in total to Queensland's power system, will ensure there is adequate electricity supply to meet Queensland's needs over the next few years.

The planned interconnection between Queensland's power system and the electricity network serving Australia's southern states will provide Queensland with an additional 500 megawatts of capacity. This project is due for completion in 2001.

Extensive consultation over the finalised route is currently under way, as are the environmental impact assessments to ensure the transmission line causes minimum impact to the local communities. Due to the improved route which traverses fewer properties and crosses more State owned land, the project is encountering less pre-construction opposition than the original Eastlink proposal, and it is expected that the interconnection will be completed on schedule.

In response to the Government's recent electricity reforms, there are also presently a number of proposals for new generating capacity under active consideration by a range of private sector and government owned entities. These include an 840 megawatt coal fired power station at Callide for which a CS Energy/Shell Coal joint venture has recently called tenders.

The projects currently under way, and the reforms that have fostered the entrance of the private sector into the electricity industry, are a clear demonstration of this Government's commitment to ensuring reliable and adequate electricity supplies to the State as we move into the next century.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Appointments

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: I move—

"(a) That Messrs Springborg and Rowell be discharged as members of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and that Miss Simpson and Mr Hegarty be appointed to that committee;

(b) that Mr Healy be discharged as a member of the Public Works Committee and that Mr Grice be appointed to that committee; and

(c) that Mr Grice be discharged as a member of the Public Accounts Committee and that Mr Perrett be appointed to that committee."

Motion agreed to.

SITTING HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

Sessional Order

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: I move—

"That notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing and Sessional Orders, for this day's sitting, the House will continue to meet past 7.30 p.m.

Private members' motions will be debated between 6 and 7 p.m.

The House will then break for dinner and resume its sitting at 8.30 p.m.

Government business will take precedence for the remainder of the day's sitting, except for a 30-minute Adjournment debate."

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Allegations against Member for Nerang

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (10.16 a.m.): I rise to make a personal explanation. On Friday, 6 February, and Saturday, 7 February, the ABC Stateline program, ABC news and the Courier-Mail ran stories accusing me of breaking the law, of electoral fraud and bribery. The Courier-Mail stated—

"... the ABC television program Stateline recorded last night that Independent Green candidate Anthony Bradshaw had done a deal with the Coalition before the Mundingburra poll ..."

The Courier-Mail further stated—

"... according to Mr Bradshaw, former Liberal Minister Ray Connor had arranged financial assistance although the money originated from a National Party slush fund."

The Stateline program went on to show the Electoral Commissioner, Des O'Shea, stating that this would be an offence under the Act. There were also suggestions of my being involved with Sandy Warren's campaign in Mundingburra.

I would now like to deal with these most serious allegations one at a time. Firstly, I had no involvement of any type with either the decisions of Independent Green Anthony Bradshaw nor the Subcontractors Association's Sandy Warren to run in Mundingburra—none whatsoever. I had no involvement in funding either of their campaigns—none whatsoever. I have no knowledge whatsoever of any so-called slush

fund, or for that matter any other accounts other than the official Liberal campaign accounts, other than what I have seen in the media. I have no knowledge whatsoever of either of these candidates receiving any money whatsoever, let alone from the Liberal Party or the National Party.

If Mr Bradshaw, the Independent Green, dropped over how-to-vote cards to the Liberal Party, I was not aware of that, either. I was aware of Mr Bradshaw only because as the official Green candidate he ran against me at the previous 1995 State election, where he did not—and I repeat "did not"—direct preferences to me.

I now wish to provide evidence of the falsity of the program and the following newspaper coverage. Firstly, the Stateline program does not show Mr Bradshaw claiming a deal was made. The only person shown claiming that a deal was made was the presenter, Steve Austin. Mr Bradshaw had since issued a statement stating that no deal occurred and that he "did not tell Stateline or the Courier-Mail that any pre-election deal was orchestrated by you." I table that letter.

In relation to the comment of the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Des O'Shea, I table the following letter from Mr O'Shea stating—

"I confirm that I was asked a hypothetical question, 'Is seeking a public or Crown job in return for preference distribution a bribe under the Act'."

Mr O'Shea continued—

"I replied that it would be, and went on to elaborate on the issue. While various inferences may be drawn from the question, in the context in which it is asked, neither the question nor the answer addressed the situation that is alleged to have arisen during the Mundingburra election period."

Quite simply, the ABC tagged on Mr O'Shea's comments to a hypothetical question that simply did not relate to the subject. It was an answer to a hypothetical question that was tagged on to the end of another question much the same way as the cut and paste job was done on Mr Bradshaw's comments. I informed the ABC program before it went to air that there was no truth to any of these allegations, yet the ABC still ran it to air. Following a complaint to the ABC management, a correction and an apology was then forthcoming. The ABC on both its TV news program at 7 p.m. and its Stateline program issued the following correction in relation to the alleged deal—

"We accept this meeting did not relate in any way to the Mundingburra poll and that there was no Mundingburra deal involving Mr Connor"—

and further—

"... regret any embarrassment it may have caused to Mr Connor or his family."

Mr Austin, unsolicited, has issued a personal written apology on ABC letterhead which states—

"I genuinely made the error, I have no malice of any sort against you.

So please, I am very sorry for any distress that it may have caused."

I table that letter. The Courier-Mail's Peter Morley ran the story the following day after the Stateline program quoting the Stateline program. The matter was highly defamatory and created a great deal of distress to my family—much more than one could possibly ever imagine. Mr Morley ran that story without even giving me the opportunity to respond. He ran the lies anyway. It shows the malicious attitude of this newspaper. I have brought this information to the attention of the Courier-Mail, and I table that as well. I have yet to have any apology in any form from Mr Morley and the Courier-Mail even though they were prepared to drag my name through the mud. At least the ABC is prepared to admit when it is wrong and to apologise accordingly. The Courier-Mail has no such integrity or honesty.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (10.21 a.m.): Before tabling Alert Digest No. 1 for 1998, I just wish to report to the House that in relation to the Criminal Law (Sex Offenders Reporting) Bill 1997, Mrs Bird actually contacted our committee as, of course, is the right of anyone who introduces legislation whether they are a Minister or a member introducing a private member's Bill. The committee notes the definition of "sex offender" contained in clause 3 of the Bill does not cover all sex offenders; it only covers those sex offenders as defined in relation to children. Since the term "sex offender" is used throughout the Bill, for the sake of consistency the committee uses the same terminology. The committee wants to clarify that, where the term "sex offender" is used in the course of the chapter, it intends the term to have the same meaning set out in clause 3 of the Bill as stated in footnote No. 40 to Chapter 2 of Alert Digest, which is set out on the first page. I move that the report be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Report

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (10.22 a.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 reports and recommendations made to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing, the Honourable Russell Cooper, MLA, under section 4.6(1)(a) of the said Act, including all ministerial directions given in writing to the commissioner for 1997 pursuant to section 4.6(2) of the Act, together with the comments of the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission, Mr Frank Clair.

Mr Clair reports that he has no comments to make in respect of the register. I advise that the report was received by the committee on 16 January 1998. It is therefore tabled within a period of 14 sitting days as prescribed by section 4.7(4) of the Act.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (10.24 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House my report on my study tour of the United States of America and the United Kingdom from 7 December 1997 to 11 January 1998.

TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

Report

Mr J. N. GOSS (Aspley) (10.24 a.m.): The Travelsafe Committee tabled two reports out of session, namely: report No. 22, Compulsory BAC Testing, and report No. 23, Brisbane's Citytrain Network Part 1 Safety of the Rail System and Infrastructure. I commend these reports to the House and I give notice that on Thursday next I will move that the House take note of these reports.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (10.24 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report on a trip to certain Asia-Pacific countries from last year.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Minister for Mines and Energy

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.24 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

"That this House censures the Minister for Mines and Energy for his gross incompetence and mismanagement of the Queensland electricity sector, and calls for his dismissal for—

- (1) failing to honour his promise to keep the lights on in Queensland;
- (2) failing to understand that his inability to avert the widespread blackouts across Queensland created a crisis which imposed massive inconvenience upon all Queenslanders;
- (3) abandoning the Eastlink interconnection, thereby ensuring that emergency reserve supplies of power cannot be drawn from other States for at least another three years;
- (4) wasting \$10m on the development of a flawed electricity reform model which cannot produce lower prices precisely because there is an inadequate supply of generation capacity;
- (5) throwing the regional electricity distribution boards into turmoil by imposing a restructuring plan that will cost 2,000 Queenslanders their jobs and which is so poorly designed that two of the three new retailers were forced to merge before the new system even began; and
- (6) allowing SEQEB to undertake an \$8m marketing campaign just to change its name to ENERGEX."

Disallowance of Justice Legislation Variation of Fees Regulation 1997

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga)
(10.26 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move that—

"The Justice Legislation Variation of Fees Regulation 1997 be disallowed."

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Electricity Industry

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.26 a.m.): Last week Queensland families and industry were the victims of yet another example of this Government's incompetence. The lights went out, and what was the Government's response? Instead of fixing the damage and delivering power to Queenslanders, the priority of the Nationals and the Liberals was staying in power—a clear case of wrong priorities. The Mines and Energy Minister took the prize for supreme arrogance when he told Queenslanders that it was just bad luck. I am not

sure whether the Minister was referring to the fact that there were Statewide blackouts or the fact that he remains the Minister.

Then there was the Premier. In a blatant attempt to distract attention from the fact that his Government pulled the plug on Queenslanders, the Premier announced in the Courier-Mail a \$900m expansion of the Callide B Power Station. That is a fine idea and one that the Opposition would be prepared to applaud if it were true. However, the Premier's announcement was a sham and a con job. According to an official statement by one of the partners in this grand plan, Callide Coalfields Pty Ltd, the report was a fabrication.

I table a statement by Callide Coalfields, which was posted on the company's staff noticeboards. It says that there is no formal approval for the expansion of Callide B. Indeed, Callide Coalfields says that the reported expansion has not even been put to the shareholders. I point out that the company also says that the newspaper article was not sanctioned by it or its partners. Finally, the memorandum says the article contained "some journalistic and political licence".

The Premier stands condemned for his blatant attempt to mislead the people of Queensland to save this Government's political hide. In terms of power, all we have had from this Government is wrong priorities. It does not care; it is prepared to put out any propaganda it can. I hope that tomorrow the Courier-Mail will have a correction of this nonsense which indeed is demonstrated by the company itself in this very notice to be absolute nonsense.

Electricity Industry

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.28 a.m.): Last weekend we saw the coalition put the kite up on the privatisation of the electricity industry. Where does that now leave the Minister? Is privatisation back on the agenda or has the Government just cut Mr Gilmore adrift? Or is it more likely the case that it does not have a clue what to do with the electricity industry? It will flog it off because it does not know how to actually find a solution to the problems that it has given us.

Privatisation means higher prices for those in provincial Queensland. So it means higher electricity charges for the people in Keppel, the Whitsundays, Barron River and Mulgrave. It also means massive job losses right throughout the provincial centres. Let me tell honourable members that Labor's view is that it is a service industry, not a Dutch auction. We will not sell off the silver and we will not pull the plug on

Queenslanders. Let me tell the Minister that there will be no rotational load shedding under Labor.

Time expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Electricity Industry

Mr BEATTIE (10.30 a.m.): I ask the Treasurer: can she confirm that she has taken more than \$1.3 billion out of the Queensland electricity industry this financial year, including \$850m in special payments and \$450m in dividends and cash reserves from the now corporatised power utilities? As this represents \$1,300 pilfered from each and every Queensland family, why did she exclude from yesterday's power price cuts all the Queensland mums and dads who suffered just as much during last week's blackouts?

Mrs SHELDON: I think the Leader of the Opposition must have been speaking about Labor Party politics, because I am about to tell him what his former Treasurer, Mr De Lacy, said about corporatisation and where Labor delivered the power cuts. Firstly, I believe a Labor lie needs to be put to bed. I would like to tell the House that when in Government the Labor Party took \$2.8 billion from the electricity industry. I would also remind the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Elder interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: They are in the Budget figures, if the honourable member would like to look. We went through the Opposition's figures to obtain that information. They are public figures. I would also like to remind the Leader of the Opposition that Labor took \$1.3 billion in one hit from the electricity industry—not to spend on social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and roads, but—

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will soon retire.

Mrs SHELDON: This sum was taken in order to give Paul Keating \$1 billion to reduce his Federal debt because he was going to an election. That is how the Opposition looked after the mums and dads of Queensland. What a raving hypocrite you really are, Mr Beattie! No wonder people say that they cannot believe one word that you say.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will refer to the Leader of the Opposition as the member for Brisbane Central or the Leader of the Opposition, not "Mr Beattie".

Mrs SHELDON: I now wish to quote from Mr De Lacy's speech on corporatisation. He said—

"In 1994-95 the corporatisation agenda for major Government Owned Enterprises enters the full implementation phase. The hard work of the past few years will commence to provide real returns to the people of Queensland. As a result of the efficiencies developed during the lead-up, and the changes that stem from corporatisation itself, major benefits will flow to both taxpayers and electricity consumers."

Mr De Lacy also said that corporatisation would provide the taxpayers of Queensland with a substantial and tangible benefit from the efficiencies of corporatisation. Mr De Lacy, the member for Cairns, also said—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will refer to him as the honourable member for Cairns.

Mrs SHELDON: I did, Mr Speaker. The member for Cairns further said that there would be a reduction in costs. He said that all prices to domestic consumers would be frozen until February 1996. He said—

"Prices to commercial and industrial customers will be reduced by an average 10% in real terms from March 1995. This will provide both a major competitive advantage to Queensland business and an opportunity to remove the cross subsidisation of domestic consumers by commercial and industrial customers—thereby putting the industry on a secure and equitable footing."

He further said—

"Beyond March 1996 the efficiency benefits of corporatisation are expected to result in continuing real reductions in electricity prices."

When the Opposition was in Government the then Treasurer reduced prices because of the efficiencies of corporatisation—not to the mums and dads of Queensland, but to domestic and commercial users, the same—

Mr Elder: Hang on—domestic users?

Mrs SHELDON:—to industrial and commercial users. However, in real terms, the former Treasurer—

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: Would the Leader of the Opposition really like to hear this answer? I know that he asked the question out of sheer hypocrisy, but I would like to give him an answer. In real terms, domestic users have received decreases in electricity prices. There have been no real increases. Because we have seen an effective decrease in prices, domestic

consumers have received a plus. The former Treasurer, the member for Cairns, delivered decreases to commercial and industrial suppliers, the same as the Government did yesterday. This results from the efficiencies in the corporatisation of the electricity industry. It has gone through a reform process. I might remind the House that the Leader of the Opposition has stated that, if elected to Government, he would turn back the clock and these reform processes would go back to zero. In other words, the Leader of the Opposition is going to take the electricity industry right back to square one. As a result, prices for industrial, commercial and domestic users will increase. The Opposition is going to throw out the window its own policy which it introduced when in Government. The Opposition will also throw out the reform processes that the coalition has put in place. These reform processes are widely accepted by industry, business and the general electorate. Yesterday the Government was able to deliver, as the first tranche, a 5% cut across-the-board to industrial and commercial users. This shows that we are determined to make sure that Queenslanders pay less for their electricity as a result of these efficiencies.

Electricity Industry

Mr BEATTIE: In directing a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy, I refer to his excuse that Queensland's disastrous power crisis was a "fluke" of lotto proportions and that he was "dead set unlucky" that it happened. I ask: how does he explain the admission by the management of the Swanbank Power Station in this 29 December 1997 document—which I table—that warns that the power station will have to hire up to 50 contract maintenance workers "at any one time" between January and June 1998 in order to maintain continuity of power supply because "the work volume is beyond the capacity of the resources or staff of Swanbank due to the reduction in numbers of the workforce in January 1997 by voluntary redundancy at the changeover to CS Energy"?

Mr GILMORE: There were a number of factors in that question. I am not quite sure where to begin.

Mr Beattie: Just start with the document.

Mr GILMORE: I will answer the question and I am going to begin with the part about whether the outage the other day was predictable or controllable. I refer the honourable member to the ministerial statement I made this morning. It was not an emotional statement; it was a statement of fact read to the Parliament for the advice of members.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr GILMORE: If Mr Beattie passes the document across to me, I will have a look at it. I refer the House to the time when those opposite were in Government in this State and the member for Mount Isa was the Minister for Minerals and Energy. He was responsible for that portfolio. I take the word "responsible" to its ridiculous extreme in this case. I refer to an article in the Courier-Mail—I presume it can be believed—of 31 January 1995. It was headed, "Power cuts hit homes, the TAB and shops". The article said—and it got this wrong—that at least 60,000 south-east Queensland homes were without electricity. The fact was that 143,000 homes in the south-east corner of the State were without power on that day. The article quotes the then Minister, the member for Mount Isa—

"Mr McGrady said yesterday's blackouts had nothing to do with the issue of future supply but were caused by a combination of unfortunate and unusual events."

Those are the words of the former Minister. He said that three faults occurred almost simultaneously along with a very high power demand due to hot weather. He said, "There are problems." Is there a little *deja vu* in that?

Mr Beattie: Not *deja vu*!

Mr GILMORE: I will come to that. The honourable member should not get excited.

As a result of that blackout on that particular day, the then Minister wrote a letter to Mr Keith Hilless, chief executive officer of the Queensland Transmission and Supply Corporation, lamenting the problems of the day before and essentially demanding that it "does not occur again". That was a most extraordinary thing for the Minister to do. However, he also asked for—

Mr McGrady: Why?

Mr GILMORE: I will get to it. The member should settle down. The Minister also asked for an official explanation, and I agree wholeheartedly that that was a perfectly reasonable thing for a Minister to do. The explanation that I have in my hand goes on at some length about what happened, the system perspective and the plant failures. That is all detailed. It is a perfectly good document. Because we had a generating plant in central Queensland and they could not transmit the load to the southern corner of the State, the explanation said—

"The problem is with the limitation of the 275 kV transmission line from"—
central Queensland—

"to"—
southern Queensland. It continues—

"For voltage stability, there must be sufficient MVAR generating capability at the receiving end to support the rate of power transfer. The MVAR injection is catered for mainly by Wivenhoe and Swanbank B units.

With the outage of Wivenhoe No. 1 unit due to damage to the generator, Swanbank B units are vital for the stability of high power transfer."

From that point on, that previous Minister did nothing about the transmission capability.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr GILMORE: The Leader of the Opposition should not wave bits of paper at me, because I do not respond well. That former Minister did nothing in respect of reinforcement of the transmission capability from central Queensland. I will come back to that point in a few moments.

That was the first incident. Let me refer now to an incident on 6 July 1995, some six months later. The same Minister was in the chair. Goodness gracious me! What happened? We had a number of problems with power blackouts. Let me count them. There was electricity load shedding on 6 July 1995. This is the sequence of events. I am referring to the official report.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ipswich!

Mr GILMORE: The sequence of events began on 5 July: 280 megawatts—Gladstone No. 5 was forced off line; and on 6 July, 280 megawatts at Wivenhoe—unavailable. On the same day, at Swanbank B, Callide B and Gladstone 2, five pieces of equipment went off line at the same time on the same day, within a few hours of each other, and the Minister did nothing about future power supplies in this State—not a thing—even though he had been appropriately warned on previous occasions by the QEC and others. But what did he say about all that? I think it is important to read what he said.

Mr Beattie: Are you ever going to get to the question?

Mr GILMORE: I have not got to the question yet. I will get to that. The then Minerals and Energy Minister, Tony McGrady, said that—

"Eastlink is merely part of a multi-dimensional power strategy to ensure the State is well set up to cope with future growth."

He denied any need for urgency in lifting power capacity and said—

"... last week's blackouts were the result of a series of freak events which were unlikely to be repeated."

Deja vu again! Then he went on, and this tells it all about the six years of mismanagement by the Labor Government in the electricity industry—

"The reality is we won't require a major new source of power until into the next century."

Nothing was done to plan it. Not a thing was done for that whole period. These were freak events. Now, with due regard to the question, I am happy to respond. The question was entirely in respect of the management and maintenance of the—

Mr McGrady: Would you like the question repeated?

Mr GILMORE: No, not at all, because I am about to give a perfectly good, responsible and cogent answer to this Parliament. The problems that arose on that issue are well known. The fact of the matter is that maintenance of power stations in this State—

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr GILMORE: Don't wave bits of paper at me, lad!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refer to any member on the other side of the House as the honourable member for whatever electorate he or she represents.

Mr GILMORE: I do resent having bits of paper shoved up my nose.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will complete his answer.

Mr GILMORE: The fact of the matter is that, these days, maintenance in power stations is done on a contract basis by people who have the competency and the skills. One of the problems that we have discovered over a period is that skills maintenance cannot be maintained adequately by people who are waiting for accidents to happen or waiting for down time in power stations. I have been requested to repeat—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I believe that the Minister has been answering the question for long enough. The member for Charters Towers will ask the next question.

Electricity Supply

Mr MITCHELL: I ask the Premier: can he advise the House of what action his Government has taken to increase power generation in Queensland compared with the record of the previous Labor Government?

Mr BORBIDGE: I am delighted to have the opportunity to acquaint the House with the actions of this Government as opposed to the inaction over six long years of the previous Labor administration. The fact is that, when Labor came to power in 1989, all the bases were covered.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now warn the member for Ipswich under Standing Order 123A for persistent interjections.

Mr BORBIDGE: Stanwell was under construction. Four 350-megawatt units were to come on stream at the rate of one a year from 1993. Work had started on Tully/Millstream, which would have delivered 600 megawatts of peak power load by 1997, in time to meet any projected shortfall in generation capacity by 1998. We all know the story. Labor effectively killed off Tully/Millstream in 1990. But the task force that recommended Tully/Millstream also recommended that the Government call tenders for the supply of coal or gas for peak capacity to compensate for the loss of time in respect of the review of Tully/Millstream.

So what did the previous Labor Government do? Tenders were called. There were a number of good tenders, but the previous Labor Government did nothing. It did not make a decision in respect of additional electricity generation in Queensland for the next five years. Even when the privatisation of the Gladstone Power Station in 1992 meant the loss of another 560 megawatts—almost another Tully/Millstream—by the time the third potline at Boyne Island came on line, the previous Government still did not act.

What was the record of the member for Mount Isa and his colleagues opposite? When Labor left office in 1996, its net contribution to Queensland's power generation capability over six years was negative 1,123 megawatts—minus 1,123 megawatts—almost a Stanwell down the drain in an industry that required forward planning.

So that was our inheritance from the previous Government, plus plans for the recommissioning of Collinsville and Callide A, which would bring in some 300 megawatts this year, and the infamous Eastlink which, all of a sudden, Labor says would have been connected now. However, under its own Cabinet documents, it would not have been on line until 1999, even if there was not a legal challenge to it. The fact is that this Government inherited a mess.

The other aspect that I want to comment on is the lies coming from honourable members opposite about the restructuring of the electricity

industry and the \$1.3 billion that we took out in terms of equity and refinancing of the industry to use for roads, schools, hospitals and police stations. What did Labor take out? In 1991-92, it took out \$36.6m. In 1992-93, it took out \$52.8m. In 1993-94, it took out \$848m. In 1994-95, it took out \$1,635m. In 1995-96, it took out \$217.5m. In six years, it took \$2.8 billion out of the reserves of the electricity industry. It did not worry about the mums and dads. All Labor members worried about was Paul Keating's \$1 billion loan repayment to help to cover up the mess of "black hole" Beazley and the debt that Mr Beazley and Mr Keating racked up over their period in office.

Collinsville and Callide A will be on line this year. We followed it through.

Mr McGrady: Come off it.

Mr BORBIDGE: Labor planned; we followed it through. Next year, we will have 441 megawatts of peak power in two stations at Townsville, 283 megawatts from Mount Stuart, and 183 megawatts at Yabulu. We called the tenders. We called for the expressions of interest.

Mr McGrady: That was part of our plan.

Mr BORBIDGE: Labor was long gone. From January 2000, 303 megawatts from Oakey will be on line. Tenders have been called for two by 420 megawatt units at Callide coming on line in 2001 and 2002. Westlink will go ahead and provide up to 500 megawatts from the year 2000—

Mr Elder: Three years.

Mr BORBIDGE: Twelve months after Eastlink, had it been allowed to go ahead, because it would have been one of the greatest environmental disasters that this State has ever seen. Conceding the 300 megawatts of Collinsville and Callide A and an interconnector of 500 megawatts that had been planned by the previous Government, this Government's record is a firm commitment to almost 1,150 megawatts of new generation in this State by 2002, undertaken by this Government within two years of taking office. In six years, Labor's sole contribution was a little baby power station at Barcardine that has 37 to 39 megawatts.

Aside from those projects, we have three projects short-listed as part of the Government's Surat Basin/Dawson Valley infrastructure project. At Millmerran, Intergen and Normandy Mining have proposed a mine-mouth power station. The Surat Dawson Development Company has proposed a mine-mouth power station. At Wandoan, MIM and Entergy have proposed a mine-mouth power station. A range of other proposals is under consideration, including a

proposal for Peak Downs, where BHP is considering a 250 megawatts base-load development. At Wambo, Energy Resource Management and the Australian Resource Development Corporation have proposed a 450-megawatt open-cycle gas turbine for peaking capacity in Queensland and New South Wales. That is at the stage of environmental impact studies. It aims for a 2000 start.

We have heard a lot from members of the Opposition about how Eastlink would have solved the problem. I table the Cabinet decision and the Cabinet submission of the last time the previous Government considered Eastlink, which was 20 November 1995, with Eastlink not being operational until January 1999. I table the Cabinet document, which proves totally that, even without JR and legal challenges, the political party that milked \$2.7 billion from the electricity industry in this State would not have had Eastlink up in time to prevent the recent difficulties that we have experienced.

I also table for the information of honourable members a memorandum to Mr Farmer of the Queensland Generation Corporation and Mr Hillless of the Queensland Transmission and Supply Corporation from Mr McGrady, the then Minister, dated 8 February 1995, following Labor's blackouts and distribution problems. The former Minister said—

"I am requesting that you take all possible steps to ensure that this sort of load shedding does not occur again.

...

Could you please keep me updated on what progress is occurring to ensure that this sort of episode is not repeated."

That memo of February 1995 was in respect of the problems in January 1995.

The one I like is the former Minister's memo of 7 July, when there were further problems. That memo was to Mr Hildebrand, the Chair of AUSTA Electric and Mr Bill Blair, the Chair of the QTSC. The former Minister said—

"The load shedding which occurred in Queensland on the evening of Thursday, 6 July was totally unacceptable.

I attach a letter from earlier this year following the 31 January load shedding in which I requested that all possible steps be taken to ensure that episode was not repeated.

However, once again, a number of 'technical issues' resulted in a number of units failing at around the same time resulted in a shortage of supply on the Thursday evening peak."

When it happens under Labor, it is a technical issue, despite the fact that the Minister issued instructions some months prior that the technical issues had to be addressed and resolved. Along with Labor's Cabinet submission on Eastlink, which proves Labor factually incorrect on that score, I table those memorandums from the then Minister for Minerals and Energy. The fact is that this Government is acting where the previous Government did nothing, even when Queenslanders were subjected to power outages during 1995.

Electricity Industry

Mr McGRADY: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: if staff cuts and backlogs were not responsible for last week's power crisis, as the Minister claims, how does he explain Tarong Power Station's 76-page analysis of its current maintenance backlogs, which I table, which reveals that, at one station alone, a total backlog remains of 55,760 work hours, which is equivalent to 35 years of work, and that 52% of those maintenance jobs are overdue?

Mr GILMORE: It appears that there are leaks not just in boiler tubes in some of those power stations. Unfortunately, the breakdown in communication is about the same. That document that was tabled a few moments ago was apparently in respect of Tarong Energy. I would like to read into Hansard and table for the information of honourable members a letter from Mr Alan du Mee, the Chief Executive Officer of Tarong Energy, dated 3 March 1998. It is addressed to me and the Honourable Joan Sheldon, Treasurer. The letter states—

"Tarong Energy Corporation Limited

Recent Boiler Failures and Maintenance Performance

You have asked for confirmation that maintenance performance or changes in maintenance performance did not contribute to the failure of a boiler tube last week.

I can confirm that maintenance schedules have been adhered to and that the failure of the boiler tube was not in our opinion due to any change or failure in maintenance performance.

Boiler tube failures are a common occurrence in power stations. Tarong has had at least 30 so far in its life and these are normally handled as routine repairs. These repairs take between four and ten days to complete.

The unusual overlapping of the different failures in four power stations at the same time required that Tarong Energy respond with an urgency that would relieve the burden on the community.

All the staff at Tarong Power Station, including the contractors hired for the repairs were totally committed to getting the plant back on line as quickly as possible and managed to achieve this earlier than originally predicted."

I table that letter for the information of members.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.49 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. The Premier has tabled a Cabinet document, which, under the Westminster system, is not available to subsequent Governments. This is a convention of the Westminster system that has been in existence for centuries. The Cabinet documents are not available for 30 years. This is clearly a breach of that privilege. I have read the document. Mr Speaker, I request that you refer this matter to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

Mr BORBIDGE: I will use whatever documents I have to catch the Leader of the Opposition out lying.

Mr BEATTIE: That is unparliamentary. I ask that it be withdrawn. This Premier has no standards, no honesty and will tear up anything to stay in power.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Suncorp/Metway/QIDC Merger

Mr CARROLL: I ask the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts: can she inform the House of who are some of the big winners out of this State Government's merger of Suncorp, QIDC and Metway? What benefits have they received from the merger?

Mrs SHELDON: I would be delighted to answer that very sensible question from the member for Mansfield. Because of the misguided attacks that the Government has received about Suncorp-Metway from the Leader of the Opposition and other members opposite such as the shadow Treasurer, Queenslanders could believe that the Queensland Labor Party and its parliamentary members have some ideological opposition to this merger. However, it would appear that

Queenslanders could be mistaken. As usual, Labor has misrepresented its situation.

I thought that Queenslanders might like to hear just how the ALP and some of those members who sit opposite have benefited greatly from this merger. Despite the cheap politicking, it is very obvious that Labor did support this merger, even though we had the added hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition running around saying that it should not occur. On ABC radio, the Leader of the Opposition said—

"I've said right from the beginning we would not have supported this merger."

Soon after, on the ABC news he stated—

"While there are many challenges facing Suncorp-Metway, I believe that they will succeed in those challenges and I wish them well in their ventures."

That doublespeak demonstrates that, when the Leader of the Opposition says something, we know that he is not fair dinkum. He backflips and changes his mind the next day. We all know that Queenslanders cannot trust the Leader of the Opposition.

So I think that we need to look at the support that the Labor members opposite have given the merger of Suncorp-Metway. Firstly, I think that we should look at the support given by the honourable member for Maryborough. Despite the bleatings of his leader, he certainly knew a good deal when it presented itself. I am advised that the honourable member applied for the Government's exchanging instalment notes in Suncorp-Metway and received his allocation of 500. That was a very smart move.

Mr DOLLIN: I rise to a point of order. Yes, I certainly took the opportunity to invest because I saw that it was a giveaway of Queensland's public property. Why should I not benefit while all of those members opposite were grabbing—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mrs SHELDON: Obviously, the member is quite happy to make a profit on what he regards as a rip-off of Queenslanders. So he indulged in that by adding his money to the rip-off. What a hypocrite!

The Labor member for Kallangur also knows a good deal when he sees one. He cleverly staged his allocation for 600 EINs.

Of course, when we look at the financial arm of the ALP, Labor Holdings, the disgusting hypocrisy of the Labor Party really comes to the fore. As we know, Labor Holdings is one of the top 20 shareholders in the new Suncorp-Metway entity. Let us look at the facts. In May 1996,

Labor Holdings was willing to accept St George's offer of \$4.62 a share to Metway shareholders in its takeover offer. Fortunately for the ALP, the Queensland Government was successful in seeing off that southern takeover and facilitating the merger of Metway Bank, Suncorp and the QIDC. As at 27 February 1998, Labor Holdings still held approximately 800,000 Suncorp-Metway shares. So today the financial arm of the ALP has made an unrealised profit of around \$2m on its Metway shares.

The real point that needs to be made is that Labor Holdings has just purchased 10,000 more EINs since they were listed. So again we see the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition. While he runs around the State bagging Suncorp-Metway, what it is doing and what the Government did, his own members are showing some real financial nous by buying into it. Labor Holdings has also done extraordinarily well. Yet the Leader of the Opposition seems to think that he can still run around and bag what has been a great thing for Queensland and Queenslanders. That shows the duplicity of the Leader of the Opposition, his total hypocrisy and how people in Queensland cannot really trust a word that he says.

Electricity Industry

Mr ELDER: I refer the Treasurer to her claim on ABC radio last week that Queensland's power crisis had nothing to do with the Government, and I ask: since it was obvious that her Government's wrong priorities and mismanagement caused the power crisis, how can the Treasurer blame anyone else for the blackouts when it was her Government which ripped \$1.3 billion out of the electricity industry to prop up her Budget, it was her Government that cancelled the Eastlink project for the connection to the national grid and it was her Government that slashed 700 electricity workers' jobs, including 140 maintenance workers, at Queensland power stations?

Mrs SHELDON: I refer the honourable member to the Premier's statement and to my previous answer. However, seeing that he is obviously a little slow on the uptake, I will repeat it. I recall that we said very clearly that Labor had ripped \$2.8 billion out of the electricity industry. The Premier detailed the years over which that money was taken out. We also detailed the fact that \$1 billion of that money had gone into Paul Keating's black hole in Canberra, which all Australians are still trying to pay off.

However, let me make it very clear as to what I actually said when I spoke to Cathy Border. I said very clearly—

"The Premier and myself and the Mines Minister had the generating bodies, the corporations in to see us at lunch time, we explained our anger and concern to them, we asked for full explanation. What we were told ... that these were breakdowns ... in 4 of the main generating units across the State. We asked for a full explanation."

We were told that these breakdowns in the four generating units across the State were unforeseen and that they were working as quickly as they could to restore power, which was what we had asked specifically for them to do. I stated further—

"We asked the question how can this occur in 4 generating units all at once"—
because we were concerned about this—

"They assured us that there was no way this could be foretold and they brought in a piece of pipe that showed where this particular piece had blown and that this put that full generator out and they're now replacing that pipe."

I could read the transcript of the whole interview if the members opposite would like. It would really place on record the Government's concern and what it actually said about the people of Queensland and small businesses. However, I will sum up by referring to what I said—

"Yes I am concerned, Cathy. I would just like to say to people out there the Government is concerned, we're trying to do our level best."

We tried to restore the power that was taken away. I also referred to Telstra, which acted as a good corporate citizen during that period and put extra power into the grid. Telstra contacted us and said that it could do that. We said, "Yes, please, do that over this initial period until we find out what the ongoing effect will be."

Even on that first afternoon, I was expressing my own concern and the concern of the Government—and that concern was recorded—which was acting as fast as it could to see that power was fully restored to the people of Queensland.

Economy

Mr GRICE: I ask the Premier: could he please inform the House of any significant improvements in the performance of the Queensland economy since the coalition Government came to power?

Mr BORBIDGE: I thank the honourable member for his question. Aside from the

Jeremiahs opposite, I do not think that there is much doubt left at all that the Queensland economy is now performing at an outstanding rate compared to its performance during the term of our predecessors. Under this Government, we have high economic growth and high employment generation. That has been achieved through a record Capital Works Program, \$4.25 billion, and strong encouragement for private enterprise to invest in Queensland. Let us have a look at some of the key indicators. In terms of property, Queensland, with 18% of the country's population, is fielding 2.7% of all property investment in the nation. Access Economics Property Investment Monitor for December 1997 recognised property investment projects valued at \$30 billion, which is exceeded only by New South Wales, the State that is preparing to host the 2000 Olympics.

In terms of major contracts recently announced, Mincom has secured a multimillion-dollar information technology contract with Boeing, the world's biggest aircraft manufacturer now based in Brisbane. The Australian Gas Light Company will upgrade its natural gas pipeline from Roma to Brisbane at a cost of \$100m. BHP will spend \$230m constructing an ammonium nitrate plant and associated infrastructure at Moura. A contract for \$100m to supply gas to the plant has also been announced. Queensland Rail has awarded a \$132m contract for the construction of 38 diesel-electric locomotives at Maryborough, which is part of a \$420m order for rolling stock placed by Queensland Rail. This follows the \$216m contract awarded to Walkers Adtranz last year for a 30 three-car suburban multiple units system, which is part of Queensland Rail's 10-year, \$6 billion investment program.

In terms of endorsements, the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry's most recent quarterly Pulse Survey showed that business conditions in Queensland were the best in three years, despite the Asian economic turmoil. The survey showed that 37% of respondents experienced improved general business conditions during the quarter, with a further 39% reporting unchanged conditions. Thirty-six per cent of respondents classified the business environment as good or very good, compared to 29% generally. Access Economics found that the long-term prospects for Queensland were excellent and that the State was well positioned to weather the Asian financial turmoil. The Access Economics five-year business outlook forecast that Queensland's economy would grow at 6% in 1997-98, which is nearly two percentage points above the national growth figure. This forecast outstrips even our own Treasury forecast of 4.5% economic growth.

Access Economics also predicts strong growth in 1998-99 of 4.6%.

One welcome endorsement of Queensland's performance came from Victoria. Last month the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry nominated Queensland as the best performing State in Australia in 1996-97. The chamber's latest report states—

"Queensland continues to record a strong financial position, with this year's net credit per capita improving by \$305 compared to 1995-96."

In terms of jobs, the State Government's Capital Works Program alone will generate about 4,500 jobs in 1997-98 and the coalition's strong record of attracting and encouraging business has further escalated jobs growth. Since the coalition assumed office in February 1996, 78,800 jobs have been created in seasonally adjusted terms, that is, 42% of new jobs created throughout Australia in that period. Queensland continues to lead the nation in jobs growth, with ABS statistics confirming that 45,100 new jobs were created in Queensland in 1997 on a trend basis. The news is getting better in 1998. In the 12 months to January, 60,000 jobs have been created, which is 65% of new jobs in Australia.

Queensland is getting better and better, and as each month goes by Labor's record is getting paler in comparison with that of the coalition. Queensland is currently experiencing employment growth of 3.9%. That is nearly 3.5 times the national growth rate of 1.1% in seasonally adjusted terms and almost double the rate of the nearest State, which is Western Australia on 1.8%.

Labor knows that it could not deliver and it knows that this Government is delivering in terms of job creation, in terms of investment and in terms of positioning Queensland right in front of the pack, instead of where we were under Labor, which was behind poor old Bob Carr's New South Wales. This Government will continue to put in place policies that will ensure that this State stays in front.

