

WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2002

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Government House
Queensland

19 April 2002

The Honourable R. K. Hollis, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
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 The Queen on 19 April 2002:

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Electoral Act 1992, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Building Act 1975, the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 and the Local Government Act 1993"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Private Employment Agencies Act 1983, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and Integrated Planning Act 1997".

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Arnison

Governor

Government House
Queensland

24 April 2002

The Honourable R. K. Hollis, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
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 The Queen on 24 April 2002:

"A Bill for an Act about the management of particular pests on land and the management of the stock route network, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend Acts administered by the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act about making, managing, keeping and preserving public records in Queensland, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Consumer Credit (Queensland) Act 1994 to make changes to the Consumer Credit Code".

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Arnison

Governor

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the date indicated—

23 April 2002—

Electoral Commission of Queensland—Queensland Election 2001 Ballot Paper Survey

Report to the Queensland Parliament on a visit to the United States and New Zealand 17-22 March 2002 by the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading

30 April 2002—

Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Issues Paper No. 4—Communications to members, members' representations to Government and information provided to members

2 May 2002—

Roads Connecting Queenslanders—A strategic long-term direction for the Queensland road system and Main Roads

Department of Main Roads—Strategic Plan 2002-2007 Essential to connecting Queensland

3 May 2002—

Marine Safety Incidents—Annual Report 2001

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Prostitution Act 1999—

Prostitution Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 67

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2002, No. 68

Water Act 2000—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 69

Water Act 2000—

Water Regulation 2002, No. 70 and Explanatory Notes for No. 70

Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 71

Fisheries Act 1994—

Fisheries (Asian Green Mussels) Disease and Quarantine Amendment Declaration (No. 1) 2002, No. 72

Chiropractors Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 73

Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 74

Osteopaths Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 75

Podiatrists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 76

Psychologists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 77

Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 78

Chiropractors Registration Act 2001, Cooperatives Act 1997, Radiation Safety Act 1999, Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

Chiropractors Registration Regulation 2002, No. 79

Cooperatives Act 1997, Health Act 1937, Podiatrists Registration Act 2001, Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, Radiation Safety Act 1999, Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982, Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Podiatrists Registration Regulation 2002, No. 80

Cooperatives Act 1997, Osteopaths Registration Act 2001, Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

Osteopaths Registration Regulation 2002, No. 81

Cooperatives Act 1997, Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, Psychologists Registration Act 2001, Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

Psychologists Registration Regulation 2002, No. 82

Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Registration Act 2001, Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—

Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Registration Regulation 2002, No. 83

Community Services Legislation Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 84

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984, Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984—

Community Services Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 85

Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 86

Private Employment Agencies and Other Acts Amendment Act 2002—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 87

Industrial Relations Act 1999, Private Employment Agents Act 1983—

Private Employment Agents Regulation 2002, No. 88

Public Trustee Act 1978—

Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 89

Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999—

Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2002, No. 90

Local Government Act 1993—

Local Government Finance Amendment Standard (No. 1) 2002, No. 91

Liquor Act 1992—

Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 92

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail Harvest Period) Notice 2002, No. 93

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2002, No. 94

Status of Children Amendment Act 2001—

Status of Children Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2002, No. 95

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The following responses to petitions, received during the recess, were tabled by The Clerk—

Response from the Minister for Environment (Mr Wells) to a petition presented by Mrs C Smith from 28 petitioners, regarding the proposed irradiation industry development at Narangba—

Mr R. Doyle

The Clerk of the Parliament

Legislative Assembly of Queensland

Parliament House

Alice and George Streets

BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter received in my office on 26 February 2002 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 20 February 2002, regarding the proposed irradiation industry development at Narangba.

As a matter of law, the Commonwealth Environment Minister has the power to determine whether a project involving irradiation proceeds. Under the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC), the jurisdiction of state authorities to determine this has been ousted by approval under Section 133 of the EPBC Act.

I expressed my concerns to the then Commonwealth Minister for Environment, Senator Hill, but he decided to allow the matter to proceed despite my objections.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

DEAN WELLS

Minister for Environment

Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines (Mr Robertson) to a petition presented by Mr Pitt from 89 petitioners, regarding registering the name of Woopen Creek in the Register of Place Names as a separate entity—

30 Apr 2002

Mr R D Doyle

The Clerk of the Parliament

Parliament House

Alice and George Streets

BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 11 April 2002 forwarding a copy of petition lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning registering the name of Woopen Creek in the Register of Place Names as a separate locality.

The issues stated in the petition for the inclusion of Woopen Creek as a separate locality are reasonable and valid. My Department of Natural Resources and Mines is in receipt of 83 letters from affected residents and is

currently developing a proposal to investigate the inclusion of Wooten Creek in the localities of Cairns City local government area.

At this stage, the proposal requires further consultation with relevant agencies, including Cairns City Council. A final decision will be made following this consultation.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP

Response from the Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham) to a petition presented by Mr Briskey from 44 petitioners, regarding objections to certain road works in Redland Shire and to a petition presented by Mr Lawlor from 1064 petitioners, regarding the possible future development of the Broadwater in the City of Gold Coast—

17 Apr 2002

Mr R Doyle
Clerk of the Parliament
Central Document Exchange M29

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter of 7 March 2002 regarding petitions lodged in the Legislative Assembly on 6 March 2002 dealing with objections to certain road works in Redland Shire and the possible future development of the Broadwater in the City of Gold Coast.

I wish to advise that I have considered these issues and responded directly to the Principal Petitioner in each instance.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Nita Cunningham MP
Minister for Local Government and Planning

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled—

Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie)—

Discussion Paper, dated April 2002, entitled *Smart State: Health 2020—A Vision For The Future*

Summary Discussion Paper, dated April 2002, entitled *Smart State: Health 2020—A Vision For The Future*

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 a.m.):
On 29 April, the Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, and I released a discussion paper on the future of Queensland Health. The discussion paper, *Smart State: Health 2020*, consists of two documents. It is a vision for the future. It is the result of comprehensive research into health and health care trends in the world. I table a copy for the information of the House and I seek leave to incorporate a short statement to go with it for the information of members.

Leave granted.

On April 29 the Health Minister Wendy Edmond and I released a discussion paper on the future health of Queensland.

The discussion paper, *Smart State: Health 2020 A Vision for the Future*, is the result of comprehensive research into health and health care trends around the world.

It also reflects workshops held in Queensland last year with key health and community stakeholders.

On the positive side, we are going to see some spectacular advances in health technology in coming decades.

We expect major developments in bioengineering including the development of artificial blood, synthetic tissues and prosthetic devices.

It could soon be possible to re-construct badly injured people and make them stronger than before their accidents—a real equivalent of the "Six Million Dollar Man".

But such advances in health technology risk being overwhelmed by unhealthy lifestyle habits.

The *Health 2020* paper shows the trend towards being sedentary and obese, smoking, drinking alcohol and having poor diets. This will place more people at risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes and lung cancer.

The discussion paper does not represent government policy, but it is designed to stimulate debate and discussion so we can plan for the future. We want health professionals and the community to comment on the issues raised in the discussion paper so the Government can put together a long-term strategic plan for public health services.

Some of the clear challenges highlighted by the paper include:

- An ageing population
- The increasing incidence of chronic diseases
- The continuing poor health of indigenous Queenslanders
- Maintaining an appropriately skilled workforce
- Increasing health costs.

The State Government is committed to a free public health system for all, and over the next two decades we will need to look closely at the relative roles of the Commonwealth and State in funding health services.

A copy of the paper *Smart State: Health 2020 A Vision for the Future* is being distributed to every Member today. I encourage you to read it and contribute to the debate.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Personal Injuries Proceedings Bill

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.33 a.m.), by leave: State cabinet has decided on a package of reforms to deal with urgent problems regarding medical indemnity and public liability insurance. The state government will create an insurance policy task force as a matter of urgency to coordinate the preparation of a Personal Injuries Proceedings Bill by next month as the first stage of tort law reform. We will ban all advertising in media for no win, no fee legal work. Personal injury advertising will also be banned in the electronic media. However, personal injury lawyers will be able to advertise the type of work they undertake in newspapers and on the net. Deputy Premier and Treasurer Terry Mackenroth will pursue the issues at a national level at a meeting of state, territory and federal Treasurers on 30 May.

Key elements or general principles of the Personal Injuries Proceedings Bill, which will be introduced into the parliament in June by the Attorney-General, Rod Welford, will include a number of matters such as the following. Before the issue of court proceedings, we will require early notification of claims following an injury or the appearance of symptoms; we will require time frames for the defendant/insurer to make a determination on liability; and there will be obligations on both parties to openly exchange information such as medical and investigative reports. In terms of limits on claims, we will limit economic loss to three times the average weekly earnings; loss of comfort claims will be limited to actions following death or where damages exceed \$30,000 before contributory negligence; and loss of service claims will be capped at three times the average weekly earnings. In terms of costs, there will be no costs or outlays for claims settled for \$30,000 or less, unless the settlement or judgment exceeds the mandatory final offer of the insurance; and we will limit awards of costs and outlays for claims settled for more than \$30,000 but not exceeding \$50,000 to a maximum of \$2,500. Other major reforms—and this is not an exhaustive list—include: exemplary, punitive or aggravated damages cannot be awarded against an insurer; an obligation on the claimant to mitigate the loss; and the exclusion of jury trials.

My department will lead the task force, which will include representatives from the departments of Health, Treasury and Justice and Attorney-General, as well as the Motor Accident Insurance Commission. I want to thank my ministerial colleagues, in particular the Treasurer, the Minister for Health and the Attorney-General, for their excellent work on preparing this material for cabinet.

Our problem is that we are facing a crisis, and unless there are some reforms the system will collapse and nobody will get anything. We have doctors who are reluctant to operate, we have not-for-profit organisations which cannot hold fetes, and the whole social fabric in a number of country and provincial cities is starting to be put at risk. So we have to have reform. We want to do it in a fair and balanced way and ensure it is in the public interest. Our reforms are not designed to limit compensation for people who suffer catastrophic disabilities. They will get a fair go, and so they should, particularly if they are involved in accidents or events which are not their fault. My message to people who have been injured is that if they have a legitimate claim, they will get a fair go. While we will restrict no win, no fee advertising, we do not plan to abolish the no win, no fee process because it does enable a lot of people without money to access the courts.

I noticed yesterday some criticism from plaintiff lawyers in relation to our proposals. I simply ask them to work with us, because if they do not we will end up with a system under which no-one will be given protection or coverage, and it will mean that a large section of the community is thrown to the wolves—those who can least afford it. It is our responsibility to have a fair system to protect them, and protect them we will.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Riviera Group; Global Events; Australian Institute for Commercialisation

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: As everyone knows, Queensland is an exciting state. There is always a lot happening here, and today is no exception. At noon today I will open the Riviera Group's \$2.3 million training and

manufacturing centre at Coomera, the largest boat-building facility of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. I will be joined by three local members. It is a very talented lot from the Gold Coast way, including Albert, of course, which is part of that area.

Riviera products are sought after not only throughout Australia but also around the world, with 60 per cent of boats being built for export to 27 countries. The Riviera Group moved to the Gold Coast Marine Precinct only two years ago. In that time, sales have grown by a staggering 52 per cent. This year the Riviera Group hopes to build 400 boats. I am sure all members would congratulate all of Riviera's 670 staff and subcontractors on the successes that flow from such performance. The training and manufacturing centre is committed to ensuring that the 134 apprentices get every chance possible to excel. This is a Smart State industry which has the full support of my government. I declare for the public record that I will be travelling to the coast by private helicopter at no cost to the public!

When I return from the Gold Coast, I will address a Queensland Tourism Industry Council luncheon where I will launch Global Events, the new business arm of Queensland Events Corporation. Queensland Events Corporation has invested in more than 190 major events over the past 13 years. We have developed an international reputation as the events state of Australia and now intend selling our expertise to the world.

The first initiative under the new international brand will be a two-way partnership with Sacramento, the state capital of California. Global Events has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Sacramento Sports Commission which will see Queensland export its services in the development of a major multi-sport event to be staged in Sacramento. The initiative combines the experience of QEC and its wholly owned subsidiary, Gold Coast Events Management. 2003 is looking like a bumper year for events and events tourism. The completion of the Suncorp Metway Stadium will see World Cup games played there, as well as State of Origin matches. We are building the infrastructure for the jobs of today and tomorrow. I have no doubt that members will hear more about this from the Deputy Premier as the next 12 months elapse.

This evening I will be hosting a business reception at Parliament House at which I will be formally introducing the new chair and board of the Australian Institute for Commercialisation to the Queensland business community. This institute has been set up by the Department of State Development. Tom Barton and I took a submission to cabinet on it, and state cabinet yesterday approved this high-powered board to drive the Australian Institute for Commercialisation, which will be headquartered in Queensland. The institute will be based at the Brisbane Technology Park at Eight Mile Plains and will begin operating from 1 July this year.

While Queensland has taken the lead on this initiative, it has a truly national focus and is supported by the Commonwealth government and other state governments. The nine-member board will be chaired by Dr Peter Jonson, chair of the Melbourne Institute Advisory Board, chair of the Biotechnology Centre of Excellence Panel of Experts and the Australian Institute for Commercialisation Advisory Panel.

We believe the AIC can have a major impact on how existing firms can benefit from the \$4.6 billion Australia spends on public sector research and development each year. This will assist the growth of high value companies resulting in more jobs, better skills and greater opportunities. I table the names of all nine board members and brief CVs on each for the information of the House, together with the appropriate news release.

There is still more good news. This evening another big event will be announced. More big names are heading our way. Later today there will a major announcement about players competing in this year's Australian PGA Championship at Hyatt Regency Coolum on the Sunshine Coast. One of them will play in a regular 72-hole event in Queensland for the first time. The announcement will be made at 2.30 this afternoon. The Queensland government is delighted to be a major sponsor of this event through Queensland Events Corporation. Former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett works with the tournament promoters, SFX. He will be at tonight's business reception to encourage Queensland's corporate sector to throw its support behind this big event. I look forward to seeing Mr Kennett this evening.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism; Queensland Economy

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: This morning we break national news. Despite a national dip in the March quarter,

Queensland still leads the nation for hotel occupancy trends. The good news is that on a quarterly basis the Queensland markets continued to perform more strongly than other Australian markets. The trends are keeping pace with 2001 performance, which in a post 11 September environment is healthy indeed.

The latest Andersen hotel benchmark survey report, released today, details that Australian hotel markets generally displayed a lacklustre performance during March 2002. The Andersen report states that, despite Australia's relatively stronger economic performance in recent months, few markets report strength in the corporate and meetings sectors. The report states that Brisbane was slightly down, largely due to Easter holiday timing.

Cairns hoteliers noted subdued demand in the Japanese market and slightly weaker domestic demand, contributing to slightly reduced occupancy rates for both the month of March and the March quarter. However, continued servicing by Qantas and more positive indications coming out of Japan provide some optimism for operators. This is boosted by Qantas's Australian Airlines expansion plans, linking Cairns with several Asian hubs from September 2002.

Gold Coast operators recorded demand slightly ahead of the corresponding March quarter for 2001, with slightly improved average room rates. Obviously Virgin Blue has had a significant role here, too. Tourism is an important industry for this state and one we are keen to ensure continues to grow. Andersen's has again informed us that our decision to focus on events reaps rewards.

The news on Queensland's economy just keeps getting better. Two recent reports reinforce other assessments that Queensland has weathered the shock of 11 September and our economy is powering ahead. The latest Delta Electricity and Access Economic Investment Monitor shows that we lead the national league table for the value of projects under construction. The value of Queensland projects under construction grew by a whopping 24.6 per cent to \$15.9 billion in the March quarter. This growth was fuelled by the start of work on Comalco's Gladstone alumina refinery and AMC's Stanwell magnesium metal plant.

Notable government funded projects that are under way include the Gold Coast Convention Centre, with a value of \$118 million. Of course if we look at the full project, including the casino, we see that it is a \$200 million project. The new \$17.5 million government office building in Cairns is more than 80 per cent complete and on schedule to be finished in July. The \$94.5 million Maryborough Correctional Centre is now 70 per cent complete. While the value of projects under construction is higher than in any other state, our total project value—including projects committed, under consideration and possible—is the highest of any state, bar Western Australia. According to Access, the total value of Queensland projects rose by two per cent in the March quarter, to \$57.2 billion.

Commerce Queensland has also released news that Queensland business has this year made its best start to the year in more than a decade. Commerce Queensland's latest Pulse survey shows that the general business conditions barometer reached 58.68 points. This is the highest March quarter result since the Pulse survey began 11 years ago and the second best result since the December quarter of 1994. Survey results highlight the economy's underlying strength and the extent of improvements in Queensland business. The strength is evident in the strong performance of sales, exports, employment, profit and investment.

Business expects further improvements in the Queensland economy over the next 12 months, compared to the previous year. Fifty-four per cent of business respondents expect either a much stronger or somewhat stronger Queensland economy over the next 12 months. Only 5.5 per cent of respondents expected the Queensland economy to weaken. Consistent with this optimism, Commerce Queensland claims that business is gearing up for significant increases in sales and exports.

When we consider this encouraging data in combination with the sustained recovery in tourism and travel, we see that there is no doubt that investing in Queensland is a smart move for any business.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Schools + Parents

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: On Sunday, 28 April the State government again delivered on its commitment to Queensland families with the release of the *Schools + Parents* magazine. This free, twice-yearly magazine will help improve communication between families and schools by providing up-to-date articles on the

latest initiatives and issues that impact on education. This is the first time there has been a communication tool specifically designed to deliver broadly focused educational information to parents across all year levels in state and non-state schools.

Through the KPMG report *Education Matters*, parents told us that they wanted more information and better reporting on their children's progress. *Schools + Parents* is part of meeting that demand. Schools of course already work very hard to share information with their parents and caregivers through report cards and school newsletters, and *Schools + Parents* complements that strength.

The first edition was distributed as an insert in the *Sunday Mail*, and subsequent editions will be supplied to schools for circulation direct to families. It is also available on the Internet. Most importantly, the articles in *Schools + Parents* speak directly to parents. The material is reader friendly, accessible and covers topics such as literacy and bullying as well as more day-to-day but just as important issues such as head lice, financial assistance and term dates.

Each member of the House has been posted a copy of the magazine. I commend *Schools + Parents* to members as an information service and an investment in school-community partnerships.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Employment Assistance to Migrants

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.46 a.m.), by leave: The Beattie government is taking a leading role in providing training and employment assistance to migrants and refugees, a field in which the federal coalition government falls dismally short. The Queensland government has been quick to respond to the needs of the non-English-speaking community through a range of programs and grants.

TAFE Queensland in particular has made an outstanding effort to help migrants and refugees settle into their new country. It is now the biggest provider of English language programs for migrants and refugees in Queensland, through 15 TAFE institutes across the state. Together, the institutes help students from more than 60 language groups to learn English, understand Australian culture and participate actively within the community.

Migrants and refugees in this state are benefiting from the Beattie government's provision of overseas qualification assessment, which is a free service to help applicants gain recognition of their qualifications, leading to further study or jobs. We provide the service free of charge—unlike the Commonwealth, which charges \$145 for each applicant. Last year 386 people used our service, and another 350 people have been assisted so far this financial year.

Through the Department of Employment and Training, the government also provides a trade recognition service for migrants and refugees to assess skills obtained through work or training overseas. Government funding is available for training to temporary protection visa or 'non-resident' visa holders, such as Afghani and Iraqi refugees, and has provided a contract worth \$100,000 to the Southbank Institute of TAFE to help temporary protection visa holders with their English skills. The institute is currently helping some 40 asylum seekers previously from Woomera and other detention centres to learn English. Regrettably, the Commonwealth government does not share our view and does not fund people in these specialist non-resident visa categories.

Later today I will have the privilege of launching a program for the Multicultural Development Association at Stones Corner to assist 30 unemployed people from countries as diverse as India, Bosnia and Colombia gain recognition of their skills. The project has been funded with a \$60,000 grant under the Community Employment Assistance Program. Participants will receive accredited training in Australian work culture, occupational health and safety, English, industrial issues, and communication and life skills. The migrant and refugee employment project will provide individual skills audits, literacy and numeracy assessments and training in job search techniques. These measures give new hope to people who have been brave enough to face the challenge of starting life in a new country.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public-private Infrastructure Partnership Policy

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (9.49 a.m.), by leave: Last week I released for public comment the guidance material which supports the Queensland

government's public-private partnership policy. The release of the guidance material is within the time frame I declared in February this year at an Infrastructure Association of Queensland function. The aim of the guidance material is to provide a clear framework within which parties can work in partnership to achieve the objectives of Queensland's PPP policy—namely, to deliver improved services and better value for money through appropriate risk sharing between public and private sector parties, encouraging private sector innovation, optimising asset utilisation, and integrated whole-of-life management of public infrastructure. The public-private partnership policy has the potential to deliver better infrastructure services which are more customer focused. By getting the private sector and government to work together, we can have the best of both worlds—private sector capital and expertise with government supervision of service performance.

This guidance material has been developed following extensive consultation with government agencies and representatives of the infrastructure sector and is consistent with the PPP regimes being implemented in other states. This guidance material describes the tasks involved in implementing Queensland's PPP policy. This material aims to guide government and private sector personnel on the process and issues they are likely to confront in analysing and developing major infrastructure proposals and, where appropriate, delivering PPPs. Strictly speaking, it is not a how-to manual; rather, it is designed to give people a working knowledge of the methods and issues that arise in infrastructure analysis so they are better placed to interpret and analyse technical and specialist advice.

The next step in the implementation of the PPP policy is to begin progressing projects through the framework while the final adjustments are being made. There are already several projects in the preliminary assessment stage, and my department and Treasury will be working closely with government agencies to progress these investigations as quickly as possible. I believe that PPPs offer real potential for improving the delivery of infrastructure in Queensland, and I table the guidelines

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Anti-hooning Laws

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (9.52 a.m.), by leave: All members will be aware of the government's ongoing consideration of a number of proposals to address increasing community concern in relation to illegal motoring activities, or hooning as it has become known. I can advise the House today that cabinet recently approved the introduction of amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to allow for this, and I will be introducing this bill later today. The bill contains tough new measures to allow for vehicle confiscation against motorists who participate in illegal drag racing and/or drive dangerously. The new provisions will mean that police will have the power to impound a vehicle for 48 hours after a first offence; courts may make an order for the impoundment of a vehicle for up to three months after a second offence; and courts may make an order for the forfeiture of a vehicle to the state after a third offence. The proposed laws will also allow police to issue directions to the driver of a vehicle to cease using sound equipment for 12 hours where the noise created is considered excessive. A failure to comply with the direction could result in the equipment being confiscated for 24 hours and prosecution for failure to comply with the direction.

The reality is that illegal drag racing and dangerous driving pose significant risks to the community. They hold potential risks for other road users and the public at large, not to mention the actual motorists and their passengers. At the heart of these new measures is our desire to do what we can to make our roads safer. Undue noise created by this hoonish behaviour is also an issue that many people have raised with me. I observed this first-hand when I spent an evening at the Esplanade at Mooloolaba during CHOGM which convinced me that the government had to take tough action. These new laws will aid to preserve safety and place reasonable checks on noisy vehicles that disturb the peace.

We have worked long and hard to develop a tough but workable approach. If an offender is found guilty, then they will be required to pay all the costs associated with towing and impoundment. Police will have to incur the cost of impounding a vehicle for the first 48-hour period until the outcome of the offender's court proceedings is known. This will ensure a tough but fair system is in operation. As a further protection, the government has committed that these new provisions will be subject to review after a two-year period. We want laws that will work, and I am confident that our proposals will achieve what we are hoping for.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Gold Coast Limousine Industry

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.55 a.m.), by leave: On 11 and 12 March the Channel 9 program *A Current Affair* aired footage in which a number of limousine drivers on the Gold Coast were portrayed as being involved in illegal drug activity. I acknowledge the work of the Queensland Police Service, which on 15 March culminated in the arrest on drug related offences of six individuals, four of whom were limousine drivers, according to police reports to Queensland Transport. Upon receiving this advice, Queensland Transport moved to immediately suspend the driver authorisations of three of the individuals and the operator accreditation of the fourth. In light of the allegations made on the Channel 9 program and subsequent claims in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Queensland Transport initiated a review of its administrative records relating to the limousine industry on the Gold Coast.

On 13 March the director-general referred these allegations to the Crime and Misconduct Commission for investigation. I am informed that this investigation is ongoing and Queensland Transport is fully cooperating with the commission in this regard. Also on 13 March I requested that the director-general of Queensland Transport appoint an independent person to review the actions of the department's Gold Coast offices in relation to some administrative anomalies, particularly some apparent weaknesses in the flow of information to senior levels of the department's regional structure. This review has recently been completed and I can report that the independent reviewer's recommendations for improvements to departmental processes have been accepted by the director-general and are now being implemented by Queensland Transport. The recommendations, which I table, included clearer guidelines for the referral of information to the Crime and Misconduct Commission and Queensland Police, as well as additional staff training in areas such as dealing with ethical issues, departmental processes to refer issues of corruption and misconduct, and dealing with client aggression. The report also recommended some system improvements to information gathering procedures and handling of correspondence.

Comprehensive implementation of the recommendations is expected to be complete by the end of July. The report in its entirety has been forwarded to the Queensland Police Service for consideration in its ongoing investigations. During the past six weeks, transport inspectors have undertaken increased compliance checks on the Gold Coast. This has resulted in several offence reports and warnings to limousine drivers and operators and taxi drivers. This increased compliance activity will continue until such time as Queensland Transport is satisfied that the Gold Coast limousine and taxi industry is performing at the standard expected by the Queensland government and, importantly, by fare-paying passengers and the community at large.

Finally, I acknowledge the work of Queensland Transport staff on the Gold Coast. It is evident that the public transport staff and the transport inspectors, whose job it is to protect the public interest by ensuring that public transport providers comply with regulations, work in difficult circumstances and must sometimes deal with the very undesirable elements that have crept into the limousine industry in minority proportions. I note with genuine concern and regret that some Queensland Transport officers on the Gold Coast have been verbally and physically threatened in the routine execution of their jobs. I thank these officers for their ongoing professionalism in ensuring that those few in the limousine industry do not place a black mark on the Gold Coast's reputation as a safe and attractive international tourist destination.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Clinton Gage Memorial Fund

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (9.58 a.m.), by leave: One year ago last week a dingo took the life of Clinton Gage on Fraser Island. Some months ago I discussed with Clinton's father, Ross Gage, what would be a suitable commemoration for his son. After talking with his wife, Annette, and other family members, Ross told me that what they would prefer would be a sun shelter carrying a plaque that told the story of 30 April 2001. The family wanted the shelter to be located in an area of high visitation in order that the maximum number of people should read the plaque and so be aware of just how dangerous dingoes can be. It was their wish if Waddy Point was to remain open, as it has, for the memorial to be located there, near to the scene of the tragedy.

The memorial now stands at Waddy Point. Members of Clinton's family held a private gathering on Fraser Island on the morning of 30 April. It was their wish that I should open the memorial on the afternoon of that day. It was also their wish that this be done in private and in the absence of media. This was achieved, and a brief opening ceremony was held in the presence of some members of Clinton's family and the rangers and other officers who were part of the events surrounding the tragedy.

At other times I have advised the House of policy initiatives which occurred as a result of the tragedy. The anniversary is a time simply to remember and respect. The wild places of Queensland, including its national parks and world heritage areas, can be harsh environments. The sea can be cruel and the bush can be pitiless, yet the death of Clinton Gage, a tragic event in the life of his family, stands out as a bleak landmark in the lives of everyone in Queensland. When this little boy died, the world changed. We used to live in a world in which Fraser Island dingoes were not known to be life threatening. Now we live in a world in which dingoes are known to kill children in the clear light of day. The world is now colder, sadder and more tarnished than the world we used to know.

After the tragedy, the Gage family received a number of gifts of money from friends and well-wishers. It was their wish that this should be put to work to assist sick and injured children. They have asked me to announce by way of a statement to the parliament that a fund has been established at the Royal Children's Hospital to which the public can contribute. Donations can be forwarded to the Clinton Gage Trust Fund, care of the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation, Post Office Box 99, Herston, Queensland, 4029.

The anniversary of Clinton's death falls close to Anzac Day, a day on which we remember those who gave their lives and resolve to live in a way that ensures that they did not die in vain. The steps the Gage family has taken in supporting the establishment of a memorial and establishing a fund for sick and injured children are directed to ensuring that they and we can remember Clinton in that way.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Week

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: Today I will present awards to five Queensland organisations for their outstanding initiatives to prevent domestic and family violence. This week is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Week, and the awards, developed by the Queensland Domestic Violence Council and the Department of Families, help raise community awareness about domestic and family violence and encourage agencies to work to best practice standards in their service delivery. This is the tenth year of these awards and the theme of the week should be a mantra for all Queenslanders—expect respect, abuse is wrong.

I congratulate the following award recipients on their achievements: the Queensland Police Service, Far North Region of Cairns; the Zonta Club of Brisbane; River Inc of Wynnum; the Tablelands Women's Centre of Atherton; the Aboriginal and Islander Community Resource and Aboriginal Corporation of Rockhampton; and the Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence and Winnam Aboriginal Corporation.

Eighteen organisations were nominated for these awards. I commend them all for their efforts in this very important area of crime prevention and encourage more nominations for next year's awards. Domestic and family violence is indeed a crime and it is one that this government is working hard to reduce and prevent. Our Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Policy and Action Plan, our Statement of Strategic Intent on Reducing and Preventing Violence and our Minimum Practice Standards for Working with Women Affected by Domestic and Family Violence are all being released today.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that at least 1.1 million women in this country experienced violence from a former partner and that 2.6 per cent of women experienced violence from their current live-in partner within the last 12 months. One can extrapolate then that nearly 20,000 women in Queensland are likely to be subjected to violence from their current partner, based on these ABS figures. When one considers that domestic and family violence is primarily a hidden problem, one can assume that the incidence is, in fact, far greater than the ABS data suggests.

Today is Domestic and Family Violence Remembrance Day. Traditionally, the Wednesday of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Week is the day designated to honour those affected by domestic and family violence, especially those who have lost their lives. I call on all members of this House to get the message out into their communities and to encourage zero tolerance of domestic and family violence.

We must support our family members, our friends, our neighbours and all those seeking resolution to violence. We must expect respect in our relationships. All Queenslanders, no matter where they live, their age, sexuality, gender, race or lifestyle circumstances, are entitled to live lives free from abuse. It is incumbent upon all of us to build safer and more supportive communities.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Beef Exports to Japan

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: This weekend I will lead a trade mission to Japan to revive sales in what has long been Queensland's number one beef customer. I will be joined on the mission by representatives from four innovative Queensland beef companies. The industry representatives are: Tony Munns, chief executive officer, Kilcoy Pastoral Company; Simone Tully, business manager, OBE Beef; Lachlan Hart, general manager, Stockyard; and Ivan Schmalkuche, chairman, Brigalow Beef Company.

This is one of the most important missions to Japan on behalf of Queensland's beef industry. Typically, Japan buys more than \$1 billion worth of Queensland beef each year. However, sales of all beef have fallen significantly in Japan since outbreaks of BSE in that country late last year, with sales of Australian beef in March less than half of that for the same time last year. Only now are we starting to see signs of recovery, and it is important for the Queensland beef industry to ensure that we continue to promote the safety and quality of our beef in Japan.

In addition to meeting senior government and industry representatives, the trade mission delegates and I will participate in promotions in major supermarkets and meet major consumer cooperatives and representatives from the Japanese food service sector and school lunch nutritionists. We will be using every opportunity to boost sales of Queensland beef.

For instance, next month Korea and Japan will host the soccer World Cup, and we will be circulating beef recipes in Japanese during the mission. In preparation, the trade mission delegates and I will be cooking a barbeque on the Speaker's Green after question time today. I encourage all members to come along and taste this glorious cuisine. We will also be encouraging those millions of Japanese soccer fans to serve beef as they watch the World Cup action.

If every person in Japan had a steak burger during the World Cup in June, it would equate to approximately 20,000 tonnes of beef. In March, sales of Australian beef to Japan fell by almost 20,000 tonnes. We will be kicking goals for the Queensland beef industry. The Australian Socceroos may not be at the World Cup, but there is no reason why our beef should not be there. Japanese customers' demand for safe, healthy beef is an area with which our beef exporters readily identify. We are quality beef producers with consistent supply, boasting more than 11 million head or almost half of Australia's beef herd. Before returning to Queensland, I will visit Korea to explore opportunities for our state. In Korea, I will also be meeting with senior government and industry representatives.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: Last year, I initiated a process to establish a new, independent control body for Queensland racing. The process of establishing the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board will take racing in Queensland into the 21st century. That process included the appointment of an independent recruitment company to short-list applicants for the board and the appointment of a majority industry selection panel to choose the five-person board. Two members of the three-person selection panel were chosen by the racing industry. The third was chosen by me. Members of the selection panel subsequently received detailed briefings, on 17 January and

15 February, advising them of their responsibilities. They were advised in writing of their role to select up to eight people who they considered to be best qualified to be members of the QTRB. Those candidates selected by the panel were to be subjected to strict probity and criminal history checks prior to any further consideration of appointment.

On 22 February, the panel was provided a short list of 15 applicants by TMP Worldwide, the internationally recognised recruiting company engaged for the process. The 15 applicants had been short-listed from around 200 applicants. The panel interviewed the 15 short-listed applicants on 26 and 27 February. The panel then selected eight people. The chief executive of the Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading was then advised of the list of eight names to be subject to probity checking.

On 7 March, at a meeting with officers from the department and TMP Worldwide, the panel was advised of the outcome of criminal history searches. Following the meeting, the panel then chose a five-person board from their list of eight, leaving three reserves. When one of those five withdrew, one of the three reserves was appointed to the board.

The selection panel chose eight names. Those eight people were subjected to probity checks. Five of that eight were appointed by the panel to the board, leaving three reserves. The Australian Racing Board notified the QTRB on 12 April that it had recognised the QTRB as the new control body for racing in Queensland. The decision to admit the QTRB as a member was recognition by the ARB that the appropriate selection process had been followed. These are the facts.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

WorkCover

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.11 a.m.), by leave: The Premier and I have announced more good news for employers in Queensland this week. The average premium rate for workers compensation in Queensland will remain at the lowest level in Australia for the next financial year. The average rate of 1.55 per cent is the lowest of any state and follows three cuts from the average rate of 2.145 per cent when the Beattie government was elected in 1998. In addition, the government's recent reforms mean that Queensland's scheme now also provides some of the highest benefits to injured workers while still the only solvent workers compensation scheme in Australia.

At a time when other state workers compensation authorities are in the red, Queensland's system is not only increasing its benefits to more workers but improving its financial position and delivering the lowest average employer rates in Australia. In the last 12 months, the maximum statutory lump sum injury claim for an injured worker has been increased from \$127,900 to \$150,000. If a worker suffers permanent injury and is dependent on care, the maximum claim available to compensate for care has also been increased to \$150,000. In the event that a worker is killed, dependants are now able to claim a new maximum of \$250,000, up from \$204,645. We have also improved common law processes to help parties settle matters earlier with fewer legal costs.

The ability to maintain these benefits at the same time as offering the lowest average employer premiums in the country has been no small feat. I would like to thank particularly the management team at WorkCover, specifically the Chairman, Mr Ian Brusasco, and the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Tony Hawkins, and members of my department for their efforts in helping to make this achievement possible. Their work has ensured benefits for all Queensland employers and workers and will help attract new businesses and investment to this great state.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Bio2002

Hon. P. T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Information Economy) (10.14 a.m.), by leave: First, a question: what do sea sponges, fungus and rainforest plants all have in common? The answer: they are all found in Queensland's reef and rainforest regions and they all contain potentially life-saving drugs. Any of us who have been to the Daintree in far-north Queensland would know how pristine this World Heritage listed rainforest is. But last week when I visited the Daintree I learned there are more tree species in one hectare of far-north Queensland

rainforest than in the whole of North America. There are 2,500 different tree species in Queensland and many have potentially life-saving medicinal compounds.

I spent three days in north and far-north Queensland on a mission to arm myself with facts and figures about Queensland's biodiversity and to meet with our key researchers and scientists before I accompany the Premier to Bio2002 in Canada next month. This is the world's biggest, most important gathering of biotechnology leaders and our chance to promote our incredible megabiodiversity and scientific ability.

At Bio2002, we will be selling Queensland's biotechnology strengths to the world, and much is in our reefs and rainforests. Far-north Queensland rainforest is home to 12 of the 19 oldest and most primitive families of flowering plants in the world. James Cook University is Australia's leading tropical research university while Townsville is the largest centre for marine science research in the world. The Australian Institute of Marine Science is researching sea sponges like the one I am holding, which is one of 5,000 different types of sponge in Australian waters. That is one-third of the known species in the world.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr LUCAS: The member from Callide is right. We removed his brain. We will give it to him after parliament finishes, because he will not need it.

There is great commercial potential for our sea sponges in bathrooms around the world, but what is remarkable about them are their medicinal properties. AIMS has found when they are subjected to certain environments, these sponges produce antiviral compounds that have had success against the herpes simplex virus and polio.

In Kuranda, I visited Kerry Pearce from the Australian Tropical Mycology Research Centre, which is a partner in one of the two Queensland based bids for the federal biotechnology centre for excellence. Mycology is the study of fungus, which also contains chemical compounds, with a medicinal value of \$US20 billion world wide every year.

We have incredible biotechnology strengths in Queensland—in our rainforests, in our reefs, and in our researchers in laboratories across the state. Our biotechnology is environment friendly. Researchers need take only part of a sponge like this one and collect the chemical compounds within it, and that is the same with fungus and other biosamples taken from the field. At Bio2002—and, I am glad to say, with our colleagues opposite—we will showcase these strengths and showcase our world-class resources, researchers, infrastructure and critical mass as well as show them a thing or two.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask all honourable members to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the municipality of Sile in the Republic of Turkey led by the Mayor, Ishan Cayiroglu. They are accompanied by the Honorary Consul of Turkey, Turgun Allahmanli. Welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.17 a.m.): I advise honourable members that this afternoon at 5.45 p.m. government business will be postponed to allow debate on General Business Order of the Day No. 1 prior to the 6 p.m. debate.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Member for Gympie; Resignation from One Nation Party

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—Ind) (10.18 a.m.): I rise to inform the House that on 17 April I resigned from the One Nation Party. Consequently, I am no longer a member of the One Nation parliamentary party and will sit in this House as an Independent.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have offered me encouragement and support following my decision. I also wish to assure my constituents that I will continue to fight on their behalf for improved services within my electorate. I vow to continue to represent them and their families to the best of my ability in this House.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.18 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest* No. 4 of 2002 and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Scrutiny of Legislation Committee

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.18 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

That the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's consideration of subordinate legislation be reported on to the parliament, together with the committee's regular report on bills.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

State Budget

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.19 a.m.): For some time the National Party has been warning this parliament and the people of Queensland about the very strong chance that for the second year in a row this government is going to deliver a budget that will have an operating deficit. Last year, the operating deficit was \$820 million after the government actually predicted a surplus. It then slid into that deficit of that huge dimension. This year, the government predicted a surplus of some \$24 million, and the mid-year financial review by the Treasury Department showed that that would most likely be an operating deficit of \$148 million.

Recently, Access Economics said that the operating deficit could be as high as \$1,000 million. Naturally, the Treasurer said, 'No, that's wrong,' and came out with his unusual fruit shop explanation that they are comparing apples with oranges and 'She'll be apples.' Yesterday, the Premier said that the forthcoming budget will be a lemon. He told caucus that there would be an operating deficit. Brace yourselves for it, because this will be the second year in a row that has occurred.

While Queensland slides into its second operating deficit in a row, states such as Victoria—once the rust bucket state of Australia—are predicting a surplus and bringing in innovative new ways of attracting business. Meanwhile, Queensland heads for its second operating deficit in a row. For 19 months in a row we have had the worst unemployment figures as well.

Last budget, capital works spending for this state was cut by around \$200 million—the first time we had seen a cut in capital works funding in 13 years. This government is trying to cover up its deficits by cutting back on important capital works which deliver jobs—particularly through construction companies—and provide for economic growth in our state. The warning signs are there. This will be the second budget deficit in a row.

Time expired.

Education and Training Reforms

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): Over the past few weeks, along with ministers Anna Bligh and Matt Foley, parliamentary secretary Joanne Miller, and members of the education and training reforms project team, I have been moving throughout Queensland consulting with the community on the government's latest Smart State initiative—education and training reforms for the future. These proposals represent the most important reform agenda of this term of the Beattie Labor government and are the most significant reforms of our education and training system in a generation.

The major focus of the 39 consultation forums being held across the state is on proposals outlined in a green paper which aim to make senior schooling more relevant to young people. The first proposal is an option to raise the school leaving age or participation age from 15 to either 16 or 17, with a proviso that young people in this age group are in full-time schooling or in training or at work, or a combination of these. The proposal is based on the belief that young people should be learning or earning up until at least 16 or 17.

Other proposals in the package include ways of making senior schooling more relevant, providing more individual assistance to students who are at risk of leaving school early, and making the senior certificate more relevant to students and employers. Currently there are around 10,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 17 who are not at school, not in any training and not at work. That is 10,000 reasons why it is important for us to pursue the policy initiatives outlined in this green paper.

An OECD report in 2000 stated that—

... all effective transition systems appear to have one thing in common: underlying them are societies that assume responsibility for young people's transition from education to work.

The proposed reforms will benefit all young people, but particularly those who are most at risk of being disconnected from the community. Ensuring that all young people are engaged in either earning or learning will give them a far better chance of successfully undertaking the transition from school to work.

Historic Motor Vehicle Registration

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.23 a.m.): I rise to inform all members of a matter I have raised with the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads and to seek members' support. Despite the government's drive to make Queensland the lowest tax state in Australia, historic motor vehicle enthusiasts pay far more than their interstate counterparts for registration of these historic vehicles. For example, the discrepancy between Queensland and Western Australia is very significant. These men and women are grateful for the opportunity to drive and display their vehicles at a concessional rate. They readily accept the limitations placed on their use but are also annoyed and very disappointed that they are paying so much more than is paid interstate for identical vehicles used for identical purposes.

The historic vehicle movement gives a considerable amount to the community, as well as providing a worthwhile hobby for its members. They readily give up their time to participate at charitable and other community events. They regularly provide transport for diggers in Anzac Day parades and take part in other celebratory parades and events. Practically everyone enjoys seeing them out and about at events, as evidenced by people waving from the roadside and the conversational approaches when the vehicles have stopped.

The insurance component of their registration is probably beyond the scope of my speech this morning, although there are discrepancies here also. However, the government can make a significant difference by reducing the registration fee and eliminating the traffic improvement fee. The latter is a particular imposition and strongly against the principle of user pays, as the conditions of concessional registration virtually prohibit the use of these vehicles at peak traffic times. It is double-dipping by this government in that each owner pays a fee for the car they use for daily transport.

There are many such vehicles registered in Queensland and I am amazed that the Department of Transport is not able to advise how many historic and vintage vehicles are registered to justify the rejection of this request. Accordingly, I ask all members to consider my request for support for a reduction in historic motor vehicle registration fees in this year's budget.

Metro Arts

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (10.25 a.m.): Along with the establishment of fantastic Brisbane arts facilities, such as the Brisbane Powerhouse and the Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts, I wish to bring to the attention of the House the increased support of independent theatre in Brisbane by Metro Arts. Metro Arts occupies a heritage listed building at 109 Edward Street in Brisbane's CBD.

From its inception in 1974, Metro Arts has played a vital, grassroots role as an incubation site for Queensland artists. Today I specifically want to draw the attention of the House to the Metro Arts 2002 Independent Theatre Program. The aims of the program are to service the needs of the independent theatre sector and to promote experimentation, innovation and growth in writing and performance.

Both the theatre and the studio space will be made available for each independent production. The venue spaces are offered at half price, each production is supported by a substantial promotional package, and Metro Arts will provide a booking service. The program is

open to groups and individuals who are unfunded or minimally funded for their projects, with Metro Arts as co-producer for each production. The companies involved with this first exciting pilot program include Dogs in the Roof, Women in Theatre, Trocadero, Chas Green and Co, Steve Martin and Co, Helen Cassidy and Georgina Symes, de Base Productions, the Real TV team and the Sons of Germaine Greer. The content will be diverse, the approaches will be creative and, most importantly, the people involved are passionate about their work for new audiences.

On 24 April this year, I was honoured to launch the first production of the Independent Theatre Program. Three Points of Contact, written by Sean Charles and directed by Linda Hassall, is currently running until 18 May. It boasts a sensational cast with a continuing theme of a lion on the loose in Brisbane. It is a great play by a very promising playwright. I strongly encourage all members of the House to view this work or one of the other works throughout 2002. I congratulate Metro Arts on its Independent Theatre Program. It is smart development for the 21st century.