Electricity Industry

Mr HAMILL: I remind the Treasurer of her refusal last week to accept any blame for Queensland's crippling power blackouts by claiming on ABC radio, "It has nothing to do with the Government", and I ask: how can she have the gall to turn around this week and try to claim credit for the electricity industry reducing its tariffs?

Mrs SHELDON: The lack of political knowledge and skill of the shadow Treasurer

never ceases to amaze me. Is he suggesting that cost efficiencies should not be passed on to consumers and that commercial and industrial businesses should not receive a cut in their prices? I am sure that that would really impress them.

As I have already read out in some detail, efficiencies in the industry have been brought about through reform and corporatisation. The former Treasurer spoke at length about the benefits of corporatisation that have flowed through to the industry. This Government has gone much further and has reformed the industry and, because of those reforms, the industry is becoming more efficient. As a result, we can reduce prices for consumers. The first tranche of price reductions will go to commercial and industrial users and further down the track we will have an across-the-board cut.

The Government was always looking to do this, but because some businesses have had a difficult time in the last week, and we are well aware of that fact, we wanted to ensure that they had the benefits of the cuts as soon as possible. That 5% cut has been well accepted by businesses. The shadow Treasurer may like to go around and tell commercial and industrial businesses that they should not have had the cut, but the Government certainly believes that they had every right to it. We believe that the decrease in real terms to the domestic consumer is very important and, of course, as more efficiencies occur reductions will be made across-the-board. This shows that the Government is about delivering the benefits of efficiencies to the people and we will continue to do that. If the Labor Party does not want the people of Queensland to benefit from efficiencies in the industry, it had better try to sell that somewhat flawed policy to the electorate.

Share Ownership

Mr WOOLMER: I refer the Deputy Premier and Treasurer to the report of the Australian Stock Exchange on share ownership in Australia that was released yesterday, and I ask: does the report have any implications for Queensland?

Mrs SHELDON: As chairman of the PAC, the member for Springwood takes a great interest in financial matters. The report was commissioned by the ASX and was timed to take account of the impact of a series of successful new floats last year, including the Telstra float and the Suncorp-Metway float. The report shows that there has been a significant increase in the number of Australians investing in shares, as around 40.4% of adult Australians now own

shares. Of course, the two recent floats that I mentioned have had a large impact on lifting the levels of private share ownership.

Following the float of Suncorp-Metway, Queensland, along with Victoria, recorded the most notable increases in share ownership over the past year. Queensland continues to lead the way with the highest incidence of overall share ownership, with 45.8% of adult Queenslanders having some exposure to the share market. That compares with just 15.2% in 1991. Therefore, the State Government's public offering of shares in Suncorp-Metway was very successful. The Queensland public knew it and they showed it by taking up that offer. That showed a high level of confidence not only in Suncorp-Metway but also in the broader Queensland economy. People are buying shares and they are investing. It also showed that Queenslanders were only too willing to embrace the opportunity to take direct ownership in a Queensland-based company that had its headquarters in Queensland and that was going to look after the interests of Queenslanders. The Government float of Suncorp-Metway has been well endorsed by Queenslanders, who have not taken any notice of the whingeing, carping, negative comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

The ASX survey is a broad measure of community confidence and it confirms that our Government has succeeded in turning sentiment away from the doom and gloom that certainly pervaded the community when Labor was tossed out of office and we came to Government at the last election. There is no doubt that Queenslanders are more confident and positive about the economy and the general policy direction and economic management of the State by the coalition Government. That is shown when they are prepared to put their hands in their pockets and buy shares in this State.

Electricity Industry

Mr MULHERIN: I refer the Treasurer to her announcement yesterday of a 5% electricity tariff cut for business consumers. I refer also to the complaint of Retail Traders Association boss Ian Baldock that one extra month of cheaper electricity will not compensate businesses "who lost thousands of dollars worth of stock and lost sales", and I ask: based on the Treasurer's own figures, does this 5% tariff cut not mean that all she is giving businesses is a lousy \$40 a month, or just over \$1 a day, as compensation for the losses they suffered in last week's blackouts?

Mrs SHELDON: The same question is being asked over and over again. Obviously, the

Labor Opposition had very few clues when it came to putting together its questions.

What members opposite really do not like is the fact that we have delivered to the people of Queensland. We have delivered cuts in the cost of electricity. Our actions were supported by Mr McKendry of the Retailers Association, whose endorsement of what the Government has done is on the front page of today's Courier-Mail. He said that these cuts would be very acceptable to business. As a Government, we realise that businesses have had it tough in the past week, and we wanted to do our bit to help them.

Hospital Rebuilding Program

Mrs GAMIN: I refer the Minister for Health to the fact that recent independent economic analysis reports have highlighted the significant impact that the State Government's Hospital Rebuilding Program is having on job creation, and I ask: for the benefit of this House, would he please confirm the positive impact of the Government's health capital works program?

Mr HORAN: It is a pleasure to be able to tell the House about all of the real jobs being created right across the length and breadth of the State by the Government's \$2.4 billion Hospital Rebuilding Program. No doubt many members in this House have seen the hospitals and community health centres in their areas, the real jobs being created for contractors, subcontractors, concrete truck drivers, steel fixers, backhoe operators, electricians and tradesmen, and all of the work that is occurring.

Currently, 54 major projects are under construction around Queensland out of a total of about 115 major and minor projects occurring throughout the State. I wish to quote the latest report, the Midwood report, which talks about what hospital rebuilding is doing for the economic growth of Queensland. The Midwood report states—

"The new hospital building programme boosted Queensland non-residential building Commencements sky high in the September Quarter 1997."

It goes on to say—

"Health buildings accounted for 41% of all non-residential building in the Quarter, whereas they normally account for only 5%."

It goes on further to say—

"This is particularly good news for the building industry and will lead to a gradual and strong growth in jobs for building workers throughout 1998."

We estimate that the Hospital Rebuilding Program is creating at least 20,200 new construction jobs. I wish to give details of some of the major sites and the estimates of the number of new jobs being created. It is a real pleasure to visit many of these sites and to see that concrete workers are taking home good pay packets at the end of every week. We are creating real jobs that are contributing to the vast economic growth that Queensland is seeing at the moment.

In respect of Thursday Island/Torres Strait, we estimate that some 420 jobs will be created; at Cairns, 1,200 jobs; at Townsville, we estimate about 1,800 new jobs will be created through the major redevelopment of the new hospital at Townsville, which is on 75 acres in front of the James Cook University; at Mackay, we estimate there will be 260; and at Proserpine, where the hospital is well and truly under way, we estimate there will be 80 jobs. During the country Cabinet meeting at Proserpine, it was a pleasure to be able to look out the window of the shire council chambers and see the roof going on the hospital. That project had never, ever been approved by the previous Labor Government. It was promised by us. After a bit of catch-up football during the last election campaign, members opposite suddenly said, "We'll build one, too." We are in Government and we are putting it in place.

At Rockhampton we estimate that there will be 330 jobs; at Bundaberg, 300; and at Maryborough, 160. The previous Government had provided a lousy \$6m for Maryborough. What would \$6m have provided at Maryborough? Virtually nothing! We have put in place \$17m worth of reconstruction to give the people of Maryborough a decent hospital, not a sell-out under the previous Labor Government, which not only was not going to fund the hospital but also was going to downgrade it because they could not afford to run that hospital and the Hervey Bay Hospital. We estimate that 795 jobs will be created on the Sunshine Coast, and the list goes on. I will mention two of the major ones: Herston, 5,400 jobs; and Princess Alexandra Hospital, 3,280 jobs.

What has been particularly pleasing to the Government is not only the work that we are doing as a coalition Government in providing all these jobs and the massive amount of construction that is occurring, and the good hospitals that will eventuate as a result, but also the other projects that are under way through a revamped hospital system.

Mr Foley: What are you going to do about the PA psych unit?

Mr HORAN: I can understand the interest of the honourable member opposite. He would be well aware that \$310m is being spent at the Princess Alexandra Hospital—one of the biggest projects in Australia. In particular, in addition to going towards a major building, those funds are going towards the redevelopment of the psychiatric unit, which is not up to the standards of a modern professional unit. It was built a number of years ago and does not include facilities such as security care. That is one of the major projects under way.

In addition to what this Government is doing, a number of major co-location projects are either under way or about to commence. In particular, I wish to mention the Gladstone Hospital and the co-location there by the Sisters of Mercy. That \$12m project has started. We are the ones who made it happen. I refer also to the co-location of Health Care Australia, which has commenced at Caboolture.

Yesterday we finally had the pleasure to announce the preferred proponent for the Robina hospital, a \$48m project to be undertaken by the Sisters of Charity Health Service, which will be another boost to the services being provided on the Gold Coast. We are pleased to be getting on with the job and providing these 20,000 jobs and brand-new hospitals throughout the length and breadth of Queensland.

Electricity Industry

Ms SPENCE: I refer the Minister for Mines and Energy to the outrage expressed by business electricity consumers, such as QUF Industries and Australia Fair shopping centre, over the fact that Energex did not give warnings until 3.30 on Sunday that their power was going to be cut off the next day, and I ask: what does it say about the Minister's wrong priorities that he allowed Energex to spend \$8m on saturation advertising to announce its name change from SEQEB, yet he could not find the resources to give Queenslanders adequate warnings of the blackouts?

Mr GILMORE: I am delighted to answer the question. Once again, it is an opportunity to outline some of the concerns that the community has had over the last little while and the way in which load shedding was managed around the State. It only became obvious on the Sunday that there was likely to be load shedding around the State on the Monday. It only became obvious then. Once it became obvious, there was a press conference and material was sent out so that the community at large was aware that there would be load shedding on the next—

Mr McGrady: You knew on Friday.

Mr GILMORE: I became aware of this problem at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning. It was soon after that that I dealt with the issue. In terms of the load shedding arrangements—

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Labor in Government

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): With the State being held back by a corrupt National/Liberal Party Government, it is essential for Queenslanders to understand that a State Labor Government with new politics can make a difference after the coming election. In the Premier's performance today when he said to this House that he is prepared to do "anything" to stay in power, this man has demonstrated to this State that he is not fit to be Premier.

Let us not move away from what he did this morning. He breached one of the most fundamental conventions of the Westminster system. Not only did he do that, he breached the rules of his own Queensland Cabinet Handbook of 1997, which says—

"By convention, current Ministers may not have access to Cabinet papers produced by a past Government of a different political party. Such documents are held in trust by the Cabinet secretary and the chief executive of each department."

This man—this Premier—is not fit to be the leader of this State. Not only has he no respect for the Parliament—he will not dismiss the Attorney-General—he has no respect for the Westminster system. Any decent Premier would admit that he had made a mistake—that he had made a serious constitutional mistake—and he would come into this House, apologise and say that it would never happen again. He has thrown out any decency in Government. He has returned to the corruption of the past. The only way that we can restore some dignity to the Parliament and to the Government of this State is to throw that Government out. That is the only way.

Voters will have a clear choice on election day: a Labor Government that has spent two years developing exciting, positive new policies for jobs, services and development that will drive Queensland into the next century and, on the other side, a corrupt National Party Government dominated by corruption and that has proved every month for more than two years that it has nothing new to offer Queenslanders. They are

just the same old Nationals with the same old corruption. It is a Government that is not up to the job, a Government that will never be up to the job. No matter how long this Government stayed in office, it would never be up to the job.

Now more than ever before, people are looking for a Government that understands the difficulties involved in providing education and health care for kids, in meeting mortgage payments and in dealing with the stresses of wondering where the next job can be found or how long a job is going to last. Now more than ever before, they want to know that those in positions of power in the community understand what it is like to be an Australian in the 1990s. While their faith in politicians has slipped, their faith in Government has not. People still believe good Government can make a real difference in their lives. They want to see their political leaders apply themselves to genuinely understanding the challenges facing society and to working with the community to solve them.

That is why I have personally travelled all over Queensland with my shadow Ministers, talking to people in shopping centres and at more formal venues. That is why we have all spent two years listening to people and consulting experts to produce our New Directions Statements, a process of policy development that is a first in Australian politics. Never before has a party so thoroughly consulted the community in the development of its policies. We have said, "We made some mistakes last time. What do you want from Government that will improve the society in which you live and lead to a better lifestyle?"

Our New Directions Statements have been the basic framework of ideas on which we are building solid, meaningful and practical policies by using input from experts, stakeholders and, importantly, all Queenslanders. We are now continuing the exercise of sifting through the tremendous response we have had to the 26 New Directions Statements issued so far. For the information of the House, I table an additional number of New Directions Statements that have been released publicly since Parliament last sat. I tabled a number of New Directions Statements in November 1997. I now table the last eight, which I believe are the policies to take Queensland into the 21st century.

Suggestions that have been made as part of this process which are consistent with our philosophy are being incorporated to form part of Labor's final election commitments, so our policies will be largely the people's policies. The whole process is an admission of a fact that people have known for a long, long time: politicians do not have all the answers. The New

Directions process is about having the strength to lead while knowing that our bearings have been set by the community's compass.

No single factor has been more destructive to our sense of community than the doctrine of economic rationalism. Labor both here and in Canberra for the very best of reasons committed itself to managing the Queensland and Australian economies more efficiently. I need not and will not walk away from that legacy. Labor has always been and remains a party of economic growth. Without growth there are no jobs, and without jobs there is poverty and a loss of self-respect for the ordinary working men and women whom we represent. However, measuring one's very success as a Government in terms of money saved and jobs cut may be efficient, but it is certainly not effective and it is certainly not compassionate.

The focus of my Government will be the human consequences of the policies we pursue. We will monitor the performance of my Labor Government in terms of the vitality of our society. Jobs, jobs security, the health of our citizens, fewer youth suicides, higher levels of literacy and lower crime rates will be our priorities, not the Budget bottom line. In short, we will be social rationalists, not economic rationalists. Human lives have to be more important than dollars. We recognise that, while economics is important, we are a community not a corporation. We recognise that we are human beings first, citizens second and consumers last of all.

Our recent national conference demonstrated that Labor alone has heard and understood the anguish of Australians who are sick and tired of seeing their living standards decline while being reassured by Government that the economy is booming. Labor's approach to new politics is simply this: under Labor, those who are vulnerable and those who have not received the benefits of economic change will have an activist Government standing ready to ease their lot. With Labor, Queenslanders again will have a Government to make a positive difference in their lives.

There is a clear difference between Labor and the coalition. There is a clear difference between Premier Borbidge and me. Labor stands for creating jobs; the coalition is happy to let the market decide. We have a comprehensive jobs program to get Queensland working again; the coalition promised a \$70m jobs package in 1995, but has failed to deliver on any of it. We will have a Minister for Employment; this Government does not. We believe that we can make a difference to the unemployment rate; the Premier and the Treasurer say that they cannot. We will create at least 24,480 extra

apprenticeships, traineeships and job placements; Minister Santo Santoro's new vocational education and training legislation does not even mention apprenticeships and traineeships.

Our Better Health New Directions Statement contains strategies to tackle waiting lists and waiting times, not more propaganda which we hear daily from the Minister for Health. Under the coalition, the number of Queenslanders being forced to wait for an operation has soared by 10% and the number waiting for more than a year has rocketed from less than a quarter to more than one in every three. By the end of last year, the number of people needing surgery within three months but being forced to wait longer was supposed to be 5%; instead, the figure is 40%.

We have policies that will be tough on the causes of crime and prevent bashings and break-ins. This Government filled our prisons to overflowing and then opened the back door to let people out to ease the pressure—that is, the ones who did not go out the front door. Our New Directions Statement on Crime Prevention That Works is designed to lower the crime rate, not just increase the prison population. It will be tough on the causes of crime.

We want the best education system possible for our children because we believe that all Queensland children must be given the chance to make the most of their potential; the Premier wants to exploit our children through the commercialisation of education. Labor will ensure that all schools are Leading Schools; the coalition Government has created two classes of schools—first class and second class. Labor has a shadow Attorney-General who understands the law; the Government has a Premier and a Police Minister who think they are above it. We seek answers and solutions to the Wik impasse; Premier Borbidge seeks only confrontation and division.

Queensland is suffering the same old Nationals and the same old corruption. We will restore honest government to Queensland. We have a vision; now we have to win Government so that we can get Queensland working again, and we will. We stand for dignity and we stand for honesty. We stand for a Government that will actually do something to improve the lives of Queenslanders. This Government cannot and will not. I stress again: this Government is not up to the job; it has never been up to the job; and it will never be up to the job, regardless of how long it has to try to prove itself.

We stand for the future; Premier Borbidge stands for the past. If this Premier has any semblance of decency, before the proceedings

of this Parliament conclude today—and they go till 10 o'clock—he will come into this Parliament and apologise for tearing up one of the most fundamental Westminster principles and conventions that has existed for centuries. Here is a man who has no respect for Parliament, no respect for Cabinet, no respect for the Westminster system and is not fit to be Premier.

Nursing Home Accommodation Bonds

Mr GRICE (Broadwater)(11.40 a.m.): This week, the Federal Government's new policy concerning accommodation bonds for nursing homes and an assets test came into effect. This policy, which is undoubtedly still causing great distress and confusion to mature age Australians, is, admittedly, an improvement on the ill-considered, rash and even punitive policy that was so callously inflicted late last year. That now abandoned policy caused an enormous and fully justified public outcry and forced the Prime Minister to intervene.

I responded quickly to the avalanche of concerns that came to my electorate office from Gold Coast residents when the initial policy was announced. In fact, I have never known a Government decision—by any Government—to provoke such loathing, anger, disgust and plain, old-fashioned worry. On 27 October last year I wrote to the Federal Family Services Minister, Mr Warwick Smith, outlining my constituents' concerns, and I table a copy of that letter. I make no apology for it because it reflects honestly the views being conveyed to me. In fact, I agreed with those views. On 5 November last year the Prime Minister announced some amendments to that initial policy. As I have said, it did represent some improvement. But I remain unconvinced that this policy will ever receive the endorsement of mature age Australians or, for that matter, their families and friends.

Under the current policy, full pensioners will pay no more than \$33.10 a day, part-pensioners will pay up to \$45.70 a day if they have a private income exceeding \$20,000 a year, while self-funded retirees will pay up to \$75.30 a day with the maximum applying to people with incomes exceeding \$56,000 a year. Full or part pensioners who have not owned their own home in the past two years and have assets worth less than \$22,500 will pay a flat daily fee of \$21.10.

All the confusion over the past few months has been utterly bewildering and the decidedly sour taste that this inept bungling by the Federal Government has left in the mouths of many mature age Australians could cost it dearly at the next poll. I do not deny for a minute the fact that our nursing homes need an extensive overhaul

and considerable expansion. Nursing home care is expensive and the need for it is escalating because the population aged 65 and older is expected to double in the next thirty years.

The Federal Government has claimed from the very beginning of this debate that these higher charges are required to upgrade these nursing homes. Yet in a statement released last weekend, a coalition of welfare groups from the Catholic, Anglican, Baptist and Uniting Churches said that residents would face new total charges of as much as \$63 a day and \$37 of that would be returned to the Federal Government. The statement continued—

"In fact, the extra daily fees do not contribute any extra money to the upkeep of the homes, the care of the residents or the future development of the services."

The statement continued—

"In many instances these extra fees will be levied on the sickest and frailest members of our community. It is time the reform process eased the burden on our most vulnerable citizens."

These trenchant criticisms simply cannot be brushed aside, especially when this coalition of churches claimed the Federal Government was continuing to refuse to reinstate cuts in direct capital grants to nursing homes, thus leaving the residential sector stranded. Mature age people will view these criticisms by a powerful cross-section of mainstream churches as a significant damning of the Federal Government. The initial policy was grossly flawed, arrogantly and disastrously presented and withdrawn in a humiliating backdown. This Mark II policy is only a marginal improvement.

It gives me no pleasure to criticise my colleagues in Canberra, but I will not be silenced when an obvious injustice is being promoted as policy. By comparison, the Queensland State Government has shown a compassion and understanding that our Federal friends could well emulate. On 1 October last year, while the Federal Government thrashed about in a quagmire of confusion, the Health Minister, the Honourable Mike Horan, confirmed that the Queensland Government had flatly ruled out up-front entry fees or accommodation bonds for our public nursing homes.

On 25 January last, Mr Horan announced a \$17.5m funding package to upgrade these State-owned homes, bringing to \$38m this Government's spending on nursing homes and aged care units in public hospitals. This Government has also ruled out annual fees for State-owned nursing homes and has delivered an increase of \$6m in the Home and Community

Care funding and more than \$2m extra to the Home and Medical Aids Scheme in our past two Budgets.

Queensland is also the only State to maintain funding of \$20m a year to continue the abandoned Commonwealth Dental Program. As recently as 1 March, Minister Horan announced an immediate funding injection of almost \$9m to boost aged health care programs throughout the State. One major beneficiary will be Queensland's home nursing services which will receive some \$5.6m of these funds and thus allow an additional 8,000 elderly Queenslanders access to these services.

I believe this Government has demonstrated care, compassion and sensitivity to our aged population and they are being treated with the proper respect they deserve. In comparison, the Federal Government, by its own policy failures and hopeless presentation skills, has a reputation of a heartless Scrooge, and it will be a reputation that is hard to overcome.

There is speculation that the Prime Minister is still considering some refinements to the latest policy, including a redirection of some of the revenue raised from the increased nursing home fees into additional capital funding. I, for one, can only hope that compassion, reason and reality guide the next policy developments in Canberra.

I can honestly say that I have read most carefully all of the material available to potential nursing home patients and have found it to be bewildering. There seems to be little understanding that many elderly people are easily confused by official documents which purport to explain the details of policy. While the Federal Government has a service for older people, called the Financial Information Service, this is provided through Centrelink—the new, hybrid service-to-everybody outfit which is basically the old CES, and hardly user-friendly for many older people.

Despite the provision of this advice, the Federal Department of Health and Family Services still feels the need to include the warning and I quote from Information Sheet No. 4 "Quality Care for older Australians", produced last December, or so I assume as it contains the date of 1 December 1997, in fine print—

"Many of the decisions you take have personal taxation implications and you should seek advice on your most appropriate arrangements."

What this means, basically, is that you are on your own and aged people face significant penalties if, in a moment of weakness or forgetfulness, they err against the rules.

For example, aged people in nursing homes may give away money or assets to the value of \$10,000 in any one year. The so-called information sheet is silent as to whether this is during a financial year or a calendar year or the year from the first day of entry to a home. The sheet continues—

"If you give away more than this, income may be deemed from the additional amount gifted for the next five years. This means your pension and fees may be affected."

There is no guidance as to what assets are included and how they may be valued. Old people have old things and their perception of the value of these things may be wildly wrong. The implications for a nursing home resident who innocently gave away an old keepsake, which was revealed to be an expensive antique—and it has happened many times—are potentially awesome. In fact, some assets cannot be properly valued and the \$10,000 gift limit seems arbitrary. For example, a gifted asset which turned out to be worth, say, \$30,000 would cost a nursing home resident severely because a single resident would be deemed as earning 3% income on \$20,000 for the next five years, despite not receiving a single cent.

Under the rules of deeming, all the normal income-producing products are included, but so is gold and other bullion, which means a gold bar which realises no income, is deemed to earn, for a single pensioner, 3% on the first \$30,400 and 5% for higher amounts. Gold is a volatile commodity and a pensioner could be forced to sell his or her token so-called bullion and actually make a loss. There obviously needs to be a serious rethink about the scope of deeming and the gifting provisions relating to assets. The incongruity of this policy could be no better illustrated than by the fact that gold bullion is a financial investment liable for deeming, but gold coins are not. Is the lesson here to melt down one's gold into medallions, coins or jewellery? Or is the lesson to wait for yet another Canberra rethink.

Psychiatric Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (11.50 a.m.): Over the past 18 months I have had numerous calls from concerned staff, patients, families and carers about the psychiatric unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Their concerns were about the lack of direction within the unit and especially the lack of apparent care and supervision of patients and dangerously low staff morale. All staff who raised these concerns said

that, when they brought them to the attention of the more senior staff, including the CEO, they were subjected to intimidation and a code of silence. I have also heard from family members who tell of their loved ones bringing home other patients for the night without the staff even noticing, even though they were supposedly on 15-minute observations. Subsequent events have proved that their concerns were justified. It was disappointing to see the Minister laughing when the member for Yeronga raised these issues earlier today.

In September 1997 I wrote to the Minister raising the concerns of carers and the family of Debbie K, a healthy 26-year-old woman who had a mild intellectual disability and who also suffered mental illness. While Debbie had been unwell, she had at no time been, and had no history of being, suicidal. She was admitted for a review of her medication on 28 August 1997. Two days later, Debbie was found dead in her hospital bed. I wrote to Minister Horan as a result of many questions relating to Debbie's death. Her north Queensland parents had phoned on three occasions during that day and each time had been told that Debbie was sleeping, but no-one seemed to check that that was the case. She had not eaten all day. No-one had attempted to rouse her for meals or medication or for dressing.

In September last year I called on the Minister to have a—

"... full examination into both the cause of her death and the medical practices at the hospital which would allow a young woman to lie in bed all day without anyone endeavouring to rouse her."

The Minister eventually, in January 1998, replied that—

"... an independent inquiry into the circumstances of Miss K's death and the Psychiatric Unit generally is underway."

In fact, by the time I received that letter, the inquiry had already been rushed through in a matter of weeks in November and December.

This is not an isolated incident. In the couple of weeks since this review was completed, there have been a string of tragedies. A young woman absconded while going outside for a smoke and subsequently set herself alight. She was known to her friends and carers and, I am told, to the staff to be in a seriously disturbed and suicidal state. She is now seriously ill at the burns unit of the Royal Brisbane Hospital. A young man, also on 15-minute close observation as a high-risk patient, hanged himself in the shower. Another disturbed patient has been admitted to the Royal Brisbane Hospital after seriously harming himself

while absconding from the care of the PA Hospital.

It seems amazing that so many patients could meet such tragic outcomes and deaths while being closely supervised—indeed, on 15-minute close observations—in just a couple of weeks. However, it is less surprising when one hears that patients regularly leave the hospital for the night, returning the next day without anyone on the staff even noticing that they were missing. It is also apparently commonplace to find severely dazed, disturbed patients in their pyjamas wandering around shops opposite the hospital, buying cigarettes or even shoplifting at Target. It would appear that close 15-minute observation means very little.

As a result of recent publicity, I have also been informed of another tragic unexplained death in August 1997, when 21-year-old Dennis C was admitted to Princess Alexandra Hospital on 5 August 1997 because he was threatening suicide. He had previous admissions. One day later, he was found dead on the top floor of the car park opposite Princess Alexandra Hospital. Again, as a suicidal patient, he should have been under close observation. He had not been discharged. Was anyone even aware that he had left the hospital? His family are concerned that there are still many unanswered questions. If his death was, as is claimed, from multiple injuries from a fall, why was he on the top floor of the car park? From where did he fall? Who gave him permission to leave unsupervised when he was known to be seriously suicidal and disturbed? Who identified his body when his family were not allowed to see the body? Why did it take five hours to notify his family when he had ID in his pocket? How did the Prince Charles Hospital know of Dennis' death before his family? They called wanting heart valve transplant material just seconds after the police had notified the family. Dennis' family, like Debbie's, want answers. They want to know why and how their children died. They want a full and open inquiry into the deaths and other major incidents that have occurred and also into the medical practices that have allowed them to occur—not because they are vindictive or seeking to lay blame, but so that faults in the system can be corrected and their children can be laid to rest in peace.

As I indicated earlier, as a result of these tragic deaths a review of the psychiatric unit was undertaken with very tight terms of reference after pressure from myself and carers. Even within the extremely tight limits of time and terms of reference, the report is a damning indictment. I shall read some of the comments from the report. It states that the review is—

"... following a number of critical incidents at the facility or involving patients shortly after being discharged from the facility."

It states that the problems are such—

"... that it is essential that they be remedied without delay, as the consequences both on staff morale and the quality of patient care could rapidly approach perilous levels."

I would contend that they already have. The report noted—

"... staffing levels lower than that recommended."

It also noted—

"... that here was a reluctance to confront problems of nursing competence and attitude by nursing management. The solution to problems of a nursing management nature was often movement of staff within the psychiatric division."

The report stated that—

"... a depletion of nursing morale appears to have had a significant impact on the level of care provided."

It stated also that—

"... patient care had been adversely affected to the extent that safety of patients is compromised."

How much more damning can a report be? It found that—

"... all staff interviewed by the Review Team acknowledged that standards of patient care within the inpatient unit had fallen to unacceptable levels."

It also found that—

"... patients were fearful in the ward environment."

There is no need to go on.

The executive summary alone is a total vindication of my calls for an open, full inquiry. Queensland cannot afford the shame of another Ward 10B scandal, even though we again have the National Party in Government. But nowhere does this report—damning and critical as it is—deal with the very issue outlined in its opening paragraph, that is, the number of critical incidents occurring, except in the most general way. Nowhere does it explain how these incidents could have happened. We have already seen this Minister simply sweep under the carpet a similar damning report by the Health Rights Commission into incidents at the Baillie Henderson Hospital—simply ignoring the sensible recommendations, but addressing the entire problem of institutional culture by installing airconditioning. It must not happen again.

The report states that—

"... while it is beyond the domain of this review to comment on individual incidents, they provide indication that the provision of nursing care is a critical issue."

But they are beyond this review, because the Minister has made them so. These critical incidents should not have been beyond this review. They should have been the very core of the report. They are the very reason for the report's existence, but these critical incidents—these unexpected deaths, these self-immolations—are passed over in a couple of paragraphs, expressing concern that there is no policy for critical incident management, that is, no policy for damage control or cover-up techniques. That is all that they were responding to. Although I understand the need for staff counselling and debriefing and management of the incident, I would have expected some mention or explanation of how to prevent these incidents ever occurring.

I understand that this is a difficult area of health and that it is demanding on the staff involved. I also know that many of the staff have been just as concerned as I am about the issues that I have raised, because they have told me so. They told me so anonymously because they feared for their jobs and their careers. I also understand that they are too frightened to speak out. The climate of fear that has permeated the health system under this Minister is deplorable and harmful in the extreme. However, I cannot stand by and allow the situation to continue without answers for the families of those who have died and without real changes in staffing and structure within the unit that will improve the outcomes for both patients and staff.

I call on the Minister to immediately instigate a full, open inquiry into these critical incidents and not, once again, to try to protect his own political hide by bullying staff into acquiescence and covering up the severe shortcomings outlined already in the Queensland Health review of the integrated mental health service of the Princess Alexandra Hospital and district health service.

Tourism

Ms WARWICK (Barron River) (12 p.m.): Much has been said in recent months about the effects of the Asian currency crisis on the tourism industry. Industry members from across the nation have called on Governments to recognise the importance of tourism to our economy and to provide immediate assistance accordingly. I am proud to be part of the only Government that has heeded these calls. As a result of January

meetings between my colleagues the Premier, the Minister for Tourism, Bruce Davidson and key tourism industry representatives, a detailed submission was prepared outlining a number of strategies for immediate implementation. I was delighted to learn that the resulting allocation of an additional \$5m to the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation will see those strategies implemented in a matter of weeks. The funding will be spent on a range of targeted domestic and international marketing campaigns designed to boost visitation to Queensland.

Three million dollars will fund three comprehensive worldwide marketing campaigns to deliver both immediate and sustained increases in revenue to our tourism industry. One million dollars has been made available to the QTTC for dollar-for-dollar cooperative marketing, while the balance will enhance the domestic market through the provision of funding for a "drive" marketing campaign. That campaign will develop the motoring holiday market and provide for additional cooperative advertising. I am sure the benefits of the drive campaign will be welcomed warmly in my electorate. Already the market demonstrates significant potential for Queensland, generating approximately \$1.3 billion, or 47% of total domestic tourism expenditure. A 1% increase in Queensland's drive holiday market would represent a direct economic benefit of \$12.78m. That initiative is a further example of the coalition's recognition of the importance of tourism to our local economy.

The level of Government support for the tourism industry in the tropical north in particular is unprecedented. Two weeks ago in Cairns, Minister Davidson announced a \$920,000 marketing campaign to bring more Japanese tourists to our region. The campaign, which will target residents of the Nagoya region in Japan, is being financed by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Qantas and the Cairns Port Authority. The Nagoya region is regarded as one of the top three markets in Japan for Australian tourism. The campaign, building on Qantas' daily Nagoya-Cairns service, is designed to maximise awareness of tropical north Queensland as a holiday destination. All major tourism wholesalers in Nagoya will participate in the campaign, offering special holiday packages based on tropical north Queensland as a single destination.

The Nagoya campaign complements the \$12.5m Kamiki/Australian Time campaign that is currently running in Japan. The Kamiki campaign is the first international campaign to market tropical north Queensland as a stand-alone destination. The campaign, which also targets

Sydney and the Gold Coast as separate destinations, will run during Japan's high travel season, known as Kamiki. That is from April to September. That is the first time that the Australian Tourist Commission, the QTTC, regional tourist authorities and industry have been involved in researching, planning, devising and jointly funding an international marketing campaign. I am confident that the level of support will result in increased support from local and Japanese tourism industry operators for tropical north Queensland as a destination. It is envisaged that the campaign will also result in upwards of 50,000 additional visitors between 1998 and 2000. Other projected benefits include increased length of stay, resulting in an additional 500,000 visitor nights, and increased potential for repeat visitation. In supporting the two campaigns, the coalition Government has undertaken by far the most extensive marketing of the region to its most important international market.

In the domestic market, the tropical north is also being marketed as a destination in its own right as the QTTC moves away from generic advertising of Queensland. Tropical north Queensland's domestic marketing campaign, which is called "Where Rainforest Meets the Reef", positions the area as "offering a Great Barrier Reef and tropical rainforest experience combining adventure and relaxation within some of the greatest environmental wonders of the world". Major funding of the tropical north Queensland campaign and other destination development projects has been warmly welcomed by tourism operators in my electorate. That is in addition to record support from both the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and the Queensland Events Corporation. That support has included assistance from both the QTTC and the QEC for the Discovery Channel Eco-Challenge held last year in August 1997; support from the QEC for World Mountain Bike Championships held the year before; direct grants of \$265,000 from the QTTC to Tourism Tropical North Queensland; assistance from the QEC and QTTC for the Brand FNQ project; retail and wholesale promotion and support from the QTTC; a \$1.25m follow-up campaign in the United States following President Clinton's visit; and support from the QTTC for Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit. Tropical north Queensland was also the base for the highly successful and inaugural Queensland Showcase, which brought the top 200 European travel buyers to Queensland.

Cairns has also proved to be a popular gateway into Australia for Olympic sponsors, sports marketing companies and international media seeking information on Australia in the

lead-up to the Sydney 2000 Games. The Queensland Olympic 2000 Task Force, under the stewardship of my colleague Bruce Davidson, has been a successful lead agency in coordinating a whole-of-Government approach to identifying and addressing Olympic business, tourism, events, pre-Games training and art and cultural opportunities. As a result, Cairns has been short-listed by the Sydney organising committee for the Olympic Games as the host venue for the 1998 Olympic Arts Festival's Sculpture by the Sea promotion. Cairns is also starting to be of interest to international sporting teams as a pre-Games training base, with the Canadian Olympic swim team inspecting facilities in Cairns prior to the 1998 World Swimming Championships in Perth.

I would briefly like to touch on one issue that is of some concern to the tourism industry within my electorate. I refer to the alleged unethical and undesirable practices of some inbound tour operators. My colleague Bruce Davidson had this item added to the agenda of last year's Tourism Ministers' Council. His motion asking all State and Territory Ministers to consider strategies to prevent unlicensed operators from carrying on business was passed. I was pleased to see the Minister take the lead on that issue by establishing a task force to examine practices within the inbound tourism sector, including fair trading, transport, tour guides, tour operator, visa and other tourism issues. Mr Max Sheppard of Quicksilver Connections was a member of that task force, which comprised representatives from key stakeholder areas and Government departments. As a result of recommendations of the task force's report, I understand that at the next Tourism Ministers' Council in April the Minister will be proposing separate national legislation that will licence inbound tour operators. The Minister will also be proposing the establishment of a national working group to develop strategies and mechanisms to increase visitor awareness of freedom of choice. That move further illustrates this Government's commitment to protecting the integrity of our tourism industry. I must say that I found the Labor Party's eleventh-hour claim in relation to that issue in its recently released "No Directions" policy quite laughable, given that it avoided that issue during its six years in Government.

As we all remember, Labor's record in tourism generally was abysmal. For its first five years in Government, the Labor Party froze the tourism budget at around \$23m. Even the then Treasurer and the soon to be former member for Cairns could not convince the Labor Party to support the tourism industry in north Queensland. In a mad panic in its final year, the budget suddenly increased to just over \$29m.

That is a pitiful \$6m increase over six years. Since taking office, this Government has increased the tourism budget from \$29m to \$41m. That does not include the extra \$5m that the Premier and the Treasurer announced just last month.

The coalition Government's strong support for our State's tourism industry is undeniable. I congratulate the Minister for his role in that process. He is most committed to north Queensland. With a massive \$17m increase in tourism funding in just two years, an impressive events portfolio, destination-specific domestic marketing campaigns and a number of international tactical cooperative marketing campaigns, I defy anyone to prove a greater commitment than we have shown. This Government, unlike its failed predecessors sitting opposite, has shown it recognises the vital importance of tourism to generating employment and economic opportunities. We will ensure that tourism continues to receive the support that it deserves.

Townsville/Thuringowa Floods

Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa)
(12.10 p.m.): They say it never rains but it pours, and pour it did in Townsville/Thuringowa on 10 and 11 January this year. An inner suburb of Townsville, Railway Estate, recorded 747 millimetres of rain between 9 a.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. on Sunday and a further 123 millimetres to 9 a.m. on Monday. Magnetic Island recorded 774 millimetres and 91 millimetres for the same periods.

I have lived in Townsville for more than 40 years and I was present during Cyclone Althea as I was present during this torrential downpour. Fortunately, during both catastrophes my family suffered very minimal loss or damage. However, I have not seen rain such as occurred earlier this year. It was quite amazing and even frightening. Just when one thought that it could not rain any harder, it would rain harder. Just when one thought that it had eased, it would resume with all its previous intensity. And last it did, and there was the loss of a life and hundreds of stories of devastation and many of heroics and acts of compassion and help.

As always, there were also acts of thoughtlessness and stupidity. I think that the saddest related to those who were relieved that they had just missed damage to their home by centimetres only to have people in four-wheel drive vehicles out sightseeing creating a wash, sending water through their homes, inundating carpets and, in some cases, electrical appliances. Unfortunately, people had virtually no time to prepare for what happened. Creeks and streams

rose in half an hour and less and gutters overflowed without warning in what has been described as a one in 100 years storm and by some, in fact, as a one in 200 years storm. It was truly a devastating as well as unusual event.

However, lessons are learned from events such as this. Generally speaking, I think that the infrastructure of the two cities stood up extremely well. Despite the massive quantity of rain, the water drained away remarkably quickly and suburban streets were dry almost within minutes. The network of streets and State-controlled roads came through remarkably well. In my view, the emphasis placed on roads by successive Labor councils from as far back as 1976 certainly bore fruit. Townsville Mayor, Councillor Tony Mooney, estimated damage overall at close to \$100m. Major funding is required to rebuild the Strand area, reinstate the water pipeline from Mount Spec and fix beach erosion at Rowes Bay and Pallarenda.

I want to devote the balance of my speech to the aftermath and to raise some issues that need to be addressed by the Government and by this Parliament. At the outset, I want to add my thanks and praise to the hundreds of volunteers, emergency services personnel, defence forces and council employees who immediately swung into action to commence the massive clean-up and restoration. They have already been recognised formally and publicly and deservedly so. In that context, I would also like to congratulate the mayor of Townsville, Councillor Tony Mooney, and the Acting Mayor of Thuringowa, Councillor Sandra Chesney, for the leadership roles that they played in all of this. I have praise, too, for the Government and the respective State and Federal departments for the prompt and efficient distribution of short-term moneys, emergency accommodation and so on.

Now for the criticisms, and I assure members that I intend them to be constructive. Immediately following a disaster of this type, the politicians fly in and do their obligatory helicopter inspections, declare the place a disaster area, assure the people that the Government is there to help them and that they will all be looked after, and then they promptly fly out again. But when the water is gone and the sun comes out and some other issue dominates political minds and media attention, what assistance are people entitled to expect? People who have lost property and/or suffered damage look immediately to their insurance policies. I have to say that from reports that I have received, most insurance companies responded very promptly in that they had assessors in the field within days and they flew in people to hasten the task. However, that is where it ended for some people. Just as an

aside, we certainly do live in a strange world. One of my constituents submitted an insurance claim form in Townsville. It was assessed from Adelaide and the cheque was paid from Melbourne. At least he was paid, although it took a month after the claim form went missing between Townsville and Adelaide.

Of course, as a result of the floods in Townsville and Katherine, there has been much debate about just what it is that insurance policies cover. I refer to an article in the Australian Insurance Institute Journal titled "It's time for flood cover (at the right price!)", which states—

"Coffs Harbour had been hit by a torrential downpour on Saturday 23 November 1996.

...

Creeks swelled and overflowed; rainwater run-off coursed across ground unable to enter swollen stormwater systems and creeks. Many properties were inundated, affected by water from one or more of these sources:

overflowing drains;

rainwater run-off; and

rivers and creeks which had broken their banks.

In many cases, it was difficult to tell just where the water had come from, particularly as water from all three sources often flowed together.

...

The position with water coming from a river which had broken its banks was fairly clear. But what about water which couldn't get into a river because it had already broken its banks? Even though it was rainwater run-off looking for a creek to join, could it be said that its damage was 'caused by the overflow of any natural water course'?

...

Hydrologists argued. Insurance industry experts argued. Community groups and politicians looked on at what appeared to them to be an exercise in splitting hairs.

...

But the message many heard from Coffs Harbour was that insurance companies were refusing to pay claims.

...

What penetrated was the message that insurance companies were refusing to pay claims. It confirmed the underlying fears of the general community:

insurance companies were happy to accept premiums but much less happy to pay claims."

So it is in the aftermath of the Townsville floods. It is worth saying that a surprisingly large number of people hold the view that if it is a natural disaster, they must be covered: after all, that is what insurance is for. They argue that they pay their premiums and if something happens that was not their fault, they must have cover. Unfortunately, that is not the case. There is considerable animosity out there among people who have had their claims rejected by companies on the grounds that they were not covered for loss or damage caused by flood.

The reaction by the various insurance companies has varied enormously, and that has added to the anger. Residents living adjacent to Bluewater Creek in my electorate were among the worst hit and there is no doubt that at some stage Bluewater Creek burst its banks. Some companies provided flood cover and have met claims against those policies. Other residents did not have flood cover but have had their claims paid as a public relations exercise. The unfortunate ones are those who did not have flood cover and who have been told that their claims will not be accepted. One family with whom I have had discussions are in that last category. They are insured with Sun Alliance and they suffered major damage. The loss adjustor or assessor was on the job very early and apparently gave every indication that they would be covered. The residents argued that the initial water intrusion came from the front of the house and not from the creek at the rear. That view seems to be borne out by the fact that vehicles and other loose items were carried towards the creek and not away from it as one would expect in a flood. They contend that the water came as run-off from the high grounds to the front of the property, which would not, of course, constitute flood. Evidence from other residents support that view.

However, Sun Alliance employed a hydrologist who, several weeks after the water had gone, decided that the damage would have been caused by flood. Sun Alliance said that it relied upon reports by the hydrologist and the loss assessor to reject the claim. Another fact that I find very strange is that my constituents have never completed a claim form. In other words, they have never formally provided their version of events to their insurers. So the decision not to provide cover has been based solely on reports by people who, obviously, were not there when it all happened. The victims' whole futures and that of their families may well be destroyed by an event that was certainly not of their making.

If insurance cover does not provide a solution, what then of the flood relief appeal that was established by the Government? I refer to an editorial of the Townsville Bulletin, which states—

"The North Queensland Flood Relief Fund was set up with the best of intentions of helping those people, devastated by the floods, who were not covered by their insurance to put their lives back together. "

Unfortunately, after seven weeks having passed, not one dollar has been provided out of that flood relief fund. That editorial in the Townsville Bulletin questions whether that is good enough. It states further—

"When people really needed help was in the very first week as they tried to clean up the mess that had been left and to restore their lives to some sort of normality. It was then, and soon afterwards, that they needed help in the form of cash and refrigerators and washing machines and beds. To be dispensing such things more than seven weeks later is absurd. We can only speculate on just how much of the \$1,037,000 will actually manage to be distributed, given the late start, and just what will become of any amount which is left over."

So insurance does not provide the answer; nor, I would suggest, does the relief fund.

I refer now to primary producers who suffer crop losses or damage to equipment, fences and so on. I am advised that first they must apply to the QIDC for a business loan to help them recover. If that application is refused, they then qualify for a low-interest loan—not a grant but a loan—under the Rural Adjustment Scheme. So people who have lost their source of income for the year are offered a loan. I am told that the paperwork involved is horrendous. For example, they have to provide financial records for the previous three years, presumably to prove that they cannot sustain the losses. Surely these people are entitled to cash grants to carry them on.

In summary, I believe that the Government and this Parliament have to establish a process by which people are at all times aware of their insurance cover, that areas in which protection such as flood cover is not available should be clearly identified, and care should be taken not to raise expectations. For once, politicians should tell the victims of natural disasters what they will not do for them and be honest about what assistance will be available, and that assistance must be made more accessible.

Cost of Finance to Rural Communities

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.19 p.m.): I raise the matter of the cost of finance to the rural community, not only to farmers but also to the people who live and work in rural support towns throughout Queensland. In particular, I refer to the penalty rates that are tacked on to the overdraft rates and bank bills that are charged when people borrow through the bills system and the percentage that financial institutions require purchasers to put up when buying rural-based businesses and homes in comparison with what is required of people who buy similar businesses or homes in cities and major centres.

I take this opportunity to cite a case involving the proposed purchase of a house and a rural business within my electorate. The house is a first-class dwelling; it is not a run-down shack. It is a good house that has been well looked after. The business is the backbone of the local town and district, both of which it supports and services. Last year, the business turned over in excess of \$1m. Throughout the drought period of the last decade it made profits when many other businesses, particularly farms, made roaring losses. It has proved consistently that it is a viable and valuable rural business.

One might ask whether the purchasers whose case I am presenting were inexperienced and were considered by the bank to be incompetent to run such a business? I will let members judge that for themselves. They are a husband and wife team. The wife has years of experience in the financial field, as she was a loans officer. If one wants to go into business, one could probably have no better background than that offered by the financial and banking area. The husband has extensive business experience. He currently holds a well-paid management position and is considered to be a most competent and efficient operator. He is highly respected throughout the area. I have set the scene to show honourable members that this is an ideal couple to take on such a business.

With cash and the overdraft that the bank had granted them, the couple were able to put up in excess of 50% of the purchase price of the business. It is a cash-flow business; the day that they walked into it, they would have had cash coming in. The business has a proven track record, and the couple was able to demonstrate very capably that they would receive a positive cash flow from it and that they had the means to purchase it. I will not embarrass them by identifying the sum that they were going to purchase the business for, but it was what I believe to be a give-away price.

Members should look at this situation and compare it with that of people with no track

record whatsoever, such as a young married couple. I am not knocking young married couples. We all like to see young married couples purchasing their first homes. I have always supported and will continue to support that concept, because it is very important. We want a nation of home owners, not home renters. No-one should interpret what I am saying as a criticism. However, a couple with no track record can walk into a bank with 20% deposit and the bank will lend them money to buy their first home. That happens as regularly as clockwork. However, people with highly developed skills, who are ideally suited to run such a business as this and have the means to purchase both the business and a house, are knocked back even though they can raise approximately 50% of the purchase price.

Rural people are being discriminated against, and this is only one instance of it. I have been made aware of a number of cases of people who have wanted to buy houses in rural towns but have been knocked back because the banks wanted much higher deposits than are required elsewhere. That is not a fair go. I ask honourable members: what is the track record of rural areas? Was it the rural areas that perpetrated large losses for the banks in the eighties? No way! It was the high rollers at the big business end of the market who made major losses for the banks in the eighties. Therefore, why are people who want to buy homes and businesses in rural areas being disadvantaged by banks that are putting penalty rates on top of the standard overdraft rates and bank bills and that are demanding much larger deposits from rural borrowers? That is not a fair go at all. As far as I am concerned, people from rural communities are being treated as second-class citizens in this regard.

If honourable members look further, they will see just how difficult things become when rural people have to put up with this sort of thing. Governments are criticised regularly for not doing enough to ensure the survival of rural Australia, but how can we keep rural towns and businesses going if financial institutions make it so difficult for anyone who wants to give their all to ensuring that long-term businesses, such as the one that I have mentioned, are able to service and support their rural communities? The business that I referred to does not just sell groceries, it sells fuel and all the commodities that are required to run properties in the area. It has been operating for years and has a tremendously strong support base within the local community.

What does one have to do to convince the financial institutions that rural Australia is still out there, is still viable and will continue to be viable?

For example, take Davis Engineering at Clifton, which is a major player in the production of brass fittings and taps. It supplies commodities throughout the length and breadth of this country and also has a significant export market. That company has a proven track record because of its high-quality staff who have a great commitment to their employer. In any week, the output of those employees is far greater than one could get from any city employee in this country. The Davis Engineerings of this world set up in places such as Clifton so that they can source their work force from the rural community, because that work force will be committed to its employer. Janke Brothers at Mount Tyson sells farm machinery throughout the length and breadth of this country and there is no better machinery than Janke's. It is absolutely fantastic equipment and it has a proven track record. Once again, that company has been successful because it has a committed, rural work force.

Therefore, why in hell's name do financial institutions discriminate against people who want to run rural businesses? They should do their homework, look at what really goes on and see the real risks. I put it to the House that over the years there has been very little risk attached to lending money to the rural community, and farmers in particular, because of the success rates of rural businesses.

Time expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Police Service

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (12.29 p.m.), by leave: The coalition has delivered on its promise to provide a strengthened and enlivened Police Service which responds to community needs and focuses on crime prevention and proactive community policing. The Government's achievements in the policing portfolio have been impressive since the coalition came to power two years ago. When the people of Queensland booted out an arrogant Labor Government, one of my first moves as Minister was to order a full review of the Queensland Police Service.

The resulting Bingham report contained 197 recommendations aimed at making our Police Service more efficient, effective and accountable. I am pleased to say that the vast majority of these have been implemented. A key recommendation was a review of police powers, and last year we passed laws which, for the first time ever, clearly spell out the rights and responsibilities of police and the rights of the

community. Two Labor Ministers attempted this legislative reform, and both failed.

One of this Government's proudest achievements has been the establishment of a new Crime Commission, which is dedicated to mounting an all-out attack on paedophilia and major organised crime. It was with great pleasure that I introduced Crime Commissioner Tim Carmody to Queenslanders recently. Mr Carmody's credentials are impeccable, and the Opposition's threat to shelve the commission simply highlights Labor's shameful lack of commitment to tackling crime in this State.

Queenslanders are feeling safer because the coalition is attacking crime with a two-pronged approach to law and order—it is tackling crime from both ends. Police numbers have been increased across-the-board, and the three-year \$76m staffing plan to boost sworn strength by 800 by August 1999 is well on track. Between 1993 and 1996, Labor spent \$1.5 billion and managed to employ only an extra 29 police. When we came to power there were 6,365 police in Queensland. We are well on the way to boosting this figure to 7,000 by the end of this year. We gave the Queensland Police Service a record budget of \$644m this financial year—an increase of 10.5%, or \$63m, on 1996-97.

A massive capital works program is under way to ensure that police resources increase in line with population growth and urban development across Queensland. It is all very well to provide extra police, but the impact is lost unless the extra strength is matched with modern facilities. This year will see the construction of a new headquarters for the Brisbane Water Police, a new watch-house for Rockhampton, the completion of a new station and watch-house for Emerald, and new stations for Indooroopilly, Cleveland, Palm Beach and Centenary. There are also plans for new district headquarters at Gladstone and Toowoomba and a new station for Caloundra. The coalition has also bought new planes, boats and vehicles so police can better serve the public.

The police have a difficult job to do and the Government is committed to ensuring that they have the necessary resources and tools to do that job. The police are currently conducting an internal education program on the new powers and a public education program will follow before the powers come into effect on 6 April.

In addition to boosting police strength, the coalition has committed itself to finding new ways to prevent the vicious cycle of crime before it starts through its cutting edge crime prevention programs. Our innovative Crime Prevention Partnerships are aimed at providing community-driven solutions to local crime problems. Another

successful plank in the coalition's crime prevention program is the highly successful School-Based Policing Program which has placed constables in schools across Queensland, forging closer ties than ever before between communities and police. We will continue to build on our crime prevention strategy.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Prisons Security

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (12.33 p.m.), by leave: Two incidents which are absolutely unprecedented in Australia and the Commonwealth have sparked the biggest shake-up in prisons security ever seen in this State. The Sir David Longland break-out on 5 November and the short-lived escape of three desperate inmates from the Borallon Correctional Centre last month left this Government with no alternative other than to take swift and decisive action. The level of planning, the firepower aimed from outside the perimeter fences at prison staff and the involvement of snipers who have shown they are ready and willing to kill to free their criminal associates have necessitated a level of security not previously contemplated.

My No. 1 priority always has been, and always will be, the protection of the public and the protection of correctional officers. The Cabinet Budget Committee approved an amount of almost \$14m for urgent upgrades at centres around the State. The majority of these upgrades have been completed. Modifications undertaken include perimeter fence and road upgrades; the addition of devices outside perimeters for the early detection of an intrusion; increasing the width of sterile zones and the clearing of foliage around centres; the ordering of armoured perimeter vehicles; weapons upgrades; increased staffing levels, including provision of dog squads; extra training for officers and a review of the management of all prisoners considered to be high risks of escaping.

I have also established a task force to ensure that the Government's efforts and financial resources are targeted where most needed and that relevant information, experience and intelligence is exchanged between the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Corrective Services Commission and service providers. This is proving to be very successful and the group, which I am chairing, has been meeting twice weekly. I will personally monitor the progress of security upgrades being

implemented and will be able to hear first-hand any feedback for improving the system that the providers and police have to give.

Every measure which can be taken should be considered to ensure the safety of the community and the integrity of security at correctional centres. We are also considering other measures to ensure that dangerous prisoners are properly managed. Prisoners considered to be the highest risk have, where necessary, been transferred to more secure accommodation. Those with a history of escapes also have been placed in appropriate accommodation. I make no apology for making it tough for those prisoners who have no regard for public safety—those who are willing to kill to escape. Security will be the No. 1 priority in corrections in Queensland. This Government owes that to the people. If protection of the public attracts some criticism, then so be it.

The two escapes have prompted an immediate review of legislative measures which are critical to the security and good order of the prison system. A number of legislative provisions are deficient and in need of reform. A range of measures is being considered in conjunction with stakeholders. A meeting of stakeholders was convened early last month and a discussion paper covering a range of issues was distributed for comment. Stakeholders were invited to submit written comment, and Queensland Corrective Services Commission officers were made available for stakeholders to express individual concerns or elements of issues after they had the opportunity to consider the discussion paper.

These measures are aimed at the group of about 150 of the most dangerous prisoners in the system, whose conduct has impacted on the remainder of the prison population. I am not seeking revenge against prisoners, but the violence associated with the SDL and Borallon incidents requires a measured response. While security must be paramount, there will continue to be an emphasis on preparing the majority of inmates for a return to the outside world, which means training in trades and other programs of a beneficial nature to both them and the community. I am determined to improve Queensland's corrections system. We have taken giant strides already, but there is a way to go and we must maintain the momentum and continue to effect improvements and enhancements.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Export Performance

Hon. D. J. SLACK (Burnett—Minister for Economic Development and Trade and Minister

Assisting the Premier) (12.37 p.m.), by leave: In the last half-year our export sector has performed exceptionally strongly. This is despite the serious consequences of the economic turmoil of some of our Asian neighbours who, of course, also number some of our biggest trading partners.

The Queensland Government continues to monitor the situation in Asia through its network of overseas and Brisbane-based trade and investment offices, and provides practical leadership to business looking to access Asian markets and to diversify globally. Last year we began to put in place a strategy to assist exporters looking to diversify into Europe and the USA, as well as emerging markets. Queensland can be encouraged by the resilience and successful performance of the export sector, as well as by the strength of the Queensland economy under the coalition Government, which has assisted the State to withstand the Asian currency meltdown.

In recent years, our exporters have had to cope with some very economically trying times, Asia notwithstanding. Low world commodity prices and, for most of last year, a strong Australian dollar have eaten into our traditional competitive advantages and business profitability. Asia continues to be a matter of concern and no-one really knows what the intermediate and long-term effects will be. However, recent surveys indicate renewed business confidence and that the currency turmoil is being managed and is anticipated to be short lived.

While it is too early for official figures to fully reflect the effects of the Asian problems, it is pleasing to note that, despite a weakening of Australia's trade performance, as reported in today's press, the latest six-monthly trade figures for Queensland show that our exporters and this Government are getting on with the job of exporting and of creating the jobs and wealth for the prosperity of the State and its children.

Exports for the first six months of 1997-98 stand at \$8.4 billion, a surge of 17.5% on the corresponding period in 1996-97. Queensland held its own against other States and eclipsed Victoria, which managed an increase of only 6.8% for the period. Leading the way were Queensland's coal and mining sectors as well as meat processing and aluminium smelting.

These pleasing results lend further support to my program of practical trade support and leadership for 1998. Briefly, the program takes Queensland to the world and brings the world to Queensland. It does this by providing real assistance to business to display their wares and services at international trade fairs. It enables

businesses to demonstrate their expertise and commitment by participating in international business missions. It identifies new global opportunities and on-the-ground international infrastructure support in terms of sales, market access and investment attraction. This month trade experts from my department will lead a mission of education providers to South America while I also will lead business missions to the emerging market of the United Arab Emirates and also to China.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cyclone May; Flooding

Hon. M. D. VEIVERS (Southport—Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport) (12.40 p.m.), by leave: I wish to report on the flooding that has been caused by Cyclone May and the associated tropical depression in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Reports from 8 o'clock today have described that rain in the gulf area is continuing and flooding extends from Normanton to Burketown.

Yesterday I spoke with the Mayor of Burketown, Annie Clarke. She described it as a sea of water between those towns. She predicted that flooding could be compared to or even get worse than the floods of 1974. If that is the case, many communities and homesteads will be isolated for at least three months. It is very hard to understand that down here, but that is a fact of life. Damage to roads, dams and fencing is already considerable and stock losses are expected to be very high. No lives have been lost at this stage and, although some evacuations have been made, people in those areas are considered to be safe.

Early today I signed the disaster declaration that provides funding support for the areas affected by flooding. Disaster control centres in all areas are operating and providing regular reports to the disaster control centre. Local emergency services units from the SES, the Ambulance Service and the fire service are on stand-by or are already involved in the response. Local communities are being asked to assess food reserves and, from those details, a resupply priority will be established.

Early today the Queensland Rescue helicopter and two crews from Townsville were deployed to Normanton and will be on stand-by to support local governments in assessing damage and responding to evacuations or resupply tasks. The priorities at the moment are to confirm that all people in the area are safe, to fully assess the immediate resupply needs and to prepare for ongoing support throughout the recovery phase of the next few months.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS (PREVENTION OF SUPPLY TO CHILDREN) BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 28 October 1997 (see p. 3871).

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (12.42 p.m.): The stated primary objective of this Bill is to reduce the number of children in Queensland taking up smoking. This is a worthy objective and one that I support. Smoking is the largest preventable cause of death and disease in Australia. More people are killed by smoking than by all other external sources, for example, road accidents, alcohol, drugs and suicides, put together. This year some 19,000 Australians, including 3,000 Queenslanders, will die of smoking related diseases. I have seen that figure put as the equivalent of a jumbo jet crashing every week of the year. How long would we allow that to happen without taking serious steps to prevent further deaths?

More than 1,000 die of lung cancer each year in Queensland alone. While some diehards continue to kid themselves that there is some debate about the effects of smoking, these long-term effects became obvious once antibiotics solved many of the earlier health problems of man. Sir Richard Dott, an epidemiologist at Oxford University, demonstrated the association between smoking and lung cancer in the 1950s. It is now known that lung cancer makes up only about one third of smoking related deaths.

I am pleased that finally this year, after so many years of denial, major cigarette manufacturers in the United States have acknowledged the fact that tobacco is both harmful and addictive. People often ask: why not simply ban all tobacco? One of the things we have to realise when discussing this is that there is no way that tobacco would have been allowed into any country in the world that has drug laws if it was introduced today. The fact that it is here historically makes it very much harder to handle.

Let us look at the effects. Cigarettes cause damage at the very point at which they make contact with the body and they continue as they go through. They are linked to cancers of the lip, the mouth, the throat, the oesophagus, the stomach, the bowel, the liver and the lung. They play a major role in cardiovascular health problems such as ischaemic heart disease, peripheral vascular disease where they start chopping off gangrenous toes and keep working up, pulmonary emboli, hypertension, cerebrovascular accidents or strokes. They also cause and exacerbate emphysema and asthma, and are implicated in both male and female infertility. I may have missed some health ill

effects of smoking, but I hope that honourable members present have got the message.

Unfortunately, smoking does not only affect those who use cigarettes. An increasing body of scientific evidence has shown that the breathing of tobacco smoke polluted air by non-smokers, or passive smoking, may also lead to serious harm. It is suspected that about 10% of smoking victims are affected by passive smoking while others, such as me, are severely irritated by smoke-filled air. Certainly cancer risks appear greatest for persons who have been exposed to smoke in childhood and then continue to be exposed to smoke in adulthood. Children of smoking adults are also twice as likely to become smokers and are, therefore, also more at risk of the effects of their own direct smoking. We need a major effort to prevent this vicious cycle of events in which the life threatening habits of the parents are passed to the young.

In the 1940s some 72% of men and around 27% of women smoked. It was so much a part of life that there was no need for expensive advertising campaigns telling us how men became more macho and women somehow became more sophisticated and smart if they had a fag hanging out of the corner of their mouth and they reeked like an old ashtray. It is a tragic irony that the Marlboro Man was yet another victim of smoking induced cancer.

Over the past 30 years, there has been a steady decline in the incidence of adult male smoking as the effects of smoking became common knowledge. Just recently we have seen a reduction in the number of new cases of lung cancer in men, reflecting this reduction in male smoking. Tobacco companies have also recognised this reduced smoking by men and over recent years have changed their advertising to target young people, in particular young women, via popular sporting figures and, in the most immoral act of all, the indigenous people and developing countries while knowing full well the effect that this will have on the health of those people. This targeting of children and young people has always been vigorously denied by the tobacco companies who argue that they simply aimed to change brands until last year when R. J. Reynolds admitted targeting children for decades, particularly the age group 14 to 24, as possible new smokers.

Cigarettes are among the most addictive substances of abuse and by far the most deadly. Once smoking is established in a young person, it is very, very difficult to quit, so it is with great regret that I read research figures showing that approximately 15,000 Queensland children will take up smoking each year, with approximately one quarter of those dying prematurely from

smoking related diseases. Smoking in young people is clearly on the increase. A few minutes outside one's local high school will show that young people are lighting up more often. Honourable members should watch them teem out of local shopping centres in school uniform with newly bought packets. US studies reported in the Australian Doctor last year showed that smoking just five cigarettes per day can affect a young person's lungs, with girls the most affected. Smoking among children increases the risk of chest illnesses, chronic cough, wheezing and bronchitis.

The reduction in the number of men smoking is encouraging, however this has been accompanied by an increase in women smoking, especially adolescent women. This increase has seen a parallel tragic increase in new lung cancers in women. It is therefore of enormous importance to every member here and every parent that tobacco sales and advertising are still being directed at young people. No-one can ignore these facts. In 1992 statistics showed that more girls aged 14 to 19 now smoked than boys of that age, and the most recent studies show 33% of Year 12 girls smoke. Girls who smoke face all of the health risks faced by their male counterparts. However, there are added risks. Young women who smoke and who use oestrogen therapy, especially for contraception, face increased risks in the area of pulmonary emboli and strokes.

There is also an increased risk of infertility. Maternal smoking, allowing for in utero exposure, can lead to low birth weight babies, with more respiratory problems and slow growth patterns. Children of smokers are more likely to have asthma and other respiratory problems and, of course, are more likely to smoke as adults.

I look forward to the introduction of truth in advertising, when in the future we will see cigarette ads showing not glamorous, healthy young things but women, in particular, with the premature wrinkling and yellowed skin and teeth that identify the regular smoker. They should also show coughing, gasping, unfit men and not sporting heroes. It is hard to convince a 15-year-old girl that at 30 she will care that her skin is that of a woman 15 years older. At the age of 15, 30 seems the far end of the age spectrum.

In recent years I have been disappointed to note an increase in the number of movie stars, models and the like who have been filmed or photographed with fag in hand, glamorising to the young and impressionable a very unglamorous product. Linked with the "slim body" obsession of magazines and, consequently, young girls, it makes for a dangerous mix. Many young girls believe

smoking will help them to slim and they start smoking to try and match those unrealistic images. Of course, the very last thing we need is a Premier seduced by the tobacco companies into swanning around in a pro-smoking jacket at a major women's sporting event, giving apparent approval for young women to take up smoking.

We should know that as responsible members of the community we must do everything possible to prevent young people—children—starting this very addictive and destructive habit. Every State in Australia has already addressed this legislation and raised the age of access to tobacco products to 18—as indeed have almost all developed countries. In the 1990s about 90 countries around the world have backed similar legislation and I understand that follow-up has shown extremely encouraging results.

It should be no surprise that I support this Bill. For many years I have consistently worked to reduce the harmful effects of smoking, both professionally in treating and diagnosing cancer prior to my election to Parliament, and since then I have frequently spoken out on the subject both inside and outside this House. It is also not surprising because, like every other worthwhile initiative to come out of the Health portfolio over the last two years, it was a long-planned Labor initiative. After a lengthy review and consultation process with all the stakeholders, this Bill was ready to be introduced in March 1996.

I accept that this Bill took a lengthy period to negotiate with all the parties. There were a number of issues to be resolved: for example, smoking by juveniles in detention and the provision of cigarettes for these juveniles. It was thought that a sudden prohibition for juveniles already under enormous stress would be too much. A lead-up time was required to make a more gradual transition, especially as these young people are frequently withdrawing from other substances as well. There was also extensive consultation with retailing groups regarding training, areas of responsibility, signage and penalties. But it cannot be disputed that this Bill had been negotiated through all those hoops and was ready to be introduced in March 1996. I table the relevant page of the Summary of Legislative Program to prove that point.

I can understand the need for an incoming Minister to want to review legislation in the pipeline before proceeding with it, but it has taken two years to review this legislation: two years to review legislation that has the support of all health groups and the Opposition. For 18 months of those two years the Minister has been indulging in media and photo opportunities

about the health benefits related to the legislation. If this Minister put half as much effort into the legislation reform agenda as he does into his media hunting, this legislation would have been welcomed into this House in the middle of 1996. Or would it? How serious is this Government?

In September 1996 this Government raised the tobacco levy. Unlike the Labor Party, the Government did not go honestly and openly to the electorate saying that it would increase tobacco taxes, giving the reasons for such increases—for health purposes, to provide jobs especially for young people and, of course, to fund the major hospital rebuilding program laid down by Labor. Rather, after vowing and declaring hand-on-heart that it would not increase any taxes, the Government deceitfully raised tobacco taxes at the first opportunity—along with a bundle of other tax hikes. Belatedly, the Minister tried to justify that tobacco tax hike as a "health initiative" to make it harder for young people to afford cigarettes.

This Minister has no shame. Not only was he sitting on this Bill at the time, but he was also sacking the Health Promotion Council and other Health promotion programs. I argued at the time that for the coalition tax hike to be a genuine health exercise, rather than a money grabbing exercise, it had to be matched by this legislation to remove the access of children to cigarettes and also to have the increased and focused anti-smoking programs planned to go with the legislation. But that did not happen! Clearly, it was just a blatant grab for money from children without any regard for their health.

This Minister and this Government shamefully—I repeat "shamefully"—and with total disregard for the health of the 55,000 child smokers, refused to bring in this legislation while there was any possibility of dragging money out of these children. Was it really a coincidence that this Bill only went to Cabinet in September 1997—just after the High Court decision on State franchise fees raised questions about the legality of so-called tobacco taxes? Was it really a coincidence that this Minister only seriously started action on this Bill when the High Court decision led to intense scrutiny of State laws relating to tobacco usage? Was it really a coincidence that this venal State Government collected over a full year's tobacco tax at these increased rates? From children!

These are serious questions. The Minister spoke of 55,000 children who smoke. Those children represent about 8% of the smoking population in Queensland, a body that contributes \$566m per year to the Treasurer's coffers. Allowing for children being lighter

smokers, they have contributed of the order of \$30m in the last year while this Bill stagnated. Has that \$30m gone into creating jobs for kids, as happened under the Labor Government? Not at all! Youth jobs and training programs have been slashed at both State and Federal levels. Has this \$30m gone into adolescent health services? No way! It took 18 months for the Minister to staff the adolescent mental health unit after saying he would do it in six weeks. The unit was planned and built by the Labor Government.

Nor have the funds been used to provide an adolescent health unit at the Royal Children's Hospital where, once again, Labor had provided the infrastructure and planned the unit. Have the funds gone into educational health promotion programs? Not likely! Are these children receiving education about the health hazards of smoking? The most recent survey of Queensland children reveals that in the early years, such as Year 7, when smoking is often first tried, 33% of Year 7 boys and 41% of Year 7 girls said that they had no lesson or part of a lesson at school about smoking. A larger number of students in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 said that they had received a lesson on smoking, but the percentage was still very low—around 25% maximum. When students reach Year 12—a time when an increasing number of students, both male and female, were smoking—about one third of students said that they had no lessons on smoking hazards.

This lack of education in our school system has led to over 50% of our children having some experience with smoking. This amounts to 154,722 children. The lack of Government funding for this type of education carries over into the general community. There are no programs within the community which are specifically designed to help children give up their addiction to cigarettes. There are general programs run by community organisations, but no programs which talk to children at their level on the hazards of smoking and how they might overcome the peer pressure, and nicotine addiction, to give up.

I welcome the recent initiatives of the Education Department to begin to address this issue in the closing days of this Government. But no worthwhile initiatives have come from this bonus of \$30m of tobacco tax from children. However, this bonus did fund that biased waste of money, the Connolly/Ryan inquiry, to the tune of \$14.5m. This bonus did fund the outrageously dishonest ads on juvenile crime and punishment that the disgraced Attorney-General loves. It has funded and will continue to fund the \$6m waste of child taxpayers' funds in self-promotion and photo opportunities of

Ministers. In the meantime, we must remember that about 15,000 children would have started smoking during that year when the Minister sat on the Bill and did nothing.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Mrs EDMOND: From the remarks I made earlier, it should not be surprising that Queensland has earned the dirty ashtray award from the AMA for its lack of commitment in introducing this legislation for two years running. Queensland was described in a recent article as the laggard State of Australia in respect of tobacco control, policy and prevention programs in schools. In recognising the upward trend in smoking take-up rates, particularly by teenage girls, the article went on to say—

"If inroads are to be made into this increasing recruitment of teenagers by tobacco companies, tobacco prevention programs need to be part of a comprehensive drug education program in Queensland schools."

We also need to develop and introduce smoking cessation programs for the children who are already addicted to this drug.

This article also stressed that, although the introduction of this legislation restricting minors' access to tobacco "is a positive step in the right direction", "legislation without enforcement will be no more than a lame duck law." It goes on to state that "the reinforcement of legislation is dependent upon the availability of resources and the level of priority given to the implementation of law" and that "legislation must not only be passed and enforced, but also must be seen to be enforced, especially by retailers." It is in this sector that I again ask the Minister: is this Government serious about protecting our young people? Or is this a token effort to win a few pats on the back from the medical community? Members of this House can judge for themselves.

As I said, Queensland is the laggard State in these reforms. We are not a risk-taking pioneer. We could look at the other States and bring in similar legislation with similar penalties to prevent confusion and claims of lack of knowledge, but is this Government serious? While the tenor of the legislation is relatively uniform, it is in the area of penalties that we can measure just how much a State values its young people. Let us look at those penalties, including the penalty for a first offence of selling tobacco to a child. In the first State to enact the legislation, Western Australia, the penalty is \$5,000; in South Australia, \$5,000; Tasmania, the last before Queensland, \$5,000; Victoria, \$1,000; New South Wales, \$5,000; the ACT, \$1,000; and the Northern

Territory, \$10,000. But in Queensland, what is being proposed by this Government? \$75! That is right: \$75 in Queensland. What sort of a disincentive will that be? How many will that deter? It would not pay for one quarter of the Premier's fancy white sports coat, plus the smoking logo. However, we must not despair, because the penalty will double to \$150 for a second offence. Most of the other States also double their second offence penalty to \$10,000. As I said, members can judge for themselves just how serious this Government really is about preventing the sale of tobacco to children. Not at all!

Very few small retailers or employees would take any chance, no matter how remote, of risking a fine of \$5,000. It is a significant disincentive. But \$75? I have to say that they would recoup that from the sales of cigarettes to young children very quickly. A couple of lunch hours next door to the school would repay that \$75. How many would be prepared to gamble when the risks and the subsequent costs are so low?

I am told that this change to Labor's version of the Bill—and the only apparent change—comes about because of pressure from retailers and that, without caving in this way, the Minister would not have reached agreement with them for this legislation. I was fascinated that the Minister takes his policy direction in this manner—against all health expert advice. But I have news for the Minister. His poor negotiating powers are earning him a reputation in Canberra, where he is renowned as "Rollover Mike", as well as here in Queensland. The previous Labor Government had agreement with all parties for the \$5,000 penalties. They might not have admitted that to the Minister, but the retailers had agreed and wanted this figure on the public signage as a reinforcement, so that they could point to the sign and say, "We just cannot afford to sell cigarettes to kids or we cop a \$5,000 fine." This Minister cannot even get agreement where it has already been negotiated. Just how weak and spineless can one get? It is no wonder that the health and drug and alcohol groups are saying, "Nice legislation, sounds good, means well, pity it is completely toothless." I do not know who sold the Minister that line, but they saw him coming.

In one of his numerous press releases last year, the Minister stated that Labor had lacked the courage to introduce this Bill. It does not take a lot of courage when he has rolled over on each and every touchy point—at the first sign of lobbying from those who stand to make the most money out of our young people continuing to smoke. It is worth noting that the South

Australian Government introduced tough new penalties of up to \$5,000 for employees and employers alike just months before going into an election. I do not think it was raised even once as an issue during that election, and I followed that election very closely.

It is also worth noting that, in this coalition Government's Justice and Other Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2), there are amendments to the Classification of Publications Act 1991 that will impose a fine on retailers of up to \$2,250, or one month in jail, if they display a magazine cover on the wrong shelf. And the Retailers Association has made the valid point that, while the community is well aware of the dangers of smoking cigarettes, the proposed amendment to the Classification of Publications Act makes a statement that this Government is more concerned that young people may see something slightly naughty on the front of a magazine than it is for young persons purchasing cigarettes and getting hooked on smoking and affecting their health.

The Opposition has taken a responsible role on this legislation. We welcome it. We will support and provide encouragement for it. We also want to ensure that this legislation works, that it is not a token effort, that it has teeth to enforce the legislation, and that it is worth introducing. If the Government seriously is concerned about the health of our young people and the prevention of sales to them of a toxic substance, then let it join us to amend this Bill to introduce the penalties that it said it would introduce—not the ones that it has hidden away in this Bill and not publicised—that is, \$1,000 for small tobacco retailers and \$5,000 for large retailers. And we will keep \$75, as now proposed, for employees. I remind members that these are maximum penalties, not minimum penalties, and, as such, they are at the very modest end of the range in the States of which I spoke earlier.

While I welcome the support for the principles of this Bill from retailers, of course retailers will object to these penalties. We are discussing a major sales item for them. As I said earlier, the State tax revenue alone on tobacco product sales to young people is in the order of \$30m a year. I have no idea what the retail profit is on such sales. I cannot even tell members what a packet of cigarettes costs. I do not blame them for looking after their interests, but we are here today to look after the interests of our children, not the retailers. For that reason I ask the Minister and members on both sides of the House to support the Opposition's amendments and to take the penalties back to the levels that the Minister and the department said would be

applied and would be appropriate. Presumably, these were well considered and rationally calculated as the level of penalty needed to achieve results—before the Minister announced them in the media. Clearly, it will cost retailers nothing—not a cent—unless they break the law and sell tobacco to children. The Opposition also foreshadows some minor amendments that will further protect employees from being unwittingly used to sell tobacco products to children.

The member for Cook will raise a very specific problem in relation to vending machines in remote communities. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Minister ways that this could be addressed without in any way relaxing the legislation. Smoking in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities is a major health problem, and that further reduces their life expectancies relative to the wider population and complicates already problematic heart and kidney diseases and diabetes, for example.

I would also like to add my support for the planned education programs for retailers. I commend the handout produced by the Health Department of Western Australia, which explains both the law, the penalties, parental responsibilities and the rationale behind the legislation. I would support the provision of similar handouts for retailers in Queensland. Western Australia is one State that has led the charge against juvenile smoking, with its original legislation prohibiting the sale of tobacco to under 18-year-olds as far as back as 1916. It recently had a review of its legislation. It did not decide to reduce its penalties. It decided to increase signage and to make other minor amendments; however, it made no attempt to reduce the penalties imposed. I table that handout from Western Australia.