Central Highlands Health Facility, Emerald

Mr JOHNSON (10.27 a.m.): I rise today to point out to the House the deplorable state of the management of the central highlands health facility in Emerald. Two weeks ago a public meeting was held at the gemfields in relation to the sister in charge, Sister Anne Payne, who has been suspended from duties. I have called on the minister's office twice to make absolutely certain that this lady is reinstated. She is the popular choice. It seems that there is a victimisation situation evolving between the central highlands health facility management and the gemfields clinic. This is a deplorable situation! This lady should be reinstated straightaway.

Mrs Edmond: Watch what happens with her.

Mr JOHNSON: I am watching, all right! I think the minister's people out there should be telling the truth, too. All of the people at the gemfields cannot be totally wrong. The total support for Anne Payne at that public meeting a couple of weeks ago proves how popular she is. If something has been hidden, the minister should tell us what the problem is because at this stage people are not accepting the statements coming from the minister's office. I am aware that an internal investigation is under way.

In relation to the Windorah clinic, Sister Anne Kidd has been off duty for some period of time as a result of sickness. A fully paid permanent staff member has been put in her place. Now that she has come back on duty, there will not be support staff for that position and there will not be a full-time appointment. I ask the minister: is this fair to those remote communities?

The Queensland Nurses Union has taken up the plight of a young lady who has been a trainee assistant nurse at the Emerald Hospital and has been told by Kerry Windsor that at the end of her training she will not have a job.

Time expired.

Proposed Wind Farm, Crows Nest

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (10.29 a.m.): The Crows Nest Shire Council, a shire partly in my electorate, is continuing to work with Stanwell Corporation to form a partnership to develop a wind farm in the shire. The potential for this project to progress to construction stage is looking very positive, with results from the wind monitoring activity in the district proving encouraging.

In August last year, three 50-metre towers on three sites at Crows Nest recorded average wind speeds of seven metres per second. This was just below the eight metre per second benchmark for a viable wind farm. However, the Crows Nest Council, the Wind Farm Working Group and I all firmly believe that this project has many advantages that would assure its future success.

Firstly, planning is under way to develop a state-of-the-art sustainable energy centre to be located at the wind farm. The interpretive centre will have a strong education focus and promote sustainable and environmentally sensitive energy practice. Strong linkages have been created, with schools and tertiary institutions in south-east Queensland confirming that regular visits to the centre will be integrated into their curriculums.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for private members' statements has expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Speaker's Chauffeur, Assistance to Alleged Criminals**

Mr HORAN (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Premier to police allegations that two suspected armed robbers, one of whom was subsequently charged with murder and the other as an accomplice, were assisted through the use of the Speaker's chauffeur-driven limousine and allegedly helped to evade police by speeding through red lights. I refer also to his announcement in the media on 22 April of his department's investigation of the incident, and I ask: who conducted his departmental inquiry and what were their findings?

Mr BEATTIE: Let me thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for his question. I am not quite sure that that is exactly what I said, but let me go through this.

As members may be aware, this matter is the subject of an ongoing police investigation. However, I am informed that Mr Speaker was neither in attendance at his electorate office nor privy to the actions taking place at the time this matter occurred. I am further informed that the release of any additional background information could affect both the current police investigation and the court case involving the arrest of two individuals, the names of whom I do not think I should mention in the House.

Furthermore, this incident relates also to a New South Wales police operation and it is therefore inappropriate for the release of any information regarding the investigation at this time. Therefore, it is probably unwise for me to comment any further on it other than to simply say this: any electorate office tries to provide whatever assistance it can.

Mr Hobbs: But not a getaway car.

Mr BEATTIE: We can be very clever about this or we can deal with it in an open way. I have already indicated that there are matters before the court. I do not think anybody—

Mr Horan: Not the use of a car.

Mr BEATTIE: Obviously, I will not be allowed, with the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Johnson: Speeding through red lights.

Mr Mackenroth: You don't know that's true.

Mr BEATTIE: They do not know whether any of that is true. They are just making wild allegations. These matters are before the court. They have no idea whether or not that is true. Honestly, if it were not for the *Courier-Mail*, we would not have a question time. The *Courier-Mail* is opposition members first, second and third reference point. They should pay the *Courier-Mail* a fee, because without it they would be speechless.

Mr Speaker, I have absolute faith in your integrity and in you as a person. I know that you would not behave inappropriately at any time or place. Mr Speaker, if it is a matter of your integrity, I stand by you.

Teachers, Redundancy Packages

Mr HORAN: I refer the Premier to his plan to spend \$10 million on allowing the most uninterested, unmotivated and ineffective teachers to collect a \$50,000 bonus to start a new life, and I ask: is it not a fact that many of these teachers were going to leave the profession, anyway? How will he stop this from being a wasteful extravagance for teachers already planning to leave the education system? Does his government now have a policy to pay a bonus to any other underperformers on the public payroll, whatever departments they might come from?

Mr BEATTIE: Let us be very open and clear about this: this is not just a case of somebody putting up their hand and wanting to go. There has been a consultancy appointed and principals will be consulted about the people who will be offered these opportunities.

Let us get to the core of this issue: this is about delivering the Smart State. What the Education Minister, my government and I want is the best for our children. I make no apology for that. Education and the Smart State are the top priorities for this government. Yes, in consultation with principals and the independent consultancy we have appointed, we will work through a number of opportunities for people to retire from the service. We have very good teachers.

Ms Bligh: Some of the best in the country.

Mr BEATTIE: We have some of the best teachers not only in Australia but the world. I stand by that. But we know also that teaching is a very demanding and tough profession. I make no

apology for wanting the best for our children—absolutely none at all. Is the premise of the Leader of the Opposition's question right? No, it is not. It is not a case of somebody wanting to go putting up their hand. No, it is not a case of people close to retiring taking a payment to ease themselves into retirement.

Mr Horan: What is it?

Mr BEATTIE: I have been through it. The answer is no, that is not how it will work. The Cabinet Budget Review Committee made certain when this was approved that it would be done in such a way as to enhance our education system. When talking about education—

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Broadwater, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from the Pullenvale State School in the electorate of Moggill.

Traveland Collapse; Travel Compensation Fund

Mrs CROFT: I refer the Premier to the collapse of Ansett and its subsidiary Traveland. Thousands of travellers who made claims on the Travel Compensation Fund as a result of the collapse of the Traveland agency were faced with being paid only 40c in the dollar because of the huge demands on the fund. I ask: what is the government doing to help these people?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. Coming from the tourism area of the Gold Coast, she knows the importance of this program and what we have been doing.

The collapse of Traveland has had a devastating effect on the tourism industry. By December, the Travel Compensation Fund had received claims totalling about \$16 million. These claims were from people who had booked and paid for travel through a Traveland agency owned by Ansett but which they lost in the collapse. With insufficient reserves, the fund could pay them only 40c in the dollar. The fund's trust deed provides for the imposition of levies on travel agents to address such shortfalls, but with the size of the collapse this could cripple an already depressed industry. The number of claims is 10 times the normal level. Members can understand the risk to the state's tourism reputation, which is why we supported it.

The federal government and the states agreed that if the federal government contributed \$5 million the states would match that \$5 million, with each making donations according to their size. In other words, the \$10 million top-up between the Commonwealth and the states would solve the funding shortfall. Our contribution was set at \$940,000. I am pleased to announce that the Cabinet Budget Review Committee has approved that we should make that contribution to the Travel Compensation Fund to help these people. As I said, our contribution, because it was based on size, was \$940,000.

Tourism is an important industry. In fact, it is our second biggest industry, employing 150,000 people. It is important that we do everything we can to help the industry recover from the effects of the 11 September attack on the United States. We have provided what we believe is appropriate assistance. We did that because we wanted to protect the industry and ensure that it continues to grow.

While I am talking about tourism and people who make it work, I wish to pay tribute to Black and White Cabs, because often the first face a tourist visiting here sees is that of the driver of a Black and White or Yellow cab. Black and White Cabs has taken a smart approach to doing business by installing high-technology equipment to improve services. Its new GPS satellite system and state-of-the-art telephone system mean that callers are instantly recognised and the closest cab is instantly dispatched.

On 24 April, I had the privilege of opening the company's new and expanded headquarters at Brisbane airport. The driver training facility at the new headquarters is one of the best equipped in Australia. It is a smart headquarters in a Smart State. In a competitive world, to get ahead and to stay afloat we need to be thinking smarter all the time. It is great to see that the taxi industry in general in Queensland is striving to improve the overall quality of service. Black and White now runs 700 cabs and has built its new headquarters to house support staff, the number of which has doubled from 60 to 120. During my visit I also unveiled a new Black and White Cabs livery. Cabs will help the tourism industry on the Gold Coast as well as in Brisbane.

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board; Mr B. Bentley

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the Minister for Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading to her statement in this House on 9 April that Mr Bob Bentley 'was on the short list' for appointment to the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board and that 'the panel selected five members and compiled a reserve list'. The minister went on to definitively state that 'there is a reserve list'. I refer also to recent statements by original selection panel members Mr Craig Black and Mr Chris Sourris on 1 May that 'although Mr Bob Bentley had been interviewed by the first selection panel, he was not selected, either as a member of the board or on any reserve list by the first selection panel, and the first selection panel did not sign off on any reserve list'. Now that the minister has been caught red-handed fabricating the course of events relating to the appointment of Mr Bentley and has blatantly misled this House, will she resign?

Mrs ROSE: I will answer: no.

Anzac Day

Mr PEARCE: I direct a question to the Premier. This year's Anzac Day celebrations were again well attended. Could the Premier inform the House as to what efforts have been made by this government to ensure that the significance of this day is remembered by all?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Fitzroy for the question. As a Vietnam veteran, he would understand the importance of this day, and I thank him very much for that. On 22 April, the Education Minister, Anna Bligh, and I launched the Premier's Battle for Australia Commemorative Essay Competition during a visit to the Moranbah State High School. This competition recognises a special event in Queensland and Australia's proud military history. We have already been greatly encouraged by reports of considerable early interest in the state wide competition for all secondary school students.

The competition honours the 60th anniversary of the Battle for Australia. All secondary school students are eligible to submit a 1,000-word written response focusing on wartime recollections and reflections of the experience of Queenslanders during the Battle for Australia in 1942. Students could talk to someone such as a family member or neighbour who can reminisce about what it was like to live through such a tumultuous period in our history.

On 19 February 1942—and it is worth reminding people of this—mainland Australia came under attack for the first time. That was the day Japanese forces began their series of air attacks on northern Australia, predominantly on Darwin. At two minutes to 10 a.m., the first Japanese bombs hit Darwin. All in all, more than 680 bombs were dropped on northern Australia on that day. A lot of people do not know that. That is more than twice the number of bombs dropped on Pearl Harbour. In May 1942, the Japanese seemed unstoppable in the Pacific and were planning to invade Port Moresby, launch a massive air raid on Townsville and subsequently isolate Australia from our ally the United States of America. Attacks on Queensland also included bombing raids on Horn Island and Mossman between March and July 1942.

The Premier's Battle for Australia Commemorative Essay Competition will highlight the bravery and sacrifices of allied soldiers and ordinary Queenslanders. Entries for the Premier's Battle for Australia Commemorative Essay Competition will close on Friday, 2 August 2002. Categories will cover state and non-state schools and will include cash prizes to winning students and money for their schools for a memorial space. Competition winners will be announced in September during celebrations to mark the Battle for Australia.

I also use this occasion to offer a suggestion to the Brisbane City Council to further enhance the Anzac Day dawn service, which I attended. The King George Square and Wickham Terrace car parks could be open free of charge between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. on Anzac morning for the thousands and thousands of dawn service parade attendees. The council might also consider doing the same for the Anzac parade later in the day. This year's dawn service was again packed, but it would be easier for ageing veterans, attendees and especially mums and dads and their children if nearby public parking was accessible.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who joined in this year's Anzac Day events for keeping alive that spirit which unites us like no other as a nation. I also urge all members to chase up the schools in their electorates to be part of this special competition.

Public Liability Insurance

Mrs PRATT: I direct a question to the Treasurer. The government is to be commended for addressing the public liability insurance issue, which threatens many non-profit organisations. The Treasurer would be aware that 129 show societies are currently collectively represented by the Queensland Agricultural Society. Will the government accept its submission on behalf of the 129 show societies, or will each of the show societies be required to put forward their own submission?

Mr MACKENROTH: We would accept one submission from the show societies with no problems at all.

National Party Economic Policies

Mr SULLIVAN: I ask the Treasurer: is he aware whether the National Party of Australia, Queensland branch, has any new or original economic policies?

Mr MACKENROTH: I have been listening to the Leader of the Opposition. This morning I heard him talking about the budget. Last night after I heard him talking about our budget, I thought I would have a look at the National Party web site to see whether it has any original ideas which we could use. Original ideas—no! But what I did find were the policies released by the leader of the Queensland Nationals, Rob Borbidge. I thought that I may have gone to an old web site, or perhaps the National Party has not bothered to update the site for a long time. But apparently the party does update it, because amongst its members is one Raymond Gordon Hopper. We assume that Rob Borbidge's policies—

Mr Beattie: Is Rob still a National Party member?

Mr MACKENROTH: Maybe he is. I read Ray Hopper's interests. They include rodeos, horse training, shooting, farming and family. Family, of course, is last. What great National Party stock—rodeos and shooting! I went a bit further into the web site—

Mr Johnson: What about the rest of it?

Mr MACKENROTH: We will get to the rest of it; the member should not worry. Then I get to the party's ad. The Leader of the Liberal Party may not have seen this, but the National Party of Australia has called for expressions of interest from people wishing to stand for parliament and serve Queensland in the next National Party-led coalition government.

As for originality, I think this absolutely takes the cake. The banner on the National Party's web site contains a range of coloured photographs. All but one were taken from the Queensland government's web site. All the photos are the same, except for one, which depicts indigenous art, which obviously the National Party would not put on its web site. It changed that around. The government web site says that the government—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: The Leader of the Opposition is so bad that he cannot even get his own heading.

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board; Mr B. Bentley

Mr HOBBS: My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism and Racing. Good morning, Minister. I refer to the minister's appointment of a second selection panel, chaired by one of her own departmental officers, to select a chairman for the QTRB after the withdrawal of Mrs Nerolie Withnall. Why did the minister not go back to the first independent selection panel to select a replacement for Mrs Withnall? Was it because the minister had been advised and therefore was aware that it had not short-listed her preferred candidate, Mr Bob Bentley, for any position on the QTRB?

Mrs ROSE: I thank the honourable member for his question—and good morning to you, member for Warrego. I am very happy to go through this whole process all over again. I have absolutely nothing to hide. The second selection panel was established because one of the members of the first selection panel had gone overseas. I have been through that and I am happy to go through the whole process again.

The new Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board was established to take the racing industry in Queensland into the future. It is a great industry. It is our fourth largest industry. It employs 24,000 Queenslanders. It is worth something like \$700 million to the Queensland economy every year. It is a great industry. It needed a professional control body to make those

really tough decisions and to meet the challenges it will face over the next few years. We needed a highly professional control body for racing.

We engaged the independent, internationally recognised and reputable recruitment agency TMP Worldwide. It called for applications. Over 200 applications were received. It then short-listed that 200 to 15. It referred the 15 to the selection panel, which was an industry majority panel of two racing industry appointments and one appointment made by me. That selection panel took that short list of 15 names. It then came up with eight. I have already tabled the documentation which shows Bob Bentley on the list. I have already tabled that. That has already been done. I did that weeks ago.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. The selection panel has made a statement that it is not true. The minister is misleading the parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs ROSE: All of that documentation has been tabled. The panel then had probity checks and criminal checking carried out on the eight. The panel then came back with a list of five. One of the five withdrew and one of the three remaining on the list was appointed. It is very simple. The panel picked eight. From the eight, after the probity checking and criminal checks, it then picked five. One from the five withdrew. It then selected one of the three reserves. It is very simple. The member can work it out with his fingers. The panel picked eight. From the eight, five went to the board. One of those withdrew. It then took one from the three that were left. It is very simple mathematics.

Higher Education

Mr PITT: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. The federal government recently released a discussion paper on higher education in Australia. What will it mean for Queensland and in particular Queensland regional universities?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. Like other members here, he knows the value of the regional campuses of universities in his own area. The new federal education minister, Brendan Nelson, has released a report called *Higher education at the crossroads*. It is now the subject of public consultation. I think it is an important report and I urge all members of the parliament to get their hands on it. I am happy to provide it.

There are a number of questions about the report. First of all, what is in this report? Members will not find any surprises in it. What members will find in this report are the same old hoary chestnuts they have found with the Liberal Party over the last 20 years about higher education in this country. It is clear from reading this document that the Liberal Party of Australia has never forgiven Gough Whitlam for giving ordinary Australians a chance to participate in higher education. There are still significant elements of the Liberal Party who believe that this is the domain of the elite and that it is their business to restrict it further.

What are some of the ideas? They are levying higher fees for undergraduate students, reducing the number of student places available, introducing vouchers, restricting the number of universities that are eligible for public subsidies and extending public subsidies to private providers, and transferring funding from public universities to private universities. It is the same old Liberal Party stuff.

Who has been given the job of overseeing this process? It will be overseen by a group of 22 people, all of whom have a very significant interest in higher education. While I am very pleased to see Queensland well represented by John Hay from the University of Queensland and Dennis Gibson from QUT, I, like many other ministers for education, am disturbed to see that of the 22 there is only one regional university represented, that is, the University of Ballarat. While I do not know much about the University of Ballarat—I am sure it does a good job—from a Queensland perspective one could not say it has much to do with remoteness.

Why are regional issues important in Queensland? Just under 40 per cent of all Queensland higher education students are enrolled at a regional campus or a regional institution. Why are regional universities important? Firstly, they give a chance to kids who would otherwise not have one. Whether people are on the Gold Coast, in Cairns or in central Queensland, that opportunity is being realised for many young people. Importantly, those regional campuses are economic drivers in their regions. They should not be overlooked.

Mr Lucas: James Cook is the best tropical research university in the world.

Ms BLIGH: That is right. On that note, one of the proposals in the review is that resources be taken from existing universities and poured into two that the minister picks to become so-called world-class universities, at the expense of the other 36. Do I think that a remote Queensland university is going to be one of the two? While I would love to see it happen, I doubt it. I very much think that the usual southern triangle will get the guernsey. What is important in this review is not only what is there but what is not there. What is not there is any financial relief for families.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Robina, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from the Undurba State School in the electorate of Murrumba.

Tree Clearing, Compensation

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier would be aware that at a ministerial council meeting on 22 March this year the Queensland government secured an additional \$560 million in GST revenue for this year's state budget—more than five times the amount of money the Premier has been asking for to put an end to excessive tree clearing in this state. Will he now confirm that in this year's budget he will compensate landowners to put an end to his government's rampant tree clearing policy that has given approval for an area of land seven times the size of Brisbane city to be levelled to the ground each year?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Merrimac. Is it Merrimac?

Mr SPEAKER: No. It is Robina.

Mr BEATTIE: I am sorry. I was just reading the Liberal Party web site, and it says that he is the member for Merrimac. If we cannot rely on the Liberal Party web site, what can we rely on? Let the record show that I have been corrected. I should not have listened to the Liberal Party. I table that for the information of the House. It is disgraceful. Bob, give them a call, will you? Tell them you have changed electorates.

All we have got is our guaranteed amount. That is what we got. We got no extra money; we got our guaranteed amount. Let us be really clear about this. There is no extra \$500 million or whatever the member said. It is only our guaranteed amount.

Let us talk about the GST. One of the things the Howard government has managed to do quite successfully but deceitfully is give the impression that the states, particularly Queensland, are better off from GST revenue. That is not true. We have not yet received any growth in terms of our revenue out of the GST—not yet. Maybe we will one day, but we have not yet.

Yes, this year's budget will be a tough budget, but we will have the usual sensible balance that goes into the hard work my government has demonstrated during the last four budgets. This will be our fifth. We are committed to sound economic principles and we will work very hard to deliver that. This year will be tough.

As the member knows, the GST abolished a number of state taxes. Because Queensland is a low-taxing state, we were disadvantaged. Those members who followed this debate will recall that when David Hamill was Treasurer he and I went to the meeting of the other premiers with the Prime Minister and the Treasurer and argued very strongly that what the Howard government set out to do was rip us off for a longer period of time. We managed to remove one of those outyears to get our revenue, but in the early years we were disadvantaged. So we have not got any growth from GST revenue at all. All we have is the guaranteed amount.

Mr Mackenroth: And they took \$25 million off us.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right; they took \$25 million off us in relation to petrol. So we are behind. I say to Queenslanders: do not be hoodwinked by this. We are not ahead as a result of the GST—not ahead at all. In fact, as the Treasurer just reminded me, we are approximately \$25 million behind as a result of the rip-off from petrol. That is what has happened. Maybe in future years there will be some growth, but that depends on what happens with special purpose payments. They have a significant impact in terms of funding education and health. There has been no guarantee in relation to maintaining real value for special purpose payments. We have fought very hard to get a guarantee on that. That has not been given, but we will fight to maintain them in real value.

Brothels

Mr MICKEL: I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to the Beattie government's policy of better regulating the brothel industry, and I ask: has the policy resulted in the closure on average of one illegal brothel a week? Is the minister aware of any new tactic used by politicians to dissuade potential clients from entering brothels?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the honourable member for Logan for the question.

Mr Johnson: Is that your Kalkadoon tie?

Mr McGRADY: No, it is a university tie actually. I again thank the honourable member for Logan for the question. I can confirm the first part of his question. Yes, we are closing down these illegal establishments at the rate of one per week. No, there is not a new tactic to use politicians to scare off clients from these establishments. But, yes, there is one federal member—in fact, a National Party federal member—threatening to use a camera at a brothel. Despite the front-page coverage of Mackay's *Daily Mercury*—which I just happen to have with me, because it contains a photograph of Ms De-Anne Kelly; she secured this wonderful photograph of her with a camera in hand—once again Ms De-Anne Kelly has done a backflip, saying that she never intended to use the photographs. To quote her words—

I'll be down there with my torch and candle ... and camera.

That is what she told the Mackay *Daily Mercury* on 12 April. All this was under the headline 'MP vows to photograph brothel patrons'.

Then on page 3 of the same paper on 23 April she is reported to have told the Supreme Court that it was never her intention to use the photographs. I am confused. The people of Mackay will no doubt be confused. One minute, yes, she wants a front-page picture moralising about her view, but then she does a backflip and, no, she never intended actually doing anything with them.

Mr Livingstone: She might have recognised some of them.

Mr McGRADY: I do not accept that interjection. This lady publicly attacks this government for lack of consultation, yet at two elections in this state we went to the people of Queensland and advocated our policy.

Time expired.

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board

Mr SEENEY: I refer the Minister for Racing to her statement in this parliament of 18 April, and I quote her words—

There has not ... been any suggestion about any files or documents relating to the candidates for the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board positions disappearing or whatever.

I also refer to the Attorney-General's admission the same day that an internal investigation was instigated on 28 March—some three weeks prior to that—into how legal advice prepared for her department may have been passed into public hands. I ask: now that the minister has had two weeks to refresh her memory, could she advise on what date she learnt that these documents may have been stolen or interfered with? Can she advise the House what action she took?

Mrs ROSE: I thank the member for the question. That matter is being investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Public Housing

Mr PURCELL: I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to the meeting of federal, state and territory ministers for housing held in Sydney on 19 April, and I ask: can the minister outline the key outcomes of that meeting?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for his question. Any members interested in this issue on this side, especially the member for Bulimba, would know that over the last four years we have been talking in this place about the loss of some \$90 million from the last Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. The bad news is that that trend will continue from Canberra. The good news is that we are going to have a Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement of some sort next year. But, as I say, the bad news is that we are going to lose another \$109 million. The reality is that that is going to be felt in every member's electorate in this place—from the Torres Strait, where there is an acute housing shortage at the moment, to far

western Queensland, where almost on a weekly basis councils are writing to me asking for funds for very worthy projects to keep older citizens in that part of the world.

There was some glimmer of hope that we are getting through to Canberra, because it was not all bad news. There was some \$2.5 million put on the table for Queensland for Aboriginal housing, and honourable members would be aware of the \$173 million five-year program in place in the 34 DOGIT communities. That \$2.5 million is a teaspoon in the sea of that problem, but the reality is that it is a start, because there has been no growth in funding for Aboriginal housing in the last decade—not one dollar. Queensland taxpayers are now putting their hands in their pockets for twice the amount that Canberra is. That is clearly an unsustainable situation.

I notice that there has been one federal member, Mr Neville from Gladstone, who has taken up the cudgel and blames the state government for not spending enough on housing. I have never seen such hypocrisy in all my life, because the chickens have come home to roost for him. The state is not in a position to provide emergency housing in that part of the world like it was before. He is clinging to some rambling letter to the editor in the *Gladstone Observer* in which he indicates that it is the state's fault.

Since 1946 the Commonwealth has been responsible for housing. He makes the excuse that there is no longer a Housing Department in Canberra. That is a lot of claptrap as far as I am concerned. The responsibility for housing rests solely with the federal government and the states were always meant to top that up. We are now seeing that door being closed and the approach of rent assistance being favoured. Rent assistance is all very well for those who can find a house at affordable rents. However, we all know that of the 93,000 houses built for rental in Australia in the last decade, less than 10,000 are under the \$150 a week mark. What we are seeing in Gladstone—in Mr Neville's own backyard—is an example of what will happen in the future.

Nixon Family; Shelburne Station

Ms LEE LONG: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines. Now that court proceedings have been concluded I can speak in relation to state government attempts to evict the Nixon family from Shelburne Station on Cape York Peninsula. When proceedings were before the court, Justice Muir said it was arguable that any chance the Nixons had of being heard during negotiations with the state government was illusory. I ask: will his department now enter open and honest negotiations with the Nixons to resolve this issue?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question as it provides an opportunity to place on record the history of this matter so that all members are aware of what actually happened before the courts a couple of weeks ago. The Supreme Court reserved its decision in relation to the Shelburne proceedings, so it is still inappropriate to comment about matters still before the court; but eviction proceedings are a normal procedure in dealing with people occupying state land without authority. Due process has been followed in all dealings with these matters. This government and previous governments have tried to work through all the issues with the former lessee, Mrs Nixon, and will continue to do so to determine the final use of the area in the interests of all Queenslanders to preserve the area's unique natural and cultural values.

Shelburne has been a priority acquisition for conservation for over 25 years. It was well known on the cape that the government would not renew the lease upon expiry. The pastoral lease for Shelburne was held solely in the name of Mrs Eileen Nixon and expired in July 1997. The then Borbidge government extended the lease for one year to allow negotiations to continue over acquisition by the state for conservation purposes. This pastoral lease covered approximately half of the whole property with the balance being a permit to occupy, an annually renewable permit, in the name of Eileen and Dallas Nixon. Two further extensions were granted in 1998 and 1999 to allow further negotiations to continue.

Despite a generous ex gratia payment offer and extensive discussions, agreement was unable to be reached with the former lessee for acquisition and the lease then lapsed, as did the occupational licence. The matters before the court a couple of weeks ago—an application by the Crown for a summary judgment—are not the final step in this process. The court has found that it should go to full trial in order that the arguments to be pursued by the Nixons can be fully ventilated before a full court hearing. In my view, that does not reflect on the actions taken by my department in relation to this matter. Of course, we will now proceed to that court. As to when that hearing will occur, I am advised that the date has not yet been fixed. In the interim, if the Nixons wish to reopen discussions with the department, they are of course welcome to do so. We do not

want this matter extended further than it needs to be, but the reality is this: the lease has expired. It has been expired now for some time. It is now classified as USL but, as I said, if the Nixons wish to continue discussions we are happy to do so.

Positive Parenting Program

Ms BARRY: My question, directed to the Minister for Health, is a confession as well as a question. My confession is that I have read the *Courier-Mail* and I did so because a few weeks ago an article referred to the PPP parenting support program, a program that is of great interest to me as a parent and to many parents in my electorate. Will the minister advise what Queensland Health is doing in relation to this matter?

Mrs EDMOND: I thank the member for Aspley for her question and her ongoing interest in and support for this very important issue. The Beattie government has recognised the value of these initiatives and to date has invested some \$10.5 million in a range of parenting support programs, with the Positive Parenting Program, PPP, being the most significant component of this carefully structured package. PPP is focused on parents of children aged 18 months to eight years of age, where the evidence supporting the program is strongest. Once trained and accredited, child health staff work with parents to develop a range of parenting skills which help parents recognise and respond to common behavioural problems and assist in building positive relationships with their children.

Like the member for Aspley, I wish it had been around when my children were that age, though I have to pay credit to my children that they are all wonderful, well adjusted kids. This program has been exceptionally well received by parents, and from December 1998 to December 2001 1,301 group programs were completed involving more than 10,880 parents right across the state. In addition, an indigenous PPP video aimed at providing culturally appropriate parenting assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be trialled this year. There are also focus programs for children with more difficult and extended behavioural problems. I know that these programs are valued by the parents.

I have spoken to many of the participants, and they speak of getting back a life, of saving their marriages, and more. It is really quite heart-rending when one sits and listens to them. I am also pleased to advise that PPP services are available in a variety of formats, including groups or individual sessions and as phone consultations for people in rural areas and self-help programs, to enable Queenslanders right across the state to gain the benefits of this very worthwhile program. I am pleased that the members of the media often raise the need for parenting support, but I wish that they could also inform their readers of the availability of these accredited programs through child health centres free of charge right across the state.

Drug Users Network Education and Support; Public Liability Insurance

Miss SIMPSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer to groups such as the Gold Coast Drug Users Network Education and Support program, DUNES, which provides a government-funded service and will close its doors at 5 p.m. today, despite the minister's promise in February this year to provide a contingency plan to keep it open. Given that DUNES services 1,200 clients a month not only with a needle distribution and collection service but also counselling services to help break the drug cycle, how does the minister intend to stop the 80 per cent needle return that this program collects ending up on the beaches and streets of the Gold Coast? Given that this service represents the tip of the iceberg of non-government organisations which provide public health services under contract to Queensland Health and which are now facing closure due to a lack of affordable insurance coverage, what will the minister do to provide assistance for gap insurance cover to address these immediate problems for such groups?

Mrs EDMOND: I welcome the member's return from wherever she has been. The member has certainly not been visible in the last several months and obviously has not read media reports in recent times about public liability insurance and what the government is doing about it. Of course, we have encouraged non-government organisations, whether they be from health or other areas, to take advantage of the group insurance possibilities through the state government as a whole-of-government initiative. I am sorry that the member was not aware of that program, but we have urged all of our organisations to take advantage of it, even if we have not urged the National Party.

I refer back to the DUNES example, because its insurance fell due in February this year. After my intervention and the fact that I said that, before I knew we would have a state wide scheme available, I would look at bundling all of the non-government organisations in health that receive funding from health into one group and go to whichever insurance company would give us the best deal, I was then advised that DUNES had been given a guarantee of continuing cover at the same rate. It has now emerged that it would no longer be covered and that the cost of its cover was extortionate—\$50,000 a year, up from the \$1,200 a year figure I was advised of earlier in the year.

While Queensland Health has been trying to help DUNES arrange short-term insurance cover, until the state government establishes a group purchase scheme for non-profit organisations later in the year, that will not be possible. But Queensland Health currently funds DUNES to the tune of \$291,000 a year to provide a service which is constantly under attack by some of the member's colleagues on the Gold Coast. It would be impossible for Queensland Health to pick up these increases in insurance for non-government health organisations around the state. We have estimated that that would represent \$30 million that would have to come out of health services across the state.

In terms of the provision and the return of clean needles, DUNES shares a building with another Queensland Health facility which is approved to provide clean needles. We will be looking at doing that in the shorter term. Of course, needle users are encouraged constantly to return needles in a safe way. That can be in the approved containers handed out by the various needle availability programs around the state or it can be in any safe, solid container with a lid, such as a strong milk bottle, a juice bottle, et cetera. If users put needles in such containers, they can then be placed appropriately at any health service or any other needle availability program. I am encouraged to believe that such facilities regularly get very big returns—more than 90 per cent—and that that will continue to happen.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Whitsunday, I welcome to the public gallery a second group from the Undurba State School in the electorate of Murrumba.

Marine Stingers

Ms JARRATT: I direct a question to the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. We have in recent weeks had the double tragedy of two tourists dying from the effects of marine stingers and many others being admitted to hospital. I ask: can the minister outline to the House what the government is doing to address the issue?

Mrs ROSE: I thank the member for Whitsunday for the question. This afternoon Tourism Queensland is bringing together agencies from across the government to Tourism Queensland House to address the irukandji issue. The Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tourism Queensland, Queensland Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department of Innovation and Information Economy, Sports and Recreation Queensland, and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority will be involved. The meeting will consider issues such as public awareness and education, research and development and physical barriers.

This summit is the first step towards developing a more detailed action plan. That process will involve a wider representation of stakeholders and stinger experts and researchers in the development of the action plan. We have asked that James Cook University brief CRC Reef Deputy CEO David Williams on the irukandji issue so that he can, in turn, brief today's summit. Another presentation on the medical aspects of marine stingers will be made by Dr Peter Pereira, the Director of Emergency Medicine at Cairns Hospital.

This year's stinger season has been much more severe than it has been in previous years. The two deaths that have resulted from irukandji syndrome are tragic. There is an obvious need for research funding. Premier Beattie has written to the Prime Minister asking for federal government support. Treasurer Terry Mackenroth has also contacted the Commonwealth.

The deaths highlight the need for tourists to heed safety warnings on beaches. Marine safety and stinger warnings are included in the national visitors safety program that I launched at the Tourism Futures Conference at Couran Cove on South Stradbroke Island recently. Stinger warnings are included in a pamphlet to be distributed on planes, through hotels, on tourist buses and by other tourism operators. The brochure warns visitors to be particularly careful of marine stingers in the coastal waters of northern Australia. Marine safety is also covered in the in-flight

video, which forms part of the safety program. It will be screened on incoming flights to Australia. Already, 17 airlines have agreed to show the video. The program also includes an awareness campaign to ensure operators are aware of their obligations and their responsibilities to inform tourists on safety matters.

Gold Coast Convention Centre

Mr BELL: My question is directed to the Honourable the Premier. I believe that it is a question that he will be happy to field. I refer the Premier to the Gold Coast Convention Centre where site works are now well under way. Incidentally, those site works indicate that a small part of the site is actually within the electorate of Surfers Paradise. I ask my question in two parts. Is work on the convention centre proceeding on time and according to schedule? Is there some place where workers hoping to obtain jobs in the completed facility can record their interest now?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. In fact, the last time I saw him we were opening the refurbishment of the Gold Coast Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club—a \$1.5 million extension. In fact, they had converted a toilet into a clubhouse, which I have to say is a big improvement. I was delighted to be there to officially open it.

In general terms—I do not have the full details in front me—work on the Gold Coast Convention Centre is going ahead. A number of projects are happening. Earthworks started on the \$118 million Gold Coast Convention Centre on 11 February. The project is due for completion in April 2004. The \$118 million budget includes both state government and private sector contributions. If we add to that the work on the casino, that brings the project to a total of \$200 million. It is big project.

As the member will remember, I was there for the sod turning, as it is called. As I understand it, in broad terms, the project is on time. In terms of people who can access jobs on the project, that is obviously a matter for the contractors themselves, but the Department of State Development and the Department of Public Works have been working on it on behalf of the government.

I should make the point that I think that that project will be an exciting opportunity for the Gold Coast. As I have said on many occasions—and the honourable member for Surfers Paradise will recall this at the sod turning exercise that I performed on the Gold Coast—it is extraordinary that the state's second largest city, the Gold Coast, has not had a convention centre before. It is long overdue. As the member knows, in many senses it is one of the major tourism attractors to this state. Therefore, we need facilities to go with it.

The other thing that I have indicated publicly—and we are working on this at the moment—is the need to coordinate conventions between the various convention destinations in the state. Brisbane has been a great success. If I recall correctly, the last time the parliament met I referred to the success of the Brisbane Convention Centre. The Gold Coast has been a success, as have Cairns and Townsville. The list goes on. We need to ensure that if a convention cannot come to Brisbane, it goes to the Gold Coast, and vice versa. There will be times when forward bookings will make it difficult for conventions to go to one or other of those locations. We need to have that coordination. We also need to link into Cairns and Townsville. The government is working on that coordination.

We should not miss any opportunity, because as I have said in the past—and I will be saying this today in my speech at the Tourism Council—conventions are a key driver of jobs in the tourism industry, as are events. That is why we are behind the PGA golf tournament, which we will be pursuing with Jeff Kennett a little later today. At my lunchtime speech today I will talk about conventions and what they mean for jobs and how important that coordination is. I think that I have answered the member's question.

Scholarships, Indigenous Queenslanders

Ms MOLLOY: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the awarding of state government scholarships to young indigenous Queenslanders. I ask: can the minister please advise the House of the details of the scholarships?

Mr BREDHAUER: I thank the honourable member for the question and for her support for this important issue. On Wednesday, 10 April this state government launched its response to the Fitzgerald Cape York Justice Study, which is a landmark piece of policy for this government in

trying to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in Cape York but throughout Queensland. At that time there was some comment about the need for the government not to focus on only those issues in relation to alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence and other issues but also to provide positive opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Just two days later—on Friday, 12 April—I was very pleased to actually participate in the awarding of scholarships under the state government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education to employment scheme, which is designed to encourage young people to complete secondary education and thus job training opportunities. Essentially, the scheme involves various state government departments providing financial support of \$5,000 over three years for selected students in years 10, 11 and 12 along with work experience, vacation employment and event entry into a traineeship, apprenticeship, cadetship or higher education. Each student has a mentor to guide and support them during the final three years of their schooling.

In 1998 as minister I initiated this program with the Department of Main Roads. At that time, three scholarships were awarded. This year, we awarded a total of 24 scholarships to young indigenous Queenslanders: three with the Department of Main Roads, six with Queensland Transport, four with the Department of Primary Industries and Rural Communities, four with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, two with the Department of Public Works, and five with the Department of Emergency Services.

I am very pleased that over the four years since this program started a total of 46 young indigenous people have received scholarships under the program. This year, successful students were chosen from Thursday Island, Bamaga, Cape York, Mossman, Cairns, Ingham, Townsville, Mount Isa, Palm Island, Moranbah, Bundaberg, Roma, the north coast and, of course, from around the Brisbane region. We also had representation from the three original Main Roads scholarship recipients from 1999. One is a student from TI who is studying communication studies at Griffith University and the other two have undertaken traineeships.

This government is determined to provide positive opportunities for education and employment for young indigenous Queenslanders. I thank the Ministers for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Mines, Public Works and Housing, and Emergency Services for their support. I believe that this program will continue to grow. It provides a very positive role model for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in our high schools. It is demonstrating its effectiveness in the fact that those students are now attending university and undertaking traineeships.

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

PRIVILEGE

Labor Party Web Site

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I bring to the attention of the House the web site on the Labor Party's Queensland policies. It is good reading from a minister who specialises in deficits. It is all a deficit—it is totally blank!

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (11.31 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr McGrady, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (11.32 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

All members will be aware of the increasing community attention focusing on the issue of 'hooning' or illegal motoring activities, as it can more accurately be described. Predominantly, these hooning activities involve groups of people racing their vehicles in speed 'drag' contests or being involved in 'burnout' displays. This dangerous behaviour is placing at risk the safety of road users throughout Queensland. Indeed, the potential for tragedy can never be underestimated when it comes to illegal drag racing. It presents real risks to legitimate and lawful road users and to the general public, not to mention the motorists and their passengers.

Moreover, the noise associated with this behaviour can only be described as disruptive and annoying. Ultimately, it is a frustration to families attempting to enjoy the peace and quiet of their homes. Having spent an evening at the esplanade at Mooloolaba during CHOGM earlier this year, I know only too well that we can never discount the undue noise aspect in relation to this issue. What I observed that night hardened my resolve to develop tough but fair measures to address this issue. Put simply, the Beattie government will not tolerate the behaviour of those few who choose to risk the lives of the many. Through the passage of the bill that I am introducing today, this government will provide the courts and police with sufficient and balanced options to ensure the safety of all road users.

When we talk about hooning, primarily we are talking about activities involving acts of dangerous driving. Often these acts are subject to the penalties of the Criminal Code of Queensland. They are also regulated by other acts of parliament which incorporate careless driving, attempts to set speed records, races between vehicles and burnouts.

It is not uncommon in major centres around Queensland for groups of hoons to regularly gather at predetermined locations to partake in such illegal activities. They tend to race their vehicles either against each other over a set distance or individually and attempt to beat a speed time set by other hoons. Clearly, the speeds reached during these races well and truly exceed those set by the law as safe. The speeds alone are dangerous, but they become even more dangerous considering these powerful vehicles are often in the hands of inexperienced drivers.

I remind all members to consider the potential consequences of these activities. Should innocent and unwitting pedestrians or motorists be unfortunate enough to be on the road at a time when these events are carried out, a very real potential exists for serious injury or loss of life for an innocent party. There can be no plausible excuse for these illegal acts and I can assure each and every Queenslanders that it will not be tolerated by the Beattie government.

A further ridiculous and dangerous hoon activity—which I am certain honourable members of this House will agree can be incorporated into these dangerous activities—is that of 'burnouts'. I am sure that we have all seen the aftermath of these burnouts in the form of thick, black rubber tyre tracks left on a road surface. The activity occurs when motorists rev the engine of their vehicle to its peak capacity and drop the clutch, causing the rear wheels of the vehicle to lose traction with the road and spin. Regularly, oil or kerosene is poured onto the roadway to assist in breaking traction and to create larger volumes of smoke. I am advised it is regularly the case that a number of people will stand around the vehicle and hold it or rock it to create greater amusement for onlookers. The potential for loss of life or injury to innocent persons is a concern to this government. A further concern is the fact that it also causes major damage to our roads.

Another type of hoonish behaviour which is the subject of constant complaints to me is referred to as 'lapping'. Lapping involves vehicles being driven, normally at a slow speed, repeatedly around a number of streets. The predominant source of complaint is the extreme volume at which the stereo systems in the vehicles are operated during lapping. Often the stereo systems fitted to these vehicles are worth more than the vehicle itself. I have been advised that in one instance the stereo system of a particular car was valued at more than \$12,000. In fact, the rear seat of the vehicle had been removed to allow sufficient room to fit the speakers.

As Minister for Police, I recently received representations from a motel owner in a major Queensland centre who complained that his business had suffered drastically because hoons lapped past it continually late at night with the stereo systems in their cars operating at full volume. The patrons of his motel could not sleep because of the noise needlessly created by these hoons. While lapping may be a source of enjoyment to hoons, it is beyond a joke when people cannot sleep and legitimate businesses are affected.

The bill I have introduced is not intended to prevent people enjoying music within their vehicles; rather, it is aimed at behaviour that intentionally disrupts the lives of people who have a right to enjoy the peace and quiet of their surroundings. To the business owner who made these representations to me and to other business people who suffer from similar hoonish behaviour, I offer the guarantee that these laws will enable police to take appropriate action to put an end to this behaviour.

As members will recall, in August last year I made a commitment that the Beattie government would work to address the problems which I have just outlined to the House in relation to hooning. As an immediate measure, the Commissioner for Police committed to increase the number of police allocated to the State Traffic Task Force. At the same time, the government began a lengthy consideration of various legislative options to address the issue. The options all held complex ramifications but a tough yet fair approach was required.

Existing laws allow for a range of actions to be taken against an offender involved in drag racing or burnouts, from the issue of a traffic infringement notice for creating undue noise, to arrest for dangerous driving. In the case of lapping, a traffic infringement notice can be issued for undue noise created by a stereo system. However, the available penalties seem to have done little to deter persons involved in drag contests, burnouts or lapping. Thus, there is a need for the passage of this bill.

For the purposes of brevity, I do not intend to address each and every clause of the bill. A copy of the bill and the explanatory notes has been provided to honourable members and are available to members of the public. Therefore, I will speak only to the major issues of the bill.

The bill amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to allow a police officer to impound a vehicle used in the commission of a 'prescribed offence'. A prescribed offence is defined in the dictionary amendment to the bill as an offence committed in circumstances that involve a speed trial, a race between vehicles, or a burnout that also incorporates—

- an offence of dangerous operation of a vehicle under section 328A of the Criminal Code;
- an offence of careless driving of a motor vehicle under section 83 of the Road Use Management Act;
- an offence of racing and speed trials on road under section 85 of the Road Use Management Act; or
- an offence against the Road Use Management Act involving wilfully starting a vehicle, or driving a vehicle, in a way that makes unnecessary noise or smoke.