Legislators in Western Australia have been brave enough to impose penalties that ensure their legislation works: \$5,000 for the first offence for individuals—and my understanding is that that includes employees as it does in South Australia—and \$20,000 for large retailers. Second offences are \$10,000 and \$40,000 respectively. It is interesting to note that, in comments to the media in September, the Minister used Western Australia as an example of how this legislation can work, how it can be successful, with only 28% of juveniles successful in purchasing cigarettes compared with 89% before the new fines. That is a huge drop. They are indeed extremely encouraging results that, probably more than anything else, vindicate Western Australia's strong stance in term of penalties.

I table a graph showing the increase in cigarette smoking among Year 7 to Year 12

children from the study by Dr John Lowe et al, which will be useful if anyone needs convincing that we have a major issue on our hands. Although smoking in the general community decreased from 33% in 1983 to 25% in 1995, with an added reduction in consumption in juveniles smoking, rates for Year 12 boys increased from 19% in 1984 to 31% in 1996. For Year 12 girls, the figure increased from 22% in 1984 to 33% in 1996. We clearly need to increase dramatically the anti-tobacco education programs in our schools, including primary schools—not with cute slogans or pretty pictures, but with quality, tried and proven, targeted educational programs.

Some 80% of smokers indicate that they would like to quit, including the member for Rockhampton whenever I nag him about this subject. Five out of six smokers started smoking before the age of 16. Statistics show very few take up smoking after 18 years. Clearly, prevention is better than cure. Preventing those young people from starting will significantly improve their health throughout their lives and reduce the massive social and health costs that smoking has on the community. However, we also must recognise reality and provide Quit programs for those young people already addicted to this insidious drug. Most of all, we need legislation with penalties that are fair, but which show that we are serious about protecting our young. This is no time for legislation with token penalties that can be shrugged off as "nice but useless, toothless". It is a time to say that we, as members of Parliament, are united in trying to save the health and lives of our young people, that we care enough about our young people and their lives to wear a bit of flak, that we care as much as other States and other developed countries around the world about our children and their health.

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah) (2.43 p.m.): Tobacco kills. It kills more Australians than any single preventable cause, more than alcohol and far more than illicit drugs. We know that it will kill one in four young people who start smoking in their teenage years. The Australian Bureau of Statistics recently reported that although the proportion of smokers in the population has declined, the decrease is due mainly to people giving up smoking rather than not taking up the habit. Studies of tobacco use in Australia show that there has been a slight decrease in the incidence of smoking among 17-year-olds; yet there has been an increase over time in the proportion of adolescent girls smoking. Although girls are more likely than boys to be smoking by the age of 17, at the age of 12, the reverse is true. A 1990 study revealed that 6% of boys aged 12 years old were current

smokers, compared with 5% of girls of the same age. From the research undertaken, it can also be said that, although adolescent girls are more likely to smoke than adolescent boys, boys tend to consume more when they do smoke.

Recognising those facts and figures, there is no doubt that preventing the supply of tobacco to children is good law. The Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill is to be supported. It brings Queensland into line with the Australian standard by targeting the availability of tobacco to children and adolescents. It is a law that is well overdue. This Bill replaces very old legislation in the form of the Juvenile Smoking Suppression Act of 1905. This existing 1905 law places restrictions on the sale of cigarettes to children under the age of 16 years by making it an offence to, firstly, sell, give or supply cigarettes or tobacco products to any person under the age of 16. It also makes it an offence for a person under the age of 16 to be smoking in a public place. That law—and that is our current law—imposes fines of \$20 for the sale of tobacco and 50c for the first offence. I believe it is doubled to \$1 for the second offence for a child who is convicted of using tobacco. Needless to say, the current law is meaningless and laughable as a measure to combat underage smoking.

The fact that this Parliament passed a law over 90 years ago in an attempt to prevent children smoking shows just how long we have known that smoking is unhealthy and damaging, particularly for young people. For instance, I have read some of the contributions made by members of the Legislative Council when the 1905 Act was debated. Those contributions displayed that it was understood even back then that smoking was harmful. I would like to quote from one member of the council, Mr T. A. Johnson, who said—

"In the town in which I live and in Brisbane, I believe from my own observation that smoking among small boys is largely on the increase. I have noticed boys going to school puffing cigarettes. It is generally admitted by the medical professional that cigarette smoking has a most injurious effect upon the growth and development of the youths. I have read that it is carried on to such an extent in America that in some cases it has caused loss of sight and injured digestive organs and that in various ways it has retarded growth and development."

Mr Johnson was quite right. In fact, as early as 1798, renowned American physician Benjamin Rush condemned tobacco for its detrimental effects on health. The history of tobacco and medical knowledge of its effects is briefly

canvassed in the Scientific American article titled "The Global Tobacco Epidemic", published in May 1995. That article states—

"By the mid to late 1800's many prominent physicians were expressing concern about the development of certain medical problems connected with tobacco. They suggested a relation between smoking and coronary disease, even recognising the potential association between passive smoking and heart problems. They also noted a correlation with lip and nasal cancer.

Although tobacco use was relatively common in that century, it did not produce the widespread illnesses it does today. Individuals of the time consumed only small amounts, mostly in the form of pipe tobacco, cigars, chewing tobacco or snuff. Cigarette smoking was rare. Then in 1881, came the invention of the cigarette-rolling machine, followed by the development of safety matches. Both significantly encouraged smoking, and by 1945 cigarettes had largely replaced other forms of tobacco consumption. Smokers increased their average of 40 cigarettes a year in 1880 to an average of 12,854 in 1977, the peak of American consumption per individual smoker.

The rise in tobacco use made the adverse effects of smoking more apparent. Medical reports in the 1920's strengthened the suspected links between tobacco and cancers. The connection to life span was first noted in 1938, when an article in the journal Science suggested that heavy smokers had a shorter life span than did non-smokers."

That tells us that for an awfully long time we have known that tobacco is harmful. As early as 1905 we recognised that measures should be taken to limit, if not prevent, children from gaining access to cigarettes. Then how does this Bill before us today go about achieving that task? The Bill is described by the Minister as being part of a package. The elements of the package are a public awareness campaign, education kits targeted at businesses that sell tobacco products, a telephone advice service for those businesses, the display of signage in businesses advising that it is an offence to sell cigarettes to a person under the age of 18 years and, finally, the creation of new offences governing the sale of tobacco.

However, I note that the Minister's second-reading speech makes no mention of the level of resources that will be applied to the educational aspects of this package, nor is any mention made

of the resources that the environmental health officers of his department will have in their enforcement role. Clearly, without adequate resourcing the initiative will be of limited or no benefit. It will also lead to charges of hypocrisy against this Government. Those charges will flow from a comparison of the taxes that the Government will receive from school-age smokers as opposed to the money committed to reducing the levels of smoking.

In a study commissioned by the New South Wales Cancer Council, it was shown that in 1994 some 211,000 Australian children were smokers. The taxes paid on those cigarettes provided State Governments with almost \$8.5m a year and further provided the Federal Government with almost \$13m a year. That amounts to each child smoker contributing \$60 a year to State Governments while the same Governments contributed a mere 11c per under-age smoker in precaution programs—\$60 in taxes received to 11c spent is a stark contrast.

I appreciate that such a comparison can be misleading. It fails to account for the money spent on health care generally or that tax-induced price increases are a disincentive to taking up smoking. However, the point about adequate resourcing of the education programs and enforcement is something that I would like to hear the Minister respond to in his reply.

The Bill follows essentially the same scheme as the 1905 Act by creating an offence for a tobacco products supplier to personally supply tobacco to a child or for an employee to supply tobacco. In relation to the acts of employees, the Bill creates a defence based upon four preconditions, namely, advising the employee of the law, advising that proof of age will be required when selling to anyone not clearly over the age of 18, advising the employee that he or she will be committing an offence if a sale proceeds and, finally, the employee must acknowledge the instructions in writing.

It is not unusual for legislation to make employers vicariously liable for the actions of employees, nor is it unusual for an employer to be criminally responsible for an employee in certain circumstances. Under the proposals in this Bill, the means by which an employer may establish a defence is highly prescriptive. A more common means could have been used to establish a defence, that is, to show that the employer acted reasonably and in good faith to ensure that the law was complied with. Steps taken which establish this is then, on a case-by-case determination, based upon the facts of that case.

The highly prescriptive approach in this Bill has advantages but it also has disadvantages. Its

advantage is that an employer can take definite steps to avoid liability and successful prosecution. The disadvantage is that the onus is placed on the employee to sign a declaration in the case where minimal or no instruction was given. Members could easily imagine a new employee who, on his or her first day of work, is handed a pile of forms and among those forms is that employee's tax declaration, superannuation forms and probably some other employment details. In that bundle of forms that the employee is handed is also a declaration that he or she needs to sign to say that he or she has been given adequate instructions about the sale of tobacco products. The Government must ensure that this law operates fairly for employees. Again, that depends on resources. So does the issue of enforcement.

The effectiveness of legislation of this type was canvassed in a 1995 British Medical Journal article titled "Counting the Cost of Children's Smoking." The authors of that article concluded—

"... the best hope of reducing smoking by children comes from more active enforcement of existing legislation. In spite of legislation"—

and they are referring to the British legislation that was introduced in 1991—

"banning tobacco sales to those under 16 years, only 35% of pupils aged 11-15 who had attempted to buy cigarettes in 1993-4 year had been refused. There is good evidence from the United States and Australia that simply informing tobacco retailers of the law has little effect, but that active enforcement (by test purchases and prosecutions) can be very successful in reducing sales to children ... One of the main requirements for a reduction in children's smoking is a shift in public attitudes, such that a street corner newsagent selling cigarettes to children is perceived in the same way as a street corner dealer selling crack cocaine. The main difference between the two is that the tobacco sale is more likely to lead to a lifelong addiction and premature death."

In summary, I support this Bill and note that it has been a long time coming. Queensland's laws are the last in Australia to be modernised. The measures contained in the Bill are worth while, but will have an impact only if the educational aspects are properly funded and a strong effort is put into the enforcement of offence provisions.

I also note that the offences themselves are by way of fines of \$75. We have to make the offences under the Act meaningful. In that

regard, I support the Opposition's foreshadowed amendments to increase the fines so that they are not as laughable as the existing law. Governments receive a great deal of money from tobacco excises. Huge amounts are committed to the health system in treating the effects of smoking. Logically, smoking should be tackled by stopping the next generation from becoming addicted. This Bill will help, but it is not all that needs to be done.

Mr MALONE (Mirani) (2.57 p.m.): I rise to support the Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill 1997. This Bill is part of a package of measures aimed at reducing the uptake of smoking by children. The package will include a public awareness campaign, the distribution of educational kits to businesses that sell tobacco, the establishment of a toll-free telephone number to respond to any queries that businesses or employees might have in relation to the legislation and the distribution of free signage to businesses that sell tobacco.

The coalition Government is also considering options for a broader campaign targeted at reducing the demand for tobacco among young people. For example, the public awareness campaign will let young people know that they must expect to be asked for proof of age when they purchase tobacco. The education kits will include a guide to the Bill as it relates to counter sales and sales from vending machines. The kits will also include information for employees of businesses that sell tobacco.

The Bill will also reduce the number of children who take up tobacco smoking by reducing the availability of tobacco to children. That will be achieved by educating and cooperating with the businesses that sell tobacco and with the general community rather than through heavy-handed enforcement. In that regard, the education component of this package that accompanies the Bill will be important. The distribution of signage to get the message out at the point of sale is also one of the key aspects of this particular package.

The Bill will replace the Juvenile Smoking Suppression Act 1905, which allows tobacco to be sold to people over the age of 16. Setting the age at 16 is no longer acceptable. The Bill will prohibit the sale and supply of tobacco to people under the age of 18. Moving the age to 18 will bring Queensland into line with all other Australian States and Territories.

Under the Bill it will be an offence for a tobacco product supplier, the primary retailer, to personally supply tobacco to a child. Under the Bill people who operate vending machines are dealt with separately. It will also be an offence for a tobacco product supplier to allow his or her

employees to supply tobacco to a child. However, it is the intention of the Bill that tobacco product suppliers should not be unfairly liable for the actions of their employees where the tobacco product suppliers have told their employees not to sell tobacco to children. To ensure that this will not happen, the Bill sets out four preventive measures that suppliers can use to minimise the chances that their employees will sell tobacco to children. If a tobacco product supplier has taken the four preventive measures, the supplier will not be liable for the actions of his or her employees. This offers fairness and certainty to retailers.

The four preventive measures are simple measures that tobacco product suppliers will easily be able to incorporate into their existing management employment practices. Firstly, the tobacco product supplier needs to tell his or her employees that they must not sell or supply tobacco to a child, even if that child claims to be purchasing tobacco for an adult. Secondly, the tobacco product supplier needs to tell his or her employees that they must ask for proof of age before supplying tobacco to a person, unless that person is clearly over the age of 18. Thirdly, employees need to be told that, having received these instructions, if they do supply tobacco to a child they will be committing an offence. Fourthly, employees are to acknowledge the instructions in writing.

The Bill also offers fairness to employees. An employee of a tobacco product supplier will commit an offence only if he or she supplies tobacco to a child after his or her employer has been through the four preventive measures with the employee. This means that an employee will not be liable for selling tobacco to a child unless he or she has been told first that he or she must not sell tobacco to children and that it is an offence to sell tobacco to a child.

The unions have expressed concern that employers will not properly explain the employee's responsibilities under this Bill to the employees. To respond to these concerns, the education material sent to the employers will strongly emphasise the necessity to properly explain to their employees that they must not sell tobacco to children. Education and support will also be available to the employers to ensure that they understand completely the legislation.

If a tobacco product supplier or an employee of a tobacco product supplier supplied tobacco to a child but honestly and reasonably believed that the child was an adult, the supplier or employee will have a defence under the Bill. However, if the supplier or employee did not ask the child for proof of age prior to supplying the tobacco to the child, that will then be evidence

that the supplier's or employee's belief that the child was an adult was not a reasonable belief. The intention of this provision is, in commercial situations, to reinforce the rule: when in doubt, ask for proof of age.

Where a tobacco product supplier commits two offences within two years, the court sentencing the supplier for the second offence can order that the supplier be prohibited from supplying tobacco for a period between two months and one year. The court will also be able to set conditions on the sale of tobacco by the tobacco product supplier. However, where the tobacco product supplier operates more than one outlet, the order may apply only to the outlet or outlets where the offence occurred.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (3.05 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill such as it is and to support the amendments that have been foreshadowed by the Opposition spokesperson, the member for Mount Coot-tha, Mrs Edmond. However, I am not as convinced about the efficacy of this Bill as a number of my colleagues appear to be. In fact, one can almost equate this Bill to wetting oneself while wearing a dark suit: you'll feel much better, but nobody will notice much. In my view, the legislation will only postpone the onset of smoking among young people.

Mr Grice: You have got dark trousers, too.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I have, but I do not feel much better yet. Queensland already has legislation governing the minimum smoking age. While I do not oppose the idea that we should have the same smoking age legislation as the other States have, our current legislation is ignored in much the same way as many of the other age impositions on our young people are ignored. Kids pay scant regard to the law in many areas. Fines will not prevent the supply of tobacco to children, no matter the magnitude of those fines. Furthermore, it is ridiculous that this Bill condones the supply of tobacco products to young children by their parents. What a ridiculous situation that is. We are trying to introduce legislation that will protect young children from the very real and dangerous consequences of tobacco addiction, yet we allow parents to decide that it is all right to addict their children. That is a farce, as is the fact that our society already condones and anticipates that our young people will use alcohol before the legal alcohol age. Nobody cares too much about the fact that in a number of places in this State Schoolies Week seems to be a binge-drinking exercise for 17-year-olds.

As other speakers have said, although perhaps not quite so baldly, this Bill is useless

without a proper education program and we have seen nothing of that yet. I have no confidence that this Minister can develop an advertising campaign that is culturally appropriate to young people and, therefore, will be effective in helping them to decide to give up or not take up smoking. I point to the Minister's actions in relation to the AIDS Council advertising that is currently in the news. The Minister has decided that the AIDS Council cannot advertise a program that it is running because it looks like a dating agency. I say to the Minister that that is possibly the whole point of it: if it looks like a dating agency, perhaps the people who are at risk will make inquiries as a consequence of seeing the advertisement and will be provided with the services that the AIDS Council is offering. It may look like a dating agency, but so long as it does not function as a dating agency what is the problem?

An effective advertising program for young people will look like anathema to many of us who have passed the age of 30, or whatever the age is that young people consider to be old. However, that advertising campaign needs to be culturally appropriate to young people. I do not think that the Minister is able to oversee such a culturally appropriate campaign, because he has demonstrated a certain narrowness of mind when it comes to dealing with people who are not of exactly the same make-up as himself.

The scourge of tobacco is well known to all of us except those who have some interest in ensuring that tobacco products continue to be available to people in this country. A 1991 study done for the Federal Department of Community Services and Health by David Collins and Helen Lapsley very clearly pointed out that the cost of tobacco to the community generally was 47.5%, or \$6.84 billion per year. We need to be mindful not only of the health costs to the individuals who smoke but also of the costs to the community generally.

A Government that brings forward legislation that is only just fiddling about the edges and which does not have any efficacy has to be questioned. Lest anybody should object, I point out that I would raise the same question about Governments of any persuasion. I do not think that Parliaments around the country, be they State or Federal, have the resolve to do anything much about smoking. As I said, the best I can see this Bill doing is postponing the onset of smoking. One might wonder about its effectiveness. In this country we should be about trying to find a way to phase out smoking. Every time a Government taxes smokers, a number of people——

Mr Stephan: Do you believe in fairies?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Obviously, the member's colleague the Minister does not.

Every time the Government tries to raise the taxes on smokes, there is an outcry. A number of smokers have to be considered sympathetically in that situation, because they have to be regarded as people who are addicted. They might not see themselves as being addicted to a drug in the same way as they might see a person who is addicted to an illicit drug. However, tobacco is a drug of addiction, and we need to deal with people sympathetically.

Simply putting up the prices, the fines or the legal smoking age does very little to convince people not to smoke. Those are not the ways to deal with smoking. There has to be a better way. There has to be a way in which smoking can be phased out so that young people—in this case, those who are 16 to 18 years old—do not take up smoking, which is what this Bill hopes to achieve. However, we also need to have people who are 18 to 60 years old not taking up smoking for the first time. I notice that Mr Perrett reckons that Mr Grice falls into that age group—and I think closer to the latter.

The issue is that we need to do something about smoking. I understand that the coalition Government has undertaken a second round of purchasing quota off tobacco growers who want to get out of the industry. That is a step in the right direction.

Mr Grice: A big tick.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Yes, that is a tick for the coalition Government. We should not do anything to disadvantage those people. They should receive proper compensation. Not producing tobacco leaf in this State is a good start in trying to come up with a legislative regime that sympathetically reduces smoking throughout the entire community. Generally, the ills of smoking do not result from the first cigarette. People who take up smoking in their early years will experience adverse effects much later in life. It is a cumulative effect.

I wish to raise a couple of aspects with respect to this Bill, one that I find interesting and one very concerning. The interesting part of this Bill is its treatment of vending machines. I have not yet seen any action to move the cigarette vending machine in the Parliamentary Annexe from the third floor to the fifth floor, where the licensed area is. However, it seems to me that that is perhaps a bit of overkill. Although we condone smoking and although we are not bringing in legislation to prohibit smoking altogether—

Mr Grice: The member for Rockhampton chained himself to the vending machine.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: The member for Rockhampton may well have done that, but I doubt that it was a cigarette vending machine.

In my view, restricting vending machines to licensed areas as a means of ensuring that young children do not have access to them is overkill. There are any number of places where children seldom, if ever, tread and where the clientele is, by nature, adult. I cite large businesses with cafeterias and the like that may wish to use a vending machine rather than to sell tobacco products over the counter to their employees. We need to consider those particular circumstances. I do not think there would be too many children working at the Ford factory on Kingsford-Smith Drive, because child labour is outlawed. However, from time to time the people working there may wish to buy a packet of cigarettes. Often, the decision will be that it is better, for a range of reasons, to have cigarettes dispensed by a machine. In situations where only adults would be the clientele, we should look at some relaxation of the provisions.

Of much greater concern to me—and members will have heard me speak on this issue any number of times—are the provisions in this Bill that relate to the search and seizure powers that follow from entry without a warrant. We have gone backwards and forwards on these issues many times since this Government came to power. In fairness, I suspect that these types of powers were being drafted for introduction into legislation in the latter years of the former Government also.

We would all be aware of what happens. Politicians set out with an object; they want to achieve something. To do that, they might need some enforcement provisions. Those advising us, whether they be in the departments or in the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, have a method of achieving it. These days, their method of achieving inspectorate powers tends to be to say that people can enter premises without a warrant provided they obtain consent. Any number of arguments are put forward for that. However, I will continue to put forward an argument of my own. I know that on at least one occasion late last year an amendment was made to reflect this argument. On another occasion last year, with respect to the Keno Bill, the Treasurer brought in legislation that had powers included in it such as I would like.

A person who seeks the consent of the occupier to enter premises should have to do a few very simple things first. That person should have to tell the occupier why he or she wants to come into the premises and that person should have to advise the occupier that the occupier need not give consent. Then the person would

need to obtain from the occupier a form that states simply that the occupier consented to the entry. Quite rightly, in the Keno Bill provision was made such that, if the inspector did not undertake those few small steps, any evidence produced was not admissible.

People need to be aware that throughout a whole range of Bills across a whole range of departments these powers have been provided to inspectors. These powers are invasive of an individual's property and business and allow subterfuge entries to be gained. As a Parliament, we need to be very vigilant in protecting the rights of individuals.

This Bill is about protection; it is about protecting young children from smoking, and I think that is a worthy thing for us to do. However, stuck in the middle of the Bill, as Mr Lester well knows, is a provision that allows the rights of people occupying premises to be violated by an inspector, who may not be a policeman who has been through the academy. I am not quite sure what is required of a person who is to be appointed as an inspector under this Bill. I am sure that some of them—but not all of them—will be police officers. The entry of premises with a warrant is a long established, workable, decent and fair system, and we need to be careful about any departure from it. I am concerned that this is yet another instance when this departure has been brought forward.

In conclusion, I hope that I am wrong when I say that I doubt this Bill will achieve much. I would like to come back in 12 or 18 months and have a look at it.

Mr Tanti: You won't be here.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Yes, I will be here, but I have my doubts about the honourable member opposite.

In 12 or 18 months let us come back and see just how effective this legislation has been. I suspect that, as we have heard in the Parliament here this afternoon, we will still see young children riding their bicycles to school with a cigarette hanging out of their mouth. If those cigarettes have been provided to them by their parents, why then are their parents immune from suffering a penalty under this Act? I do not believe that this legislation will achieve much. Our hope lies with the education program. We have not seen this education program; we know nothing about it, and I have grave doubts of it ever being effective. However, I suppose the best I can say is that we have to do something. If this is the something that the Parliament has before it, I will support this something.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore) (3.21 p.m.): I stand to support the Tobacco

Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill 1997. Following on from my colleague the member for Mirani, I would like to say that this Bill also contains provisions relating to tobacco product vending machines, as has been outlined by some of the other speakers. A Queensland Health study in 1993 found that children were successful in 97% of their attempts to purchase tobacco from vending machines. A 1992 study in New South Wales found that children perceived vending machines as the easiest source of tobacco. As members might imagine, a vending machine known by children in the area to be largely unsupervised would fast become a prime source of tobacco for children.

Under the Bill, it will be an offence to possess a vending machine in premises other than those premises licensed under the Liquor Act. Children cannot enter some licensed premises and would be accompanied by an adult in most other licensed premises. Licensed premises are generally not left unsupervised while open to the public. In addition, staff in licensed premises have existing responsibilities for asking for proof of age and ensuring that children are not able to obtain alcohol.

Responsible practices by licensees will ensure that vending machines in licensed premises are not a viable source of tobacco for children. Currently, over 95% of the vending machines in Queensland are already in licensed premises. This Bill will cause some inconvenience to businesses that use vending machines on premises other than licensed premises and to businesses that hire out vending machines. Steps have been taken to minimise that inconvenience. The provision of the Bill that restricts the location of vending machines to licensed premises will commence six months after the other provisions of the Bill. This is intended to give businesses that use or hire vending machines time to dispose of stock and make alternative arrangements.

The Director-General of Queensland Health wrote to all known vending machine hiring businesses in Queensland in October 1997 to formally warn them that this Bill will restrict the location of vending machines to licensed premises. Given the delayed commencement of the relevant provision, vending machine hiring businesses will have almost 12 months' warning before the provision becomes effective.

As well as restricting the location of vending machines, the Bill will ensure that people in charge of vending machines in licensed premises behave responsibly in relation to vending machines. It will be an offence for a licensee of licensed premises to allow a child to obtain tobacco from a vending machine on those

licensed premises. However, the Bill recognises that a licensee cannot always prevent a child from obtaining tobacco from a vending machine. Therefore, the Bill sets out four prevention measures that licensees can take to minimise the chance that a child will obtain tobacco from a vending machine on a licensed premises.

The four prevention measures are simply commonsense management practices in relation to vending machines. Firstly, the licensee needs to locate the vending machine so that the employees of the licensee can see people using the machine. For example, it would not be appropriate to place the machine in a corridor or entry area not usually visible to staff members. Secondly, staff are to be instructed that they are to take reasonable steps to ensure that a child does not obtain a tobacco product from the machine even if the product is for or is claimed to be for an adult. For example, a staff member could tell a child not to use the machine and could call for assistance from a senior staff member if the child persists. Thirdly, the licensee needs to tell staff that, unless a person seeking to use the vending machine is clearly over 18, staff are to sight proof of age before allowing the person to use the machine. Fourthly, staff members are to acknowledge these instructions in writing.

It is not necessary that licensees give all their employees the necessary instructions. The instructions need to be given only to employees who work near the vending machine and can observe its use in the course of their employment. There is no liability for employees under the vending machine provisions of the Bill because, unlike over-the-counter situations, no individual employee is involved in supplying tobacco to a child where the supply occurs via a vending machine. As with tobacco product suppliers, courts will be able to prohibit persistent offenders from possessing a tobacco product vending machine for between two months and a year.

The Bill will also require that tobacco product suppliers place signage about the Bill at the point of sale and that similar signs be affixed to vending machines. Queensland Health will supply the necessary signage free of charge to retailers and licensees of licensed premises. Under the Bill, it will also be an offence for an adult to supply tobacco to a child where the supply occurs other than as part of a business activity or by a vending machine. This is intended to pick up the situation where, for example, an older acquaintance of a child purchases tobacco on behalf of the child. However, it will not be an offence for an adult to supply tobacco to a child where the adult is the child's parent or guardian.

The Bill also prohibits the sale of cigarettes or cut tobacco below certain minimum quantities. Small packets of cigarettes are inexpensive and are, therefore, very attractive to children because children have low levels of disposable income. These provisions therefore provide an additional means of reducing the availability of tobacco to children. The Bill also prohibits the supply in a commercial situation of food or toys that resemble tobacco products or the packaging of tobacco products. The reason for this is that studies have shown that children who use products such as lolly cigarettes are more likely to experiment with tobacco than children who have not used such products.

The Bill will mainly be enforced by environmental health officers from Queensland Health. Police officers will play a supporting role where required. Environmental health officers and police officers will have the usual investigative powers such as powers of entry and search. In addition, an environmental health officer or a police officer who sees a person being supplied with tobacco and who suspects that the person is a child will be able to require the person to show proof of age. If the person does not or cannot supply proof of age or the proof of age indicates that the person is a child, the officer will be able to demand the person's name and address. Without this power, an environmental health officer or police officer might see a young looking person being supplied with tobacco and have no means of establishing that person's age.

As mentioned earlier, tobacco retailers and licensees under the Liquor Act will be sent a kit containing the signage required to be displayed under the Bill and explaining their responsibilities under the Bill. Queensland Health will also provide a dedicated phone number to answer any questions that retailers or licensees may have about the Bill. To give retailers and licensees time to familiarise themselves with the Bill and give instructions to their staff, the provisions of the Bill will commence operation in the next couple of months.

Parents and schools in Queensland are doing their best to stop children from taking up smoking. However, outside the home or school, many children have found that it is easy to get cigarettes. This is a situation that I am sure many parents find very worrying. This Bill sends a clear message that it is unacceptable to sell tobacco to children and makes it a lot harder for children to get tobacco in Queensland. I am confident that in the long term these measures will help to reduce the number of children who take up smoking in Queensland and will, therefore, result in better health outcomes for Queensland children later in life.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (3.30 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly on the Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill. I have had correspondence with the Minister in relation to vending machines. I support the legislation and I support general moves to make sure that we try to discourage young people from taking up the habit of smoking. I am a person who has learnt from bitter experience. I had my first smoke when I was nine years of age and I smoked continuously up until—

Mr Tanti: It stunted your growth.

Mr BREDHAUER: It stunted my growth, yes. I have a number of features that may be attributable to smoking or other factors. I smoked fairly regularly until I was in my twenties. I have been lucky enough to be one of those who has managed to kick the habit. It is now 20 years since I gave up cigarettes. I know how difficult it is to give up smoking. I once gave up smoking for three years, and then returned to the habit before I finally gave it up. We need to prevent young people from taking up the habit of smoking. These remarks apply particularly to young women.

We need to direct our attention to the problem of smoking in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I do not have any statistics, but I feel that the rate of tobacco usage in those communities is particularly high. I am sure that young people in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities take up smoking at an early age. This contributes to the range of health problems that we see in those communities. We need to be vigilant in addressing this problem.

A business operator in my electorate, Stan Thornton, has contacted me. Mr Thornton supplies and services tobacco vending machines. He has corresponded with me on a number of occasions and has raised the possibility of installing vending machines in the stores in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I make it clear that I do not support any initiative that would make it any easier for young people to access tobacco products, but I would appreciate some comment from the Minister, either during his summing-up or at some other relevant point in the debate today, on Mr Thornton's suggestion, which is that tobacco vending machines could be placed behind the counter in the store so that the machine is operated by the retailer.

I have had correspondence from representatives of an Aboriginal community in my electorate. I have been told that one of the difficulties encountered in monitoring supplies in the stores concerns the area of tobacco products. The operators of stores in Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander communities have requested Mr Thornton to install and service vending machines so that there are no accountability problems with stocks of tobacco products. If the vending machine was placed behind the counter in the store it would be operated by the retailer. The machine would not be accessible to under-age customers. A number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities do not have licensed premises where vending machines could be installed.

I received correspondence from the Minister fairly recently in which he said that he would be prepared to have a look at the suggestion made by Mr Thornton to see whether there were any issues that need to be investigated before a decision is made. These are relatively small communities and most of the store operators would be aware of the ages of their customers. They would certainly know whether a customer was under the age of 18 years. If we do move down this path it would still be necessary to speak to a range of community councils—perhaps the ACC and the ICC—about an education program for retailers so that they understand their responsibilities.

Our primary consideration should be protecting and preserving the health of young people by stopping them from having access to tobacco products. If the Minister and his departmental officers feel that adopting this suggestion would not guarantee the necessary safeguards, I believe we should err on the side of caution. The suggestion is worthy of consideration. Obviously the business person who has contacted me has a vested interest in the matter because he has contracts with a number of community stores. I would like to hear the Minister's views. Health considerations should be paramount, and if we cannot adequately cater for those considerations, we should err on the side of caution.

Mr TANTI (Mundingburra) (3.38 p.m.): I rise to support the Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill. Being one of the children of this Parliament, and never having had a cigarette, I support this legislation. Other speakers have covered most of the key points, so I will simply state the following.

This Bill, along with a well-orchestrated advertising campaign, will assist in preventing people under the age of 18 from taking up the habit of smoking. For individual smokers there will be three main messages about the risks of smoking: firstly, the risk is big—50% of persistent smokers are being killed by smoking; secondly, one-quarter of smokers are killed in middle age—35 to 69 years—thus losing 20 to 25 years of life expectancy; and thirdly, stopping, or better

still never starting smoking, really works in reducing the risks.

This Bill is aimed at reducing tobacco product demand, the reduction of production, the reduction of cancer and other serious smoking-related diseases and avoiding the risk of death from tobacco products. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services has estimated that smoking costs the Australian community \$12.7 billion per annum.

The importance of reducing the number of children who take up smoking is recognised not only by groups such as the Queensland Cancer Fund, the Australian Medical Association and the National Heart Foundation but also by businesses that sell tobacco. This is evident from the fact that groups representing businesses that sell tobacco have participated in the development of this Bill in a positive and cooperative way.

In May last year, the Queensland Cancer Fund, the Australian Medical Association, the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association and the Queensland Retail Tobacco Traders Association signed points of agreement in relation to the Bill. The Motor Traders Association has subsequently written to advise that that association also supports the points of agreement. This Bill is consistent with those points of agreement.

The following groups are supportive of measures to curb youth smoking: the Queensland Newsagents Federation, the Queensland Hoteliers Association, the Registered and Licensed Clubs Association of Queensland and the Retailers Association of Queensland. The Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill will affect the day-to-day operations of small and large businesses across the State. The cooperation given by these groups has enabled Queensland Health to develop a practical Bill which clearly sets out the responsibilities of business in relation to preventing sales of tobacco to children. Queensland Health Department officers have also consulted unions and youth groups on the Bill.

The objectives of the Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill 1977 will be mainly achieved by reducing the availability of tobacco products to children and making it more difficult for children to obtain tobacco, hence reducing the number of children who take up smoking. Reducing the availability of tobacco products to children also reinforces the coalition's message that tobacco use has serious health consequences. I have nothing further to add to the debate.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Chermside) (3.40 p.m.): I rise to support the main thrust of the Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Bill 1997, but will be supporting an amendment foreshadowed by the shadow Minister concerning penalties. I agree with the aims of this Bill, which are to prevent the supply of tobacco products to children, with the main purpose being to prevent them taking up what is a very addictive and harmful habit. Unlike the previous speaker, I was a smoker for more than 20 years, from school days until the mid eighties.

Mr Johnson: Did you take up smoking at school?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: There may have been an occasion at school when I was smoking.

Mr FitzGerald: But you didn't inhale.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Yes, I confess, I did inhale.

Mr Horan: At Nudgee College.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: The Minister is inaccurate in his statement. It was not that particular school.

Through a little bit of good luck, when I ended up in hospital in 1986 I had the chance to have a break from smoking and actually gave it up. To my detriment, around the time that my mum died in 1996, I took up smoking again. However, I was determined to be non-smoking by the first anniversary of her death, and I gave it up again last year.

When I took up smoking it was the in thing to do. It was cool. It was hip. It was the thing that television stars, sports personalities and everyone else did. I enjoyed smoking, found it a pleasurable experience and saw it as a very enjoyable social experience. Only in more recent times have the harmful effects of tobacco become more evident to me. When my father died of a heart attack, and I realised that it was probably caused to a reasonable degree by his lifetime habit of smoking, I understood that eventually this pleasurable habit has a way of catching up with you and wreaking its revenge.

I am very aware that smoking is a very, very addictive habit. In fact, one never gets over it. I am reminded of speaking to a person who was commenting about his attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. I said, "So you are a former alcoholic?" He said, "No, I am an alcoholic, but I am just not drinking." In this regard, I am a smoker and will always be a smoker, but at the current time I am not smoking. I believe that is how addictive the substance is. I do not know whether I would have had the good sense not to take up smoking in the sixties if, as a teenager, I knew then what I know now about smoking.

Perhaps not. As a teenager, one considers oneself to be 10 feet tall and bullet proof.

I want to give thanks particularly to my family, who helped me give up—my wife and my children. It is very helpful having teenage children who can very bluntly inform you of the awful smell of tobacco around you and the dangers to my health. How does one respond to a teenager who asks, "Why are you slowly killing yourself, dad?" It is hard to give an answer to that. I believe that some of the advertising that is being directed at teenagers, in terms of the Quit program, does, in fact, get through to some degree to some of our teenagers. The influence of my children on me in giving up smoking for the second time has been significant.

Mr Grice: I have been told you smoke a lot in caucus.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: The member's information in that regard is about as good as it is on Operation Wallah. He is really off the track.

The difficulty with tobacco smoking is that it is very addictive and that the dangers are initially hidden. I am sympathetic with friends who come to my house and who smoke. They are cognisant of the fact that the smoke does impinge on other people's comfort, and they usually smoke on the deck, not within closed quarters. However, I am in no way, I hope, a rabid former smoker, because while I see the dangers, I know how difficult it is to give up the habit. That is why, in supporting this Bill, I believe that the biggest benefit of this Bill is that it will help prevent our young people from taking up smoking.

The big victory over addictive drugs comes when people do not start taking the drugs. This is particularly so with tobacco products. As we have seen in recent years, tobacco companies lie, lie and lie through their teeth. It is unfortunate that, only late in their lives, former employees of tobacco companies—former senior executives—are saying, "We knew years ago that the tobacco product was killing people, and we denied it. We knew years ago that we were targeting adolescents and denied it." Fortunately, some of the truth is starting to come out.

Part of the difficulty will be if this Bill has no teeth. Therefore, I ask the Minister for Health if he would consider very seriously, and agree to, the amendment to be moved by the shadow Minister. The Health Minister is the leader of a party many of whose members ask for increases in penalties for drug dealers and call on society to lock them up and throw away the key. Would it not be ironic if a Health Minister from the National Party, having the opportunity to deter the sale of a drug and the pushing of a drug onto our young

people, allowed a penalty to be so meagre as to have no effect?

Mr FitzGerald: Is it a legal drug or an illegal drug?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I take that interjection from the Leader of the House, whom I have generally found to be a fairly reasonable person. I understand that it is a legal drug. However, for more than 20 years I worked behind bars selling alcohol—a legal substance. Yet it was illegal for me, as a bar attendant, to sell it to people under 18 years of age. I knew, as a bar manager, that the licence for our family could be revoked and that I personally could be fined if I disobeyed that law. I also knew the harmful effects of selling too much alcohol so that someone became drunk. That was fairly obvious. That was a bit of self-preservation, because the bar manager had to sort things out. But we also knew that the penalties were significant, and the loss of a licence was a significant threat, so we policed that very carefully. But members know that there are ways to avoid detection. We know that sober 20-year-olds can buy four pots. One does not see where they are all the time in a crowded bar, and they could be slipping drinks to under-age people or to people who are inebriated. I do not believe that this legislation is going to cure all. But unless we have reasonable penalties, it will be an absolutely toothless tiger. So I ask Mr Horan, who is probably getting advice from Mr FitzGerald, to agree to the amendment to be moved by the shadow Minister.