For a first prescribed offence, a police officer will be provided with the power to impound the offending vehicle for a period of 48 hours. In this case, police must commence proceedings by way of either a notice to appear or arrest.

This bill gives the courts significant plenary powers to deal with repeat offenders. A person who commits a second prescribed offence within three years of the first offence may have their vehicle impounded for a period of up to three months. Finally, should a person commit a third or subsequent prescribed offence within this three-year period, they may face the reality of having their vehicle forfeited to the state.

This is tough but fair legislation and I make no apology for that. Those foolish enough to flout the law will quickly come to realise that the Beattie government will not tolerate life-endangering offences being committed against law-abiding members of the Queensland community. Ultimately, if the bill results in a court determining that a recidivist offender no longer deserves to have their car, then that will be a lesson well learnt for that offender.

As I have previously indicated, there is an offence regularly committed by hooners who undertake 'lapping'. This relates to the noise created by stereo systems which can be an intolerable nuisance rather than a potentially life-threatening offence. Therefore, impoundment of a vehicle does not appear an equitable option. Nevertheless, undue noise created by motorists undertaking lapping will not be tolerated. Consequently, it will be subject to police noise abatement directions where the level of noise emitted from a sound system installed in a vehicle is excessive and a source of interference or annoyance to other people. This is an extension to existing noise abatement laws under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, which apply to excessive amplified noise being emitted from houses in residential areas.

A police officer will be permitted to issue a direction to the driver of a vehicle to cease using the sound equipment for a period of 12 hours where its use is excessive in the circumstances

having regard to the degree of interference or annoyance the noise is causing. A failure to comply with the direction may result in the equipment being removed from the vehicle for a period of 24 hours and the driver being prosecuted for disobeying the lawful direction of a police officer.

The amendments are not complaint based, as is the case with noise being emitted from a house. The reason for this is simple. In these circumstances it is not a matter of police intervening needlessly in a residential area where neighbours are willing to tolerate the occasional noisy party held by a neighbour. Residential parties affect only a few people living in a street. However, the noise created during lapping affects a much larger number of people, as the vehicle may be moving throughout a suburb or a number of suburbs at regular intervals. Therefore, we consider it appropriate to allow a police officer to take appropriate action in these instances.

Clearly, with the introduction of any new law there needs to be balanced safeguards to protect the legal rights of innocent parties and this bill is no exception. I will now outline the safeguards contained in this bill.

Our courts must always determine the question of a person's guilt for an offence. Consequently, a police officer will be required to commence proceedings against an offender by way of notice to appear or arrest prior to being entitled to impound a vehicle. This will ensure that every alleged offender is given the inalienable right of defending an action brought against him or her. If a person is eventually found not guilty of or is not proceeded against for a prescribed offence then that person will not suffer the initial costs of impoundment of a vehicle. Members of this House will appreciate that it may be some time after the impoundment of a vehicle that the offence relating to the impoundment is heard and determined by a court. Consequently, the towing and storage fees associated with a first offence impoundment will initially be paid by the state.

In the case of a second or subsequent impoundment, the costs of the first 48 hours of impoundment will again initially be met by the state. Within those first 48 hours, a police officer will be required to make an application to a court for either a maximum three-month impoundment, or a forfeiture of the vehicle to the state, as applicable. At the time of lodging the application, a court must order the return of the vehicle to its owner until the prescribed offence is heard and determined. An exception to this requirement will exist only if police can satisfy the court that the return of the vehicle will result in the commission of a further prescribed offence.

Obviously, should the offender later be found guilty of the offence then the costs of impoundment will be a debt recoverable by the state from the offender, as distinct from the owner, unless the owner is a party to the offence. Those costs will be recoverable under the SPER legislation. By structuring the legislation in this manner, those businesses involved in towing that are commissioned by the police to remove and store an impounded vehicle are guaranteed of receiving the costs of their commission. However, to ensure equality in costs to all persons throughout the state, it is the intention of the bill that the Tow Truck Act 1973 be amended to cap towing and storage fees for the impoundment of vehicles under this legislation. In this regard, officers of the Police Service and Queensland Transport have consulted, and will continue to consult, with towing operators to establish fees reasonable to all parties.

A further major safeguard to this legislation involves third parties who own a car but are not involved in a prescribed offence. To ensure, for example, that a mum or dad who innocently lend their family car to a child does not suffer from this legislation, a defence mechanism has been built into the bill. If a second or subsequent prescribed offence occurs without their consent or knowledge then they will not risk losing their car. In this case the car can be returned by order of a court to the parents. Also, should the impoundment of a car for a second offence or the forfeiture of a car be likely to result in severe financial or physical hardship to a person, then a court is entitled to return the vehicle to its owner.

Clearly, the Beattie government is not intent, by impounding a car, to cause a person to lose their job or to create difficulties for a family shopping for groceries or in taking their children to a doctor. This government is not inhumane. However, neither will we give an offender an easy way out. Therefore, if a court orders the return of a car in circumstances of severe financial or physical hardship, it is intended that the court will have at its disposal an alternative power, in addition to any existing penalty, to impose an order on the offender to serve up to 240 hours community service.

Finally, the interests of other third parties are protected by this legislation. The owner of a vehicle which has been stolen and used in the commission of a prescribed offence and a car rental company are exempt from this legislation. Additionally, the interests of finance provider

companies and absentee vehicle owners have been insured, not only in the defence provisions, but also in the retrievable interest provisions of section 59X of the bill. Officers of the Police Service will consult fully with finance provider companies prior to the proclamation of this legislation to ensure that the provisions of the bill are fully understood.

This is not a bill that purports to punish offenders and disregard the legitimate interests of third parties. It has been well thought out to protect third parties yet ensure that offenders experience the full force of the law for life-endangering actions. As a further protection, the government has committed that these new provisions will be subject to review after two years.

Queensland roads are not racetracks and we cannot allow them to be used for illegal purposes. Nor can we allow the peace and quiet of residents to be disturbed through these activities. This bill is a balanced response to a complex issue. The government has taken a tough but fair approach and I am confident that it will help to address this important issue. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

MARITIME SAFETY QUEENSLAND BILL

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (11.51 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to provide for the establishment of the Maritime Safety Agency of Queensland, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Bredhauer, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (11.52 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to establish a maritime safety agency for Queensland through the creation of a statutory entity attached to Queensland Transport. It is envisaged that Maritime Safety Queensland would be established by 1 July 2002. The primary objectives of the proposed legislation are:

- to reduce duplication in the delivery of essential maritime services that are provided to maximise safety or limit environmental risks;
- to provide a lasting solution to pilot service delivery and training of marine pilots in Queensland ports; and
- to provide a whole-of-state marine pollution response capability that incorporates the marine pollution response services currently provided by port authorities.

Maritime Safety Queensland, or MSQ, will report directly to me through the Director-General of Queensland Transport as if it were part of the department. The director-general will assume the role of chief executive for the agency with the proposed legislation defining his specific responsibilities. In particular, the chief executive will be responsible for the strategic and policy oversight of MSQ as well as monitoring the agency's performance. The bill also proposes the appointment of a general manager who is responsible for the operational management of MSQ. The general manager will be appointed as an SES officer under the Public Service Act and will report directly to the chief executive.

MSQ will assume many of the functions currently being undertaken by the Maritime Division of Queensland Transport, along with some additional functions currently the responsibility of Queensland's port authorities. The functions of MSQ outlined in the bill are related to providing:

- safety for trade, commercial and recreational vessels and their users;
- the monitoring and management of ship movements in coastal waters;
- aids to navigation;
- marine pollution and emergency response, including within ports;

- port pilotage; and
- other maritime services, for example, tidal information and the preparation of boating charts.

As established in the functions of MSQ, a key element of the proposed legislation is the reintroduction of direct government control over the provision of pilotage services and pollution preparedness and response capability in all Queensland ports. In establishing the legislation, it was necessary to create an employment regime that would enable pilots and other port authority employees being transferred to MSQ to retain their existing employment conditions and entitlements. The bill provides for the employment of certain officers, most particularly pilots, outside of the Public Service Act. By establishing flexible employment arrangements, MSQ will be able to attract and retain the high-level expertise required for specialised maritime functions such as pilotage. I must emphasise, however, that all existing public service officers employed by the department will continue to be employed under the Public Service Act. The employment of officers outside of the Public Service Act will be limited to special and very particular cases.

The bill also includes specific provisions that preserve the employment and contractual conditions of pilots and other external service providers who may be affected by the creation of MSQ. The legislation proposes that any contract or employment agreement relating to the provision of pilotage services that was in place prior to the commencement of MSQ will continue with the same terms and conditions. The only change will be that MSQ will replace either Queensland Transport or a port authority as the principal in the contract. This will ensure that no-one is unfairly disadvantaged as a result of changed service delivery arrangements for pilotage, pilot transfer and pollution response activities in ports.

The bill proposes the creation of an agency fund to receive pilotage fees, conservancy dues and other revenue received for services provided by MSQ. This fund will provide users of essential maritime services with transparent reports on expenditure and revenue. This is a particularly important issue for industry. Industry expects that any benefits accruing from the delivery of pilotage services by port authorities will continue to be passed on by MSQ. To this end, MSQ will deliver pilotage services under commercial principles and with a high degree of transparency for industry.

Pilotage services will be delivered by a discrete business unit within MSQ that will be kept completely separate from the regulatory arm of the agency. This separation is to ensure that harbour masters' responsibilities in maintaining regulatory oversight of pilotage services do not conflict with the actual delivery of these services. Accounts for the fund will be kept as part of the departmental accounts of Queensland Transport. The fund will be subject to the requirements of the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

The bill also makes a large number of consequential amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act, the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act and the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. The nature of these amendments is to establish responsibility for the matters dealt with in these acts as belonging to either Queensland Transport or MSQ.

The proposed legislation will create a government monopoly for pilotage services and, as such, it was necessary to subject the draft legislation to a public benefit test. The public benefit test found that the safety and long-term sustainability benefits of re-establishing government control for pilotage services outweighed any benefits that could be derived from the introduction of competition for this service.

Safe and sustainable shipping movement in Queensland waters is essential to support the economy of Queensland. The creation of Maritime Safety Queensland will enhance regional maritime service delivery as well as provide better safety and environmental outcomes for the maritime industry and the broader community. I believe Queensland will benefit from the state-wide approach to marine pilotage and pollution response that MSQ will provide. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 16 April (see p. 988).

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.57 a.m.): I rise today to speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, a bill that covers many aspects of the very

important legislation administered by the Transport Minister. This omnibus bill seeks to amend a range of legislation, including: the Aurukun Associates Agreement Act 1975; the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act 1968; the Queensland Nickel Agreement Act 1970; the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994; the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995; the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1995; the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994; and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994.

The Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 is to be amended to allow sufficient time for the identification of titles and leases of land associated with establishing the definition of the rail corridor. The current legislation requires this land to be identified and gazetted by the end of June this year. Apparently the task of identifying the land has been completed, but additional time was required for lease details to be completed and for other rail land to be categorised and documented. This act extends the time limit for this task by a further 12 months.

The Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act is to be amended by deleting section 14 from the act. This section covers the matters that were required to be reported under the Commonwealth Navigation Act. Because of the amendments to the Commonwealth legislation, this section is no longer required. This act is also to be amended by inserting a new section 107A to provide that the master of a vessel and the owner of the vessel are responsible for the repair and reinstatement of any navigational aids damaged by the vessel. While there is an existing provision for the prosecution of the master and/or owner, the actual repair or reinstatement has been left to common law. This amendment makes the people most likely able to prevent damage and most likely in a position to pay for damages the subject of a specific provision in relation to the cost incurred by damage to things such as buoys and beacons.

Part 7 of this legislation is long overdue, as it finally addresses the question of marine sewage discharge under the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995. These amendments will replace existing legislation that expires on 1 July this year. Essentially, this legislation is outcomes based and, rather than define sewage control processes, it simply states the outcomes to be achieved, such as defining the areas in which no sewage discharge is to be undertaken. The opposition acknowledges that this concept may be less restrictive of vessel operators. It does shift the onus for the maintenance of clean waterways very much back to the government.

There will be two types of nil discharge areas established under this proposed amendment. One will prohibit the discharge of untreated sewage and the other will prohibit the discharge of treated sewage. These areas will be defined in detail by regulation. In principle, sewage discharge will not be permitted in areas of high usage or habitation, in food production areas or in environmentally sensitive areas.

I also note in particular in the explanatory notes that areas intended for nil discharge include marinas, boat harbours, canals, rivers, creeks, areas surrounding reefs or where people are in the water, and aquaculture fisheries resources—in other words, in nearly all parts of our waterways and ocean-going corridors adjacent to the mainland.

Certain vessels will also be required to be fitted with sewage holding devices that are appropriate to the number of persons on board and the length of time the vessel is likely to be in a nil discharge area. Once again, the types of vessels to be declared under this legislation will be detailed in the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Regulation 1995. The new section 51 provides that declared vessels must carry a shipboard sewage management plan.

Interestingly in view of recent developments, clause 38 provides that the owner of a ship over 35 metres must have insurance in place sufficient to pay for the clean-up of any pollution discharged from the vessel and/or to pay for the salvage or removal of a ship that is abandoned or wrecked. Given the difficulties that abound in relation to obtaining equitable insurance coverage, I would be particularly interested to know just how this requirement will be enforced. Obviously it will be possible as a condition for vessels in survey in Queensland, but I would like to know just how this requirement is likely to be enforced for visiting vessels.

While the opposition supports the intent of this bill, obviously the devil is in the detail. I note that the explanatory notes to this bill indicate that appropriate consultation has been undertaken and that the provisions of this bill are supported. I am sure it would assist in the acceptance of this legislation if the minister answers a number of questions that arise from the proposal. Could the minister give some examples of where it will be possible for treated sewage to be discharged and where it will be possible for untreated sewage to be discharged? The requirement for sewage

holding devices, which under this legislation can include a bucket, begs the question of where appropriate discharge facilities will be available.

I also ask the minister to indicate if there are to be specific requirements for marinas, boat harbours, commercial vessel hire organisations or local authorities providing anchorage facilities to provide sewage pump-out facilities or other disposal facilities. It would also be of assistance in the deliberation of this legislation for the minister to give an indication of which vessels this legislation is applicable to.

Of immediate concern is whether these requirements are intended to apply to the family runabout. It is hoped that these requirements will apply, for example, to commercial houseboats. I ask the minister to clarify if that assumption is correct. Two other examples spring immediately to mind. Are the yachts moored only a couple of hundred metres from here examples of vessels that will be required to have holding tanks? If so, who will be providing the disposal facilities and just how will that work? I ask the minister to address these very simple and straightforward examples, as the answers to these questions will assist in giving everyone, including me, a better appreciation of just what is intended by this legislation.

I think in this modern day and age we are all more aware of environmental standards and of meeting those environmental standards. I think the government and the Department of Transport are making a responsible move by highlighting the importance of this question. These are a couple of questions the minister can answer.

Mr Bredhauer: When they pay a mooring fee here they get a key for the land based facility. You have been out there walking in the morning. You have seen them come over early in the morning and use the toilet and the shower.

Mr JOHNSON: I will get to the other aspect of that in a minute.

Having addressed the matter of who the legislation applies to, we can then address the issue of just how the legislation will work. I note that a discharge from a declared ship is reportable and that offences are to be established for illegal discharge. This raises two particular issues. Who will enforce this legislation and what is to happen to address any discharge that takes place?

In relation to the first issue of who will enforce this legislation, I believe that the existing marine enforcement resources will be used. That includes police, fisheries inspectors and so on. Following the minister's statement this morning about the establishment of a marine safety division, I presume that these staff will also have a responsibility in this respect. Again, this will only utilise existing resources. Having adequate resources in place is very important to the policing of this piece of legislation. If resources are not sufficient for officers to assume all of these responsibilities, attempting to carry them all out will reduce effectiveness in relation to their existing responsibilities. I am sure that existing resources are not sufficient to appropriately treat or investigate illegal discharges.

I ask the minister to address the question of appropriate compliance resources in his reply to this debate. I urge the minister to consider the appointment of additional officers to address the specific requirements of this legislation. I am sure there are many people out there who will consider this legislation tokenism unless the government is prepared to ensure that this legislation is made to work by ensuring there are appropriate enforcement and response officers employed for this purpose.

The other main purpose of this bill is to amend the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. Essentially, these amendments relate to the issuing of emergency contracts in situations of services being provided by one contractor being suddenly withdrawn. In this instance the government, in the public interest, needs to issue a short-term contract to ensure continuity of service. A classic example arose with the demise of Flight West Airlines last year and to a lesser extent with the withdrawal of Brisbane Bus Lines from scheduled services. These examples have highlighted the need for these emergency provisions to be put in place. They are supported by the opposition.

It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge the good job that was done by the minister, his departmental staff and the Department of State Development—I believe there was also input from the Premier's office—in relation to the handling of the whole sorry saga involving Flight West Airlines last year. It was not an easy situation. The government did not have much time to move. I congratulate the minister and the government on being able to put effective air services in place at such short notice. I am well aware of just how difficult the situation would have been. I congratulate QantasLink and the other carriers. I make particular mention of Ashley Kilroy,

general manager of QantasLink, who I think did a brilliant job of working with the government to put in place a stopgap service to fill the void created by Flight West.

It is all very well to criticise at the end of the day, but many people were hurt as a result of the Flight West demise. All I can say is that the department, the government, the ministers responsible and the personnel involved worked in a very professional and admirable manner, and I congratulate all parties concerned. Whilst speaking about Flight West, I believe that an announcement is imminent regarding the letting of tenders in relation to subsidised air services to regional and remote Queensland. I understand that the minister's officers have also been considering the subsidisation of essential coach services for regional and remote areas. I take this opportunity to ask the minister to make this announcement as soon as possible so that the many Queenslanders who rely on these services can be assured of their continuation. The minister does not need me to tell him that there are many marginalised people who avail themselves of these services, because they are services that provide an integral form of transportation to many people throughout this great state. As the minister also knows, many jobs are dependent on this decision and a prompt announcement will relieve a lot of anxiety in families whose income depends on the continuation of these services.

I again congratulate the officers—namely, Gordon Buchanan and Damien Vasta—from Queensland Transport who have been undertaking the current review and thank them for the inclusive manner in which they have undertaken their task. They travelled throughout western Queensland at the time of the announcement of subsidised air services. Those two officers have worked in a truly professional manner. They have consulted widely with councils, with interest groups and with travel agents, et cetera. I ask the minister to convey my sincere gratitude and appreciation to those two gentlemen. With expert experience like that, we are going to get the best possible outcome.

The other significant amendments to the passenger transport legislation relate to aspects of the contracts issued under the act. Generally, these contracts are related to bus services, and it is in that context that they are best considered. For example, clause 47 expands the conditions that may be included in service contracts to include such matters as ticketing processes and fare structures determined by the chief executive. Obviously, these conditions are designed to facilitate the mythical integrated ticketing system. This proposal has been around for so long that it will soon become redundant before it is even implemented. I remind the minister that in a little over two years I was able to negotiate the introduction of a paper based system between the Sunshine Coast and the border west to Ipswich.

Issues such as concessions and different fare structures were identified then. I am disappointed that it has taken so long to progress this issue, and there is still no end in sight. I hope this issue is resolved, but the minister might elaborate further in his summary. I presume that our friend Lord Mayor 'Traffic Jam' Jim—friend of firefighters and bus drivers—has made a unilateral decision in relation to smart card technology that is meant to intimidate the state into accepting his view of the integrated ticketing world. I think he must have been busy at work on Monday working out his new system because I understand that he did not turn up to the Labor Day parade. Maybe Tim Quinn is doing the work behind the scenes.

Conversely, clause 48 provides that the term of service contracts can be for up to seven years and clause 52 includes an option for renewal. The opposition welcomes these amendments because they will assist contract holders to obtain finance for their capital investments in vehicles, et cetera, by increasing the term. Again, I congratulate the minister on this. This is a very responsible part of the legislation. It allows the operator in question the opportunity to put in place a better class of vehicle—whether it be aircraft, coaches or whatever—and also gives them a better term for planning. Seven years is certainly better than five. The option of another seven years on top of the initial seven will enhance the quality of services provided. It will encourage people to use public transport more because there will be a better facility and a better service in place. This particular aspect of this legislation has to be commended.

Clause 49 also provides additional conditions on service contracts by including penalties for failure to meet performance standards set by the contract. While on the surface this may seem to be heavy handed, the provision of penalties of this type is far more realistic than the threat of withdrawal or cancellation of a contract. I have been assured that these amendments are acceptable to representatives of contract holders. We witnessed what happened last year with Flight West. As I just said, the option for an additional seven-year contract on top of the initial seven years will put in place a better operation and possibly prevent this situation from ever happening again.

I also point out to the minister—I am sure that he is well aware of this point—that such penalties mean that the service levels and performance standards need to be realistic and not the pie in the sky wish list which formed the basis of the first generation contracts. Speaking about bus service contracts and conditions reminds me that the working group established to implement the recommendations of the School Transport Safety Task Force has been conspicuous by its silence. The public wants to know what is being done about the issue and what progress has been made in relation to upgrading the bus fleet in particular. I went cold when I heard about the tragic bus accident that occurred on the Victorian border last week. I dread the possibility of such an accident happening here.

I believe that this matter must receive urgent attention. I regret that I am not witnessing a sense of urgency in this government at this point in time. The road toll is already spiralling out of control. I implore the minister to give this parliament an update on the progress made with the report, which was well received by this side of the House.

Before debate on this bill commenced, the Minister for Police introduced legislation in relation to other aspects of road safety. I say to the Minister for Police and Minister for Education that this side of the House supports anything at all within reason that will bring the road toll down. It is one of the real scourges of our society and has been an impediment for too long. I will give the House an example. After attending a meeting at the Sunnybank Hotel, I was waiting for a cab outside. I saw two cars take off—

Mr Reeves: Why would you catch a cab when you could have taken the busway?

Mr JOHNSON: At that hour of the night I wanted a cab because I wanted to get back to town quickly. Cabs are public transport, too. I do take buses around this city. I take all forms of public transport. I have to say to the honourable member for Mansfield that I know just how passionate he is about public transport, as I am, but he must not forget that cabs provide a very important form of public transport in our state.

Mr Reeves: You should have only caught the cab from—

Mr JOHNSON: No, people have the option. We do live in a free society. However, I do applaud the honourable member's comments. Getting back to what I was saying, I watched two cars take off from the lights. By the time they got down the road a bit, if they were not doing over 100 kilometres an hour I will give it away. I certainly applaud what the Minister for Police, with the support of the Minister for Transport, is trying to achieve in eliminating this element from our roads. How do we know that somebody who is a bit nervous about driving at that hour of the night could not have been involved in an accident with one of those louts? That is exactly and precisely what we are trying to achieve here.

It is also relevant to note that included in these amendments is the demise of the term 'commercial contracts' as distinct from 'government funded service contracts'. The explanatory notes suggest that each is a type of service contract and there is no need to distinguish between the two. There are still many of us who remember that the concept of the commercial contract was the justification for the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act in 1994. Then minister David Hamill told those in the bus industry that they were fat and lazy, too dependent on government subsidy, and that if Queensland Transport issued contracts that set strict standards passengers would be fighting to get on board. These services would not require government subsidy any more but would become commercially viable.

I thank the minister for putting this naive assumption to death and shall have much pleasure in circulating the explanatory notes to some of the people whose family businesses were ruined by Labor's wilful actions. I shall also send copies to those public servants who were dismissed because they tried to tell the so-called reformists that they were peddling snake oil.

This bill also amends the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement 1968. This amendment was proposed at the request of BHP Billiton Limited as part of its restructuring process. BHP Billiton proposes to transfer the 8.5 per cent currently in the name of a company incorporated in the US, subject to taxation provisions in both the US and Australia. The company to which it proposes to transfer its interest is an Australian-owned subsidiary, and this proposal is part of a BHP Billiton repatriation policy and is supported by the opposition. Following a review of transport and main roads legislation for consistency with the Commonwealth Corporations Act, this bill also amends a number of acts.

These amendments determine the extent to which the entities established by this legislation are to be excluded from the operation of the Corporations Act. I must admit to some interest in

the amendment to the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 which excludes the South East Queensland Transit Authority board, commonly known as SEQTA, from the operation of the Corporations Law. Of course, I am interested that there is no SEQTA board. After the koala tunnel fiasco, this board, which was set up to give a cushy job to the well known transport expert Craig Emerson, never hit the deck. Suffice to say that the proposal for Mr Emerson and a board of Labor cronies to run transport in south-east Queensland was met with such opposition that the whole matter was confined to the basement at Capital Hill. I suspect, as do many other interested spectators, that this amendment means that SEQTA has been dragged out of the basement, dusted off and is being readied as a sinecure for some Labor lackeys.

Mr Bredhauer: Don't be so cynical. It doesn't become a man like you.

Mr JOHNSON: I want the minister to tell me about this.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: We all know about SEQTA; we certainly do. There are people in the minister's department who will know exactly and precisely what I think about SEQTA.

Mr Bredhauer: Are you advocating we bring it back?

Mr JOHNSON: No, I am not. Given the doubt that exists over 'Traffic Jam' Jim's future on the Airtrain board, I wonder whether he is considering running public transport in south-east Queensland.

I now refer to the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. I commend the explanatory notes to part 5 to students of legislation, because it is not very explanatory to me. My interpretation is that clause 24 absolves a party from a need to renumber sections because a section previously to be deleted has not been deleted. I should also note that proposed new section 138A clarifies issues where road and rail corridors intersect and establishes that the land will be incorporated in the adjacent rail corridor. Again, keen students of transport law will note that this is the same amendment proposed in last year's Transport Legislation Amendment Bill but that, because of the problem associated with the renumbering, needs to be done again. I wonder whether the minister would be kind enough later to confirm my explanation of this sequence of events in his summary.

In conclusion, I record my appreciation to the minister, his staff and the staff of Queensland Transport who provided a briefing on this legislation which, as I have indicated, is quite complex in many parts. The courtesy in providing a brief is appreciated at all times. I also look forward to the minister's responding to the matters I have raised so that my colleagues and I can be satisfied that these matters will be addressed adequately. The opposition will take the opportunity to raise a number of issues related to the legislation being amended but, subject to the minister satisfactorily responding to the issues raised during the debate, proposes to support this bill.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (12.26 p.m.): I rise to support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I will speak to part 9 of the bill, which amends the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act. It would be remiss of me as the number one ticket holder of the busway not to mention it.

Mr Bredhauer: You were out there for the birthday celebration!

Mr REEVES: I am just about to tell members about that. Last Monday I had great pleasure in celebrating with the minister the busway's first birthday. We were there to cut the birthday cake.

Mr Johnson: You ate all the cake!

Mr REEVES: In fact, I did not have any. I just finished my liver cleansing diet the day before, so I did not think I should have the cake. The busway has been an outstanding success. I cannot believe the shadow minister would not use the busway to get to Sunnybank. If the shadow minister gives me a telephone call next time he is visiting the south side, I will let him know which bus to catch. For example, this morning I caught the 136 at 7.01 a.m. from Garden City. I was at Mineral House by 7.12 a.m. and at Parliament House by 7.14 a.m. That is a 15-minute trip, including my walking time.

Ms Keech: What if there was an accident?

Mr REEVES: Yes, if there were an accident on the freeway it would take one and a half hours. After the Labour Day festivities on Monday I had great pleasure in showing some of our union colleagues how to use the busway. So, we caught the busway from the cultural centre back to Garden City.

Mr Johnson: Where is the cultural centre? What cultural centre?

Mr REEVES: Many within the union movement are very cultured. We had a wonderful day at Musgrave Park, and there were arts everywhere.

Mr Johnson: Matt Foley was there, was he?

Mr REEVES: I did not see the member for Gregory there. Getting back to the busway, I say that it has been a major success. The extra 900,000 passenger trips since the opening of the busway one year ago have well outstripped any expectations as to its popularity.

A government member interjected.

Mr REEVES: That is another story. The Travelsafe committee has been out there as well.

The people of south-east Queensland deserve a pat on the back for embracing this new facility. The massive patronage means there are 40 fewer cars on the road for every bus running at maximum capacity. And the buses are running at maximum capacity. As a result, Brisbane Transport, in conjunction with Queensland Transport, has ensured that, in a boost to service levels, the 111 will now run the busway every five minutes during peak periods. People can throw away their timetable, because they just need to go to the station and a bus will be there within two to three minutes. Every five minutes during peak periods there will be a Translink 111 bus. On top of that, with the 160 bus run by the Brisbane City Council, it is just great service.

There is no doubt that the busway, as I said, has been a major success. Patronage on core services rose by 45 per cent in its first year, with 27,000 extra passengers per week using the busway. Previously, in peak time a car would take up to an hour to travel that distance, but using the buses it takes a mere 18 minutes from Eight Mile Plains. I know after the cake cutting ceremony the minister had to attend a cabinet meeting that morning.

Mr Bredhauer: The quickest way was by bus.

Mr REEVES: The trip would have taken the minister about 16 minutes from when he boarded the bus. I noticed there was a bad accident on the freeway that day. If the minister had used a car from Garden City it would have taken 45 minutes to one hour. Because of the busway, the minister was not late for his cabinet meeting.

Mr Johnson: Well planned that busway, wasn't it?

Mr REEVES: It is an excellent plan. The member cannot claim credit for it. The member was just bagging the Goss government, but I know where it all started. I remind ministers, who will be at Eight Mile Plains for their community cabinet meeting on 26 May, that the Eight Mile Plains busway station is just a stone's throw away. If the Minister for Transport wants me to pick him up at the bus station, I will be quite willing to do so.

As I said, the state government's TransLink service and the Brisbane City Council's 160 service provide a practical and fast option for travel to the city. Those all-stop, high-frequency services provide travel options that previously were not available to south side residents. The patronage numbers are proof of this initiative's success. As I said, previously, people in my part of Brisbane never had a reliable public transport system. That area does not have a rail service as do other parts of Brisbane. Instead, buses had to travel along roads that were congested with car traffic and they were hampered by traffic lights. Now, this area has a high-frequency bus service. It is a first-rate public transport system. For any member who wants to travel on the busway, I would be quite willing to go with them to show them the benefits of using the busway. If the member for Gregory has to attend a meeting on the south side, he should not hesitate to call me because I will tell him the best bus to catch.

This bill makes several amendments to legislation governing public transport in Queensland. Most of those amendments refer to the use of service contracts for the provision of public passenger services. Under the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the chief executive of Queensland Transport can declare that a service contract is required to provide a public passenger service of a specific kind or in a specific area or route. Many of these service contracts give operators the exclusive right to provide specified public passenger services. The use of an exclusive service contract is of particular benefit to communities when the contract enables an operator to use its profitable service, that is its peak hour services, to cross-subsidise the non-profitable services, that is, its non-peak hour services. This also lessens the pressure on direct government funding for those services.

Although exclusive service contracts are designed to benefit the community, the existing legislative requirements can sometimes hamper the ability of Queensland Transport to ensure the

ongoing provision of public passenger services. For example, as the member for Gregory said, Queensland Transport had an exclusive service contract for Flight West Airlines for some air routes. When Flight West Airlines ceased operations last year, the legislation hampered the department's ability to quickly get another operator to provide effective air services. I was affected by that, because I had friends from Longreach who were coming to my wedding, which took place in the same week as when Flight West Airlines crashed. Unfortunately, because of that my friends were unable to attend. The department was hampered because, firstly, the legislation required for services to be provided under a service contract. This required a tender process to be completed before a new contract could be issued. Secondly, the legislation required a time-consuming process to be followed when the department sought to cancel the exclusive service contract held by Flight West Airlines, even though the company was not providing any services.

Whenever an operator is unable or unwilling to provide its contracted public passenger services, the legislative framework impedes Queensland Transport's ability to quickly arrange another service provider. For example, if a contracted school bus operator stopped providing services today, the community would want Queensland Transport to arrange another service provider today. The children have to get to school somehow. The amendments proposed in this bill will enhance the ability of Queensland Transport to quickly resolve disruptions to passenger services that are caused when the operator fails to provide the contracted services.

Clause 53 of the bill enables the issue of emergency service contracts. Those contracts can be issued without the department inviting offers for the contract when the contract is necessary to ensure continuity in the provision of a particular public passenger service. For example, if Queensland Transport is notified that a school bus operator has gone bankrupt and is unable to provide its contracted services, the department can immediately enter into an emergency service contract with another operator to provide those services without having to go through any tender process.

However, when Queensland Transport issues an emergency service contract without inviting offers for the contract, the term of the contract will be restricted to six months. When offers are invited for an emergency service contract, the maximum term of this contract is two years. During the currency of an emergency service contract, Queensland Transport will have time to arrange the issue of a more convenient service contract to begin at the end of the term of the emergency service contract. It should be noted that, where the legislation allows existing operators the right to make the first offer when a new service contract is being entered into, this first offer right will not apply when the existing operator is the holder of an emergency service contract.

Under the existing legislation, if an operator fails to provide contracted services and Queensland Transport intends to amend, suspend or cancel the contract, then the department must give the operator 10 days notice before taking the action. This delay in taking action impedes the department's ability to enter into a service contract with another operator, especially when the original contract granted an exclusive right to provide a service. Under the proposed amendments, Queensland Transport will be able to take immediate action when there are grounds for believing that the contract holder is unable to provide any or all of the contracted services.

Several other amendments in this bill relate to service contracts. Clause 47 of the bill will allow service contracts to include principles for fare collection. This might include, for example, requirements on ticketing processes and associated computer software. This vital part of the legislation will cover integrated ticketing, which will come about. It ensures that those who want to be part of the Queensland Transport service contract have the right equipment and that it can be part of integrated ticketing. Additionally, a service contract will be able to require the contract holder to charge fares determined by the chief executive of Queensland Transport. The ability to make these requirements relating to fares in service contracts is necessary for the future implementation of integrated ticketing between public transport services in south-east Queensland.

Clause 49 of the bill will allow the continuation of a service contract to include penalties for failure to meet stated key performance indicators. For example, if a contracted service provider fails to operate any of its contracted services or continues to run late with its services, a penalty may be applied for these contract breaches. I think that it is very important that those provisions are contained in the bill as it gives Queensland Transport the power to force contractors to provide the services that they have signed up for. Consumers should feel comfortable that there is an avenue through which remedies to their public transport services can be put in place. This amendment also adds more flexibility to the contract regime, because the existing legislation

allows Queensland Transport to take only severe action, such as the suspension or cancellation of a service contract, in response to breaches of contract conditions.

The proposed amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act serve to improve the operations of service contracts for public passenger services. These amendments will benefit the public and service operators as well as bring efficiencies to Queensland Transport as the administrator of these contracts for the state. As I said, these measures will ensure that contractors will have to deliver on their promises. Previously, the only stick that was available for Queensland Transport was its ability to either suspend or cancel contracts.

Before commending the bill to the House, I want to refer to the Premier's comment of talking to the council about opening up King George Square car park for Anzac Day. I know that the council provides free travel for war veterans on Anzac Day. I think that the council also needs to consider running buses on the busway on Anzac Day from 2.30 a.m. or 3 a.m. so that people travelling to attend those services have a safe ride. We should bear in mind that many of those people who attend Anzac Day services experience difficulty driving, particularly when it is dark.

Mr Bredhauer: A few of them shouldn't be driving home after.

Mr REEVES: Probably a few of them should not be driving home after Anzac Day services. I have made representations to the minister and also to the city council to consider extending the services of the busway. It is a safe, efficient and secure transport system. Late-night services need to be extended. We all know of the problems with trying to find a cab in the city when the nightclubs close at 2.30 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Mr Bredhauer: I haven't had that experience.

Mr REEVES: I have had them reported to me. There is a lot of trouble outside nightclubs at taxi ranks, because there are simply not enough—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr REEVES: That is why I am saying that the member should travel by bus. Although we have an efficient bus service, if we had extended bus services taxis could pick up people from the busway stations, which are very safe. After those taxi drivers have dropped off their passengers to their homes, they would be back at the busway stations in time to pick up passengers getting off the next bus. That would create a much more efficient transport service. We need the council to investigate extending bus services, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. That will create a better usage of our bus and taxi services. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.39 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I note the enthusiasm of the member for Mansfield for the South East Busway. I would welcome similar services in rural and regional Queensland. I understand that its success is due in great part to the number of people in the south-east region. People situated outside the south-east corner are significantly disadvantaged by the lack of availability of a reliable bus service. In my electorate we have a bus service which is endeavouring to grow and I believe that it will be used—and used efficiently. However, we would certainly welcome any improvement to the public transportation options for rural and regional Queenslanders.

As far as bus licences are concerned, we faced a situation not too long ago where a contractor announced the withdrawal of services to schools with a week or two weeks notice before the conclusion of school holidays. The only advice to parents was in the local newspaper. The department responded to that positively and services were re-established in time for the commencement of the school term.

However, it is essential that the government has the ability to implement emergency provisions where there is potential for contractors either to cease providing services or to become unable to provide services because of financial difficulties. One problem faced by our bus service was the time taken to sign off on conveyancing contracts. That may have been an isolated incident. However, it brought to a head the announcement by the bus company that it would discontinue services. The provisions in the bill which allow for responsive action on the part of government in those circumstances are certainly welcome and, I believe, will avert a lot of problems in the future.

The disposal of sewage, both raw and treated, from larger vessels has been a matter of some concern. When I was a member of the Calliope council, councillors who had responsibility for the Boyne River expressed concerns about people who lived on boats disposing of their untreated sewage effluent into the river. This amendment does not relate to them because they

are smaller vessels. However, it does address the general concern of people about the health of the waterways.

As far as Queensland is concerned, I am not sure how significant the Gladstone marina is in the scheme of things, but there are certainly a lot of vessels moored there on a permanent and semipermanent basis, so people's ability to appropriately manage disposal of their waste is certainly important. There are facilities at the port to receive treated waste, and that is certainly essential. If the government is controlling the handling of waste on vessels, then there must be places made available up and down the coast where that treated or untreated effluent can be discharged.

A concern I have had for a long period of time is addressed in part by this bill—the potential for pollution by vessels visiting a port. For example, the discharge of ballast water in a contained port which may contain organisms foreign to us or pollutants of some other description is certainly of concern. Whilst the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has commented upon the reverse onus of proof, it is important that persons who profit from these vessels also take some responsibility for the potential problems. I understand that when potential pollution issues have arisen in and around the port, the port authority has responded quickly and appropriately and contained any potential damage. Gladstone is a significant port not only for commercial purposes but also for recreational and commercial fisherman. The area in proximity to the port is also a nursery, particularly for crustaceans such as crabs and prawns, et cetera. There is a real need for the water quality there to be kept as pristine as possible.

I think most electorates share an issue in relation to railways and their commonality with roads. The electrification of the line through Gladstone and particularly north has meant that the speed of trains has increased significantly. Some crossings in our town still require lights and barriers. That matter has been raised by the council with the minister's departmental officers, and I believe it will be addressed in a progressive manner. There is a need in city areas for appropriate safety at these rail crossings, particularly when high-speed trains are in use.

I assume the common area has been the responsibility of one or the other in the past, so the common area will just be that area where the road intersects and the arrival and departure area from the railway line are located—that is, the intersecting rail/road. I wonder whether there is any intention to have a similar situation on route D, which the minister now supports, where they run in parallel. There will be a lot of commonality. I have not seen the latest plans—I believe officers are still drawing them up—where the road will be run next door to the railway corridor. It is a significant and busy corridor, as far as the rail is concerned, and I assume it will be relatively busy, as far as the road is concerned. I wonder what arrangements the minister has in mind for the management of those areas. They do not intersect but they do run in parallel with each other for quite some distance.

In that regard, there remains a significant and informed opposition in my electorate to route D. I believe the minister would be aware of that. I have read the press releases and I do not know what occurred for the minister to change his mind concerning the support of that. I would be interested in having a chat to the minister about that. The management of that area is of concern simply because on the plans the council is working on, there will be heavy transportation, under load, with a significant grade in the road. Potentially, some trucks will carry hazardous goods and, again, they will be running in proximity to the rail corridor where hazardous goods are also transported backwards and forwards from the port. I am interested in the proposed management of that area not only because of road management issues but also because of safety issues that have to be addressed.

The explanatory notes for this bill state—

Where a railway on a common area ceases being used the chief executive may require that the road be cleared of rail infrastructure.

There is no indication of a time frame if the chief executive exercises that requirement. In the past, when Tom Burns was a minister there was a huge outcry when there was a proposal to shut some Queensland railways. He successfully closed some without the support of the community. However, there was such a large outcry in relation to others that the railway was retained. One of those railway lines he intended to close was the Gladstone to Monto railway line in my electorate. It will now be carrying a significantly increased load from the Monto area, and there is some work to be done as far as re-sleepering the railway line on the way out through the Boyne Valley. Will an arbitrary period be specified or discretion given to the chief executive to ensure that the rail infrastructure remains on the road for at least long enough for the decision to be assessed as

being correct? Once that infrastructure is physically removed, the chances of reopening the railway line are almost nil.

Mr Bredhauer: It's not taking up any rail line.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: No, but the bill gives a discretion such that if a railway ceases to be used the chief executive may require that the road be cleared of the rail infrastructure. I think back to the old chestnut of the railway line to the Gold Coast, which was closed and subsequently reopened.

Mr Bredhauer: I think a more likely scenario is where you get purpose-built lines, say, the service to a mine, and the mine doesn't operate anymore so there is no need for the line.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: There is not that discretion. It just mentions instances where it has ceased to be used. My concern is that subsequent governments, irrespective of whether they are conservative, Labor or whatever, can make decisions and, with hindsight, can be proven to be ill-informed or ill-advised. If the chief executive is able to require that the infrastructure be cleared fairly quickly after a decision is made, this removes the potential option for the railway line to be reopened in the near future. I take the minister's comment about what the intention is, but the bill does not cover that.

The bill also intends to amend other agreements. I am assuming, according to the explanatory notes, that they do not change the contents of the agreements and there is just a change in the status of those companies. However, coal and its transportation are significant to my electorate and the state. I would hate to see anything done, for example, in terms of the current discussion about privatisation of the railway, that undermines the value of either the coal commodity or the railway for the people of our state. I would be interested in hearing the minister's comments about the potential privatisation of rail. In some ways, that is influenced by this bill because it deals with the change in status of the road/common area. I would like to hear him allay the fears of railway employees in my area that this government intends to privatise rail services/activities. I look forward to the minister's response and to the passage of the bill.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.52 p.m.): A number of acts administered by the Transport and Main Roads portfolio are to be amended in view of a new Commonwealth law, the Corporations Act 2001. Before the Commonwealth's new Corporations Act was enacted, the scheme of corporate law in Australia was based on state powers. Each state referred these powers to the Commonwealth, so that state law operated cooperatively as a national scheme. The administration and enforcement of this Corporations Law scheme was carried out federally through the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, ASIC, and the Director of Public Prosecutions, DPP. Both of these bodies were established under Commonwealth acts. This scheme worked remarkably well and there was little discord between the states and the Commonwealth about the operation of the Corporations Law in Australia.

However, this scheme has now been changed through new state and Commonwealth legislation as a result of recent decisions of the High Court. In 1999 a ruling of the High Court of Australia in the case of *Re Wakim: Ex parte McNally* first cast doubt on the legal validity of the Corporations Law scheme. The High Court held that the Australian constitution did not allow the federal parliament to confer state jurisdiction on its Federal Courts. This view was held even though the states had exercised valid powers in conferring the jurisdiction of their courts on the Commonwealth.

The following year the High Court ruled in *R v. Hughes* that the Commonwealth cannot confer state powers on its enforcement authorities if this may adversely affect the rights of individuals. A law of the Commonwealth must directly confer such powers. With the current Corporations Law scheme potentially invalid, the Commonwealth introduced a new scheme under the Corporations Act 2001. This act continues to rely on the interaction of state and federal powers, and Queensland has passed new Corporations Laws in response. In recognition of this new Corporations Law scheme, Crown Law has reviewed legislation administered by the Transport and Main Roads portfolio legislation for consistency. This review has also determined the extent to which these laws should be excluded from the operation of the new Corporations Law scheme.

To give effect to the recommendations of the Crown Law review, the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2002 proposes to amend the following acts: Aurukun Associates Agreement Act 1975, Queensland Nickel Agreement Act 1970, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, and Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994. I stress that these amendments are essentially technical in nature, and are not designed to alter the intended operation of these Queensland acts. In

general, references to expired legislation are corrected to reflect current statutes. In the case of the agreement acts, certain provisions are excluded from the operations of the Commonwealth law. This is so that money held in trust under those acts will continue to be dealt with in the manner determined by Queensland's parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STRONG (Burnett—ALP) (12.55 p.m.): I rise in support of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I wish to speak in particular about some of the amendments relating to public transport. The Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 enables Queensland Transport, on behalf of the state, to enter into contractual arrangements for the provision of public passenger services throughout Queensland. Queensland Transport is currently a party to over 750 service contracts covering scheduled urban bus services, as the member for Mansfield so eloquently elaborated, scheduled commuter ferry services, school services, a number of air services connecting remote communities, as well as service contracts for taxi booking companies in major urban areas.