Some of my colleagues have already outlined the huge economic costs of tobacco smoking. As the Minister for Health, Mr Horan would know the huge impost on the hospitals and the medical facilities in this State. The impost of tobacco smoking will continue on the hospital system, for which he currently has responsibility, for some years. But if we can at least start to deter some of our young people from taking up this habit, then some of those health costs will be non-existent for future generations, and we will have healthier young people. In fact, at that stage they will be healthier old people.

I earnestly beseech the Minister. This is not some sort of cheap trick. This is a reasonable thing that says that, if there is no significant deterrent, the law will not be abided by. I ask the Minister to look at the comparisons with legislation relating to alcohol. Our statutes contain provision for serious fines and serious repercussions if alcohol is sold to minors. I believe that the same should apply here. I support the legislation and hope that the House will support the amendment to be moved by the shadow Minister.

Hon. M. J. HORAN (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) (3.49 p.m.), in reply: I thank all the participants in this debate. The one point that has come out of the debate is the total support of the House for this Bill to prevent the supply of tobacco and tobacco products to children. Virtually every speaker has discussed the health problems associated with tobacco. I will not go over those. A number of those were mentioned in my second-reading speech. Suffice it to say that this Government is the first Government in Queensland that has been able to bring this sort of legislation into the Parliament, have it debated and, hopefully, become an Act that offers practical and pragmatic ways of preventing the sale of tobacco and tobacco products to children.

Important aspects of this issue—and they were touched on by a number of speakers—are how to make this Bill and the processes that flow from it practical and workable, and how to obtain the cooperation of retailers. When one considers the tens of thousands of retailers throughout this State including the small, isolated, remote parts of the State—major supermarkets, garages in country towns, all the licensed premises, all the transit centres; the great complex of retail outlets where tobacco products are sold—one gains some idea of the immensity of the issue that we are facing and one recognises that, if this legislation is to be successful, it must have the support of the entire retail industry. Success requires a cooperative approach and people willing to be involved. What this legislation must not be about is small business bashing.

I am pleased to say that, after just two years in Government, we have brought this Bill before the Parliament. We have heard much bleating and complaining from the Opposition Health spokesperson about the fact that it took us two years to bring this legislation to the Parliament. It is pretty obvious to everybody here that, in six years, Labor could not get this Bill into Parliament. It had discussion papers, arguments at caucus, arguments at Cabinet, yet it still did not have authority to introduce this Bill to Parliament. It is one thing to table in the House a schedule of when one hopes to receive authority to introduce; it is another thing to receive authority to introduce. We received it well within two years. We received authority to introduce at a Cabinet meeting last year. The next day it was introduced to Parliament. That typifies the difference between the two political groups. On the one hand one has members of the Opposition, who always talk about things and never get anything done. On the other hand, one has Government members, who say they will do things and then consult properly, do something practical and pragmatic and have it introduced.

The Opposition Health spokesperson talked about this as a long-planned Labor initiative. It certainly was. In six years, Labor got absolutely nowhere. As I said before, Labor had no agreement or consensus in its own ranks. Labor members had some great arguments about the issue. They were paralysed and could not get the legislation into the Parliament. The Opposition Health spokesperson, the honourable member Mount Coot-tha, went on and on about the taxing of children for some \$30m per year. She came up with some of the most ridiculous comments that I have heard in my life, about a tobacco tax increase under the coalition Government in order to drag money out of children. She said that the Government brought this issue into the Parliament only because of the recent High Court decision. I do not think I have heard anything so stupid in all my life. If the honourable member does believe that \$30m per year was dragged out of children, she must also believe that the previous Labor Government dragged \$180m out of children without ever getting into the House a Bill to prevent the supply of tobacco and tobacco products to children.

The honourable member also mentioned the Health Promotion Council. I would be happy to comment about that. Under the previous Government, the Health Promotion Council had a budget of approximately \$2.5m. The Statewide health promotion team within the Public Health Services branch of Queensland Health has a similar budget. We have dedicated health improvement funds of more than \$200,000 in addition to the \$2.44m that we have provided for Statewide health promotion. Interestingly, of the money that the previous Labor Government provided to the Health Promotion Council, approximately \$650,000 was used for consultancies and administration. That is typical of the previous Labor Government: plenty of money, but none of it going into real services.

The Opposition Health spokesperson mentioned the Adolescent Health Unit at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. Again we hear hypocritical carping from members of the Opposition. When we came to Government, we had to firstly find \$120m to fund the budget overruns, unpaid accounts and the financial mess that we inherited. However, as to the Adolescent Health Unit at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, it is one thing to build it; it is another thing to staff it. No money was provided for that. We were the ones who provided the cash to staff it, just as we have staffed Nambour mental health unit and all the other mental health units that we are providing around the State.

The Opposition Health spokesperson and many other speakers on the other side of the House continually spoke about penalties. I think they have demonstrated just how out of touch they are with the real world. They criticised our fine of \$75 for an initial offence, saying that that is not high enough. Obviously, they are pretty much out of touch with some of the people who work in retail outlets. Can honourable members imagine a young shop employee of 17 years of age receiving a \$75 fine, or a fine that has doubled to \$150 for a repeat offence? One can imagine what effect that will have. That will virtually knock out a substantial part of their take-home pay. Those people would be lucky to have a few dollars in the bank. However, members opposite reckon that those amounts are not significant. I think the point that members of the Opposition have continually missed—and particularly the final speaker, the member for Chermside—is the fact that persistent offending means that one will lose one's licence to sell tobacco products. That is similar to losing one's licence in a bar outlet, about which the honourable member was speaking. That is a very significant impost on any small business, particularly a corner store.

At the end of the day, this legislation is about whether we are successful or not in preventing access to tobacco products by young people. I believe that everyone in this House has a genuine desire to see that happen. We heard suggestions of fines of up to \$5,000. The member for Kurwongbah even suggested—I presume with the support of other members on that side of the Chamber—that plain-clothes police officers enter shops in an attempt to entrap and catch people. We are not on about that. We are not small business bashers. We are cooperative. We believe that we have the full support of small business, big business, the motor trades and the tobacco trades for cooperating and ensuring that staff are well educated and know what are their responsibilities.

There was some discussion regarding vending machines. I will touch on that when I discuss the comments made by the member for Cook. As to all the talk about enforcement and major fines—in six years of Labor being in Government not one fine was imposed, so I do not believe they are really fair dinkum about what they are saying. The Opposition Health spokesperson, the member for Mount Coot-tha, discussed caring for children. The proof of the pudding is in the eating: Labor could not do and did not do it in six years. It is devastated that we have done it in less than two years. All we heard from that side of the Chamber, particularly from the member for Kurwongbah, was hot air about a

police state, about catching and fining and about officers in plain clothes. The member for Kurwongbah's main contribution to this debate was about active enforcement by plain-clothes police officers. We refuse absolutely to do that. We do not intend to impose those sorts of activities on the retail industry.

I would like to thank in particular the three speakers from the Government side of the Chamber, who gave detailed information about the different arrangements, the vending arrangements and how those processes will be enforced. The member for Caboolture discussed the education campaign. I can assure him that the education campaign will be most comprehensive. In particular, there will be point of sale material and education materials for retail outlets. There will be a major distribution of education materials to the many thousands and thousands of retailers throughout the State. We have received enormous cooperation, particularly from the large retailers, who will produce video systems to teach and train their young shop assistants and checkout assistants. That will be backed up each and every year by an annual, consistent and effective marketing campaign to ensure that we provide education in an ongoing way to not only retailers and their staff but also to the public about the dangers of smoking and their responsibilities in relation to not procuring cigarettes for young people.

The member for Cook brought up the matter of vending machines and asked me to comment. Through representations that he has made and also through representations made by the honourable member for Barron River, Mrs Lyn Warwick, I have had discussions about the difficulties that operators of small businesses in the far north of the State that supply vending machines to some of the very remote communities have with this Bill. We have looked into this matter very, very carefully. From talking to these people personally, I understand the particular difficulties that they have in supplying some of the remote communities. However, at the end of the day, it boils down to the fact that vending machines are probably one of the major reasons why young people have been able to obtain easy access to tobacco products. Probably well over 90% of that access has been through vending machines.

I wrote a lengthy letter to a number of organisations that we had consulted about this Bill regarding the plight of these business operators in the far north of the State, particularly in some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I looked forward to receiving replies, which I did. Organisations such as the National Heart Foundation and the

Queensland Cancer Fund felt that it would be an absolute betrayal of the whole principle of this Bill. Unfortunately, we had to make the decision that we could not put in place any special or particular arrangements for these operators of vending machines in some of these remote parts of the State.

On the other side of the coin, it will not be until later this year, following the proclamation of this Bill, that the particular arrangements for vending machines will be put into place. There will be time before they have to comply with the details of the Bill. It will be late this year and we sincerely hope that in that time, through their business operations, those people will be able to make other arrangements that not only comply with this Bill but also enable them to maintain a substantive portion of their business. We are extremely sorry that we are not able to help those two or three small-business operators who have been caught in these circumstances. However, I can assure the member for Cook and the member for Barron River that the matter was looked into very, very thoroughly.

Finally, the member for Chermside was concerned about the penalties. I say to the member for Chermside that, if he had due regard to the effect that the penalties would have on the pockets of those people who are either owners of small businesses or retail outlets or who are employees, he would realise that they are substantial. If any member gets pulled over for speeding, he or she would know that the fine does hurt. These fines, particularly on young retail assistants, are very substantial and would be extremely hurtful. However, more important are the processes that we have put in place to give instructions to young people—the way in which they sign a simple form that gives them the two prime details that they are required to be told by their employer. We have made sure that the processes are right so that they know what they have to do in that they have to ask for proof of age when they doubt the age of the child or if the person looks like a child. The member for Chermside alluded to this matter when he referred to his family's previous business in the liquor trade. If there is a persistent breaking of these rules, the business involved would lose its licence. That is a very substantial penalty on that business.

Once again, I thank the speakers from both sides. I would also like to thank the staff of Queensland Health who have put a lot of work into the preparation of this Bill and all the people who assisted us in the consultation. There were large numbers of people representing youth groups, the various retail industries and the various interested health organisations. As I said

previously, at the end of the day, this Bill is about making effective and practical rules and regulations to prevent young people under the age of 18 taking up smoking. We believe that, in the circumstances of a vast decentralised State that has a multitude of outlets for tobacco products, we have put in place the most cooperative process that there could be. We have had enormous cooperation from the various small and large business outlets. We have backed that up with practical arrangements for signage, for kits for the education of retailers and their staff and, most importantly, for the ongoing education of the public. Let us hope that these measures receive the full support of the House, bring about a vast improvement in the health of young Queenslanders, help reduce the cost on the public and private hospital systems and give Queensland families a better quality of life and a better potential for life.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. M. J. Horan (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—

Mrs EDMOND (4.06 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

"At page 8, line 10, 'instructing'—

omit, insert—

'giving written instructions to'.

At page 8, line 17, 'warning'—

omit, insert—

'giving a written warning to'."

These amendments are similar and I will deal with them together. They increase protection to particularly young and inexperienced employees. Concerns have been raised that when a young person starts work, often he or she is confronted with a range of documentation to sign and a list of verbal instructions relating to days on which to work, uniform arrangements and where the locker rooms are. So that there can be no doubt that the employee has been given clear instructions regarding his or her responsibilities under this legislation, the Opposition has put forward that this instruction should be in writing and retainable by the employee and not just signed off, as it were, in great haste at the employer's office.

Mr HORAN: The written acknowledgment that the employees will sign says that they have been instructed that they must not sell tobacco to children in any circumstances, even if this

supply is, or is claimed to be, for an adult. It states further—

"I must sight acceptable evidence of age for a person before supplying a tobacco product to the person unless I am satisfied that the person is an adult."

Finally, the acknowledgment states—

"I have been warned that if I disregard the above instructions and supply tobacco to a child I will be committing an offence against the Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Act."

My concern about this amendment is that it requires employers to provide another piece of material in addition to the instructions that they would give employees. As I said previously, a number of major retailers are actually producing videos to provide the formal training of their new staff through a video system. The employees are required to sign this form after having read those simple instructions. The points themselves virtually amount to another instruction because the employees sign off that they must not sell tobacco to children in any circumstances and that they must sight acceptable evidence of age. They are good, simple, straightforward instructions. I believe that if we add anything further to that, then we are going to be simply involving ourselves in possibly paper warfare. I think that we have good cooperation from the various business outlets and this written acknowledgment is one formal, straightforward, practical way of having a written detail before an employee, who signs it off. We are not able to accept the amendment.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: The people who will be employed in corner shops or newsagents will be fairly young. I have heard what the Minister said about the form and I know that the written acknowledgment will have those requirements, maybe in an abbreviated form, contained within it. I presume that the employee will sign that acknowledgment and hand it back to their employer as proof that they have been warned verbally or in writing. The shadow Minister has presented a very valid argument that when these kids go home, particularly if it is their first job, their minds will be spinning with all the stuff that they have been told. A further section in the Bill sets out how an employee can be held responsible for their actions, and that is as it should be, and a monetary fine is mentioned. The Minister has said that that fine will be one penalty unit or \$75. As the Minister has rightly said, that is a significant amount of money to a 15-year-old or 16-year-old who works at a newsagency or wherever.

Given that this has a direct monetary impact on them, I can see a lot of value in another pro forma sheet being handed to the kids so that when they do have time to sit down and go through the paperwork that is handed to them they have it in writing. It would nag in the back of their minds, "I was told that I'll get fined for this, but I am not sure what it was exactly I had to do." Unless the Minister's response is significantly different to what he has already said, I intend to support the amendments.

Mr HORAN: Written acknowledgment is provided to the employee and the employer. The written acknowledgment, which I will read again, gives two very simple instructions that are also signed off by the employee. That is the basis of how they operate across the counter. The acknowledgment states—

"I must not sell tobacco to children in any circumstances, even if the supply is for, or is claimed to be for, an adult; and

I must sight acceptable evidence of age for a person before supplying a tobacco product to the person, unless I am satisfied that the person is an adult.

I have been warned that if I disregard the above instructions and supply tobacco to a child, I will be committing an offence against the Tobacco Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Act."

A copy of that acknowledgment remains with the employee.

We felt that this summarises it very succinctly. In the midst of a lot of obligations that a young employee has when serving over the counter, this is something that they have to comply with that is simple, does not cause any confusion and they have signed off on. In addition to having received from the employer instructions from the instruction kit that is sent to each and every outlet, they then have two principles upon which they have to make a decision if someone whom they believe is a child comes into the retail outlet, that is, that they are not able to sell tobacco products to someone who is a child and, if they have any doubt about that, they must ask for acceptable evidence of age. If they have done that, they have complied.

Mrs EDMOND: I am happy to accept that. That is the first time that it has been made clear that the actual employee will keep a copy of the statement. I was concerned that the employee as well as the employer have clear instructions written down.

Mr HORAN: While understanding that a lot of employees are young people, we were endeavouring to make this something simple

that they can keep. I thank the member for her understanding.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—

Mrs EDMOND (4.14 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 9, lines 1 and 2—

omit, insert—

'(a) for a first offence—13 penalty units; and

(b) for a second or later offence—26 penalty units.'"

The aim of this amendment is to increase the maximum penalty for an individual retailer to \$1,000 for a first offence and \$2,000 for a second offence. That is a more realistic penalty, although it is still extremely modest when compared to other States' penalties. I remind honourable members of the penalties in other States: Western Australia, \$5,000 for a first offence; South Australia, \$5,000; Tasmania, \$5,000; Victoria, \$1,000; New South Wales, \$5,000; the ACT, \$1,000; the Northern Territory, \$10,000; and the proposed fine in Queensland is \$75.

Without such a penalty and with the relatively low risk of prosecution, unless the Minister is going to have health police on every corner, every temptation for the retailer will be to ignore the legislation and run that risk. The penalty must be of a sufficient level that the retailer will decide that it is simply not worth the risk. Without such a genuine deterrent, this legislation is simply meaningless window dressing.

I point out that these are maximum, not minimum, penalties. I am sure that a magistrate would take into account all the other relevant factors, as they always do and, in fact, as they are compelled to do. However, to have a maximum penalty of \$75 is a cruel joke on the health workers who must deal with the end results. If this legislation is for real and if the Minister really intends to reduce the number of children smoking, then let it be so. Let him accept our amendment.

Mr HORAN: We discussed this issue during the second-reading debate and it is really about how practical we can make the legislation. If we are all genuine and serious about wanting to reduce smoking amongst children and to prevent them from getting into the habit of smoking, we have to make the scheme practical.

We have heard much about the fines that are imposed in other States. We all know that

since 1905 when the original tobacco Bill was passed—that is, for most of the 20th century—not one single fine has been imposed. Therefore, let us get a bit realistic about this. I have talked about small, country town service stations with caravan parks out the back, corner stores in the suburbs, big retail outlets, transit lounges and the thousands and thousands of other retail outlets around the State. Let us look at the myriad organisations that represent them, such as the Retail Traders Association and the motor traders and the tobacconists associations. We need to get all of those organisations to back us absolutely and achieve the highest possible compliance with the legislation through having a cooperative retail sector.

A major part of that will be achieved through advertising regularly every year and providing education kits and point-of-sale material to each and every outlet to detail their obligations in this matter. As I have said, every year we must back up our education kits, because it is only through regular mass marketing—not merely passing legislation in Parliament and then forgetting about it for the rest of our lives, but making it ongoing and never ending—that we will get somewhere. Retail bashing or small-business bashing ideas such as fines of thousands of dollars and, as one Opposition member has suggested, having people in plain clothes entrapping retailers is just a back-to-front way of going about this.

I have been very heartened by the meetings we have had with the major retail chains, the seriousness with which they have approached the matter and their commitment to putting in place in-house training schemes for all of their staff. I am also very heartened by the reaction of the organisations that represent small business outlets. I am confident that the systems that we have put in place in Queensland Health for when the Bill is passed, so that we can immediately send education and point-of-sale material to every outlet and educate our authorised officers, will bring about a new culture and will create a change. To endeavour to do this in an impractical way through massive fines and the other draconian measures that are proposed by the Opposition will not attack the problem in a practical and pragmatic way.

I am very confident that what we have done will be successful. At the same time, the fines will hurt people convicted of selling cigarettes to children—for example, people with small corner stores. The most important issue, which keeps being neglected, is that persistent offenders—and that could be those who commit a second or subsequent offence—can lose their right to a very substantial part of their retail business. In all

our discussions, that seemed to me to be the strongest deterrent of all. That in itself can be costly—for example, in the order of thousands of dollars. People who lose their licence to sell for 12 months could face a difficult situation with respect to the viability of their business. This Bill is based upon a cooperative and practical approach. It is not about bringing in draconian provisions that, as has been shown to be the case in other States, are not policed and checked. We are not prepared to accept the amendment.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I seek to clarify something with the Minister. I understand that clause 10 deals with single-outlet owners, that is, shop owners who have a store, whether it be a small one or perhaps a large one in the city. The maximum penalty is \$1,000 and \$2,000 for a second and subsequent offence. I have watched reports on television current affairs shows—and I acknowledge that some of them have been set-ups—where the media have conducted trials using kids who are under the legal smoking age and who are sent into a store to buy a packet of smokes. There might have been one show where one kid got knocked back, but almost without exception the kid walked out with a packet of smokes.

Provided clause 10 is talking about the owner of the store, I am not convinced that a single seller will be deterred by a \$75 fine. Yes, the young person working in the shop might be deterred, but that fine will not be a deterrent if the attitude that some of those shop owners showed through those trials is consistent. Those sorts of shop owners will not be deterred by a \$75 fine. I hear what the Minister is saying about a cooperative attitude and so on. However, over and over in those trials that *A Current Affair* and *60 Minutes* conducted the kids walked in—and they were obviously underage—and they were able to buy one or two packets of smokes. When one or two people challenged them, they said, "Oh, it's for dad." There needs to be a higher level of deterrent for owners of single shops.

Mrs EDMOND: I wish to clarify two points. Firstly, the member for Gladstone is quite right. One has only to be outside any small shop near a school to see children trekking out in their school uniforms, sometimes in primary school uniforms. For a local shopkeeper it does not take much nous to know that 90% of people coming in from a school will be under 16 years of age, which is the current age, let alone under 18 years old. We have to question the goodwill of proprietors who are happy to serve kids in a primary school uniform. All the kids have to say is, "It's for mum." That happens regularly.

I would hope that the Minister's consultation was not confined to his ministerial office but was undertaken in the community and in some of these small schools. I wish also to draw the Minister's attention to his press release dated 11 February 1997 in which he stated that a key element of this new Bill would be to raise the age of a minor to whom it is illegal to sell tobacco from 16 to 18 years, ban supply as well as sale, impose fines—and that was still under consultation—of \$1,000 for small retailers, \$5,000 for large retailers and \$375 for employees. Presumably those fines were set for a purpose. Presumably the Minister's statements to the media about fines were considered statements arrived at through an analysis of what has happened in other States and what Health Department public servants told him. Presumably they are not just figures off the top of his head. To now dismiss those statements and go from imposing a fine of \$1,000 for small retailers, \$5,000 for large retailers—and I support that differentiation—and \$375 for employees down to \$75 across-the-board seems an incredible backflip or flip-flop, whatever we like to call it. It is about as "Rollover Mike" as we can get. Let us see some backbone. Let us see some real intent in this Bill.

Mr HORAN: In the past, there has virtually been no action in this area whatsoever. As I said, in Queensland there has not been a fine in almost 100 years. We are looking at a totally new system in which there will be a fine and a kit. We are introducing an amendment to this Bill which requires a review of this Act in three years' time. More importantly, the real thing that will hurt the pocket of the businesses involved is the loss of the licence. If the retailing of tobacco products means anything at all to a business, if that retailing makes any significant or important contribution to the business, certainly, the loss of the licence to retail those products will be a very severe blow indeed. The bigger the business, the bigger the effect. In particular—and this applies to smaller businesses as well—losing an important part of their business and also being fined will certainly make them very aware of what is happening.

All over Australia we see the lack of cooperation, workability and practicality of systems that have been brought in. This scheme is aimed right at the point of sale. There will be major point-of-sale material and training of retailers, shop owners and sales assistants on a regular basis. There will be a simple and practical form for all new staff to sign off, and an ongoing education campaign every year. At the end of the day, it will be the education of people—sellers, owners and employees—throughout the tens of thousands of outlets across the length

and breadth of the State that will make the difference. I maintain that the amount of the fines coupled with the total loss of ability to sell tobacco products for persistent offending—and that can be from the second offence on—combined with the new and practical ways in which we will bring in education for the owners, the sellers, the staff and everybody else, means that there will be a whole new culture in Queensland. We are going about this in the best way to see a genuine reduction in the number of young people buying cigarettes. In particular, I point out that only through education and understanding will we ultimately make this a success.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 42—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Turner, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Mitchell, Carroll

NOES, 44—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, Cunningham, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Roberts, Sullivan T. B.

Pair: Sheldon, Livingstone

Resolved in the **negative**.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11—

Mrs EDMOND (4.34 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 9, lines 9 to 11—

omit, insert—

'Maximum penalty—26 penalty units.'

This amendment also seeks to impose penalties on those larger retailers with a number of outlets and employees which sell tobacco products to young people as a realistic deterrent and not simply as a token gesture. We have assumed—and I seek the Minister's clarification on this—that the separation of "individual supplier" and "supplier" implies that this section relates to larger suppliers and retailers. Could the Minister clarify that? We are asking: does this include Woolworths, Coles and the major—

Mr HORAN: This applies to any business that has employees.

Mrs EDMOND: Why is there a distinction between individual retailers and retailers?

Mr HORAN: The first one applies to personal sales—of people making sales over the counter. The second applies to businesses themselves, be they single or large businesses.

Mrs EDMOND: I am sorry, my understanding was that the first one applied to individual retailers meaning the corner store where the person who owns the shop and the person who is doing the selling are the same person, rather than a person within a large store who is doing the selling. Therefore, this classification must apply to those other than that, which means presumably larger business or those which have multiple outlets.

Mr HORAN: The first one itself is where the employer is actually doing the selling themselves and this second one refers to the employers who have employees working for them.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 42—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Turner, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Mitchell, Carroll

NOES, 44—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, Cunningham, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Roberts, Sullivan T. B.

Pair: Sheldon, Livingstone

Resolved in the **negative**.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12—

Mrs EDMOND (4.42 p.m.): I do not propose to move an amendment to this clause, but I wish to offer an explanation. This clause deals with the penalty to be imposed on the seller of tobacco products to children. We acknowledge the concern of the union with regard to the suggestion that shop assistants may suffer duress from the employer or management and that this legislation could take advantage of young people who are unskilled and vulnerable. However, three things need to be noted and understood. The first matter is that

the employee will have his or her responsibilities with regard to this legislation detailed to them. The Minister has assured us that that will be in writing. I accept that. The second matter is that the place of sale will have signs clearly stating that the sale of tobacco products to children under the age of 18 is prohibited. Hopefully, these signs will be large and clearly worded. I am mindful of the fact that, as a small child, I spent many hours in the butcher shop wondering what "expectorating" was and why it was prohibited to such an extent that it would incur a fine of £10—an enormous sum of money at that time. I will not say how many years ago that was.

In this instance, with the legislation aimed at children, the signage should be such that neither young shop assistants nor young customers are left in any doubt that to sell tobacco products in any form to a minor can incur a significant penalty. Recently, I was impressed upon entering a bar to see a large sign at the entry which said "Your first drink may cost you \$1,850 if you are under 18 years". I think that made an impression on the young people outside the bar, too.

The third point I wanted to mention is that these penalties are maximum penalties. No doubt a magistrate would take into account the age and vulnerability of the employee. Let us not forget that not all employees are young or vulnerable or inexperienced. The magistrate would also take into account any suggestion or evidence of pressure being exerted by the employer on a young shop assistant to ignore the legislation. I make this point because the Minister said that I was callous in suggesting that \$75 was an insignificant fine for young people. He suggested that I might be trying to increase the fine. That is not the case. The Opposition has accepted that to many young shop assistants \$75 will be a significant fine. I also believe that young people are more able to assess another young person's age accurately. From my side of the age divide it is hard to tell ages from about 22 down; they all look very young. Those closer to those ages are far better at guessing age.

With a differential in penalties between retailer and employee there is the danger that employers might encourage employees to wear the penalty and pay it rather than the retailer or his organisation having a conviction recorded. I am concerned that that may still occur. I have some concerns regarding this aspect in view of the proposed penalty. I urge the department to monitor it as carefully as possible. It is for this reason that most other jurisdictions do not differentiate at all in maximum penalties for employee or employer, although magistrates

may differentiate in imposing penalties. We therefore accept the maximum penalty of \$75.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—

Mrs EDMOND (4.48 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 11, line 3, 'instructing'—

omit, insert—

'giving written instructions to'."

Once again this amendment seeks to increase protection for employees to ensure that they have clear and precise instructions regarding their responsibilities under this Bill. The Minister has indicated that those instructions will be given in writing. It would have been encouraging to see that incorporated in the second-reading speech. However, I accept the assurance from the Minister.

Amendment negated.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15—

Mrs EDMOND (4.51 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 11, line 18, '1 penalty unit'—

omit, insert—

'13 penalty units'."

Again, this amendment seeks to increase the penalty to be a meaningful deterrent and to be consistent with the other fines that have already been agreed to.

Mr HORAN: I reiterate the arguments that I put forward before. We have developed a practical way of getting cooperation from the retail industry and those involved with vending machines in various premises. We certainly believe that the existing penalty is adequate. We had the full cooperation of the retail industry, which is going to get heavily involved with us in the education of its staff and other employees. The fact that repeat offenders will lose their licences to sell tobacco products certainly is a very major deterrent. We are not in the business of imposing massive draconian penalties on the industry. We work in a cooperative way. We have worked carefully with the various industries, and we oppose this amendment.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Along similar lines to what I said about the previous amendments which increased penalties, I acknowledge what has already been said by the shadow Minister. This imposes a restriction on the location of tobacco vending machines. One penalty unit will not impact on an occupier who is intent on doing the wrong thing. And even if it is increased, it will

not impact on a person who is intending to do the wrong thing. The imposition of one penalty unit on somebody who wants to continue to sell tobacco products to young children will be ineffective, and it needs to be increased. I will be supporting the amendment.

Mr HORAN: I repeat that it is not just a matter of one penalty unit. The important thing is that repeat offenders are liable to lose their licences to sell tobacco products. That is where the harshness for a repeat offender comes in.

Mrs EDMOND: I remind the Minister that the draconian measures about which he is talking were the very draconian measures that he thought were appropriate one year ago. I believe that they are still appropriate now.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 42—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Turner, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Carroll, Mitchell

NOES, 44—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, Cunningham, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Sullivan T. B., Roberts

Pair: Sheldon, Livingstone

Resolved in the **negative**.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 15, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 16—

Mrs EDMOND (4.59 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 12, lines 2 and 3—

omit, insert—

'(a) for a first offence—13 penalty units; and

(b) for a second or later offence—26 penalty units.'"

Again, in keeping with other penalties, this amendment increases the penalty for the offence of selling tobacco to a child via, in this case, a vending machine—which, I might add, is probably one of the commonest ways of children accessing cigarettes—to \$1,000 for the first offence and \$2,000 for the second offence.

Mr HORAN: Again, the answer is the same. We have always believed that the system that we have put in place will work and be effective and practical. We believe that the penalty is adequate to bring about proper enforcement, coupled with the very real penalty of actually losing one's licence to sell tobacco products. So once again we oppose the amendment.

Mrs EDMOND: I remind the Minister that the penalty proposed is the very penalty that he proposed one year ago and thought was appropriate at that time.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Had there not been the provision in subclause (2) whereby a person does not commit an offence if the proper procedure has been followed to warn an employee against selling to a child, I certainly would not be supporting the amendment. The fact is that the person in charge of the tobacco product vending machine will not be on the premises at all times. Therefore, that provision is important. However, there does need to be an incentive for the person in charge to adequately advise his or her employees and for himself or herself to have an incentive to comply. I will be supporting the amendment.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 42—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Turner, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Carroll, Mitchell

NOES, 44—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, Cunningham, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Sullivan T. B., Roberts

Pair: Sheldon, Livingstone

Resolved in the **negative**.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—

Mrs EDMOND (5.07 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 13, line 21, '1 penalty unit'—

omit, insert—

'10 penalty units'."

The Opposition believes that clear, obvious signage plays a very important role in both the education of the general public and the retailers and their employees. That signage provides reinforcement and support for the retailer at such a time as a customer may try to argue against the legislation. It has been claimed by retailers that parents frequently send children to purchase tobacco products on their behalf and that to refuse to serve them would incur the wrath of those parents and possibly the loss of their patronage. To those arguments, I would respond with two points. Firstly, it is also the device most commonly used by children to purchase cigarettes for themselves. Secondly, no one retailer will lose patronage if all obey the same rules. Being able to point to a large, clearly worded sign that indicates a significant penalty will reinforce a firm but polite refusal to sell to children. It is for all of those reasons that the Opposition believes that, again, the penalty must be in line with earlier penalties.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: For the sake of saving time, I will address both amendment No. 8 and amendment No. 9, because they are similar. The shadow Minister has said that retailers want good signage. In itself, that will be an encouragement for them to erect the signs. I believe that they will have great delight in being able to blame the Government for restricted sales. My concern with increasing the penalties in this amendment is a simple one, that is, signs can easily fall down. If a young person—or an older person for that matter—wants to be a bit smart towards a retailer who has refused sale of a product, he or she could remove the sign, particularly if he or she knows that there is a penalty attached to non-display. I think there is sufficient benefit for the owner or operator of a business to have a sign in place—predominantly so that they can sheet home the blame for this regulation to the Government—and for them to ensure that the signs are up. I believe that the risk of it being inadvertently removed or intentionally removed by whomever it poses a risk to makes increasing the penalty on the owners of shops unjustifiable. I will not be supporting either of the two amendments.

Mr HORAN: One point to consider is that part of the arrangements that we are putting in place with the kits that are being sent to the retailers is the provision of free signage. That is very clear signage that certainly makes the message quite strong at the point of sale, that is, right at the counter where the cigarettes are sold. That is part of the cooperative package that has been designed by the Government—the kit and the provision of free signage.

Mrs EDMOND: Although I do not resile from any of my previous comments, I say that amendments Nos 8 and 9 circulated in my name are complementary. I am quite happy for them to be voted on together.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 20, as read, agreed to.

Clause 21—

Mrs EDMOND (5.11 p.m.): The proposed amendment to clause 21 is meaningless without the passing of the previous proposed amendment, so I withdraw the amendment.

Clause 21, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 33, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

Mr HORAN (5.12 p.m.) I move the following amendment—

"At page 19, after line 4—

insert—

'Consent to entry

'33A.(1) This section applies if an authorised person intends to ask an occupier of a place to consent to the authorised person or another authorised person entering the place.¹

'(2) Before asking for consent, the authorised person must tell the occupier—

- (a) the purpose of the entry; and
- (b) that the occupier is not required to consent.

'(3) If consent is given, the authorised person may ask the occupier to sign an acknowledgment of the consent (a "consent acknowledgment").

'(4) The consent acknowledgment must state—

- (a) the occupier was told—
 - (i) the purpose of the entry; and
 - (ii) that the occupier is not required to consent; and
- (b) the purpose of the entry; and
- (c) the occupier gives the authorised person consent to enter the place and exercise powers under this part; and
- (d) the time and date the consent was given.

'(5) If the occupier signs the consent acknowledgment, the authorised person must promptly give a copy to the occupier.

'Evidence of consent

'33B.(1) Subsection (2) applies if—

- (a) an issue arises in a court proceeding whether the occupier of a place consented to an authorised person entering the place under this part; and
- (b) a consent acknowledgment is not produced in evidence for the entry; and
- (c) it is not proved the occupier consented to the entry.

'(2) The court may presume the occupier did not consent.'

¹ This section does not apply if entry is authorised by section 33(1)(b) or (2)."

This amendment is a standard provision setting out the circumstances in which an authorised person may enter a place. One situation in which an authorised person may enter a place is when the occupier of the place consents to the entry. This amendment inserts two provisions after clause 33 to set out the process for obtaining a consent to entry. The insertion of these provisions provides further protection for the occupier of the premises. This amendment has been a suggestion by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee.

A consequential amendment will also be made to insert a definition of the term "consent acknowledgment" in the definitions section of the Bill.

Mrs EDMOND: This amendment addresses a concern that the Opposition had raised and we would have moved an amendment if the Minister had not moved this amendment, so the Opposition accepts the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

New clauses 33A and 33B, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 46, as read, agreed to.

Clause 47—

Mr HORAN (5.13 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 27, line 9, '10 penalty units'—omit, insert—

'20 penalty units'."

This amendment refers to authorised persons investigating offences under the Bill in that they may need to approach children to ask for proof of age, name and address. It is essential that no-one pretends to be an authorised person in order to approach children. This amendment makes it an offence to impersonate an authorised person.

I considered that the penalty proposed for this offence when the Bill was introduced was not high enough. This amendment doubles the

penalty for impersonating an authorised person and causing stress to young children. It doubles the penalty from 10 penalty units to 20 penalty units.

Mrs EDMOND: Again, the Opposition supports this amendment. It brings the penalty into line with other Acts that address offences such as pretending to be a policeman or other authorised persons. The Opposition supports the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 47, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 48 and 49, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr HORAN (5.15 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 27, after line 18—

insert—

'Review of Act

'49A.(1) The Minister must ensure the operation of this Act is reviewed.

'(2) The review must start within 3 years of the commencement of this section.

'(3) The Minister must prepare, and table in the Legislative Assembly, a report on the outcome of the review within 4 years of the commencement of this section.'"

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 49A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 50 to 53, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—

Mr HORAN (5.16 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 29, after line 14—

insert—

' "consent acknowledgment" see section 33A.'"

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Horan, by leave, read a third time.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BILL

Withdrawal

Hon. N. K. W. WILSON (Mulgrave—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (5.17 p.m.): I move—

"That order of the day No. 2 be discharged from the notice paper."

Ms BLIGH (South Brisbane) (5.17 p.m.): I rise to speak to the motion that is before the House because I do not believe that the withdrawal of this Bill should go unremarked by the Parliament. The decision to withdraw this Bill, as members will know, goes hand in hand with other decisions by the Minister to withdraw from public consideration amendments to the domestic violence legislation and amendments to the Child Care Act; in other words, the withdrawal of the entire legislative program in the portfolio of Families, Youth and Community Care from the public arena for the time being.

I accept, and I think that it is important to acknowledge, that the new Minister was in a difficult position. Clearly, she inherited a mess from her predecessor and her choices were to either go ahead with a poorly drafted Bill in need of some amendment or withdraw the Bill in the interests of consultation and improvement. I understand why she made the choice that she did, but I think that it is important for this Parliament to ask: what does this move say about the Government as a whole? Very simply, it says two things: in my view it puts beyond doubt that this Government is riddled with wrong priorities and it lacks the capacity to do the job with which it is charged.

In order to really understand the travesty that is being committed here today, we need to understand some of the history of child protection legislation in this State. The current legislation that governs the protection of children and under which officers in the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care work and go about their difficult daily job is 30 years old—actually, it is 33 years old, and it is the Children's Services Act 1965. The first review of that legislation was commissioned in 1978. In other words, in 1998 legislative reform of the child protection legislation of Queensland is having its 20th anniversary and it is still to reach a form by which it can be debated in the House.

Throughout the 1980s under the previous National Party Government, there was much consultation with the public and many attempts were made within the department to redraft the legislation. With the advent of the Labor Government, a white paper was issued in 1993 and extensive consultation was undertaken in 1993-94. In 1995 legislation was drafted, which received Cabinet authority to be introduced. Therefore, in February 1996—over two years ago—the former Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care inherited a fully drafted Bill.

I can understand the desire of the then new Minister to review that legislation. After all, it was

the legislation of a previous Government. I can understand that he wanted to look at the Bill and make a decision about whether or not he and his new Government could support it. To do nothing for the first 12 months was unforgivable, but that is what he did. No public consultation and no activity occurred within his department. Nothing was done for 12 months. Over the following period, various redrafting teams were constructed, including, at one stage, the temporary engagement of a retired judge to redraft the legislation. At no stage did the previous Minister embark on any process of public consultation or give any passing reference to Parliamentary Counsel in his attempts to look at the legislation. In November last year Cabinet finally approved a Bill presented by the former Minister. That Bill was almost a carbon copy of the Bill that the former Minister had inherited from, and that was drafted by, the previous Labor Government.

Mr Bredhauer: Two years wasted.

Ms BLIGH: Yes, it was two years wasted. After two years of mucking about in all but a handful of respects, the Bill that was approved by Cabinet in November last year was a mirror image of Labor's legislation. It will come as no surprise to members of this House that in every case where the previous Minister changed Labor's Bill, the change diminished the rights and protections available to children.

In two years no consultation took place. That begs the question: whose responsibility might that be? Of course, there can be no real doubt that the ultimate responsibility to consult with the public on such an important piece of legislation lay with the Minister. This is an opportune time for us to consider the role of a Parliamentary Secretary, which is a relatively new position in the Queensland context. The position of Parliamentary Secretary brings with it resources and is a position that one could reasonably assume would carry with it some responsibility to act as a go-between between the public and the Minister in a busy portfolio. After all, not every Minister gets a Parliamentary Secretary; only the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care are afforded this extra resource. Therefore, the public could be forgiven for expecting to see a little more service from the portfolios that have the benefit of those extra resources.

One could hardly say that the portfolio of Families, Youth and Community Care has been overworked legislatively in the past two years. Indeed, what is the legislative record of the previous Minister? In late 1996 he introduced and had passed by the Parliament the Children's Commissioner and Children's Services Appeals

Tribunals Bill. Of course, that was as a result of a motion moved months earlier by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, not in response to any policy motives of his own. Last year the former Minister's entire legislative record in this House involved passing an amendment to the guide-dogs legislation. While that amendment was supported by the House and recognised as an important piece of legislation, if my recollection is right, it was approximately two pages long and could hardly be said to have exercised the legislative program of either the Minister or his department.

In the context of considering the appropriate role of a Parliamentary Secretary, it is reasonable for members to ask what the member for Mulgrave was doing about child protection legislation for the two years during which she held that position. If she was aware that the public was concerned about a lack of consultation and if she was aware that there were difficulties with the legislation, what was she doing to bring those difficulties to the attention of the Minister? What was she doing with the extra resources that came with her position to ensure that the public had an opportunity to have input into the Bill? On all accounts, the answer is that she was doing nothing in that regard.

I take this opportunity to draw to the attention of the House the fact that only last week, without the full resources of a department or a Parliamentary Secretary, the Opposition conducted a public seminar for people working in the south-east corner in the field of child protection. So interested are people who work in this field that they came from as far afield as the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Ipswich and Toowoomba. Sixty people attended the seminar, which was held last Tuesday in the Parliament. The purpose of the seminar was to inform people, as far as possible, about the legislation and to allow the Opposition to inform itself of what practitioners who will be working with this legislation identify as the parts of the Bill that are to be commended and those that might need some amendment.

The seminar lasted for four hours. It was a very useful opportunity not only for myself and my parliamentary colleagues who attended but also for the many people who work with families to put forward our views on this very important piece of legislation.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: It was a very successful seminar.

Ms BLIGH: It was a totally successful seminar, not least because the member for Chermside was there. People who were in

attendance at the seminar identified numerous strengths in the Bill, and it is to be commended for those aspects. People who work in the field noted that the strengths of the Bill included the following: the fact that for the first time the legislation would establish a comprehensive range of orders for the court, that it would establish and clarify the powers and responsibilities of authorised officers and police officers, that it would establish standards of care and, commendably, that it would entrench in legislation the child placement principle, that is, the principle that indigenous children should, wherever possible, be placed within their own communities.

Not surprisingly, people who will work with this legislation were also able to identify a number of weaknesses which they thought could be easily remedied. I bring those to the attention of the Minister in the hope that she will take them into the account in the process that I understand she will now embark upon. Firstly, there was the question of whether the thresholds that were necessary for the exercise of certain powers under the Act were enough, for example, whether or not the definition of "harm" versus the use of the words "significant harm" could be looked at more clearly and the need perhaps for some checking system to be put in place where significant powers were being exercised. The next question was whether in many cases the duration of orders should be the subject of further consideration. Most people felt that the period allowed for orders was too long. The previous Bill had provided specifically for the separate legal representation of children. That provision has been removed from the draft legislation and there was a consensus among practitioners that it ought to be replaced.

Practitioners also felt very strongly that the unprecedented move in the Bill presented by the former Minister to exempt both the Minister and the director-general from the confidentiality provisions of the legislation was nothing more than an attempt to politicise child protection and had no place in the legislation. Many people who were present at the seminar have practised in the field for 20 and 30 years, but nobody could identify circumstances where such a breach of the confidentiality of children in the care of the State could ever be justified. I urge the new Minister to make sure that the legislation that is brought before the House after her consultation process has taken place does not have that disgraceful clause in it. I note that in no other jurisdiction in Australia is that provision required.

While it was recognised that there will always be circumstances in which it will be necessary for authorised officers and police officers to have

the power to move a child at risk to a safe place, practitioners felt that the Bill should define what a "safe place" might be. Other discussions took place about the regularity of review periods.

Mr Lingard: Tell us about that hospital record that you made a blue about.

Ms BLIGH: I would have thought that the discredited member for Beaudesert would listen to this in silence.

The regularity of review periods was also something of consideration, as was the need perhaps to have some recognition that there are a number of children currently in the care of the department who are in care because they have special needs as a result of disability. It was considered that the legislation should make some reference to those needs. In addition, the opportunity to discuss child protection during that seminar gave people the opportunity to consider issues which had not previously arisen when the Bill had been consulted on in 1993 and 1994, in particular the notion from the department of a charter of rights for children in care.

I would recommend to the Minister that the officers who might be in charge of redrafting this legislation take on board, or at least consider, some of the recommendations in the Australian Law Reform Commission's recent report, which was brought down only at the end of last year, titled "Seen and heard: priority for children in the legal process", and which identifies a range of issues to do with the charter of rights for children in care. I understand that a national charter of rights for children in care is on the agenda of national and State Ministers. I commend that charter to the Minister and indicate that she would certainly receive the universal support of this side of the House for it.

Earlier on I identified that I believe this Bill indicates two things about this Government. Firstly, it is a symbol of the wrong priorities that this Government and the previous Minister for this portfolio brought to his task. After two years there will have been no legislation debated in this House on child protection. Cabinet approved the legislation that was introduced in November last year. Who was watching the legislation? Who was watching this portfolio over the past two years to see what was happening in the core business of the portfolio?

When Cabinet approved the legislation in November last year, did anybody notice that the Explanatory Notes to the Bill said that the legislation had last been consulted on in 1993 and 1994? The Explanatory Notes to the Bill made it absolutely clear that there had been no consultation and no opportunity for public input,

yet the Bill was tabled and introduced in November last year.

As I have noted, two years is a long time for nothing to happen. It is important to note that this Government has had no such problems in relation to an ability to speedily resolve an issue when it comes to issues that are politically motivated and to its own political advantage. For example, it did not take very long for this Government to establish, at quite significant cost, a Crime Commission and it did not take it very long to spend \$14.5m on the Connolly/Ryan inquiry. But for two years the Government has taken no action on the very core business of the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care.

Not only does this Bill point to the wrong priorities of the Government; it points absolutely to its incompetence and laziness. As I identified earlier, the legislative program of this portfolio is in tatters. It has been non-existent for two years, and the many worthy things that were about to come forward for debate in the Parliament are now off the agenda. I say to the new Minister: I pity her because of the mess that she has inherited. I commend her for her willingness to remove these pieces of legislation and to try to get them right.

In relation to the child protection legislation, I think it is fair to say that this falls into a different category from the amendments to the domestic violence legislation and the Child Care Act in that they have been subjected to quite extensive consultation and they may need to be refined a little more. However, I urge the Minister to expedite that process and to bring this Bill into the House as soon as possible.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (5.33 p.m.): This motion urges the Parliament to discharge that Order of the Day which provides for the Children and Families Bill to proceed with the second-reading debate. Over four months ago the then Minister introduced the Bill. The Minister's motion has been moved today without the benefit of any explanation to this Chamber.

Mr Bredhauer: The Leader of the House says that the Bill will be back straight after the election; trust him.

Mr FOLEY: I thank the member for Cook. Indeed, one of the questions that I will pose to the Minister to seek her advice to this House a little later concerns the timetable that she has in mind. There are questions about the process to date. There are questions about the urgency of addressing the issues which make up the content of the Bill and there are questions about the process to be followed in proceeding down the path of further consultation.

The Parliament is entitled to an explanation from the Minister as to why as Parliamentary Secretary she did not undertake or cause to be undertaken the consultation which she has now advanced in public discussion as the reason as to why this legislation has to go away. The shadow Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, the member for South Brisbane, has pointed out that the previous Government left a fully drafted Bill back in February 1996. I ask the Minister to inform the Chamber as to what steps she took. Is her concern with the consultation a new-found matter? Did she have a concern? If so, did she raise those concerns with the Minister and, if so, what action was taken?

However, let me turn to two issues that are matters of concern to me. The first is the Aboriginal and Islander child placement principle which was enshrined in the Bill. It is indeed unfortunate that the legislative implementation of this principle is to be further delayed. As far back as 1981, I worked with Aboriginal leader Lilla Watson on producing a report on Aboriginal and Islander child-care issues in Queensland. Then, as now, foster homes and child-care institutions the length and breadth of this State were chock-a-block with Aboriginal and Islander children. That is the greatest issue which continues to face the child welfare system in this State.

As far back as 1981, we advocated the implementation of an Aboriginal and Islander child placement principle. That came about as a result of significant work on the part of the Aboriginal and Islander community throughout Australia. It followed significant work by the American Indian community in the United States, where they had achieved legislative implementation of an American Indian child placement principle under President Carter. As an interesting piece of history, I point out that they did that with the significant political support of the union of longshoremen, that is, the wharfies, who contributed significantly. At a time when the wharfies are copping a fair bit of criticism in public debate, I think it is important to remember that both here and internationally they have contributed to social reform. This was one of the issues that they took up in the United States.

I ask the Minister: will she affirm the Government's commitment to the Aboriginal and Islander child-care placement principle? Is this principle to be put in jeopardy during the course of the review? I urge the Minister to take the opportunity here and now to affirm her commitment and the Government's commitment to the principle. It was a good part of the Bill which the Minister now wishes to withdraw. It

would be a tragedy if that principle were to be abandoned or watered down in the course of the Government's review of this legislation.

The second matter that I urge upon the Minister is something which appeared in the report of the Australian Law Reform Commission late last year, namely, the Charter for Children in Care. I remind honourable members of this report, which is titled "Seen and heard; priority for children in the legal process". I have a clear memory of it myself, because I well recall the day that the Premier and I had a spirited exchange about the great virtues of this report, which resulted in one of us remaining in the Chamber and the other of us going elsewhere. At the time, the Premier was moved to describe the authors of the document as a cabal of lawyers. Putting to one side whatever other collective nouns might be used to describe lawyers, I do ask the Minister to consider carefully the Charter for Children in Care recommended by that report of the Australian Law Reform Commission in conjunction with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Recommendation 164 of that report is to this effect—

"A Charter for Children in Care should be developed. The Charter should create a legally enforceable obligation on the part of the relevant State or Territory family services department to provide each child in care with

- * a safe living environment
- * accommodation in the least restrictive placement commensurate with the child's best interests and wishes
- * suitable education and job training opportunities or assistance in finding appropriate employment when the child reaches working age while in care
- * an appropriate amount of spending money
- * therapeutic support or additional educational assistance where necessary and with the consent of the child
- * a mentor from whom the child can obtain confidential advice and assistance
- * regular reviews of the child's case plan and circumstances in care
- * the right to be consulted and to have the child's views given due weight (in accordance with age and maturity) in the decision-making process, particularly when decisions are made about residence, family contact, schooling and health

- * appropriate assistance in the transition from care including housing assistance, access to income support, further training and/or education and continuing support from a mentor
- * service delivery models tailored to the needs and capacities of children."

With respect to implementation, the report recommended that—

"OFC should develop the Charter for Children in Care in conjunction the relevant State and Territory family services departments and in consultation with other relevant government agencies, non-government service providers, children's advocacy groups and children in care. This Charter should be enacted in legislation at federal, State and Territory levels."

This is an idea whose time has come. The circumstances of children in care remain today circumstances in which many of them face conditions that are unacceptable and unsatisfactory. It shocks the conscience of many to learn that many of the street children are, in fact, children in care. One is left to wonder how it is that this can be so at a time when resources should be made available to assist them. I think a significant rise in community awareness has come from the report on the stolen generation, and I think the community has been touched by the tragedy of the loss of Aboriginal and Islander children from their parents. That should serve to drive home to all of us the problems and challenges faced by children in care. I urge the Minister to use the time that will be available to her to implement that so as to have Queensland right at the forefront of law reform in this area. It goes without saying that law reform in itself does not make for the welfare and benefit of children. However, it is an important plank in doing so.

Let me ask the Minister four specific questions for she has sought from this Parliament the discharge of this Order of the Day. Firstly, I ask: what specific action is to be taken by the Minister following today? Secondly, what consultation process is the Minister to undertake and with whom? Thirdly, what timetable will the Minister adopt and, fourthly, will the Minister give an assurance that the legislation will be brought back into this House and debated before the election?

Mr FitzGerald: What date is the election?

Mr FOLEY: It is a date within the control of the Government over the coming months.

Mr FitzGerald: Ha, ha!

Mr FOLEY: I am surprised that it is a matter of mirth in Government ranks. We are talking about an election which is due by the middle of July. It is now the first week in March. The Government has four and a half months. May I say: what a striking contrast! When the Government needed to bring in legislation to authorise the Connolly/Ryan commission to quarry through the records of the Criminal Justice Commission, there was no problem about rushing legislation in; there was no problem about the urgency of that. Oh no! When it wanted to nobble the Carruthers inquiry, it was prepared to move with greased lightning speed.

I ask the Minister to inform the House as to whether she will give an assurance to be expeditious, to go out to do the consultation that she believes is necessary. She should keep in mind that we are talking about legislation that replaces the Children's Services Act of 1965. Over a decade ago legislation was drawn up by the National Party Government and it was as a result of criticism from the then Chief Justice of Queensland, Sir Walter Campbell, that that legislation was withdrawn. The Government does not have the Chief Justice as an alibi this time; it is simply a change of personnel in the Minister's office. So the question is: will this simply fall into the too-hard basket or will the worthwhile reforms that are in the Bill be shown the light of day so that the children of Queensland can get the benefit of them?

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr FOLEY: I note the observation of the member for Cook. If it is the intention of the Government to put this off, to defer it, then I ask the Government to give an explanation as to why. Why does it not have a sense of urgency about the rights of children? Why does it not have a sense of urgency about the welfare of children and families? If it is good enough for the Government to be urgent when it was trying to nobble the Carruthers inquiry and when it was trying to bring in the Connolly/Ryan commission, why is it not good enough now? Accordingly, I ask the Minister in her reply to answer those four specific questions upon which the House can form its view as to whether to discharge this Order of the Day providing for the debate on the Children and Families Bill.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove) (5.46 p.m.): I was not going to speak in this debate until I heard the Leader of the House answer by way of interjection the question: when will this legislation come before this House? He glibly said with a smile on his face, "After the election." I have now sat in this House from my

first election date in 1977 for more than 20 years, although I have had a short period of sabbatical leave. Nevertheless, I have always understood that the legislation under which we are pretending to protect children has always been ineffective. There is no doubt at all that the care and control of our children who need to come under the control of the State have been deficient in very many ways. In fact, as the previous speaker said, when the State does intervene it leads to a lot of our young people becoming homeless.

The Human Rights Commission inquiry on homeless children, which I was involved with, received a submission from the then State Government—the National Party Government—which stated that it was quite aware that large numbers of young people who were homeless were actually under the care and control of the State. In my view, this is a great example of why we need fixed term Parliaments. If we were living in an ideal world, we would have a four-year term and a fixed term to boot. That way we could actually give priority to some of these issues that do not currently get priority. Although a motion is moved about it from time to time when it is highlighted by people such as Father Wally Detales and we get a bit defensive about it, we really do not care that much. We show that by the way in which we behave and in the priority that we give this sort of legislation.

There is no doubt at all that the Leader of the House was right; we will not be seeing this legislation this side of the election, so another opportunity has passed. I know we want legislation that is worth while. I know we want legislation that has been drafted after proper consultation. However, I am very concerned that, as members of this legislature, we are saying that with the ability, the resources and the processes we have to protect the most vulnerable group of children who need to be protected by the State, we do not give them priority. I think that is appalling. It is an indictment on each and every one of us. It is disgraceful that we will close this Parliament and have an election, yet we will still be working on legislation that is 33 years old.

Mr Bredhauer: Older than the Minister for Natural Resources.

Mr FOURAS: Absolutely! The legislation is older than the Minister for Natural Resources. I think that he is quite a good lad, so I do not want to be sounding critical of him. Age and wisdom do apply in my case, but not in all cases.

In the end, that is my plea. I could give a lot of examples in which the State is not coping, in which the current procedures are inadequate and in which I think we do need a new look and a

new approach. I am worried that the previous Government had legislation ready and had funds ready—substantial amounts of money—that were to go towards protecting the children, but they were hived off and lost. We have seen neither the legislation nor the money. That is a shame. If it is true that we will not see the legislation this side of the election, we should all hang our heads because that would be disgraceful.

Hon. N. K. W. WILSON (Mulgrave—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (5.50 p.m.): I am happy to present a few explanations to the House as to why this particular piece of legislation was withdrawn. When I became Minister a number of people rang me and expressed the need for some further consultation. I wanted to respond to community need. This action has not been taken lightly. A lot of work had been carried out on the previous document that lay on the table. The honourable member is correct; it has been 33 years since this legislation was first brought before the Parliament. I believe we need to develop legislation which will not need amendments a short way down the track.

My department will follow an open process. We will be looking for groups within the community to make submissions to the department. We will be advertising and calling for submissions. I can assure those opposite that a time line has not been set. I do not want the time line for this legislation to be too short. However, I assure the House that I am very keen to get this legislation up. I cannot give the House an assurance as to when the legislation will come before the Parliament.

Mr Foley: Do you not have a timetable?

Mrs WILSON: I am not going to have a timetable because I want community consultation to be open. We have to take the time to call for submissions. The submissions have to be considered. I can assure the House that when the legislation does come to this place it will be something on which the community has had very adequate consultation.

Mr Bredhauer: And you will not be the Minister in charge.

Mrs WILSON: I certainly will be the Minister in charge and that is why I am determined to get this legislation before the House after good community debate. The document will be one on which I will be proud to put my signature because it will have had that extra community input.

Motion agreed to.

On the Order of the Day being discharged, the Bill was withdrawn.

**CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY
BILL
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY BILL
QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY BILL
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND BILL
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN
QUEENSLAND BILL**

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Debate resumed from 8 October 1997 (see p. 3700).

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (5.53 p.m.): The Central Queensland University Bill, the Griffith University Bill, the Queensland University of Technology Bill, the University of Queensland Bill and the University of Southern Queensland Bill have been around for a long time, as the Minister well knows. Although they are essentially machinery amendments to the university legislation, I do not want to play down the significance of the legislation.

This legislation is bringing the administration of the State's universities up to modern legislative principles. This is long overdue. I was speaking to the member for Kedron, Mr Paul Braddy, who was Minister for Education in the first Labor Government between 1989 and 1992, and he remembers discussion on these amendments at that time. A lot of work was undertaken on the amendments up until the time when the present Government came to power two years ago. I believe the universities and the Higher Education Division of the Department of Education will be glad to see the back of these amendments when they are finally disposed of. Late last year they were placed on the Notice Paper and it was thought that they might get up, but they did not.

It is important that we debate this legislation because the higher education sector in Australia is facing a period of significant tumult due, in no small part, to the actions of the coalition's colleagues in Canberra. Over the past two years, people who are involved in higher education have experienced some very destructive policy initiatives as a result of the actions of the Howard Government.

I have been involved with education since 1972 when the Whitlam Government moved to make access to a university education universal. The former Labor Government in Canberra made some changes in the higher education area which were criticised, I admit, but people never anticipated the savagery with which the Canberra colleagues of those opposite would deal with higher education. We have seen the massive budget cuts which have been visited upon higher education throughout the country. These

cuts occurred notwithstanding the fact that, prior to the last Federal election, John Howard and other coalition frontbenchers mouthed platitudes and made promises which they subsequently broke. We were told prior to the election that funding to universities and higher education would not be cut. However, this was just one of the many promises that turned out to be—how do they describe it—not a core promise. Apparently we have core election promises and we have other election promises. According to Mr Howard, core election promises are the ones that are kept and the non-core promises are the ones that are made with every intention of being broken after the election. Presumably the coalition's commitment to the funding of higher education was a non-core promise.

The savagery with which the Federal Government has dealt with the higher education sector over the past two years is unprecedented. I do not think anyone could have believed that the Government would have visited such savage cuts on the higher education sector.

We have had many manifestations of those policies. We have had the reintroduction of up-front fees for university courses. We have had significant increases in higher education charges. We have had contributions for capital and recurrent expenditure at universities cut. We have had changes to Austudy which have made it much more difficult for many students, particularly those from needy families, to access education in a way that has not been seen since the early 1970s.

The attitude of the Labor Party, both in the Federal and the State sphere, stands in stark contrast to that of the coalition over the past two years. This is the policy that the Labor Party will take to the forthcoming State and Federal elections.

Debate, on motion of Mr Bredhauer, adjourned.

MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (6 p.m.): I move—

"That this House censures the Minister for Mines and Energy for his gross incompetence and mismanagement of the Queensland electricity sector, and calls for his dismissal for—

- (1) failing to honour his promise to keep the lights on in Queensland;
- (2) failing to understand that his inability to avert the widespread blackouts across Queensland created a crisis which

imposed massive inconvenience upon all Queenslanders;

- (3) abandoning the Eastlink interconnection, thereby ensuring that emergency reserve supplies of power cannot be drawn from other States for at least another three years;
- (4) wasting \$10m on the development of a flawed electricity reform model which cannot produce lower prices precisely because there is an inadequate supply of generation capacity;
- (5) throwing the regional electricity distribution boards into turmoil by imposing a restructuring plan that will cost 2,000 Queenslanders their jobs and which is so poorly designed that two of the three new retailers were forced to merge before the new system even began; and
- (6) allowing SEQEB to undertake an \$8m marketing campaign just to change its name to ENERGEX."

This Minister is grossly incompetent and must be sacked. Queensland deserves better. I will clearly demonstrate that the blame for last week's power crisis lies firmly with the Minister for Energy. The Minister said that he had taken whatever action was necessary to guarantee that the lights would stay on. He plainly did not. The Premier knows that the Minister is not up to the job, but he refuses to pull the plug on him. The Premier is weak and is demonstrating no leadership.

Today the Opposition gave the Government eight opportunities to pass on the power price cuts to mums and dads as well as to business, and the Government refused. The Treasurer does not know that "domestic supply" means mums and dads. The Minister knew that there were problems as long ago as last year, but he waited until the late afternoon of Sunday, 22 February, to give Queenslanders their first warning that they would be blacked out from the next morning. This crisis represents yet another broken promise. I table for the information of the House a booklet that talks about 100 broken promises of this Government.

In 1995, the coalition issued its power policy and a media release headed "Coalition's power policy to keep lights on and prices down". That was the commitment. What does the first paragraph of this document say? It says—

"The Coalition today released its Future Power Supply policy, including commitments to urgent projects to avoid a power shortage in 1998 ..."

That is what the document said. I table that for the information of the House. The coalition promised to reject the plan to build the Eastlink transmission line, which would have made power from New South Wales available to Queensland. When Minister Gilmore pulled the plug on Eastlink in March 1996, the Townsville Bulletin reported as follows—

"Because of the Eastlink announcement, Mr Gilmore said that the State would face a critical short-term power shortage from around 1998 to 2000 and called for tenders to help solve the problem to be submitted by July 29."

The Minister himself was saying that, because he had cancelled the Eastlink project, Queensland would be faced with a critical short-term power shortage from 1998. Those were his words, not mine. This Minister was saying that a decision of the Borbidge/Sheldon Cabinet was going to lead to a risk of the lights going out from 1998 onwards, and he was right. The risk was so great that action had to be taken almost immediately, and tenders to help solve the problem were needed within four months. These were the Minister's words.

If there is still doubt in anyone's mind that the fault for last month's power crisis is entirely due to the coalition Government's incompetence and wrong priorities, here is further proof. The Courier-Mail reported on 26 March 1996—

"The Goss Government did manage to get over the critical 1998 hump, but it's now been pushed out to the first quarter of 1999."

I ask members to think about that quote. In 1996, this quote was very clearly and unequivocally forecasting that, because of action taken by the Labor Government, there would be no power problems in 1998. Who said this? The Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr Gilmore, said that.

Then, in April 1996, there was—in Mr Gilmore's own words—fear and confusion surrounding the State's power supply for 1997 and 1998. This led to the Minister making a ministerial statement to Parliament on 30 April 1996 in which he said—

"I have now been assured in writing by the chief executives of all three power supply authorities AUSTA Electric, Powerlink and the Queensland Transmission and Supply Corporation that action already undertaken or planned will guarantee supply, including that in peak demand periods."

That was the assurance that was given by the Minister. The Minister guaranteed to Parliament that the lights would stay on for 1997 and 1998.

It was the same in September 1996, when the Minister was asked a dorothy dixer during the Estimates process. The question was—

"Can you assure the people of Queensland that proper procedures are in place to ensure a continuing, reliable and efficient power supply to the State?"

That was the question put to the Minister. What did he say? The Minister said very calmly and simply: of course I can. So there we have it: a very clear commitment. The Minister went even further. He said—

"I am satisfied now that since we have taken the steps that we have of recent times by letting contracts for three new power stations in the State, all is well within that particular jurisdiction."

He told shadow Minister McGrady—

"... there is sufficient power within the system to take us through to 2000."

That is what he told my colleague.

Let us get it straight. The coalition promised to keep the lights on. That was the commitment. It is in black and white in this document and in the answers given by the Minister. That was the commitment. This was the great contract with Queensland. The Premier said, "If I break it, throw me out." Queenslanders will have that chance very shortly. The coalition Government said very clearly that the Labor Government had done enough to keep the lights on in 1998. Those were the Minister's own words. The Minister for Energy guaranteed that he had checked with the power industry and there was sufficient power to take Queensland through to 2000. They are the facts. That is why the responsibility clearly lies at the doorstep of this Minister. So if there were to be any problems in the power industry, the Minister must and should bear full responsibility.

So what went wrong? It was the Government's wrong priorities. The Treasurer stole more than \$1.3 billion from the power industry to spend on trying to get the Government re-elected. That is what it is about. It is about pork-barrelling. In other words, the coalition Government was more interested in political power than the power industry itself. The Government has pushed 700 workers out of the industry so far. This resulted in maintenance tasks not being carried out. The Opposition tabled proof of that today. Fifty-two per cent of maintenance tasks at Tarong Power Station are overdue. I table the full document. When one looks at this document, one sees all the way down it that there are 1,900 little bombs going off.

Mr McGrady: Time bombs.

Mr BEATTIE: They are time bombs with wicks burning. These little bombs represent all overdue jobs at the Tarong Power Station. These have come about because the Government has been involved in staff cuts. That is why we have 1,900 little time bombs going off at Tarong alone. I invite members to look at the substance of this document. This demonstrates the incompetence not only of this Minister but of this Government—1,900 little time bombs going off at Tarong. And the Government tries to say that there are no maintenance problems. Let the members of this House decide that, having looked at that document.

This has forced power stations to hire contract maintenance labour to try to catch up with this massive backlog. The Government says that this is normal business practice. But is it normal business practice for a whole power system to collapse? Before the Premier's desperate and premature announcement of the extension of Callide last week, the Government had done nothing to bring major new generation capacity into the Queensland system. Government members have just sat on their hands. They have had over two years in which to do something. They have wasted \$10m on developing a flawed electricity reform model which cannot produce lower prices. Is it any wonder that I have given a commitment on behalf of the future Government of this State that we will sort out the power structure, we will reamalgamate and we will give the power industry a decent future?

Altogether, 2,000 Queenslanders employed in the power industry are being pushed out of work, and \$8m was spent just on changing its name to Energex. How do Government members explain that to the mums and dads to whom they refused to give a power price cut? They have wasted \$8m on changing a name.

Mr McGrady: At least.

Mr BEATTIE: At least. That is a sackable offence alone. The Minister wasted \$8m. In last year's Estimates hearings in June, Minister Gilmore accurately said—

"One of the aims of this Government is to help Queensland prepare for the challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities for growth and prosperity in the 21st century."

He said—

"I am absolutely convinced that we can do this only if we have abundant supplies of competitive priced gas and electricity."

The Minister is absolutely right on this. Queensland business and industry can prosper and create jobs only if it is confident of the power supply. After last week's fiasco, it can have no confidence in this Minister or in this Government. The Minister has failed to honour his promise to keep the lights on, and he has damaged the reputation of this State, both interstate and overseas, which will have an impact on our reputation around the world. This has caused immense damage to our reputation both here and overseas and directly threatens future investment in this State.

The Minister was responsible for the widespread blackouts across Queensland which created a crisis that imposed massive inconvenience, loss of opportunities and expenses on Queenslanders. He bears full ministerial responsibility for the crisis. The Minister tried to wriggle out of this responsibility, as Ministers from this appalling coalition Government always try to do. He said that there was nothing to apologise for. The arrogance of it! The Premier felt obliged to grovel to the State the next day. The Minister then blamed the media for reporting that there was a power crisis. The Premier said that he had no complaints about the media's coverage. The Minister said that he would be disappointed if business took legal action against the Government. The Premier said that it was up to business whether or not they filed a suit. It is obvious that this Cabinet has no cohesion and is not up to the job.

Time expired.

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa) (6.09 p.m.): I second the motion. It is very difficult to mount an attack in the five minutes allocated. Last week the people of Queensland had demonstrated to them once again that this Government is inept, not up to the job and certainly unfit to govern this State. A censure motion is a serious matter and one that I treat as such. This Minister has proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is incapable of leading the power industry of Queensland and presiding over one of the most important industries in this State.

Today in question time, as an Opposition, we demonstrated that the real problem that faces the industry and the real reason for the chaos of last week was the lack of maintenance of the equipment in the power stations caused in part by the retrenchment of so many workers, with many more to follow. This morning we had the Minister and the Premier trying to score political points by tabling memos that I as Minister sent to senior public servants telling them not to allow power outages in this State. What is wrong with that? I will do it again when we get back into

office. The real question tonight is: where are the memos from this Minister? Where are the instructions from this Minister to ensure that the lights do not go out? There are none available, because he did not send any. He does not understand the industry.

Last week, the Minister for Mines and Energy refused to apologise to the people of Queensland for the chaos that he and his Government created. The very next day, the Premier apologised on behalf of the Government. We have seen report after report after report indicating a lack of maintenance. We then witnessed the spectacle of the same Minister not knowing the terminology of load shedding. In front of the whole of the national television audience, he demonstrated his total lack of knowledge of basic, simple industry terms.

In her usual arrogant way, the Treasurer stated that the problems had nothing at all to do with the Government. Yesterday, the selfsame Treasurer announced a 5% reduction in electricity prices for commercial and industrial users, in her words, to compensate them for the problems they experienced last week. The question has to be asked: where is the 5% reduction coming from? Does this Government really believe that that is going to compensate those businesses, large and small, for the losses that they incurred as a direct result of the policies pursued by this Government? \$40 a month is what the small businesses of this State will save. The real issue is this: if the Government has seen fit to reduce the price of electricity by 5%, why did it not do that right across-the-board? Because they also had problems, why did it not give it to the mums and dads?

Does this Government and, indeed, this Minister really know what is going on? They are masquerading as disciples of the free market system, under which the market will determine the price of electricity, yet, when they are in political strife, when they are in a corner, the first thing that they do is interfere in the marketplace and fix the power prices for businesses for the next three years. That is totally against all the principles that they and their advisers have been advocating for the past two years. All expert opinion suggests that there will be no decrease in the price for domestic users under the new market arrangements. The same people are suggesting that there will be substantial increases for domestic consumers in the regions.

This is all about risk management in the power stations. We on this side of the House say that the risk is too big. We are not prepared to sit back and allow the maintenance vote to

disappear. The risk is too great. We will have no bar of the policies that the Government is pursuing. Nobody in the State should be under any illusions that the responsibility for last week's crisis lies fairly and squarely at the door of the Minister for Mines and Energy, the Treasurer and, indeed, the Premier. There is plenty of proof that makes it clear that there has been a lack of maintenance of important equipment at the various power stations around this State. There is indisputable evidence that proves that the retrenchment of part of the electrical work force has contributed to the lack of work being carried out on this equipment. In one power station last week, management refused to allow one person two hours' overtime, which would have allowed that unit to come on 16 hours earlier. There is one other issue that makes me angry, and that is what they did—

Time expired.

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (6.14 p.m.): This debate is about lies and credibility. This debate is about a very simple principle: if one cannot tell the truth, one cannot run Queensland. Today the Leader of the Opposition and the former Minister were caught out, because truth is the overriding convention in a democracy. To hear the honourable member for Mount Isa was a bit like hearing Nero calling the fire brigade. He is the Minister who did nothing for year after year after year. After six years of Labor Government, we actually had less generating capacity than when Labor took office.

I want to deal with a few of the lies—the claims from honourable members opposite about the \$850m that we took from the reserves of the industry. They took \$2.8 billion. I tabled that information today. As to the lies from honourable members opposite in respect of maintenance, this Government has received written assurances from the three companies involved that maintenance levels have been maintained. As to the lies from honourable members opposite in respect of this Government's alleged inaction, the first thing we did on returning to the Treasury benches was to put in place three new peak power stations, which are now under construction or committed at Townsville and Oakey, as well as the other arrangements to which I have referred.

I turn to the greatest Labor lie of all: Eastlink. I quote the Leader of the Opposition on Today Tonight on Monday, 22 February. He said—

"If you consider that in April '96 the Minister cancelled Eastlink, which was due to come on somewhere between January and March this year and would have produced something like 500 megawatts of

power had they followed our power strategy, this would not have happened."

Then, on Carolyn Tucker's program on 23 February, the honourable member for Mount Isa stated—

"The facts are that Eastlink would have been up and running next week or even this week."

On the ABC radio news on Thursday, 25 February, we heard the member for Mount Isa again—

"Eastlink? It could have now been in operation, and it could have allowed Queensland to access some 500 megawatts of power from the south."

That is not what they decided in Cabinet. That was not their policy. That was not what they took to Cabinet. That was not what they argued for in the Cabinet room. Twice in the past week, the Leader of the Opposition has been caught out telling lies.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. The Premier knows that that is untrue. It is unparliamentary. I seek for it to be withdrawn. I ask the Premier to behave like a Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked for a withdrawal.

Mr BORBIDGE: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to tell the truth. If the Leader of the Opposition is offended, I will withdraw the word, but not the substance of the allegation. He misled the people of Queensland in regard to his salary increase. He misled the people of Queensland in regard to Eastlink. On those two occasions, he has been caught out in writing.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. That is untrue. The Premier knows that that is untrue. I find that offensive and unparliamentary. I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr BORBIDGE: If the honourable member finds it offensive, I will withdraw. I make the observation that his written correspondence to me does not correspond with his statements in the House tonight. His statements in respect of Eastlink have been proved totally wrong in respect of certain documents that were tabled here today. I make this observation: if one cannot tell the truth, one cannot run Queensland. The member talks about parliamentary convention; I am talking about truth and integrity, the basic foundation stones of a democratic society. The fact is that the Leader of the Opposition has been found wanting.

Earlier today the Minister and I detailed in this place the Callide A, Callide C, Collinsville, Townsville, Wandoan, Oakey and Wambo initiatives that have been presided over by this

Government, which seek to ensure that the people of Queensland are never subjected again to the chronic mismanagement that we had under the Labor Party.

Time expired.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.19 p.m.): The Premier will do and say anything to save his political hide. After his performance in the Parliament today and this evening, he does not deserve to run Queensland. He does not deserve to be the Premier of this State.

The Government has reeled from crisis to crisis. Members of the business community—and I know because I talk to them regularly—

Government members interjected.

Mr ELDER: Government members up the back of the Chamber may laugh, but the members of the business community are attending dinners and evenings that I have hosted. They are just fed up with the way in which the Government has run this State. If it keeps up its incompetent performance, we stand to lose billions of dollars in the future.

The Minister is telling business people throughout the State that the free market will be the saviour of the electricity industry. Imagine their surprise when this morning they picked up the paper to read that the Government has announced a price cut. It is a price cut from nowhere that will apply for the next three years. The question being asked by people in the boardrooms—and I have spoken to them—is: how is the Government going to pay for the 5% cut over the next three years?

By the end of this reform process, the incompetent Minister that he is will have spent \$10m trying to force Queensland industry into a competitive market. What is the result? Previously, Government members up the back of the Chamber were laughing about what industry is paying for electricity. What industry pays for electricity is added on to the price of every good it manufactures and every job it provides. It is part of industry's bottom line in terms of economic development in this State.

What are the results? I hear no answer. I will inform the members opposite because they sit there in ignorant bliss. They have not talked to industry about the results. The market arrangements for the top 40 industrial users, which were introduced in January this year by this Minister, lasted two weeks before they were stopped. Prices went through the roof—from \$40 per kilowatt hour to a peak of \$5,000 per kilowatt hour on the spot market. That is what the Government has done to the price of electricity

for businesses in the State. The Government blamed the computer software that operated the new system. However, the designers of that software system rejected that criticism out of hand.

Right from the start, the national market manager of NEMMCO and the industry have been saying that electricity prices are going up because there is no excess in supply. The Minister would not have to be a genius to work that out. Everyone except the Government says that prices are going up because there is no excess supply. When demand is greater than supply, surprise, surprise, prices go up. We need to look no further than the events of last week to see that demand in Queensland has exceeded the available supply of power.

The people in the industry to whom I have been speaking are taking the view that this tight supply situation will not disappear overnight. It will last three to four years until Westlink comes online or a new base load power station comes online. That will be the earliest time that we will have any true semblance of competition in the Queensland electricity market. So I say to the Minister that prices are not going to fall over the next three years.

As Clive Bubb asked in Queensland's leading business weekly, *Business Queensland*, "Why deregulate if it is not going to lead to lower prices?" That brings me back to my original question: how is the Government planning to pay for a 5% cut in electricity prices to commercial users? If competition is not delivering the price cut—and it is not because the Government has set that rate for three years—that means that more power workers will lose their jobs, there will be more blackouts through lack of maintenance because the money will not be spent on maintenance, and at the end of the day there will be no real change in price. That is the future for power under this Government.

For a moment I would like to consider how this particular crisis arose. It is common knowledge—and the Government knew this back in 1997-98; Labor knew it—that, in terms of the capacity of the electricity industry to provide power, this summer was going to be trying. Today, the Government has made great mention of Eastlink. If members opposite looked at that Cabinet document, they would find that Labor said that it should not be necessary for Eastlink to come on stream until the summer of 1998-99. When he saw that supply was a problem, any Minister worth his salt would have brought forward the project. Labor would have brought forward the project. All one has to do—

Government members interjected.