The use of service contracts has several benefits to the people of Queensland. Service contracts are a means through which the state can ensure the provision of public passenger services that are responsive to the needs of the community. Operators who enter into service contracts with the state are required to provide their services to minimum service levels specified in the contracts. This helps ensure that the public receives clean, safe, regular and reliable services. For operators, service contracts provide a level of certainty over their future operations. Service contracts can require operators to provide services over particular routes or times that by themselves would be financially unsustainable to operate. The unsustainable services required under a contract can often be offset without government funding by other services under the contract which are profitable.

Where the government does subsidise the provision of public passenger services, service contracts help ensure that the state's expectations of the subsidised operator are met. It can be seen then that service contracts are a valuable mechanism through which the state can help ensure that people receive necessary public passenger services and furthermore that service contracts help industry operators to provide viable ongoing services.

This bill proposes a number of amendments that will improve the use and operation of service contracts. At present the term of a service contract is for a fixed five-year period at the end of which the contract holder is entitled to make the first offer for a new contract provided that their performance under the contract has been satisfactory. Clause 48 of this bill will allow the term of service contracts to be up to a maximum of seven years. There are several benefits to the move from a mandatory five-year term to a maximum seven-year term for service contracts.

Firstly, as noted in the report arising from the national competition policy review of the transport operations act, several operators and the Queensland Bus Industry Council supported a longer contract term because they argued that the five-year contracts actually raised costs, particularly with regard to financing vehicles and other significant infrastructure. Furthermore, flexible rather than mandatory contract terms will enable the state to enter into longer contracts with operators who consistently perform well. Similarly, where there may be some uncertainty about the operational ability of an unproven operator, the state can enter into a shorter term contract and thereby reduce the risk of entrenching a bad or unsatisfactory operator.

I mentioned earlier that several bus operators and the Queensland Bus Industry Council had sought longer contract terms because of the costs associated with financing vehicles and other infrastructure. Together with the introduction of maximum seven-year contract terms, the clause 52 amendment will also help operators in this regard. This amendment provides that a service contract for the provision of a public passenger service can give the contract holder an option for renewal of that contract at the end of its term. So if the term of a service contract was for seven years and that contract also stated that a renewal option applied, then the possible total 14-year operating period under a contract would assist the contract holder when negotiating with financial institutions.

It should be noted that this renewal option is not a mandatory element of service contracts. In practice, this amendment gives Queensland Transport the discretion to issue a service contract containing a renewal option when the department considers that it is reasonable and appropriate to allow such an option. It should also be noted that the ability of a contract holder to take advantage of a renewal option is dependent upon the operator's satisfactory performance under the original contract. Furthermore, the renewal option can be applied only once. In other words, a contract that has been renewed through the presence of a renewal option in the contract cannot

be renewed again. Nevertheless, when a renewed contract is expiring, a new service contract is to be issued. The benefits already given to existing operators under the act allowing them the right to make the first offer for the new service contract would still apply.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Mr STRONG: I will continue where I left off before lunch. The benefits already given to existing operators under the act, allowing them the right to make the first offer for the new service contract, will still apply.

I note that other amendments in the bill will also serve to improve the use of service contracts for public passenger services. These include allowing the conditions of a service contract to specify penalties on operators for failure to meet specified key performance indicators and the introduction of emergency service contracts that, amongst other things, will help ensure the continued provision of services after the failure of a contracted operator because of liquidation or a similar event. Another amendment will enable immediate action to be taken to amend, suspend or cancel a service contract when there are good grounds for believing that the contract holder is unable to provide any or all of the services required under the contract. Together these amendments will improve the effectiveness of service contracts, and this will in turn bring benefits to the community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.31 p.m.): I rise to join the debate on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. It covers a number of important transport issues that have arisen around the state, particularly in my electorate.

The bill includes a number of amendments to various statutes. It deals with the extension of transitional provisions in the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 for the identification of rail corridor land. It deals with holding tanks on ships and a number of other matters under the Marine Safety Act. There are also amendments under the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 to comply with NCP requirements. These will provide for greater flexibility in the length of public passenger service contracts and allow for the inclusion of penalty provisions in those contracts. Other amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 will provide for principles of fare setting in service contracts, will enable the entry into emergency service contracts if services are disrupted and will remove the distinction between commercial and government funded service contracts. They are some of the major issues covered by this bill.

I want to speak on some general transport matters, particularly relating to the coach industry. I have spoken in this parliament before about the types of services provided by the coach industry throughout Queensland. Some of the amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act aim to provide greater flexibility in the length of public passenger service contracts and allow for the inclusion of penalty provisions. The shadow minister has indicated the way in which we will support some of those matters.

I turn to coach services and the McCafferty's service in particular. We have spoken a number of times about the wonderful services provided by coach lines throughout the state, particularly to those places which are not well serviced by regional airlines. In many cases, the service provided by the coach lines is the only passenger transport available in those parts of the state. Coach lines provide a service particularly to students and pensioners who are not in a position to own a vehicle in which to travel to Brisbane or the major regional centres. They allow for the urgent delivery of medical supplies such as blood samples that require testing. They also facilitate the delivery of urgent parts and minor freight.

I know that McCafferty's in particular has had recent discussions with the minister. With the advent of cut-price air fares, there is no longer a high volume of passengers seeking to use coach services in major centres like Brisbane, Townsville or Cairns. As a result, many of the coach lines rely on picking up passengers in smaller centres. So, for example, the Brisbane-Sydney run would be relying more on picking up passengers in Stanthorpe, Tenterfield and Glen Innes rather than collecting the bulk of passengers from major cities. That has reduced the capacity of coach lines to cross-subsidise less profitable services in more remote centres. For example, it is difficult for companies to provide the less frequented but very important routes between places such as Charleville and Mount Isa and still run at a profit. There have been some negotiations. We supported the minister meeting with McCafferty's to negotiate on that basis. I understand there is an arrangement in place until the end of June. I request the minister to give that company every consideration, because it is about maintaining very important services for people in regions where it is difficult to run a quality service at a profit due to the lack of passengers.

The National Party provided subsidies to various western airlines and other bus companies in the south-west so that essential services could be maintained. In this day and age, it is essential to try to provide that level of service so that people can access regional centres, be it for health, business, educational or just family and social reasons. In the capital city and south-east Queensland, high subsidies are directed to the metropolitan rail service. Nobody begrudges that; it enables people to access public transport to travel to work yet still pay a reasonable fare. Likewise, it is an important community service obligation to provide subsidies to airlines and coach services in rural and remote parts of the state.

I want to speak also today about the Gowrie-Grandchester rail corridor study. It has been under way since March 1999 when the minister first announced a joint Queensland Transport/Queensland Rail study to investigate a corridor for a possible future high-speed rail line between Gowrie, which is just west of Toowoomba, and Grandchester. A report has been concluded on one part of that line, the Helidon-Grandchester area. The recommendations have just been released for comment. There is a period of six weeks for comment on that. The second part of that investigation is the Helidon-Gowrie route, which will continue to be investigated over the next 12 months. That is far more complex because of the topography of the area—the need to go over the range, the need to find a route that can facilitate high-speed trains to replace the very complex current route that brings trains to Toowoomba.

It is an interesting line. The minister probably knows the history of it. The rail company that built the line up the range was one of the most famous rail line building companies in the world. It was the only line that it built in Australia. That is where the term 'the Galloping Clydesdales' came from for the famous Rugby League side, because they imported so many Clydesdales from England to do the earthmoving on that route. That is an interesting piece of history for the benefit of the member for Toowoomba North, who follows me in this debate.

The thing about that route up the range is that it is very circuitous. It has very sharp bends. Some very old—I think they are heritage listed—and very interesting tunnels, from an engineering perspective, have been constructed on that particular route. There will be a need for a new pathway across the range to Gowrie. The investigation of that is more complex. It involves acquisitions, matters of native title and heritage value and so forth.

I think the whole issue of this study is important. It needs to be done. Undoubtedly this crossing will be needed and will happen in the future. It will be a huge expense. Very significant expenditure will be involved in crossing the range, even in the first part from Helidon to Grandchester because of the Liverpool Range and some low-lying area in the Lockyer Valley where it will be necessary for the line to be raised to some extent.

Toowoomba has between 92,000 and 96,000 people in the city itself, and another 20,000 or 30,000 people live in the immediate vicinity. The city is growing at a rate between 1.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent. The growth of the surrounding shires is amongst the highest in the state. Obviously it is a very attractive area in which to live. One day it may well be that people want to live there and work in areas to the east of Toowoomba, in much the same way as the Blue Mountains are used. People live there and take the train service to Penrith, Parramatta or Sydney.

I have often felt that, as our city grows, one of the important things is not to look at our city as a dormitory suburb. Our city has its own individual strengths and independence. It has always been a city in its own right. In the past relatively few people commuted to Brisbane or Ipswich to work, but with better roads and cars people are sometimes doing that. We should be aiming at making our city a place people want to live and work in. But we have to look to the future, and it may well be that that is part of the future growth of our city, because of its attractiveness. This study will make allowance for that and will start to set the corridors, make estimates of costs and look at other aspects of this quite exciting project which could happen at some time in the future.

Other things that have an immediate value need to be done before that. One is the second range crossing, which would be funded by the Commonwealth government. The Queensland Department of Main Roads would, in normal circumstances, be the contracting authority. That is proceeding at the moment. Almost \$30 million has been provided by the Commonwealth government for the purchase of the road corridor for the second range crossing. Some of that money has been made available—

Mr Bredhauer: Most of that is planning and design work.

Mr HORAN: It is not only planning and design. Much of it is for the purchase of the corridor. I think almost half of that corridor has now been purchased. Those funds are for planning and design and for the purchase of the corridor.

I think it is our hope—everybody seems to be working towards it—that the eventual total amount of the money will flow. It would be a large amount of money—from memory in the order of \$300 million. That will be a national asset as well as an asset to the city of Toowoomba.

It has been estimated that the Warrego Highway will be at its maximum with 26,000 vehicles a day coming up to Toowoomba. It is getting towards that now. The point to note about that range crossing is the extremely high number of trucks that use it. At particular times of the day there is an almost constant line of B-doubles and semitrailers—

Mr Bredhauer: We won't get it under current rules with the National Highway.

Mr HORAN: When they go through Toowoomba they turn left to go to Melbourne or they turn right to go to Darwin. They all go along the major east-west road of Toowoomba, which is James Street. It is also the Warrego Highway. I think there are some 14 sets of traffic lights they have to negotiate as they go through the city. At most of the intersections in the inner city at any time there are up to five or six B-doubles and semis on either side of the lights. It really makes that road very congested. I think a second range crossing would make a significant difference to traffic flow in the city. It would take the heavy trucks, at around 80 kilometres an hour, across the range to join up with either the Warrego Highway or the Gore Highway. That is a very significant part of traffic infrastructure for us in Toowoomba. I urge the minister and his department to keep on it. The politicians in local government and other people in Toowoomba are maintaining pressure on the federal government to provide the funding on time.

That is a very important project, as are the recycled water project and the industrial estates that are projected for the western side of the city. Those industrial estates will make the proposed rail line from Gowrie to Grandchester and on to Brisbane even more important and more exciting. The proposal to run the Australian inland railway from Melbourne through New South Wales, across the Darling Downs on the western side of Toowoomba and up through central Queensland to Gladstone and then one day on to Darwin will give total significance to this Gowrie to Brisbane rail line, not only for high speed trains but also for the industrial or transport modules to the west of Toowoomba. It would become almost like a mini Singapore in handling the containers that would come off these long, double-stacked trains that would run from Darwin to Melbourne. It is all futuristic, but that future is not far away. Many of these projects are required within the next couple of years, particularly the second range crossing. The process of land acquisition and planning should be completed within two years. It is very important that construction on that project start then.

I refer to the issue of school buses and seatbelts. Last year the government's School Transport Safety Task Force brought down its findings. They ranged from 30-kilometre speed zones around schools to seatbelts on buses. It remains one of the most important public transport issues faced by the government and those of us in parliament today: ensuring the safety of children travelling to and from school in school buses and starting to upgrade the safety mechanisms on those buses to a standard that would make parents feel happy that their children are safe during the vulnerable time of travelling to and from school. That is something that we in the National Party want to see commenced in the forthcoming state budget. It is important. It was a major issue at the last state election. It is time to get cracking on it and start that process. I urge the minister to give consideration to that.

There is another issue on the Sunshine Coast, where we held a shadow cabinet meeting recently. Our shadow minister for primary industries met with representatives of the sugar industry. There is a lot of concern about the viability of the Moreton sugarmill and a strong case for the government to assist the local sugar industry with transport systems that could replace decommissioned rail services and support expansion into areas such as the Mary Valley.

I touch finally on Commerce Queensland's budget submission, which did include a number of transport infrastructure proposals and suggestions. Its submission included the development of a north-south bypass corridor, improved cross-river links in Brisbane and the development of the Tugun bypass project. I know that the Tugun bypass is one of the major issues on the Gold Coast. It is very important that that project be commenced. It has been under consideration for so long. That end of the coast is an absolute bottleneck.

Mr Bredhauer: Waiting for the money from the feds.

Mr HORAN: The government has to pull its weight and do its part, too. It has to make the thing happen.

The other issue I mentioned related to cross-river links in Brisbane. Our shadow minister for transport, Vaughan Johnson, recently announced our policy in this regard—that is, the duplication of the Gateway Bridge and other options of crossing the river to link up with existing road systems and public transport systems to provide that extra convenience for travelling around the city, particularly for public transport. As I said, this bill covers a number of issues. The issue I want to reinforce is that the government should start to move on the seatbelt issue. It has been around for too many years. It was a major election issue. There was a task force, the idea of which was to make things happen. It is National Party policy to see the implementation of seatbelts on school buses. It may have to happen in a gradual way. Our original policy was to put seatbelts in place where buses were required to travel at over 60 kilometres an hour in rural and regional parts of the state and in those parts of the state where school buses had to travel in hilly or mountainous areas in order to get children to school.

I reiterate the importance of coach services to Queensland, particularly rural and regional Queensland. In the Toowoomba area, it is of absolute importance to get a second range crossing in place before the Warrego Highway and James Street become totally choked. There needs to be the provision of some form of amenity and convenience for the people who live in Toowoomba. Not many cities in Australia, if any, have one of the busiest highways running right through the centre of the city. However, the Warrego Highway has the heaviest freight load in Australia. It makes it very difficult for people traversing east to west in the city, particularly those people who do not like driving amongst 10 B-doubles. It makes it difficult for them to traverse the city. It would make a major change to the amenity of our city if that second range crossing was in place.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (2.51 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I particularly want to speak on the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. The Clark family provides Logan's bus service. Yvonne and Reg Clark are in their 26th year of providing this service and are now doing this with the assistance of their daughters. While many people find it difficult to understand why buses are not running to certain destinations or run on a certain route or run at certain times, the logistics of supplying a bus service to all of Logan is huge. Scheduling, drivers rosters, maintenance schedules, timetables and human resource management are only some of the factors that play a role in running a bus service. This is not an easy task, yet this family has provided a bus service for over 20 years, and I congratulate them.

The other day I was reminded by a friend who moved to Shailer Park when Lion Park was at her back door and the Hyperdome had not even been thought of that in order to catch a bus one would have to stand on the busy Pacific Highway and flag the Pioneer or Greyhound bus on its way from Brisbane to the Gold Coast or vice versa. She said that she often had to stand in the hot sun while she was pregnant trying to flag down a bus to go to the Mater Hospital and how pleased she is that things have changed since Clarks took over. Today we have a suburban bus service that takes us to Brisbane or Logan West and, in the near future, will have the Springwood bus station. I must say that progress on the bus station is going well. However, I urge drivers to drive safely around the construction site as there have been some changes to the normal traffic flow.

Recently the Shailer Park State High School community had a problem with a particular bus route. I am extremely pleased to report that a meeting took place between the principal, P&C representatives, teachers and Karen Gitsham and Dave Kerswell from Clarks Bus Service. This meeting not only allowed the problem to be solved; it also gave an opportunity for the community to give feedback to Clarks and also for the school community to understand a little bit about running a bus service. I thank the parties involved for their willingness to proactively solve the problem. I also thank Clarks for its prompt action to the problem. While often we only hear the negatives about a company, it is pleasing to be able to report some positives. The P&C President, Mrs Jenny Cooper, told the meeting how impressed she was with the Clarks Bus Service representatives and their willingness to listen to them and solve any issues they had. I, too, agree with Jenny and thank Karen and Dave for listening and acting on the concerns of the school community. I would encourage residents of the Springwood electorate to give feedback to Clarks, as it can only solve issues if it is aware of them.

I note that this legislation will impose penalties where the provisions of a public passenger service contract are breached. While this could be hard on operators, I believe it is what the

community expects—that is, a high-quality bus service that meets community standards. If this is not met, then there needs to be a penalty. I also note that the bill will create flexibility in the length of service contracts, with terms of up to seven years instead of five. While I can see how this would be useful for service providers to ensure capital outlay and other expenses are more efficient, I would hope that some mechanism is in place to ensure that the provider is providing the service required by the community. Seven years is too long to wait if a provider is not meeting a high standard of service. I believe it is beneficial that checks be made along the way to ensure the terms of the contract are being kept.

While speaking about providing the community with a bus service that meets its expectations, Clarks has informed me that it will be reviewing its services in order to fully utilise the Springwood bus station. I once again encourage residents of the Springwood electorate to contact Clarks to let it know what they expect. If it is possible, then I have no doubt Clarks will implement it. I look forward to the completion of the busway and the Springwood bus station and to improved bus services for the people of Springwood. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (2.55 p.m.): At the outset, I join the Leader of the Opposition in terms of some of the comments he made with respect to the coach industry. I acknowledge the very significant support given by the minister and the government to McCafferty's in particular in the vicinity of \$250,000—

Mr Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mr SHINE: As I recall, it was support in the vicinity of \$250,000 to carry on the service the member opposite referred to in remoter parts of this state. I accept the acknowledgment of the member for Gregory. The minister will no doubt recall that I have made representations on behalf of another bus company that operates out of Toowoomba but which also services remote areas such as Dirranbandi, St George and so on. In that particular case, it is looking for certainty of renewal of the very welcome assistance that has been given in the past. It is looking for some certainty of that being provided in a more concrete basis for the future.

I certainly acknowledge what the Leader of the Opposition said in relation to the effect on the coach industry of the bulk fare syndrome, which we have been experiencing lately. It is logical to assume that the adverse effects suffered by the industry are no doubt relative partly to that cause but also partly to changing habits and wants of the community generally. I am sure that the minister, representing, as he does, a very remote area of northern Queensland, would be familiar with the problem. I want to make some introductory remarks in relation to some sections of this amending legislation. I also want to raise some points that have been circulated today in the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest*, comment on the second range crossing and the Gowrie to Grandchester rail corridor, again an issue referred to by the Leader of the Opposition earlier.

The objective of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2002 is to provide four amendments to a range of statutes administered by the Department of Transport and the Department of Main Roads, two of which I want to make some brief comments about. The first is the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. These extend traditional provisions for the identification and allocation of rail corridor land before existing provisions expire on 30 June 2002. As I understand it, the need for this is that the work concerned—that is, the surveying of the land associated with rail corridors, particularly out west—is a mammoth task and has just not been completed. Therefore, there is a need to legalise, if you like, the situation by granting that extension.

I also refer briefly to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 and the amendments proposed there. It is proposed that penalties would be imposed where the provisions of a public passenger service contract are breached—penalties in the vicinity of \$300 or at least four penalty points. For example, the penalties might apply in relation to the late running of a bus. These matters were to be set out in the contracts entered into between the department and the bus contractors at the time, so they would know in advance the penalties for any possible breaches in the future. The idea was to create flexibility in the length of service contracts so they could be extended to seven years instead of the current five. Another feature was to allow the chief executive to enter into emergency service contracts if services were disrupted or were likely to be disrupted.

As I mentioned before, earlier today the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest* was circulated and it does raise some concerns—particularly from a legal point of view—in relation firstly to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 amendments. The proposed

sections 47, 48 and 50 are referred to in the *Alert Digest*. These sections all create offences in relation to the discharge of sewage from a ship into specified waters—in some cases treated sewage and in others untreated. In each case, each culpable person commits an offence. A culpable person is defined as the ship's owner or master or another crew member who caused or contributed to the discharge. In each case, the relevant section declares that it applies despite the Criminal Code, sections 23 and 24. They are very important sections of the Criminal Code, because they allow defences in the normal course to be raised.

These sections of the Criminal Code would normally enable persons charged with the relevant offences to escape liability if the relevant discharge happened independently of their will or was accidental, in the case of section 23, or if the person held an honest and reasonable but mistaken belief in the state of things relating to the discharge, in the case of section 24. If it is the desire of parliament to exclude the operation of a very fundamental protection of the individual in legislation, it must be for very good reasons. The minister might be kind enough in his summing up to indicate to the House why in this instance those sections are to be excluded and in fact the onus of proof is to be reversed.

Likewise, the committee referred to proposed amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 in that a new section 107A is being inserted. This provides that, if a ship damages or destroys an aid to navigation, the master and the owner of the ship are jointly and severally liable for the expense of repairing or reinstating the aid to navigation. On the face of it, that is irrespective of whether or not they were negligent. It is a strict liability that appears to be raised. The committee has again brought that to the attention of the House and seeks confirmation from the minister that this provision is intended to impose strict liability. If that is the case, the committee seeks information as to why that form of liability is considered to be appropriate in the circumstances.

I refer to the second range crossing to which my friend the member for Toowoomba South referred. As the member indicated in his speech this afternoon, progress has been made. Last May the Commonwealth government contributed an additional \$13 million, the total amount being allocated to date thus being in the vicinity of \$26.25 million. So far, it has spent about \$14.7 million of that amount. At the moment, planning studies are being continued to finalise detailed planning so that it can purchase the rest of the land for the corridor. By the end of the next financial year, that is, by June 2003, it is hoped that it will have acquired the corridor in toto and completed planning. Refining work to the road alignment on the existing corridor is also taking place. A 1997 study established a road corridor north of Toowoomba for the crossing. In fact, it intersects my electorate of Toowoomba North. The refining work taking place at the moment will ensure the best outcomes for the project.