Mr ELDER: Listen to the construction geniuses opposite at the back of the Chamber. It takes a couple of towers and a couple of powerlines, and any boofhead of a Minister worth his salt would have been out there running that program. However, the Government did not do that. It capitulated. The Government should go.

Time expired.

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (6.24 p.m.): Anybody knows that power stations are not constructed overnight, yet the Opposition tries to avoid the responsibility of what we are debating today. It also seems to be suffering from a memory lapse. We have just heard an excellent example of that from the Deputy Opposition Leader, who said that Labor would have brought forward the construction of Eastlink if it found out that, this year, there were going to be problems. How long does the member really think that it would take to construct it?

Mr ELDER: I rise to a point of order. The remarks are offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn. I did not say that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has found some remark offensive.

Mr HARPER: Mr Speaker, I withdraw. The Deputy Opposition Leader said that Labor would have brought it forward. However, it takes years to construct a transmission line of the type of Eastlink or Westlink. Surely he knows that!

The Opposition claimed that the \$850m taken out of the industry by the Government has meant that it has been left with less money with which to maintain the plant. For over 12 months, the member for Mount Isa has been pushing that line. Frankly, that is becoming tiresome and boring. For once, let us examine the facts. There is no relationship whatsoever between the recent plant failure in the industry and the \$850m capital repayment to the Government. That \$850m was essentially funds that were additional to the industry's needs and the public of Queensland is far better off having these funds being used to provide social infrastructure rather than being left within the industry. That is precisely what the coalition Government did when it applied the one-off injection from the electricity industry debt restructuring to fund the \$850m for those capital projects.

The process that was followed was modelled on the one which was adopted by the previous Government, which is now the Opposition, for the corporatisation of the electricity industry in January 1995. That is not long ago, but the Opposition seems to have forgotten that. At that time, the Labor Government attributed \$1.3 billion in debt to the

electricity GOCs as part preparation of electricity GOCs for corporatisation and to fund pricing adjustments for the electricity industry worth some \$100m, including the extension of tariff equalisation from domestic consumers to commercial and industrial consumers.

In an answer to a question, the then Treasurer, the member for Cairns, stated that a detailed review of the balance sheets of the electricity corporations and a comparison with other States and international electricity organisations was performed on corporatisation to arrive at an appropriate gearing ratio. A gearing ratio in the range of 30% to 40% was advised as a prudent level of debt for the electricity industry. If the Opposition doubts that, it should refer to page 641 of the Hansard of 20 October 1995 to read the then Treasurer's words.

The principles underlying the repayment of the \$850m are the same as those that were applied by the previous Government in taking the \$1.3 billion. However, this Government has allocated that money towards building infrastructure to benefit all Queenslanders, not to send it south to the then Labor Government's Federal mates in Canberra.

A significant point also to be noted is that, when Labor geared up AUSTA in 1995, the debt to total assets ratio of the generator was 31%. This Government has not changed that. It will stay at that ratio. I refer to the \$8m that the Opposition stated that Energex was supposed to have spent on the name change. Where did it get that figure from? It is another figure plucked out of the air. Much of that spending would have occurred on usual things, anyway. Under seven years of Labor rule, the electricity industry spent millions of dollars.

The Opposition referred to the issue of staffing. I refer to the period from 1992-93 to 1993-94. In that time, the previous Government cut 572 staff from the then QEC and a total of 640 staff from the industry. This Government has not done that in any one year. However, the Opposition seems to have forgotten about that.

I refer to the power stations that have been constructed. In that regard, this Government has a proud record. Between 1966 to 1969, there was Swanbank A; between 1970 and 1973, there was Swanbank B; between 1976 and 1982, there was the Gladstone Power Station; in 1984, there was the Wivenhoe pump storage and between 1984 and 1986, there was the Tarong station. What did the present Opposition do in the seven years during which it was in power? How many new power stations did it commission? Not one! I am sorry, I am misleading the House: it provided a mere 37 megawatts at Barcardine. The Callide B and Stanwell stations

which came on line during the term of the previous Government were actually planned during the term of the previous National Party Government, yet the Opposition tries to say that it looked after the industry responsibly. It is the Opposition's lack of planning and action that has led to Queensland having a lack of power generation.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich) (6.29 p.m.): "There's a hole in the Budget, dear Joanie, dear Joanie", and the evidence of that came from the honourable member for Mount Ommaney, who just told the House that the \$850m that was taken from the electricity industry was used for social infrastructure.

Dr WATSON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I refer to your ruling earlier today when you asked honourable members to refer to other honourable members by their names. I think what the honourable member for Ipswich said was unparliamentary.

Mr HAMILL: For the information of the Honourable Minister, the person concerned is the Treasurer, the Honourable Joan Sheldon, who claimed falsely to the Estimates committee last year that the money that was taken from the electricity industry was used for capital. According to the words of the member for Mount Ommaney, it was used for social infrastructure. He confirmed the allegation that was made by the Opposition at the time that only half of the \$850m found its way to capital and that the other half went to the recurrent spending of the Government. That means that there is a \$400m hole in the State Budget that last year was funded through one-off sources that are not available this year. That is the outcome of the words of the member for Mount Ommaney.

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order. The member for Ipswich is misleading the House, which I find offensive. I said that the \$850m went to capital works and benefiting the people of Queensland socially.

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member is misleading the House. The Hansard record will show that he used the words "social infrastructure" and I wrote them down when he said it. He has put his foot in it. It is little wonder that he will not advance any further than being a Parliamentary Secretary. The honourable member's speech caused me to make that point, although my major point this evening is in relation to electricity pricing. However, that was an opportunity that was too good to miss and I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for it.

Last week the Minister for Mines and Energy showed his contempt for the people of Queensland who were suffering from what at

times he described incompetently, although he finally got it out, as rotational load shedding. We all knew that they were blackouts and my constituents knew that they were blackouts. Indeed, last night one of my constituents rang me on the subject. Having heard the Government waving around this token power tariff cut to industry, he was absolutely incensed because he too had lost money as a result of the blackouts that the Minister presided over last week, yet there was not even an apology from the Minister let alone any sort of reduction in power tariffs for ordinary Queensland consumers, householders, mums, dads and kids. They are the ones who missed out. Talk about a Government with wrong priorities! What better priority ought there have been than to make some amends to Queensland families by way of recompense in tariff reductions? However, the Government could not bring itself to do that just as the Minister could not bring himself to apologise to the Queensland public last week.

Yesterday the same Minister, the Treasurer and the Premier claimed credit for tariff cuts to certain business interests. The Government's reform of the power industry means the death knell for tariff equalisation around the State. The document that demonstrates that quite clearly is the one that the Government is using as its Bible for power reform. I refer to the report on the reform of the Queensland electricity supply industry dated December 1996. That report clearly shows that certain groups in the community have been receiving power at less than cost and other groups have been paying more than cost for their power. Page 63 of the report reveals that domestic consumers and small commercial and industrial users have been effectively getting a subsidy paid by larger industry. If large industry and small industry is now getting a tariff cut, the real increase in power costs to the small domestic consumer will be greater because, at the end of the day, the Government will have to balance its books. If it takes money out of the industry to give to the larger industrial consumers, guess who is going to pay the bill? The very people whom the Minister could not even bring himself to apologise to last week! The domestic consumers will be paying the bill and they will be paying for the Minister's cheap generosity to big business and industry. I think that that stinks and my constituents think that it stinks. The Minister should go and go quickly.

Time expired.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone) (6.34 p.m.): The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition has a number of facets and I

hope to deal with them all. The first point relates to the failure of the Minister to honour his promise to keep the lights on in Queensland. I have read the media comment attributed to the Minister and tonight the Leader of the Opposition quoted from a coalition policy document. Given that we do not know the future and given the number of areas of potential failure, including mechanical and technical failure, a promise to maintain power is brave indeed, more so given the complications being faced and yet to be faced with the restructuring of the industry.

The second point that the Opposition raised was the fact that a crisis had been created and massive impositions had been placed on Queenslanders. That is true. An article in the Courier-Mail talked about people being stuck in lifts on the Gold Coast and how power cuts caused chaos for police and ambulance officers on the Sunshine Coast as computers crashed and communications centres went off line. Police have said that the load shedding caused many problems for them with traffic lights and so on. I certainly pass on my apologies to the people of Queensland, not only for the inconvenience but also for the risk that some people were placed in. The Premier has also expressed his concern and I am sure that members of the Opposition did as well.

Thirdly, the Opposition has said that the Government abandoned the Eastlink interconnection, thereby ensuring that emergency reserve supplies of power could not be drawn from other States. At the time of the last election, a great deal of concern was expressed about the Eastlink route. On that basis, I believe, in its election campaign the current Government said that it would withdraw the Eastlink connection and it has been substituted with its cousin, Westlink. However, both sides of politics have done that. The Tully/Millstream scheme was a power generation option that was approved by the State and Federal Governments, but it was turned around when the Labor Government came to power. That is fair enough, because that was its policy. The same thing occurred with Eastlink. My information is that Eastlink would not have been operating until 1999 and Westlink will not be on line until the year 2000. We have a lack of generation capability, particularly in base load power.

The fourth point raised by the Leader of the Opposition related to the \$10m that was, according to him "wasted on redevelopment of the reform model". I looked at that and I found that with reform in the electricity industry, there is a requirement under competition policy that

State monopolies be competitive. Again, nobody has provided contrary information. The ALP Government signed that agreement and this Government has had to comply with it. On many occasions I have expressed my opposition to privatisation, but the previous Government obligated subsequent Governments to comply with time frames for that competition.

The fifth point relates to throwing the regional electricity distribution boards into turmoil by restructuring. I want to ask the Minister some questions. Although he will not have time to answer them tonight, I will be seeking his response to the fact that following restructuring there were to be three energy entities. According to the Ergon Energy press release, they have been amalgamated into two. I would be interested to know how that sits with the competition requirements or any other implications that it could have for electricity generation in Queensland.

I have no supporting information on the SEQEB \$8m marketing plan; I only have verbal information. I believe that they were given that power under corporatisation. The corporatised entities make those decisions without reference to the Government. I remind members that corporatisation started some time ago.

A number of references have been made to Callide B generation and the tender process, and documents have been tabled by the Leader of the Opposition. Again I will be talking to the Minister about that issue later on.

I wind up by saying that Peter Morley and a couple of other journalists have said that each side blames the blackouts on the other's failure to adequately fund maintenance, but both sides have failed by not planning for growth. Terry Sherman has also stated that both sides have been responsible for failing to make future plans for energy generation and particularly base load generation in this State. Does the evidence that has been presented today justify a censure motion? Given the information that I have received from people within the industry and the joint responsibility of the several Governments, I say: no.

Time expired.

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay) (6.39 p.m.): It is important to know who is to blame for the blackouts and load shedding that was inflicted on the general public, small business and industry last week. It is not the fault of the dedicated workers in generation, transmission and distribution throughout this State; the fault lies squarely with the Minister for Mines and Energy and his coalition Government for its failure to

maintain a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity.

In fact, this arrogant Minister did not have the decency to apologise to the public of Queensland for his failings and incompetence in maintaining supply but left it up to the Premier to take on the role as the de facto Minister for Mines and Energy and to apologise to the people of Queensland. Another member of this lacklustre and crisis ridden Government, the Treasurer, had the audacity to say that "it's got nothing to do with the Government". Then, to rub salt into the wound, how did the Premier say thanks to the mums and dads who suffered the inconvenience of the power cuts? He gave a 5% cut to the business community!

Let us look at what the Minister had to say in this House about the electricity industry. In Opposition, on 29 March 1995, the now Minister claimed that the coalition had "a policy in respect of how it would be able to keep the lights on in 1998". He went on to say that the coalition had the policy "if given the reins today to keep the lights on in this State in 1998 and thereafter". He pledged, "The first thing we have to do is keep the lights on; that is the emergency—an enormous emergency." About this amazing policy he said—

"If I may say so, it is a damned fine plan. It has the capacity to get the lights on and to keep them on after 1998, which is the important thing."

In Government, on 30 April 1995, the Minister said—

"I want to make it clear that the role of the coalition Government is to re-establish a reliable, low-cost and safe supply of electricity for the people of Queensland as a top priority."

He went on to say—

"But first and most importantly, I want to assure Queenslanders that the Government will do everything possible to ensure that power supplies in any part of the State meet the needs of the community at all times."

So what about this plan? On 17 December 1996, the Minister announced the reform of the electricity industry and made the clear commitment that the reliability of electricity supply will be further improved in the reformed Queensland market. Reliability? What a joke! The industry is in crisis. The Minister's initial response to the failure of generation plant last week was that it was like Gold Lotto odds. I can tell the Minister that I think a lot of people in Mackay and elsewhere sitting and sweltering in the dark last week were feeling anything but like they had just

won Gold Lotto. It should not have happened, but it did. The reason it happened was that, under the Minister's reorganisation, over 2,000 jobs will go. Already jobs have been lost in the maintenance area to cut costs, and management are relying more and more on risk analysis and deferring maintenance. If we defer maintenance and take the risk often enough, the odds are that the system will fail and people will suffer blackouts, as they did last week.

Documentary proof of this has been the splitting of AUSTA into three corporations, which has led to a reduction in the work force and which has left stations such as Swanbank requiring contract maintenance in order to maintain continuity of supply. The volume of work is beyond the capacity of the resources or staff due to the reduction in numbers in the work force in 1997 by voluntary retirement at the changeover to CS Energy.

This demonstrates the incompetence of the management which retrenches its staff one month and then needs to replace them with contractors the next month. Not only has the industry lost skilled and expert power station workers; the splitting up of AUSTA has caused the loss of global coordination of planning and scheduling of maintenance across all State-run power stations. In Mackay, during the power crisis the Mackay Gas Turbine operated at half capacity because of the unavailability of a turbine which has been out of operation since December, and it could be out of service for at least 18 months because of the difficulty in procuring a fuel pump from Rolls Royce. I have been informed that the gas turbine has not had routine maintenance carried out since mid 1996 because of cutbacks in maintenance staff. That is simply not good enough.

In the retail and distribution area we have seen the closure of electricity depots and service facilities in regional distribution areas. The great Gilmore model for retail reform has lost a wheel before it even got rolling. The three new retail corporations created to cover Queensland have been reduced to two even before they started operation. The central and northern retailers, Ergon and Omega, found that the model would not work and they had to amalgamate. The result is that 50 electricity workers in central and north Queensland will lose their jobs.

The coalition Government does not care about regional Queensland. Already the billing function is now handled from Brisbane, and I understand, from rumours I have been hearing from the industry, that they will centralise all calls to a State call centre in Brisbane. How ridiculous is that? Power consumers in Mackay will have to ring Brisbane about their electricity accounts.

This really shows the lack of commitment for maintaining an employment base in regional Queensland. Finally, it is about time that the Minister accepts responsibility for the pain and suffering he has inflicted on the general public, small business and industry for his flawed master plan—

Time expired.

Hon. T. J. G. GILMORE (Tablelands—Minister for Mines and Energy) (6.44 p.m.): It is with great regret that I stand in this place tonight without an hour and a half to debate this matter. Mr Speaker, let me assure you that the contribution from the Opposition to this debate has been abysmal and has demonstrated something clearly to the people of Queensland tonight, and that is that the Opposition in this place does not understand change and cannot live with it. Members opposite are locked in the past. They also apparently subscribe to the same view of the world that Goebbels did during the war, that is, if you tell a lie loudly enough and for long enough, sooner or later somebody will believe it. That is what we have seen tonight and earlier today.

We saw a most appalling contribution from the Leader of the Opposition tonight. Today, more nonsense and myth has been stated in this House than I have heard for a long time. This is a very poor quality debate indeed. Clearly, as I said earlier, the Opposition cannot handle change. The change that we are seeing in the electricity industry today is fundamental change. It is real change. It has been brought about on the back of documents signed by the former Minister in Government when he signed off the 1993 COAG accord. That is where it came from. That was the genesis. I am given the job of driving it, and I am driving it very well indeed.

Tonight the Opposition claims that there appears to be an enormous shortage of generation capability in this State. In 1991 the then Labor Government was warned by the Queensland Electricity Commission in its annual report that there would be a major shortage of generation capability in this State. In 1992, on the advice of the QEC that there would be a shortage of generation capability in this State, the Goss Labor Government called for tenders for fuel suppliers for a new coal-fired power station. Twenty-seven months later it rejected those tenders and failed to act. It produced absolutely nothing in respect of those tenders for new power generation in this State. It failed to act out of its fear that something might happen in the lead-up to the election campaign; it was concerned about where various preferential votes might be cast. So nothing happened. For six years nothing happened.

Tonight, mention was made of the 37 megawatts of power produced in this State during the six years of the Labor Government, and that it was provided by a private company. It was not provided by the then Minister or the then Government, it was provided by a private company. Therefore, the Goss Labor Government failed and failed again in respect of power generation in this State.

Tonight the Leader of the Opposition stood in this place and said that I knew 12 months ago that there were going to be blackouts. But I am sneaky; I waited until late Sunday night. That is what he told this House; that I waited and that I knew. I ask the House: what do members opposite believe I am—a clairvoyant? Could I have predicted three boiler tube disasters in a week? Three boiler tubes blew out and an oil shaft sheered in different powers stations, one of which was owned by a private corporation. Could I have predicted that? Should I have got out my ouija board and asked those out there in the ether? Is that how the previous Minister ran his Ministry? Did he put on his turban and say, "Is there anybody out there? Please tell me what is going to happen on Sunday evening?" For goodness' sake!

Tonight in this Parliament we have seen a disgraceful and dismal performance from the Opposition. It has demonstrated that it understands and knows nothing about the electricity industry. The member for Mount Isa, during his diatribe tonight, was difficult to understand at the beginning, but he demonstrated that he does not understand the industry and never has. He does not understand the need for contract work in the electricity industry these days.

The former Minister was the Minister in February 1995 when three pieces of plant went out. He was the Minister in July of 1995 when four pieces of plant went out. Did he resign? No, he did not resign. Whom did he blame for it? He wrote letters to the people running the industry. He blamed them and demanded that they do nothing that would bring him into disrepute. But he did not resign. Were those failures the responsibility of the former Minister? Were maintenance failures responsible? Of course not! They were unpredictable outages that happen from time to time, as were the events of last week. I am disgusted and dismayed at what has happened in this House tonight.

Time expired.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (6.49 p.m.): I would have thought that the Minister for Mines and Energy would have learnt last week that arrogance is simply not a sufficient qualification to be a Minister in this State. Having heard his

speech tonight, again I found it full of arrogance, political hectoring and bullying. In his speech tonight, there was no sign of any sensitivity or compassion for what Queenslanders—

Mr GILMORE: I rise to a point of order. I find the points that have just been made by the honourable member offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Ms SPENCE: I withdraw. In this Minister's speech tonight, there was no sign of any type of sensitivity, compassion or understanding for what Queensland consumers went through in the blackouts last week. Queensland consumers were given another lesson on incompetence by this Government. They found out that their Government Ministers refused to take responsibility for the policies of their own Government. Both this Minister and the Treasurer refused to take responsibility for pulling \$850m out of the electricity industry, for cutting back on maintenance, for sacking maintenance workers, for allowing our electricity generators to operate on skeleton staff and for failing to perform basic maintenance tasks. The result is that Queensland consumers experienced the worst blackouts since the days of the SEQEB dispute.

I would just like to tell the Minister what it was like out there in the suburbs last week, because I think he in his fancy ministerial office failed to realise what Queensland consumers went through. Having been given no warning that there were going to be blackouts, they woke up on Monday morning—if they were lucky to have an alarm clock to wake them up—to find that they could not boil water to make the morning cup of coffee or to warm the baby's bottle.

In fact, a woman from Holland Park rang me on Monday. She has seven children under eight years old. She had experienced four blackouts that day and did not realise what was happening. She tried to ring Energex to find out what was happening and all she could get was a recorded confused message. She did not really understand what was happening. She should have been given some warning that this was about to occur. The Minister knew 24 hours before it was going to occur, but the consumers out there in the suburbs had no idea.

A lady from Wishart rang me on Tuesday afternoon—they ring me these days and not the member for Mansfield. She had experienced four blackouts in one afternoon. In fact, in five hours she had had only half an hour of electricity. She and the woman from Holland Park could not understand why the blackouts were not being spread evenly throughout the city. They have a valid argument there because I can tell honourable members that in Mount Gravatt we

suffered no blackouts last week, yet some people were very adversely affected and were being blacked out all the time. I think people are prepared to put up with these blackouts if they think that the load is being shared fairly, but it simply was not last week.

The other major complaint was about the telephone system at Energex. In the old days when it was SEQEB, one could actually ring up and speak to a real person at the other end of the line. These days one cannot. One has to go through and listen to music and finally get to some sort of answering system—

Mr Nuttall: Get in the queue.

Ms SPENCE: —and get in the queue. If one really wants to speak to someone, one has to go through this whole process of pressing buttons and it is very difficult. One can be on the phone for half an hour before actually speaking to a person at the other end of the line. Energex really does need to improve its act in relation to its telephone answering system.

Other complaints included the warning system. People were being warned that their area was going to be blacked out at a certain time in the afternoon so they made arrangements. They sent their staff home; they closed the coffee shop; they did what they thought they had to do; and then there was no blackout in that area at the time they were told to expect it. In fact, the blackout came the next morning when they were not warned to expect it. So the messages that Energex put out all week were hopeless; they did not help Queensland consumers and they certainly did not help businesspeople in this State.

Time expired.

Question—That Mr Beattie's motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 43—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Roberts, Sullivan T. B.

NOES, 43—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Carroll, Mitchell

Pair: Sheldon, Livingstone

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the Noes.

Resolved in the **negative**.

Sitting suspended from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

**CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY
BILL
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY BILL
QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY BILL
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND BILL
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN
QUEENSLAND BILL**

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 80.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (7.30 p.m.), continuing: I was referring to the policies that the Labor Party will take to the next election. I want to quote a couple of sections from the Federal platform of the Labor Party which was adopted at the national conference in respect of higher education. The conference adopted the following resolution—

"Labor believes that university education should be open to all, available on merit and equity rather than wealth and privilege."

As I mentioned previously, with such things as up-front university fees, increases in HECS, changes to Austudy programs and all those sorts of things, obviously the availability of university places has increasingly become dependent upon economic factors rather than on merit and equity. Labor will also add to the availability of university places by—

"... resuming the overall growth of the system; reintroducing a scheme for industry places; and restoring the public contribution to equity funding for post-graduate studies."

Further, at the national conference it was agreed—

"Labor recognises the need to protect student representation and the autonomy of higher education institutions in the funding of those organisations that represent students and provide services. These student organisations shall be protected by preventing State Government interference in the collection of the fees that fund student organisations."

I want to speak briefly about student organisations in universities because I raised this issue last year when we were debating the James Cook University of North Queensland Bill. This has been a contentious issue for the

coalition parties. It does not come as any surprise to us that on this, as on so many other issues, there is a deep divide among the coalition parties. In the debate last year I pointed to the fact that at the National Party conference on the Gold Coast the Minister for Education was castigated in no uncertain terms. The conference described him as incompetent and inept. I think the conference may have also said that he was "not up to the job". I have heard that term once or twice before.

A Government member: Were you there?

Mr BREDHAUER: No, but it was quoted at length in the Gold Coast Bulletin, as the member for Toowoomba North would know. I was surprised to see that the President of the National Party, David Russell, stepped down from the chair at the conference to second the motion. He joined in the condemnation and criticism of the coalition's Liberal Minister for Education for his failure to address the issue of student unionism.

At the time, I commended the Minister for not pursuing an ideological agenda in the debate on these issues and for having the courage to acknowledge that student organisations play a vital role in providing student services. The Minister for Public Works and Housing has been a member of the University of Queensland Senate and he knows what an important role the student union at Queensland University plays. By and large, university councils and senates around the State support the role of student organisations.

The Minister came in for the crabs again earlier this year at the hands of none other than his own party leader, the Treasurer and Deputy Premier of Queensland, Mrs Sheldon. She weighed into the debate about five weeks ago and once again castigated her own Minister, the Liberal Minister for Education in Queensland, for not pursuing the issue of voluntary student unionism. She made a number of outrageous allegations, one of which was that student unions contribute directly to ALP campaigns. That is not true. It is a myth. It is a furphy which is perpetrated by a number of people on the other side of this House.

One of the people who had the courage to stand up against that myth being perpetrated by the Liberal Treasurer was none other than the member for Keppel, Mr Lester, who castigated the Treasurer in his local press. Mr Lester said that we would go down the path of voluntary student unionism over his dead body. He was dead right. Mr Lester knows that in rural and regional parts of Queensland students who travel to major provincial cities to attend university

benefit substantially from the services provided by the student organisations operating at those universities. The university administrations prefer the situation where the services are provided by the student organisations because it relieves them of the responsibility.

I do not often agree with the member for Keppel. I believe on this occasion Mr Lester was making these comments for the basest of political motives. He knew that there were people in his constituency who would kick up over this. I do not believe that he is fundamentally committed to the issue that he was mouthing, but he big-notes himself in the paper so that he can play up to a particular constituency.

Mr Pearce: He just made the comments that I had made a couple of days earlier.

Mr BREDHAUER: He would have been simply echoing the sentiments of such people as the member for Fitzroy and the member for Rockhampton, who are strong supporters of the student organisation at the Central Queensland University.

The irony of this is that we do not have simply the National Party position and the Liberal Party position in the coalition: we have the position represented by Mr Lester—and I am told of one or two other members of the National Party who appreciate the wisdom of student organisations and the services they provide—and we also have the other National Party view which was represented at last year's National Party conference. It was said at that conference that the Minister needed to have a bomb put under him because he had not pursued voluntary student unionism.

We have the Liberal Party view, which is represented by the Minister, who is doing nothing about the issue. This view is also represented by the Minister for Public Works and Housing who, through his role on the University of Queensland Senate, knows the valuable role that is performed by student organisations. So we have the Liberal Party view that is espoused by such people as the Minister for Education and the Minister for Public Works and Housing, but we also have the other Liberal Party view which is espoused by the Treasurer who, on a given morning, wakes up and thinks something is a good idea.

Mr Pearce: The student union in central Queensland is angry.

Mr BREDHAUER: It is not just the student organisation at Central Queensland University that is angry, because I have spoken to representatives of all the student organisations over the 12 months that this Bill has been around and those bodies are

incensed. I reiterate that the Labor Party supports the student organisations. We support student control of student affairs. We particularly support the platform which was adopted by the national conference in Hobart in January this year which says in part, "The student organisations shall be protected by preventing State Government interference in the collection of the fees that fund student organisations."

Student organisations need have no fear of a State Labor Government in Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition, Peter Beattie, and I met a group of students outside the gates of Parliament House last year and accepted their petition and gave them the undertaking that we, too, were committed to the student organisations and to student control of student affairs.

I want to speak briefly about the capital works budget. I would like to ask the Minister if, in his summing-up, he could address the issue which he personally raised in the media on Tuesday, 20 January and on Wednesday, 21 January this year concerning capital works funding from the Commonwealth. An article appeared in the Australian in which the Commonwealth Higher Education Funding Report for the 1998-2000 triennium was discussed. The article says in part—

"Last month, State Education Minister Bob Quinn wrote to Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs Minister David Kemp, emphasising a 1995 State-federal agreement which earmarked \$80m from the CDP for 1998-2001."

I ask members to note that the 1995 agreement between the State and the Commonwealth was an agreement struck by Labor Governments at both a State and Federal level. The Minister for Education in this State was supporting that agreement. The article goes on to say—

"The letter, obtained by the HES, said if Queensland was allocated only \$5.8 million in 2000, that would be some \$16 million less than the amount committed to the State under the 1995 agreement and 'far short' of its needs."

I agree with the Minister for Education on this particular issue. I would like the Minister to clarify the current standing of the negotiations with the Commonwealth in relation to these capital works.

The Labor Government in Queensland invested heavily in capital works. For the first time, a State Government invested in capital works in universities in Queensland. We invested heavily throughout regional campuses in particular. There are people attending

universities in regional centres in Queensland—places such as Cairns, Hervey Bay, the soon-to-be-established campus at Ipswich, and Logan—who would never have had the opportunity to attend universities in those regional centres if it had not been for the commitment of the State Labor Government and, eventually, the commitments that we got from the Federal Labor Government. This is important in a range of sectors, and I might just mention the James Cook University library.

Quite detailed planning has been done on the James Cook University library. As I understand it, it is one of the projects that could be under threat if the Minister's expectation that the Commonwealth will not live up to its funding agreement comes to pass. I would like the Minister to address that issue particularly. One of the things that we have done as a Labor Opposition is given a commitment to the people of Cairns and to the James Cook University that, when we come to Government, we are prepared to advance them an interest-free loan, like bridging finance, so that they can get that library up and running as soon as possible. Enrolment growth at the James Cook University campus is ahead of predictions, and it desperately needs that library. I would like the Minister, in his reply, to tell this House tonight what his view is in relation to the concept of bridging finance. He has been asked that question both publicly and in this Parliament before and has remained silent on the issue. If he does not address this issue this evening, then I will be going to the media in Cairns and saying that he refused to address it. We have been prepared to put our money where our mouths are. The Minister is not prepared to put his money where his mouth is, unless he is prepared to make that commitment in the Parliament this evening.

I also want to talk about land at the James Cook University. There has been quite a controversial debate in the Cairns community, particularly at the James Cook University, in respect of a parcel of land on which, we understand, the Department of Natural Resources had a contract, subject to rezoning, signed over to Stockland for residential development. The Cairns City Council, at its meeting last week, rejected the rezoning application from the Department of Natural Resources. We have been unable to obtain a copy of the contract between the Department of Natural Resources and Stockland, so I am not entirely sure what the conditions on the contract were. But as we understand it, the contract was conditional upon the rezoning application being approved by the council. Now that that rezoning application has been rejected by the council—and remember that the organisation

which applied for the rezoning was none other than the Department of Natural Resources—the ball is back in the court of this Government on this side of the House.

I would like the Minister to give us a number of assurances in respect of that particular parcel of land. First of all, I want him to rule out that there will be any ministerial rezoning of that land, because there are concerns in the local community about what the intentions of the Government are in respect of that land, which would be better dedicated for future university use. I want this Minister to rule out that he or representatives of his Government will take the Cairns City Council to the Planning and Environment Court on the basis of its rejection of the application that has been received.

I can tell the Minister that if legal obligations allow us to, when we come to Government we will attempt to renegotiate with Stockland to make sure that that portion of the land which is required by the university and which is desired by the local community and by the Chamber of Commerce—strongly expressed through public meetings and media support and a whole range of other things—is preserved for future use of the university. As I said, we have been unable to get a copy of the contract, so we need to be careful about what the legal requirements are. However, I want to make it quite clear that it is the view of the Labor Party in Opposition that, when we come to Government, given the rejection by the Cairns City Council—and if the Minister is prepared to provide the assurance that there will be no ministerial rezonings or an appeal to the Planning and Environment Court in respect of the refusal by the Cairns City Council—we will be negotiating with Stockland. Three parcels of land are involved. Part of the parcel in question is not controversial. However, some of that land would be much better designated for future use of the university. That has very strong support in the university community and in the community generally, and the Minister should be aware of that.

I want to talk briefly about the election of delegates under the amendments to the University of Queensland Bill, particularly the election of convocation representatives. I have mentioned to the Minister that the Opposition will be moving an amendment which seeks to ensure that convocation representatives on the University of Queensland Senate are, in fact, elected by convocation. I appreciate the Minister's cooperation in that regard. I understand that, with one minor amendment to the wording to make sure that it is absolutely clear, the Minister will support that a meeting of convocation can appoint convocation members

to casual vacancies that may occur in the senate. It is important in terms of democracy that the convocation members be able to elect their representatives to the university senate. It actually reflects the current practice. In my view, the legislation was slightly out of kilter with the existing practice.

I now want to make a few brief comments in respect of the regional campuses of universities. As the Minister would well know, there are emerging debates in a number of the regional campuses which are seeking full autonomy as independent and autonomous universities. The Gold Coast campus of Griffith University is one of those. The Cairns campus of the James Cook University is another. The Sunshine Coast University College is another one which is seeking full university status.

I support the notion of those regional centres being autonomous universities. However, I have a number of caveats in respect of that issue. In each of those cases, there will come a time when the communities in which those campuses exist can support and sustain independent and autonomous universities in their own right. The note of caution that I would sound is that, having gone through the process of amalgamating a lot of our universities and doing away with the binary system of higher education, which was the Dawkins agenda throughout the eighties and early nineties, we need to be careful about establishing a situation in which there is a plethora of small universities, each of which may at different times be at risk of not offering either the range or quality of courses or being able to attract the number of students to offer the quality of programs that would be both nationally and internationally accepted.

Although I support the principle, I believe that there is a need for caution in respect of these matters. We need to make sure that, for example, the Cairns campus of the James Cook University can continue to offer the widest possible range of subjects, attract students and those sorts of things. We also need to be cognisant of the fact that this debate is occurring now in the context of a declining Commonwealth budget for higher education. The Minister well knows that the review committee that was set up in respect of the Sunshine Coast University College has recommended independent and autonomous status for that university. Of course, the first thing that Peter Slipper, the local Federal member, did was to say, "All you have to do, Minister, is pass the legislation through the Parliament, and it will be hunky-dory. But you know better than that."

I think he knows better than that as well. There is more to it than just passing a bit of

legislation through this Parliament and saying, therefore: you have your autonomous university. The Commonwealth must have an ongoing commitment to both capital and recurrent costs so continued growth in those universities can be sustained. Places such as Cairns are badly underrepresented in terms of participation rates in university education. Over the coming years, as the participation rate and the population in the Cairns region grow, we may well reach a point at which we are able to justify an independent university in Cairns. However, that must be in the context of adequate resources and support being provided by both levels of Government. Although I support the issue in principle, I believe we need to be cautious about that.

I turn now to university places. Apart from making a substantial contribution to the capital development of universities throughout regional Queensland particularly, the Labor Government in Queensland was successful in negotiating for new growth places for universities in Queensland. This year particularly, there has been a lot of talk that, as a direct result of the Federal coalition's policies on higher education, a range of universities has not been able to fill the places available. That might be happening in Victoria, but it is not happening here in Queensland. There is a need to continue to fund—and I mean fund—growth places in universities in Queensland where the demand is still outstripping supply, is still growing on an annual basis and, as the regional campuses continue to grow and develop, where demand can be expected to continue to grow for the foreseeable future. There is a need for this Minister to step up his campaign with the Federal Minister to make sure that Queensland continues not only to have the existing growth places honoured, which is the agreement that was set up by the previous Labor Governments at the State and Commonwealth levels, but also to receive an ongoing commitment to further growth places in higher education in Queensland.

With those few words, I say that the Opposition basically supports the Bills before the House. They are important legislation. As I mentioned at the outset, they have been around for a long time. We began the process of consultation and drafting of the Bills. To the representatives of the Office of Higher Education, in particular Leigh Tabrett with whom I have had dealings about these matters over the past 12 or 18 months, I want to express my appreciation. I believe they have been very patient in getting these Bills to the point at which they will finally get through the Parliament some time this week. I support the Bills before the House.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (8.52 p.m.): The Australian Labor Party believes education serves two purposes. The first is to assist with the personal, social and intellectual development of an individual to his or her full potential. The second is to meet the needs and aspirations of the wider society. The Commonwealth has the constitutional capacity and the responsibility to ensure that all Australian schools provide high quality and appropriate schooling. That is regardless of geography, gender, socioeconomic status, cultural background or special needs. Labor is committed to a continuing role by the Commonwealth to ensure that outcome.

The Commonwealth also has responsibility for the provision of higher education. Labor will continue to work for a just and equitable share of higher education resources. Labor is committed to ensuring that the resources that have been secured for Queensland up to this point are properly managed and adequately resourced. That is why the Bills now before the House are of particular significance. This package of Bills, the Central Queensland University Bill and the others under consideration, are essentially about the governance of the State's universities. They will improve the machinery to ensure that Queensland's higher education institutions operate more efficiently and with greater autonomy.

The previous Labor Government began the long and complex consultation process that was required to bring about long-overdue legislative reform, which this group of Bills represents. The previous Acts governing each of Queensland's public universities were different and distinct for each institution. The one thing that they did have in common was a cumbersome and wasteful legislative process when one considered the matters being dealt with. Until the previous Labor Government stepped in to deal with the situation, the governance of Queensland universities owed a great deal to the nation's colonial heritage and had nothing to do with the realities of the late 20th century. That should surprise none of us.

Queensland coalition Governments have historically failed to understand the significance of higher education, both to the individual or to the community to which that individual belongs. Events over the past two years suggest Federal coalition Governments suffer the same level of ignorance. Under the existing Acts, university statutes in Queensland were drafted by parliamentary counsel. They then had to go through an approval process to the Governor in Council. This meant comparatively trifling matters, such as the correct mode of academic

dress at Griffith University, would get caught up in the logjam of legislation to be drafted. That was a truly ludicrous situation. Statutes for individual universities would presumably be set aside as urgent legislation went ahead. They must have held up other legislation while they were being drafted.

With the passage of these Bills, universities will have the authority to draft and certify their own statutes. They will be forwarded to the Minister, checked by the Crown law office and then tabled in the House. Not only will the process be simplified but also the number of matters covered by statutes will be reduced from the current 30 or so to 10. Reforms such as these are well past due as higher education institutions must be freed from the vestiges of a colonial past so inappropriate in the current complex planning environment. Labor does not share the coalition Government's old world view that Queenslanders should be content to be drawers of water and hewers of wood. In fact, the previous Labor Government's achievements in the higher education sector are outstanding. Labor at State and Federal levels remains firmly committed to improving access to quality education.

Following the 1989 report of the Sherrin committee, the Goss Government invested more than \$100m in capital and the purchase of land for regional campuses in Cairns, Townsville, Gladstone and Bundaberg. The Mackay campus of Central Queensland University was entirely funded by the State Government. I will digress for a moment to say that that was long overdue. As someone who grew up in a small country town—Atherton, which had 3,500 people, in north Queensland—when I needed to go to university, I had to go to Brisbane. There was no law school between Cairns and Brisbane, with the exception of the James Cook University, which had started a first year law course. To use the facilities at the James Cook University, I would have spent 12 months at James Cook and then completed my degree in Brisbane. That was a truly ludicrous position. As a result, I had to come all the way to Brisbane to go to university. Being a country kid and knowing absolutely no-one in Brisbane, with the exception of some distant relatives, after coming to Brisbane and attending a university college, I had to rebuild a network of friends and fit into an environment of which I had no experience and with which I had no association. The system for country people was appalling. As a result, a lot of country kids do what I did: they get qualified here and they stay here.

Trying to get specialists to get out of Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne in order to serve country and provincial cities in this State is

one of the long-term problems that the State has in relation to the medical fraternity. It is one of the difficulties that I had when I was Health Minister. It is one of the difficulties that Mike Horan has as the current Health Minister. This is a non-political issue. It confronts both sides of politics. It is a matter of considerable concern. The only way we will secure medical specialists in a range of provincial cities and country towns in this State is to train them there—end of story. If they are trained in Cairns, Townsville or Mackay, they will be part of that community. That is part of encouraging people to stay in that community. Once people go through their course, marry and establish their connections with the community, they want to stay there. There is some reluctance to move.

On a number of occasions medical specialists have made the point to me that it is not just because they have been trained in a particular location and have established networks and, therefore, want to stay there; a lot of specialists have a fear of professional isolation, and particularly isolation from universities and academic isolation. As we all know, specialists need to keep up with the latest techniques; they cannot afford to be isolated from the university community. So by establishing university campuses throughout the State, which we have done—although in some areas we have a long way to go—we are ensuring that the diversity and decentralisation of this State continues and we overcome the sorts of difficulties that my generation experienced in getting a university education.

Much of this Queensland regional expansion took place in the context of unprecedented national growth in the higher education sector. In 1939, the Australian university system comprised fewer than 15,000 students in six universities. By 1960, it had expanded to 53,000 students in 10 universities. By 1975, it had expanded to 148,000 students in 18 universities and by 1985 there were 175,000 students. By 1997, with the collapse of the binary system, Australia had a total of more than 650,000 students enrolled in 36 public universities.

However, for the past 20 years Queensland failed to keep pace. It was not until 1995 when an agreement was reached between the then Goss and Keating Governments that this State even looked like catching up with the national participation rate. That is an important point: the participation rate is fundamentally important to the intellectual capacity and educational standards of this State and our future. In that year—and I am talking about 1995—4,700 commencing places were finally allocated to

Queensland. Members should keep in mind that that is additional places in the first year. That funding must continue on for the second, third and fourth years as well.

By the time we reach a state of stability in about 2001, there will be a further 12,000 students participating in higher education who could not have been there without the determined intervention of the previous Labor Government. That is a fact. Apart from the undoubted advantage to the individuals who now have access to a university education not just in the Brisbane metropolitan area but also in the regional areas, there is an enormous economic advantage to the rest of the State. The multiplier effect could be as much as \$100m a year in this State in extra economic activity. That is a staggering amount of money, but something that has gone largely unrecognised, despite the growing awareness of higher education within the broader community.

It is not only important that we recognise the significance of our university sector to the people and the economy of Queensland but also that we ensure that we do not again allow ourselves to fall behind the national participation rate. If we do, we are denying our very future. Without continued growth factored into the higher education budget, once again we will be under threat as early as the year 2002 or 2003 as the population in the relevant age cohort continues to grow, outstripping every other State.

We must maintain other efforts to nurture this very important sector of the State's economy. The danger for Queensland now is that the Federal Government will use the statistics to overlook the State in any allocation of new places. I am sure that the Minister shares my concern about this issue because over the period 1996 to 2006, Queensland has a growth rate of 10.8% in the 15 to 24 age cohort compared with a national rate of 3.4%. In Victoria, the rate is actually minus 3.2%. Yet that is where the university places are going. Those university places should be going to Queensland, not Victoria. I think that the Minister would agree with me that it is a highly unacceptable position that, currently, that is where those university places are going. Queensland is where the growth is. I am not just being parochial about this; I am talking in a statistical, factual way.

When we see newspaper articles about the falling demand for university places, they are not referring to Queensland. Each Queensland university place is still heavily oversubscribed. We need more places, we need more buildings and we need a serious commitment to higher education at both levels of Government.

Queensland students should not be forced to move to pursue their studies if they do not want to. Queensland's Labor Government worked too hard to improve access to higher education in regional areas for the State to be fobbed off now with non-solutions such as mass migration and satellite technology. We have proven the value of the investment. We must maintain the momentum.

The Federal coalition Government has slashed funding, jacked up HECS fees, and introduced up-front fees for post-graduate courses. I am appalled to read reports that have appeared in the press in recent times that some universities, such as the University of Sydney, may be charging students up to \$100,000 simply to do a course such as dentistry. Up-front fees of that size simply rule out 99% of the community. Who can afford to pay that sort of fee for their child? One needs to be in a very wealthy bracket to be able to afford it. Frankly, we are denying our future. I said that before, and I stress it again. We simply cannot have an education system based on one's capacity to pay alone. If we do, we deny the brains of the nation an opportunity to be educated and we deny this nation the future that it is entitled to have. Education should be based on the principle of aptitude and ability and the intelligence and brains of the students to fulfil their maximum potential at universities. If we simply go on the basis of people's capacity to pay alone, which is where the universities under this Federal coalition Government are going, we are going backwards. I stress again that we will be denying the very future of this nation. I for one find it offensive, and offensive in the extreme, that any university regardless of where it is would be talking about charging up-front fees of \$100,000 to do any course. It does not matter whether the course is dentistry, medicine or law—any course—that is simply totally unacceptable. I believe that the Australian people will adopt a very adverse approach to any Government that continues that policy.

The very people who we need to enrol in universities are the ones who are being put off. At the Australian Labor Party's January national conference, our Federal colleagues renewed their commitment to ongoing and appropriate support for Australia's higher education sector. They determined that—

"Labor will ensure appropriate funding support for Australia's university sector.

We will abolish the current system of upfront undergraduate fees, and reform the current HECS structure so that it does not act as a financial barrier to students seeking undergraduate entry."

Labor is committed to developing and utilising all people's talents to the utmost. We will ensure that there is an adequate range of opportunities to develop the diverse abilities that all individuals possess and that these can be channelled into rewarding employment and other life activities. In providing public education, the equity role of Government is crucial. For Labor, the creation of a learning society carries our hopes for a fundamentally decent and genuinely equal opportunity society. That is why Labor at State and Federal levels will provide leadership to ensure that quality and the pursuit of excellence in education are valued in an Australian society.

Recently, the shadow Minister for Education and I launched our party's New Directions statement on education not only in Brisbane but also in Cairns and Townsville. That statement confirms my future Government's commitment to the importance of education in primary and secondary schools. It also confirms Labor's strong commitment to universities and, owing to the decentralised nature of this State, to education on a decentralised basis. We gave firm commitments on everything from cooler schools to Leading Schools and right through to making certain that education is properly funded. Unfortunately, in years gone by we have not always been up to the national standard when it comes to education funding. We must maintain national funding levels and we must make certain that the emphasis on education, which Labor demonstrated when it was last in Government, is returned and continued.

I give this commitment to the people of Queensland tonight: education will be one of the most important and fundamental planks of my Government. It will be one of those issues upon which I want my Government to be judged, because education is fundamentally important to a fair and equitable society.

Mr RADKE (Greenslopes) (9.09 p.m.): At the outset of this cognate debate on the five university Bills, I mention that I have enjoyed the privilege of completing studies at three of the five university facilities. Today I will focus on an overview of the universities' role in Queensland society. I shall argue for the retention of the name "college" in the definition of the Queensland University's facility at Gatton and, in summary, I shall discuss the expansion of the Queensland University's courses in Ipswich.

Queensland has seven public university institutions with a total student population of more than 125,000 and a total of approximately 15,000 academic and general staff. The Queensland Agricultural College is the oldest tertiary institution in Queensland. The State's

oldest university is the University of Queensland, which was founded in 1910 and commenced teaching only in 1911. The State's newest university is the Sunshine Coast University College, which was established in 1994. Together these institutions attract nearly \$1 billion in direct Commonwealth funding for teaching and research annually. In addition, they earn substantial amounts from their research and consulting activities. Together they form a major component of Queensland's economy and make a significant contribution to the economic wellbeing of the community, particularly in the regions.

Through the marketing of places to overseas students, our universities also generate for the State export income of more than \$250m annually. Through the Department of Education and the Department of Economic Development and Trade, work is under way to enhance this aspect of our export industry via a Government initiative that aims to promote Queensland as a destination for study and to increase the State's share of the world's 1.2 million students who study overseas.

For a number of years now, Queensland's overall population has grown at around 80,000 persons per annum, which represents about one third of Australia's overall growth. About one half of this growth has been generated by interstate migration, particularly from Victoria. This trend is forecast to continue, with the result that Queensland is expected to overtake Victoria as Australia's second most popular State before the year 2020.

While the population is ageing overall and at a time when the youth cohort is nationally static or in temporary decline, Queensland continues to have strong positive growth in the youth cohort from which the bulk of commencing university students is drawn. This pattern will require significant continued higher education growth in Queensland over the foreseeable future. This growth will need to be directed principally to the regional institutions and campuses serving the population growth belt surrounding the City of Brisbane. This issue will be brought to the attention of Cabinet by the end of this month in the context of a strategic plan for the continued development of higher education in the State. It is also a matter on which the State will need to continue to be vigilant and proactive in ensuring that the Commonwealth meets its obligations in terms of higher education funding.

As a past student of the Queensland Agricultural College, graduating in 1979 with an Associate Diploma in Rural Techniques (Horticulture), I voice my objection to the

proposed name change from the University of Queensland Gatton College to the University of Queensland Gatton Campus. For some people, objecting to name changes may be pedantic. However, as my old college was founded in 1897, it is older than the University of Queensland which was founded in 1910, although teaching there began only in 1911. Historically, from 1896 to 1922 the QAC was known as the Agricultural College; from 1923 to 1961 it was known as the Queensland Agricultural College and High School; from 1962 to 1989 it was known as the Queensland Agricultural College; and from 1990 it has been known as the University of Queensland Gatton College. Therefore, the word "college" should remain in its title. In an unofficial sense, the college has always been known as "Gatton College", which is the way that the local newspaper has referred to it from the beginning. The college magazine was called the "Gatton College Magazine" from as far back as 1930. The college honour roll for the 1914 to 1918 war refers to "Gatton College students". For these reasons I oppose any proposed name change that will see the valued word "college" discontinued.

Mr Gibbs interjected.

Mr RADKE: For the benefit of the member for Bundamba, I will explain why it is important.

In a letter dated 30 September 1996, the Vice-chancellor, John Hay, responded to my concerns. He wrote—

"At the Senate meeting held on 5 September, some members conveyed the serious concern existing among the past students of Gatton College that a change of name was intended. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that no immediate change was contemplated. Gatton College was established by an Order in Council pursuant to s.27 of the University of Queensland Act"—

which we are debating tonight—

"and a change of title would require a legislative change. However, under the new academic organisation, the Departments at Gatton would function within Faculties which would operate across all campuses of the University and this would inevitably lead, in the long term, to changes in the nature of Gatton College.

Senate confirmed that the name 'The University of Queensland Gatton College' should continue to be used at this time."

Therefore, I hope that this legislation does not allow the University of Queensland to strike out the word "college" from the name of

Queensland's oldest tertiary education institution.

I now outline how the delivery of courses is expanding in the Ipswich area. In 1986, the State Government participated in a joint Commonwealth/State working party with the aim of increasing participation by regional Queensland in higher education. The outcome of this process was an agreement to develop a range of branch campuses of existing institutions, utilising surplus capacity in the TAFE system. Ipswich was identified as one centre for such a development, and in 1988 the then Queensland Agricultural College, Gatton, commenced teaching a limited range of courses through the Bundamba College of TAFE. As happened in other centres identified by the working party, the need for higher education in Ipswich outgrew the available capacity in TAFE and the need for a free-standing higher education campus emerged, fuelled by rapid population growth in the western suburbs and beyond into the Lockyer Valley.

In 1990 the amalgamation of QAC with Queensland University increased demand for access through the Ipswich campus and long-term planning to provide a more substantial free-standing campus began. In 1993 the State, the Commonwealth and the University of Queensland reached agreement on the establishment of a major campus of the University of Queensland in Ipswich. In 1996 the State Government agreed to grant to the University of Queensland the facilities of the Challinor Centre following its planned closure, which was scheduled for 1998. This will enable the University of Queensland to offer a diversified range of undergraduate courses to around 600 to 800 commencing students in 1999. The campus is planned to cater for 2,300 students by the Year 2001. Capital funding of \$40m, of which \$11.75m has been contributed by the State Government, will have been provided to the university for this development. In addition, Education Queensland has provided some \$8m to the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care as compensation for the site.

Mr Gibbs: In your expert opinion, would it be possible to have a vineyard in Ipswich?

Mr RADKE: I will answer that interjection at the end of my speech. While completing part-time studies at the then Queensland Institute of Technology and the Griffith University Mount Gravatt campus, I have learned that part-time students certainly learn how to manage their families, employment commitments and studies. Speaking both as a student and a TAFE teacher, on numerous occasions I have observed the

following correlation: the quality and quantity of effort expended by students on their first assignment in their subject of study correlates positively with the course marks achieved overall.

In conclusion, I wish all my constituents who have commenced or are continuing studies in 1998 all the best in completing those studies and enjoying careers in their chosen fields. I commend these five university Bills to the House. In response to the member for Bundamba, I point out that, if he looks at his local history, a family by the name of Booth had a vineyard out his way in the 1860s.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich) (9.19 p.m.): I wish to join this debate to talk about the important development of the University of Queensland's campus at Ipswich. As a member of the University Support Group in Ipswich, it is very pleasing to see this project coming to fruition. We have fought long and hard to see the development of the university in the city. If we go back a little into history, we see that Ipswich was vying for a campus at the time when the University of Queensland was first established back in 1910. Unfortunately, the area was overlooked at that time. It has taken another 80 years to see the University of Queensland project at Ipswich come to fruition. It was in the mid eighties that university places that were offered through the then Gatton Agricultural College were being offered through the Ipswich TAFE college campus at Bundamba. Those places certainly will become part of the complement of the University of Queensland's Ipswich campus when it opens its doors to students in 1999.

As I said, the battle for a university campus in Ipswich was long and hard. The critical event was the successful negotiations undertaken by the former Labor Government with the Federal Labor Government at the time. As the then Education Minister, I was very proud to be able to do the final deal with the then Federal Education Minister, Simon Crean, which secured a massive growth in university places for Queensland and capital funding to support those places.

That has resulted not only in being able to generate an additional campus for the University of Queensland at Ipswich but also in being able to generate the numbers to support the new campus of Griffith University at Logan City and also to support the expansion of other universities, such as the Hervey Bay campus of the University of Southern Queensland and additional places at James Cook and the other State universities. It was a significant achievement.

The next greatest challenge we faced was the loss of Government by Labor at the Federal

level and the installation of a coalition Government which seemed hell-bent on cutting tertiary education funding. We have seen some attack upon the Federal higher education budget in Queensland, and that is much to be regretted. Nevertheless, through strong public action in this State, Queensland was at least spared the worst of those cuts. What we have now is a University of Queensland campus taking shape in Ipswich, albeit at the Challinor Centre site.

A critical factor also in this development was the firm commitment by the former Labor Government of \$11.75m in State capital funding to the University of Queensland to facilitate its new campus—a commitment which was matched to the Griffith University to support its Logan campus. That was consistent with the policy which we pursued in Government, that is, supporting the establishment of other campuses of our State's universities. Capital funding was provided to a variety of those universities to achieve that objective. Importantly, that allowed the construction to take place ahead of the time it would have otherwise if Federal funding had been wholly relied upon.

So where are we now? Having seen through such a difficult process, we see a situation where the University of Queensland will open in 1999 on the site currently occupied by the Challinor Centre. That site is 1.4 kilometres as the crow flies, or 1.8 kilometres by road, from the central business district of the City of Ipswich. The core site on which the university development will take place is 25 hectares. The site is listed on the heritage register. There are 17 buildings of heritage significance on the site. That presents a bit of a challenge for the university, but I think it is one that it is equal to in developing a quality campus.

I hasten to add that I believe the university would have been equal to the task at the railway yards as well. But my objective in all of this was to see the University of Queensland establish its campus in Ipswich. I do not get too hung up about exactly which site is chosen so long as those places and the capital are delivered and there are benefits flowing to my community. That is occurring.

There are buildings on the site which will provide some 12,500 square metres of usable floor space. The Ipswich City Council is cooperating very closely with the University of Queensland in providing new access from Salisbury Road. Over the next few weeks, we will see site works on the northern part of the site which will prepare it for that first intake of students. Because of the funding and places which we secured as a Government, 580

students will come on to the site at the beginning of the 1999 academic year.

One of the most exciting aspects of this development is the nature of the course delivery. The University of Queensland is committed to state-of-the-art technology. In fact, it already has 15 personnel in Ipswich. It is leasing premises in the Commonwealth Bank building in the central business district, where it has established its Learning Resources Development Unit, which is part of the Teaching and Educational Development Institute of the university. It will be the core unit which is developing flexible learning techniques for the whole of the university, and it will be located at the Ipswich campus.

Over the next couple of years, we will see a rapid growth of the campus. By 2001 there will be over 100 staff on site and about 2,200 students. It will be one of the larger university campuses in the nation. That growth will take place very rapidly indeed. The significance for the community cannot be underestimated. We will not only see about \$42m of capital works over the next few years, facilitated as I said by the \$11.75m grant which we were instrumental in putting in place in Government—I will give credit where it is due; that has been honoured by the coalition since it came to office, and I thank it for that ongoing commitment to this project—but also about \$16m injected into the local community directly through wages, salaries and spending each and every year. When we take in the multiplier effect, even at the early stages of the development we are getting up to about \$40m to \$50m worth of economic activity into Ipswich through the spending generated through the university. It will be a major boost for the local economy and will also open up important new higher education opportunities.

The course structure being offered is also significant. There will be a graduate program in the bachelor of education. In addition, there will be undergraduate programs—a bachelor of information environment, a bachelor of electronic commerce and a bachelor of contemporary studies, which is in the humanities area. There will also be bachelor of business programs in leisure management, business communications, travel management, tourism management, property studies and a bachelor offered in social science. It will be a vital new element to the community of the City of Ipswich. It will make a substantial difference to our community not only in terms of higher education but also in terms of a new industry for our city. Ipswich stands ready to the challenge.

The community is strongly behind this project. The University of Queensland knows

that. The support group of which I am a member has been actively liaising with the university to smooth the way for the new campus to be established. I am very confident that this campus will make a substantial contribution not only to the economic life of the city but also to the social environment of Ipswich.

I wish to place on record my thanks to all those citizens of Ipswich who stood up last year when it counted to support our bid to make sure that the Commonwealth did not erode the funding package for that university. The petition that Don Livingstone and I took to John Howard's office in Canberra was important. It bolstered the work being done at a Government to Government level. We won the fight and now Ipswich stands ready to enjoy the fruits of that victory. I wish the University of Queensland well in its development. The University of Queensland knows that the people of Ipswich stand behind it in making a great success of this new campus.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (9.30 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Gold Coast Hospital

Mrs ROSE (Currumbin) (9.30 p.m.): For the last month the residents of the Gold Coast have been given a chance to speak out on the waiting list crisis at the Gold Coast Hospital, and speak out they have, loudly and clearly. They have sent a message and that message is this: this Government is failing to provide adequate resources to our public hospital system to meet demand. They—the people—are questioning the priorities of this Government, a Government that wastes millions of taxpayers' dollars on corporate name changes and glossy Government advertising. This is a Government with wrong priorities. This is a Government that does not want to know about hospital waiting lists. This is a Government determined to con Queenslanders into believing their health system is in fine shape. The con is not working.

The calls to my office on the Gold Coast and to Labor's Statewide waiting list hotline expose the reality of hospital waiting lists. In the months since we established the hotline, my office on the Gold Coast has received an average of about one call a day—a steady and unending trickle of complaint and anger that reveals a massive level of frustration over hospital waiting lists, because

there is a problem. There is a problem when a Category 1 patient has to wait 75 days—yes, 75 days—for a hernia operation, an operation so serious that the gentleman concerned has signed a medical release allowing doctors to open him from naval to throat.

There is a problem when a man waits for exploratory surgery for prostate cancer and the hospital cannot give him any indication of when he will receive surgery. There is a problem when a woman has been waiting 10 months as a Category 2 patient for an operation to restore mobility to her hand. There is a problem when a man with spinal stenosis—a man told by his doctor that, if his operation is delayed too long, he will be paralysed for life—has been waiting a year for an operation and still does not have any idea of when he will be operated on. There is a problem when a boy has to wait eight months just to see an ear, nose and throat specialist. There is a problem when a man is told he will be lucky to have a cataract operation by the year 2000. There is a problem when a woman with leaking breast implants—breast implants necessary because of breast cancer surgery—has to wait 18 months just to see a specialist at the hospital.

There is a problem. These cases and another dozen like them highlight the problem and tell a story. They tell a story of a hospital—the Gold Coast Hospital—that is underfunded, of doctors and nursing staff who are overworked, of beds lying idle even though they are available for private patients who can have an operation within three weeks if they pay up front. They are available for these people but not available for public patients because of lack of funds. They tell a story of a Government that will commit \$80m to a new, privately run hospital on the Gold Coast whilst denying adequate funding to a public hospital that has people queuing up on waiting lists.

In the last few weeks, I have stood in front of the Gold Coast Hospital with people desperate for surgery and pleaded with this Government to admit that there is a problem with waiting lists and to do something about it, but the Health Minister refuses to listen. He is shutting his eyes, closing his ears and yelling from the rooftops about reductions in Category 1 waiting lists, but he says not a word about Category 2 and Category 3 patients—the categories in which waiting times and numbers are ballooning. He says not a word about the frustration of people who are simply not told anything; they are not told how long they still have to wait. He does not dare mention that other, new waiting list, that is, the waiting list to get on to a waiting list. We do not hear about the people out there who are waiting for an

appointment with a specialist so that they can get on to a surgery waiting list.

In the past two years this Government has demonstrated its incompetence across-the-board time and time again. The Health Minister has managed to finesse the figures and hide the truth from the Queensland public about waiting list blow-outs. However, the waiting list hotline is demonstrating that people have had enough. It is time for this Government to tell the people of Queensland how long the waiting lists—and I mean all of the waiting lists—really are. It is time for the Health Minister to address the funding problem at the Gold Coast Hospital. It is time for the Minister to admit and to recognise that there is a problem and to do something about it.

Keppel Electorate

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (9.35 p.m.): I apologise to the member for Currumbin for trying to get the first call for this debate. I thought I was first on the speakers' list. I now realise that I was not. I would just like to simply say—

Mr J. H. Sullivan: You are not using the speakers' list as your speech notes, are you?

Mr LESTER: On this occasion I wanted to take the opportunity in the Parliament to see those inane enough to interject, and there the honourable member was as usual. I am told that many members of his own party sometimes wish that he was not seen as much as he is. They are all laughing and nodding their heads, so obviously I am right.

I really want to say "thank you" to our Government for what it has done to try to assist with funding for the very important projects in the electorate of Keppel. In recent times, we have seen the road from Emu Park to Rockhampton totally widened. That is a big deal because it means that the road is now safer. Although that will not prevent accidents—and unfortunately since the work has been done, we have had a couple of bad ones—we really cannot blame the Government for that.

A passing lane has also been installed on the road between Rockhampton and Yeppoon. It is a major passing lane measuring 1.1 kilometres in both directions. Again, it means a lot to the people. This project was completed five years ahead of time, as was the case with the Emu Park road, and I am happy about that. Some of my Labor opponents have dared to suggest that perhaps it is pork-barrelling. I simply want to say that I am here to represent my electorate and I will use whatever means are at my disposal to make sure that the funds are spent in my electorate for the betterment of my people. I did the same

thing when the Labor Party was in power. To be fair, if honourable members opposite dare to listen, I must say that in some instances its Government complied as well. It is a matter of people getting up and fighting for their people. Politics out of it, that is what it is really about.

We have had a severe problem in the electorate of Keppel with the Coorooman Creek Road. As all but eight kilometres of that road has a bitumen surface, people use it as a short cut to North Rockhampton, which has meant a lot of dust for the 12 people living on the remaining dirt section. We have been able to work out a deal. We did not break any rules but we gave the shire money in advance. It is a shire road and a bridge still has to be completed; the shire will have to do that on its own. It does mean that, if one keeps at something, something can be achieved.

Our police numbers in Emu Park and Yeppoon, on the Capricorn Coast, are now up to 23, I think. A new police station has been built and extensions are about to be carried out at the police station at Yeppoon. This Friday the Premier and our very astute Justice Minister, Denver Beanland, are coming up to Yeppoon and to officially open extensions to the Yeppoon Court House. I am very pleased about that. That is happening on Friday if honourable members would like to come and have some input. This work was needed. I also fought very hard to make sure that the ladies and gentlemen serving the people in that Government office have decent facilities. Their facilities were pretty crook and we were able to get them decent workstations, for which I am deeply grateful. These things may not seem like a lot to some people, but it means an enormous amount for those people working there.

The University of Central Queensland continues to plough on. It is now the fastest growing regional university in all of Australia. There are some 13,000 students there. The university is moving to four semesters, and it is doing an absolutely outstanding job there. I have suggested to the Premier that he come in and talk to them on Friday, and he is going to. That is very good news for us all as well. In addition to that, five sites in North Rockhampton are now being looked at for a police station.

Time expired.

Mr Beattie: Apology

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (9.40 p.m.): I rise in connection with report No. 13 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. This report deals with a charter train trip that the Opposition arranged for April 1997 in order to

carry out functions associated with my responsibilities as leader. All costs associated with the charter of the train and for entertainment and other associated costs could quite legitimately and properly have been charged in full to the Opposition office budget. But I insisted that they be paid in full by the ALP. The committee concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that I deliberately misled the House in anything that was said by me in relation to this charter. I am delighted that the committee concluded that the evidence suggested that I had made my statements to the House in good faith.

It also noted that I had not personally been involved in negotiations with Queensland Rail. I had always tried to ensure that the information I gave to the House was correct in every way and, as the committee found, I acted in good faith. Nevertheless, the committee said that as some incorrect statements had been made, it recommended that as a matter of convention I should apologise to the House. I therefore apologise, even though, as the committee found, the statements were made in good faith.

Tonight I challenge the Premier to act equally in good faith and come into this House and apologise for tearing up the Westminster Convention, which he did, in relation to a Cabinet document. He behaved in what I believe was an appalling way. The Premier needs to have the strength to admit that he was wrong. One of the strengths of leadership is to accept that, on occasions, inadvertently we do make mistakes, but when we do we have to have the moral fortitude and courage to admit it. I am prepared to do it tonight. I believe the Premier should have the strength and the courage to do what I have done and come into this House and apologise for what he has done in tearing up the Westminster Convention.

John Safran: Not the Sunscreen Song

Mr WOOLMER (Springwood) (9.42 p.m.): I want to bring to the attention of this House and to the people of Queensland one of the most dangerous, exploitative, pathetic and sinister compact disc recordings that I have ever heard. The other evening I was driving north to the Sunshine Coast and I had the misfortune of hearing John Safran's Not the Sunscreen Song. The song is marketed directly to our youth. It is played by mainstream stations and has achieved a lot of commercial success, being No. 9 on the MTV charts this afternoon.

I guess I am obviously a bit of a prude now that I am over the age of 30, but I still regard myself as being a keen observer of Australian

contemporary music. I might add that I do not include this song in that category as Not the Sunscreen Song is not exactly music.

Mr Safran has responded to an American series of positive affirmations called The Sunscreen Song with his reverse and negative overtones in this song. I will just read some of the lyrics from the voiceover that is being marketed directly to our 15- to 19-year-olds. It talks about being marketed to the class of '98. After something of a preamble it says—

"Also understand that friends will come and go. This is because of your irritating personality and nobody likes you. So if the only thing getting you through the day is the misconception that people like you, end it now."

A gunshot goes off and there is the sound of a body slumping to the floor. It goes on—

"Learn how to smoke Winnie Blues. If you are under age, get an older kid to buy them for you."

After today's debate, I think that is also disgusting. He goes on—

"Do one thing that scares you each day: sing, dance, jump in front of a car."

It goes on and on. I will get down to some of the other gems. He says—

"If you are nervous about an exam, ring up your school at the scheduled time and make a bomb threat. Cheat if you think you can get away with it. Remember, someone with richer parents is getting private tuition. Shoplift as often as you can. Shopping centres factor shoplifting into their prices, so if you don't do it, it is like they are getting your money for free. When you are on work experience, steal a Cabcharge and take a trip to Perth."

The only place where I agree with him is when he says that Adelaide is a hole. He tells kids to congregate in gangs around train stations and shopping centres because it is a free country and they are public places. He tells our youth that they should be skateboarding on our war memorials, smoking in their school uniforms, setting off car alarms, planting drugs on their school teachers, joining cults, spiking drinks, and not flushing public toilets. It gets better! He says—

"Remember, only you will truly take care of you, so carry a concealed weapon. Be open to new love. Remember, you can't get pregnant the first time you have sex."

I do not know who taught Mr Safran the facts of life, but maybe Mr Safran cannot get somebody pregnant the first time that he has sex. He says—

"Expect others to support you. It's easy to get the dole and still do cash-in-hand work."

I do not know about other members of this House, but I was quite upset when I heard this load of trash.

Mr Safran and the distributors, Shock Records, should apologise and withdraw this record from the shops immediately. The distributors in Queensland, Shock Records, have a very proud history of distributing alternative rock bands such as the Hoodoo Gurus, Spiderbait, Powderfinger and the like in this country. I do not think they need the few extra bucks they make out of this moron to keep circulating this rubbish. I think that if Mr Safran understood that more Queensland males under 30 commit suicide every year than die in motor vehicle accidents he might not be so forthcoming. When he says that a person cannot become pregnant the first time they have sex, I wonder if he is aware that last year there were 3,290 babies born in Queensland to single teenage mothers.

Mr Safran should take a good, hard look at what he has done. He is in a position where young people look up to him. I watched him in the ABC series Race around the World and I thought he was quite sensible. This is pathetic. It should be withdrawn. This does not need to be peddled to the youth in this State or any other State in this country. It is dangerous. It implies that our youth should suicide if they are unpopular. It advises them to make bomb hoax calls, to steal, to break the law, and to do all the things that general mainstream society find abhorrent. People in this Chamber and all over the country work tirelessly to prevent these things from happening. Mr Safran should grow up.

Maryborough Base Hospital

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (9.48 p.m.): In spite of all the assurances given by the Minister for Health, Mr Horan, Maryborough Base Hospital is losing vital equipment and services to Hervey Bay's new hospital. Let me make it perfectly clear that I begrudge Hervey Bay citizens nothing in the way of medical services and equipment. They deserve the best, and they would have received it from a Labor Government.

However, I refuse to sit back and allow equipment and services to be stolen from Maryborough because this Government will not purchase new equipment for the Hervey Bay Hospital. Maryborough's excellent day surgery was closed when the laparoscopic equipment used on a very regular basis for keyhole and

exploratory surgery and diagnosis was removed. Dozens of Maryborough people now have the inconvenience and expense of having to travel to the Hervey Bay Hospital to receive treatment that previously was available at the Maryborough Hospital. Minister Horan gave a cast iron guarantee that services and equipment would remain at the Maryborough Hospital.

A report called the "Fraser Coast Health Service District Staff Information Paper—February 1998" states on page 2—

"Stress testing equipment purchased for Hervey Bay Hospital which has been in use at Maryborough has been returned to Hervey Bay as of 9 February 1998."

Further to this, a hospital staff member reported to the Fraser Coast Chronicle that tens of thousands of dollars worth of exercise testing equipment has been removed from Maryborough Base Hospital to Hervey Bay. The report went on—

"There has been exercise equipment at Maryborough Hospital since late September 1996. It has been in regular use at least twice a week in Maryborough for at least a year. This equipment was moved to Hervey Bay in the last few weeks. The staff member said that since the equipment's relocation, the two hospital sisters who operated the exercise testing equipment had been designated to other areas."

The Minister was reported in the Fraser Coast Chronicle of Saturday, 28 February as saying "Dollin wrong again" and that no laparoscopic equipment had been transferred to Hervey Bay and that the stress testing equipment was bought new for the Hervey Bay Hospital and was stored at the Maryborough Hospital. The Minister said—

"Maryborough Hospital has its own stress testing equipment in place and fully operational."

That is not true. This flies in the face of the staff information report, what a senior staff member had to say, and the fact that Maryborough citizens are now being directed to Hervey Bay and being told that there is not a testing machine in Maryborough.

Either the Honourable Minister is not telling the truth, or his advisers do not know what is going on, or they are being untruthful to him. I advise the Minister that, if he is fair dinkum that Maryborough is to retain its equipment and services, he should investigate what is happening at Maryborough and get the equipment and services back to Maryborough, as he promised, while he still has a little credibility left. Most of the staff of the Maryborough

Hospital know the facts, as do most of the people in Maryborough. These half-truths and outright lies are being proven as such and are coming home to roost. I say to the Minister: get to the truth.

The Health Minister recently released a revised code of practice, which included the role and function of the enrolled nurse. As part of this, enrolled nurses will be able to access a three-module practice in accordance with the Drug and Poisons Regulations 1996. The courses are funded by the Health Department and are available at TAFE colleges in Moreton, Gold Coast, South Bank, Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba. Maryborough and the Wide Bay missed out yet again. We have nurse educators at the Maryborough Base Hospital, and Wide Bay has 546 registered enrolled nurses. I ask the Minister for Health and the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations: why has Maryborough been bypassed yet again? This is taking away the opportunity for nurses to upgrade their skills and improve their future employment prospects. On the one hand we have the Minister for Health importing nurses from overseas to staff Maryborough and Hervey Bay hospital and, on the other hand, depriving our own nurses of further upgrading. Is it any wonder that the only growth industry we have in the Wide Bay region is unemployment? I call on the Premier to look into this unfair state of affairs immediately to give our young people and nurses an equal opportunity to further their education and medical health care.

Goldmining, Gympie Electorate

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (9.51 p.m.): I take this opportunity to alert the House to what is going on in the goldfields in my electorate. When talking about gold, we talk about mine shafts. The capping program in Gympie has been very much to the fore in the last 10 years or so. It certainly has made a great difference as far as the stabilisation of those shafts. Being able to cap the mines keeps them safe for those who have houses above the shafts. Well over 700 capping shafts have been put in place in the past few years, and this has made an enormous difference to the stability of Gympie's gold resources.

It must be remembered that the Gympie goldfield was discovered in 1867. In the 60 years to 1927, it produced 3.4 million ounces—4.5 million tonnes at an average grade of 24 grams per tonne. A considerable amount of interest has resurfaced in gold in the Gympie electorate. Gympie Gold Limited is now well and truly in the business of goldmining. It must be remembered that, at the present time, the Gympie goldfield is

the sixth-largest goldfield in Australia, and it is one on which we do rely from time to time for our gold and to make that "golden mile" go just a little bit further.

Recently, Gympie Gold called its shareholders together to release its development program. Once again it is looking forward to a good year this year. Gympie Gold is a junior gold producer with secondary coal interests. Its main asset is in Gympie itself. Production is via two hoisting shafts and a 200,000 tonnes per annum treatment plant. A third shaft is being refurbished to aid exploration. The majority of ore is sourced from the Inglewood lode, which averages between six and eight grams of gold per tonne of ore. However, some ore is also being mined from the Rowlands Reef area—a high-grade vein adjacent to Inglewood. Milling of the Rowlands Reef development ore, which includes some waste rock, has averaged 21 grams of gold per tonne over the past quarter.

Gympie Gold's operations at Gympie are relatively small when one considers some of the other operations, even though, as I said, it is the sixth-largest goldfield in Australia. The company is generating a reasonable surplus. With a full hedge book stretching out to the year 2003, and cash costs in the December quarter of \$278 per ounce, the company is one of the few small producers not materially affected by the low price of gold at the present time. Gympie Gold has nearly completed its corporate restructuring, which has involved the shedding of non-gold assets. The company currently has over \$11m in liquid assets, the Gympie gold operations and a coal royalty. Based on a market capitalisation of \$44m, the market is placing a modest value on Gympie Gold's assets.

Time expired.

Cool Schools Program

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (9.56 p.m.): The oldest trick in politics is currently being played out in the central Queensland media. That trick is when a backbench member of the Government calls on his or her own Government to provide a service or facility knowing full well that the service or facility has already been approved and that the money required will be in the Budget papers presented to the Parliament on Budget day.

Over the past week, we have heard the master of political games, the member for Keppel, calling on the Government to aircondition schools in the Capricornia region of central Queensland. His call sends a clear signal of the Government's intentions to try to trump the Labor Opposition's \$48m plan for cooler

schools. There is no way that the member for Keppel would be calling for airconditioning of schools if he knew that his Government could not deliver.

The member for Keppel knows that his leader, the Premier, made a political blunder when he committed \$300,000 to three Moranbah State schools a week before the local authority elections last year. The staff of other schools, P & Cs and the wider community saw it for what it was: political pork-barrelling in the run-up to the local council election. In the interests of looking after a sitting National Party mayor, the Premier opened his mouth, ignoring the advice of the Education Department not to provide the funds. The money did not come from Education Queensland. It came from his own portfolio budget and, in doing so, sparked an outcry from school communities right across the region.

No-one in the region with whom I have spoken has denied the right of those three Moranbah schools to be funded for airconditioning. We say to them, "Good luck. Well done. We hope you enjoy a cooler classroom." But the response of other schools is not surprising. If the Premier can find money for three schools, people are saying that he can find it for other schools in the region whose students are suffering the same severe summer temperatures.

This issue is about a fair go for everyone, not favouritism to help out a mate. The Premier lost credibility overnight and is faced with an electoral backlash. He had plenty of opportunity during the latter part of last year to claw back credibility by making a commitment to schools, but he chose not to do so and has been left red faced by the Labor Party's initiative to extend the Cool Schools program.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr PEARCE: The Premier should not worry. The people of central Queensland have seen him for what he is.

Mr Borbidge: Enjoy your final weeks. We're coming after you.

Mr PEARCE: I am going to enjoy every minute of it. If the Premier puts up the candidate whom I know he is putting up, I will enjoy it, that is for sure.

He chose not to provide the funding for those schools, which would have been fair. It was about giving everybody a fair go. The Labor Party listened to the community. As the alternative Government in this State, we heard the message coming from the "Cool Schools 2000—No Sweat" campaign, which developed around the efforts of Middlemount Year 9 students. Those students did a marvellous job. Their campaign for equitable funding through the local television, radio and print media motivated other schools in the region. They became involved. They delivered the message.

I acknowledge the overwhelming support of the Central Queensland News, whose editor and staff have been strong advocates for airconditioning schools in the region and who have provided enormous support for the campaign. The Labor Party is serious about its commitment to making the classrooms cooler for students. When the announcement is made by the Government that it will fund airconditioning in schools in central Queensland, I will welcome it. However, the member for Keppel should not attempt to take credit for the outcome. His Government missed the opportunity. Arrogance was overruled by public reaction and commitment.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.01 p.m.