Interestingly enough, one of the options which I support and which is very popular among people living at Blue Mountain Estate, which overlooks and is alongside the proposed corridor, is the construction of a tunnel under the existing New England Highway, which would be very well received by those residents. I commend that that further examination take place. In relation to the second range crossing, I endorse and support the arguments put forward by the member for Toowoomba South. I will not repeat those arguments on this occasion, but Toowoomba is one of the major gateways to Queensland. The economic benefits not just to Toowoomba, the Darling Downs and the south-west but to the whole of Queensland should be self-evident to all members of the House.

I also concur with the member's comments that the proposed Gowrie to Grandchester rail link is a possibility some time in the future to link up with the proposed Everalld Compton Australian inland rail line. The prevailing wisdom at the moment is that, if that inland rail line becomes a reality, it will probably not have a spur or line going to Brisbane at this stage but that it will more likely go to Gladstone. These issues are being discussed and I understand that there is no certainty about that. Nevertheless, independent of the Australian inland rail project, a study has been undertaken by the minister's department for quite a considerable period. As I understand, it relates really to a freight-driven initiative as opposed to a passenger line. I do not know whether I have the necessary knowledge or skills to differentiate between the two, but that was the driving force behind it in the first place. Again, it would fit in with that Australian inland rail concept as well.

These types of infrastructure projects are huge and cost a huge amount of money as well. One understands that they cannot be achieved overnight. It is my pleasure, as the member for Toowoomba North, to add to the call for these projects to be considered seriously and at the earliest possible time.

Recently, the minister's office circulated to members of parliament in our area various brochures concerning the Gowrie to Grandchester rail corridor study which I commend to all who might be interested in that concept. Time does not permit me to read at any great length what is in the brochures. I have many of those brochures in my office and I would encourage anyone in Toowoomba who would be interested in this very exciting project—the Gowrie to Grandchester rail corridor project—to call at my office or to contact my office and we will send out the relevant brochures.

As I understand it, the whole display—the full report to date, the investigations to date, the maps and so on—will be on display at the Toowoomba City Library at 27 Victoria Street, Toowoomba until 7 June this year. Again, I encourage all of those who are interested, particularly people in Toowoomba—many of whom have already contacted my office, I might add, because this is a matter of great interest, as it should be—to acquaint themselves with what has been done by the department so far. I commend not only the bill but also those projects. I congratulate the minister and his department on the work done so far to which I have referred today.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (3.10 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, which covers a number of issues that are of interest to all members. I am sure that many and varied opinions about this bill will be put forward by members of this parliament.

The transport network is one of the most important structures in our society and it is particularly important to electorates such as mine. In recent times, Flight West Airlines—what we thought was a very good, secure company—ceased its operations. The swiftness with which that company fell into difficulties probably caught a fair few of us by surprise. This legislation helps to fix up some matters when that sort of thing occurs.

I was very involved when Flight West Airlines came into being. It got going very quickly and did a great job. Bob Fulton was sent by Sir Dennis Buchanan to set up Flight West. He did a magnificent job in a very, very short time. He got a few King Airs going and in a matter of weeks we had an airline up and running. It was great to see the birth of an airline and wonderful that that company could, in fact, from those very early days achieve the status of being the biggest regional airline in Australia. Of course, the disappointing part is that Flight West Airlines has folded, although some of its planes are still flying under a different ownership.

Certainly, what happened was a lesson for all of us. The way I see it, at that time the airline industry was experiencing difficulties. Perhaps it was just coincidence, but I think that the change in the equilibrium of the industry through the coming into Queensland and the rest of Australia of Virgin played a significant part. In hindsight, one wonders whether it was very wise to pay \$12 million, or whatever it was, to Virgin. Although it is good that we have cheap flights and competition, what are the consequences? I know that we are keen to attract business to Queensland. We have to try to do everything that we can to bring business into Queensland. However, I am agonising over the fact that we put \$12 million into Virgin and then we had cheap fares. Flight West Airlines made it quite clear that one of the reasons why it could not continue to fly was the cheap fares. Then the bus services experienced difficulty in matching their fares with the cheap airfares. When passengers can fly from Brisbane to Sydney for the price of three cartons of beer, although everyone knows that that situation is only temporary—it cannot last—that certainly has some impact on the rest of the passenger transport community.

Sure, we all benefited from the cheap fares offered by Virgin and Qantas. In the meantime, Ansett fell over. I am not suggesting that Ansett fell over entirely because of the cheap fares—I think that Ansett was probably on the way out, anyway—but the cheap airfares certainly would not have helped. Ansett's backers would have realised that they were in the middle of a huge price war. We have ended up with a situation that probably may have happened anyway, but it appears now that, once the dust has settled, the \$12 million has been eaten up in fares and we are back to having airfares that are very, very expensive. A lot of people have been caught. I would not doubt that members in this chamber and their friends have been caught through the cancellation of their frequent flyer points or their airfares. A mate of mine in Western Australia paid for tickets to Queensland so that he could go to a wedding. He lost all of that and instead had to drive over. It is actually cheaper for him to fly from Western Australia to Manila and then back to Brisbane than it is to come straight across from Western Australia. So we had that price spin-off for a short period, but it has gone. So I just wonder if there is a good lesson in that for all of us to consider.

I want to refer to the bus passenger transport industry. Certainly in my electorate, bus companies have been struggling to make ends meet. The low cost airfare war had an impact on bus companies. McCafferty's, which services my area, made it quite clear that those cheap fares made it very, very difficult for it to operate. It started cutting back some of its bus services at about the same time as those cheap fares. It has now been given assistance by the state government, which I welcome. But I think that we are on a merry-go-round that we cannot get off until such time as the cost of airfares levels out.

I believe that we have to provide a bus transport service to people, because many of them do not have access to vehicles. The bus service provides a valuable service for people living in the towns in my electorate. It also provides a small freight service. I can recall that when I was based in Charleville the local baker was using the bus service to carry certain amounts of bread and suchlike to Blackall. The bus run was then cut out. He really had no other means of getting that bread to Blackall. That certainly had an impact on his income. Although buses are not necessarily meant to carry freight—passengers are their main game, and I recognise that—the reality is that carrying freight helps bus companies to defray some of their costs. So once we change one part of the passenger transport game, the other part falls over as well. Often people build their businesses and make their lives around a transport structure. They live in certain areas because that is where they have access to transport. The same occurs in the city. Often one of the things that people take into account when considering where to buy a house is whether it gives them access to public transport. People go to live in little towns assuming that the local transport service is going to continue to operate.

So I say to the government and the Transport Minister that I appreciate the subsidy that is provided at present to McCafferty's in those rural areas. I hope that it can continue. The service that goes from Toowoomba down to Tara, St George and Lightning Ridge is a valuable service. We certainly require some assistance to keep it going. Let us hope that down the track the passenger numbers will increase and that we will not have to continue to provide that assistance. In the meantime, I believe it is such a valuable service that it must be assisted.

Another topic that needs to be discussed—and the member for Toowoomba North mentioned it a while ago—is the inland rail. That has been a very innovative and far-reaching plan which has taken eastern Australia by storm. Many sceptics did not believe that it would be a reality. Everal Compton and Scotty Macleay are on the committee and, basically, they are doing a great job. I believe that people are slowly starting to realise that yes, this can happen. This inland rail system will be much faster than our current system and it will also be able to carry big loads. When one travels overseas and observes some of the rail lines in America and Canada being used by huge double-decker wagons, one realises that they really can carry some freight.

That will certainly make a big difference in Australia. It will open up the opportunity for produce to be transported north and then exported. It will also prevent a lot of damage to our roads, particularly our coastal highways. Over-nighters will still be used to carry road freight. However, produce will be able to be loaded and transported all the way from Victoria and New South Wales, right through Queensland, to Darwin and then exported.

That rail line is expected to go through my electorate. Obviously the people around Miles are particularly excited about it. There will be a major station there, which would certainly draw a lot of people into that region and make it a very viable area. It is going quite well now, but it would make a big difference.

Mr Johnson: Good representation.

Mr HOBBS: Absolutely! Good representation. The member is working very hard in that particular region, as the member for Gregory points out! No doubt the rail line will eventually go through the Gregory electorate as well.

In all seriousness, it is a great concept and one that I believe will eventually be in place but it will take some time. Of course, any major project is a long time in the making and in the final development phase. It is good to see that the stakes are in place and things are up and running. It is really quite exciting.

Another interesting issue dealt with in this legislation is sewage holding tanks on yachts of a certain size. I have always been amazed that there is no mandatory requirement for holding tanks. I suppose there has been pressure from the industry. I believe that it is very important in this day and age and it surprises me that it has not already been the subject of legislation. I can certainly see the need for them. One only has to consider the number of ships of 10 metres and over which are moored in our marinas, sometimes for quite some time, which do not have these

facilities. There is no doubt that a lot of them do, because people with foresight are using those facilities, but quite a few do not—and they do not have to. Sewage facilities on boats from overseas is an issue that needs to be resolved. This legislation will certainly make a big difference. It will be beneficial for our waterways in general. Many of our marinas are situated along the coastal strip, which is very beautiful and which is visited by a lot of tourists.

Another important issue is the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act. Obviously all members would be very interested in coal freight. It plays an important part in the economy of the coal regions. It has been wonderful to see the development that has occurred over the years. The coal industry has provided jobs for a lot of people and security for many families throughout this state over a long period. I certainly hope that this will be of assistance to them.

Generally speaking, this legislation is certainly a step in the right direction. I endorse the words of our shadow minister and I look forward to some of those recommendations being implemented.

Ms KEECH (Albert—ALP) (3.25 p.m.): This bill provides for amendments to a number of acts administered by the Department of Transport and the Department of Main Roads, some of which are highly relevant to the people in my electorate of Albert. I am very happy to see the opposition supporting the bill today, and I will therefore confine my comments to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995.

A large area of the electorate of Albert borders the environmentally sensitive Moreton Bay, as well as the Albert, Logan, Pimpama and Coomera rivers. Queensland's marine and coastal environment is one of our greatest assets, not just for its contributions to the environment and the tourism industry but also for the social and cultural advantages which access to the waterways and coast affords Queenslanders.

Boating and fishing are extremely popular pastimes in my electorate. I am sure almost every second or third person in Albert owns a tinnie, at least. On the weekend it is difficult to find a spot to park a boat trailer at Jacobs Well, given the popularity of the village as a gateway to Moreton Bay. In fact, whilst I am speaking about boat jetties, may I commend the minister's department for its efforts in planning to build a jetty at Alberton on the Albert River. I can assure the minister that local residents are eagerly awaiting its construction, which is progressing with the cooperation of the Gold Coast City Council.

Members would agree that there is nothing more off-putting to a day's enjoyment on a river or out on the open seas than to come across raw sewage. The management of sewage is a critical health and environmental issue which all residents have the right to expect to be seriously policed. Our coastal waters are extremely sensitive and the government has a duty to protect the quality of the water. I am happy to support the provisions of the bill which will more effectively regulate the deliberate and negligent discharges of pollution into coastal waters.

Rather than being prescriptive, the bill is outcome driven, with an aim to reduce the amount of ship-sourced sewage discharged into our waterways. In my electorate, the proposed amendments will apply to the Gold Coast Marine Precinct, located at the mouth of the Coomera River. This precinct has developed a national and international reputation for building, storing and servicing recreational water craft. The precinct is home to the Gold Coast Marina, Haines Hunter, Mustang Boats, Quintex, Riviera and other key manufacturing companies.

The provisions of the bill which prescribe the use of on-board sewage treatment systems and the need to report incidents of sewage discharge will affect these manufacturers. From visits to the marina, it is clear to me that the operators take their responsibilities to maintain and protect the water environment seriously. Their commitment is evident in the design of plant and equipment to the highest standards to ensure that the discharge of sewage and other chemicals into the waterways is eliminated.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: The boaties in Pumicestone will be very happy to hear that.

Ms KEECH: I am sure they will. There are lots of boaties in Pumicestone, too, as there are in Albert.

Not only is the Coomera Marine Precinct recognised as a boat-building entrepreneurial leader, but earlier today the Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie, opened the Riviera Group's \$2.3 million training and manufacturing centre. This year the group hopes to build 400 boats. The new centre will ensure the 134 apprentices will have every opportunity to not only learn to build export quality boats but also to build the on-board sewage treatment systems that the bill

provides for. Given the protection of the waterways that this bill provides for, I commend it to the House.

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (3.29 p.m.): I wish to speak to a couple of areas of this bill, the first of which is part 3. This amendment arises because BHP Billiton approached the government and requested that the state agree that the 8.5 per cent interest in the CQCA joint venture now held by BHP Queensland Coal Limited may be transferred to another company, namely, BHP Queensland Coal Investments Pty Ltd. It is BHP Billiton that is seeking the amendment to the CQCA Agreement to allow this change, and it is up to the state to decide whether or not to agree to BHP Billiton's request. BHP Billiton has informed the government that the reason for the change is that the first company is presently subject to both US and Australian taxation. However, the second company is Australian registered and subject only to Australian taxation, thereby simplifying matters for BHP Billiton but not saving on double taxation.

It is clearly the case that when the state signs an agreement with a party or a number of parties, the identity of these parties and their ability to deliver whatever they have promised is of critical interest to the state. In this regard, the state approaches any request to change counterparties with great caution to ensure that the state's interest in the agreement is not affected, that the risk on the state does not increase and that the state gets or continues to get what it has been promised.

In this respect, the state is advised that there is no disadvantage in agreeing to BHP Billiton's request to substitute one BHP Billiton company for another, although I must say that the state is also advised that there is no great benefit to the state in the change, either. Nevertheless, the government is pleased to be able to accommodate BHP Billiton's request by submitting this bill to the House to seek authorisation to agree to the change. This is because the government recognises and appreciates the role that the CQCA joint venture, which is now the BHP Billiton Mitsubishi alliance, plays in the development of Queensland's coal industry. The government understands the need for these companies to have confidence that such minor and non-contentious changes can be attended to expeditiously by the government.

Finally, part 3 of this bill also contains a number of technical drafting changes to the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act 1968 on the advice of the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. These changes relate to some legislative maintenance necessitated by the many changes made to the CQCA Agreement Act in the past and also stemming out of the variety of ways that the act has been amended under the power of the Henry VIII clause. These technical changes do not affect the state's interest in the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement.

The other part of the bill that I wish to speak about deals with an emotive subject for most people, that is, transport and roads. Similar to health and education, the issue of transport is emotive—certainly in the electorate of Clayfield. Whilst we appreciate and understand the need for restructuring, busways, corridors and so on—we need that in this state—the corridor affectionately known in Clayfield as the Leckie Road corridor, which has been contentious from the early seventies, is still there.

The residents of Kalinga-Woolloowin in the greater part of Clayfield have concerns about the proposed busway. I have spoken to the minister and he is very aware of our concerns. A couple of editorials appeared in the *Courier-Mail* last Monday and in Saturday's *Courier-Mail*. The journalist, although trying to do a good news story on busways for Brisbane's north, in fact raised very contagious fears in the area of Kalinga-Woolloowin.

Having spoken to the minister, we understand that the corridor at this stage will not be sold. That is our dream. However, the minister also is not totally wedded to the fact that the busway goes along a railway line. That seems ludicrous to me and my residents. We do not want to have to go to yet another election fighting the corridor. The previous incumbent and proposed Liberal candidate seems to think that the way to get elected is to bring up this issue of the corridor in Kalinga-Woolloowin. It is distressing to the residents and wins him no points at all. I for one, on behalf of the residents, will not go to the polls on this issue. As I said, I have spoken with the minister at length on this issue. He is aware of the concerns. We will continue to talk.

If the government is up front about what will happen with respect to any proposed corridor, busway or new roads, the residents of Kalinga-Woolloowin in the electorate of Clayfield will be told, just as I will be told. Hopefully, this can be finalised. The minister says it is difficult to put finality to this, but as long as there is open dialogue and we know exactly what is going on we will be appreciative. I congratulate the minister and his team and commend the bill to the House.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (3.34 p.m.): The Transport Legislation Amendment Bill contains some very good provisions. One that I wish to comment on is that for pollution insurance for vessels defined under the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995. This is the right way to go. This is a provision that needs to be applied in other legislation. It is one thing to have legislation that applies fines for pollution against an offender. However, if that polluter does not have any assets, there are no means to collect that fine from them. Having a form of insurance provides a comeback for the people of Queensland so far as ensuring that they are not left with the price tag for a clean-up. I support that process.

Pollution has been an issue in Narangba, where an irradiation plant is proposed. I raised the issue of public liability insurance to cover radiation accidents with the Health Minister. In her reply to me of 22 March she stated that people may take out insurance but that it was not mandatory under the act and that the court may order people to pay up. But the problem is that if companies have no assets or are a \$1 company, there are no means of getting compensation for cleaning up any pollution or dealing with its impacts. That is a very significant point. We need to see compulsory insurance for significant potential polluters when they are licensed by government, especially for the irradiation plant. The community has a lot of legitimate concerns about that, and this is one aspect of it.

In relation to waterways, we speak a lot about road and public transport systems because they are so important. One area that needs a lot more attention is our waterways, places that recreational and commercial vessels use heavily. Based on the figures I have heard, by the year 2015 in south-east Queensland we will see a doubling in the number of registered watercraft. That is a significant growth. We need appropriate laws to prevent people from polluting and laws to deal with vessel traffic, vessels breaking moorings, how to tow such vessels and ensuring that the people responsible for doing so have adequate powers under the act. All of these things are relevant to the type of legislation that we need to see before the House. Some of those aspects, particularly vessel sewage, are dealt with in this legislation.

If we are going to see a near doubling in the number of watercraft in south-east Queensland by about 2015, we will also need to see a lot more resources to implement and enforce this legislation. As my colleague the member for Gregory has already mentioned, we welcome many aspects of this legislation, but we want to ensure that the resources are put in place to oversee it. There is already legislation on the books that a lot of local communities have criticised because of its lack of policing, monitoring and enforcement. In respect of people living on boats on the Mooloolah River, there has been considerable criticism that there are insufficient officers to enforce existing legislation which bans people living aboard boats, except where people have moored under certain circumstances, such as for repairs. Once again, if we are going to see such a significant increase in the number of watercraft throughout Queensland, and particularly given the pressure on our waterways in south-east Queensland, we need to have adequate numbers of officers to enforce the existing, let alone any new, legislation.

I understand that between Bribie Island and Peregian there are over 9,000 registered watercraft. There are also a number of other vessels that do not have to be registered or are registered outside those areas or interstate. In the area from Caboolture to Noosa, over 18,000 watercraft are registered. That is a lot of pressure on those waterways. With the growth that is occurring, one would think a reasonable number of officers would be provided for under the legislation to enforce the laws. But the officers who enforce those laws are primarily boating and fisheries officers under the Department of Primary Industries.

Currently there are three officers—but only two of those positions are filled—provided for to enforce the legislation governing boating and fishing between Bribie Island and Peregian. That is simply not enough. Those officers deal with the existing legislation. We cannot have two people trying to enforce the existing legislation to prevent people living aboard boats, to prevent people dumping their pollution and to ensure that people are abiding by the regulations. There are only two officers between Bribie Island and Peregian for over 9,000 registered vessels in that area. In reality, many, many more vessels from outside those areas are using those waterways. To have two or potentially three officers covering that area for 24 hours a day, seven days a week is not realistic.

On paper, some will say that there are supposed to be six officers, but they deal with other fisheries issues. The scallop industry also contributes to fisheries issues. The two officers who are supposed to be enforcing the transport legislation also have other tasks in enforcing boating and fisheries legislation, ensuring that the growing port area of Mooloolaba is being looked after in terms of fisheries issues. I bring this issue before the minister. We support many aspects of this

legislation, but it will be ineffective unless there are the officers to enforce it. We must have people on the water who are available not only in office hours but also after hours—available seven days a week—to enforce this legislation.

The people of Queensland, particularly those living on waterways, are very sensitive about environmental issues. They see from their doorsteps people who are doing the wrong thing. They want to know that they can report incidents and see their complaints followed through. The Mooloolah Harbour has come within my electorate only in the last 12 months due to the electoral boundary changes. I was aware of the live-aboard issues that existed in the Mooloolah River. I have found that those issues continue to be a major concern to the community.

Recently I held a public meeting to deal with some of the mooring issues in the Mooloolah River. The Queensland Transport officers who came along were excellent. There was also a boating and fisheries officer in attendance. The main issue at that meeting was to try to tidy up the moorings on the river and find an appropriate method to have them allocated in a fair manner. We also wanted to deal with the fact that the proposed moorings did not provide good access for people from outside the immediate area. The message that came through clearly from that meeting—which involved 115 members of the public from just a small part of Mooloolaba—was that locals are sick and tired of seeing people abuse our waterways by living aboard boats or throwing their pollution overboard into the Mooloolah River. This issue resonates through many other areas of Queensland. The average Queenslander wants to see their waterways looked after, not only from an amenity point of view but also in terms of the ongoing environmental concerns regarding their sustainable use. We do not want to see them polluted by those who access them with commercial or recreational craft.

The issue as to sewage from boats in the Mooloolah River needs to be addressed, but the live-aboard issue also needs to be addressed through greater monitoring. There is also the matter of boats that are abandoned and need to be towed away to safe areas. As well, if boats break moorings, there must be sufficient powers to deal with them in a timely way. There have been problems with that previously. I bring this issue before the minister. I know that there are problems with the legislation being passed under his portfolio but its administration falling to a totally different department. The community is crying out for resources to be allocated to the enforcement of this legislation. If that does not occur, the community will be very sceptical about the planning and consultation that is undertaken regarding the type of legislation we want. Unless we have officers to enforce it, it will not wash with people. I put that issue before the minister and ask for his consideration. Two officers—and potentially three—between Bribie Island and Peregian to look after those waterways are simply not sufficient.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (3.44 p.m.): The Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2002 has a number of parts to it. The object of the bill is to provide for a scope of amendments to a number of acts that are administered by the Departments of Transport and Main Roads. I wish to address a number of them that relate to my electorate, some indirectly, including rail corridors, sea corridors or waterways and—even though I know the bill does not mention them—air corridors.

The extension of transitional provisions in the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 for the identification of rail corridor land is required before the existing provision expires on 30 June 2002. Queensland Transport and Queensland Rail will have completed the task of identifying what land is to be retained in rail corridors by the present expiry date. But the process for exclusion of categorised land in the rail headlease and sublease will go beyond this date. I commend the minister for doing that. In some regions a lot of pressure is put on the government to create new corridors—particularly on the north coast and on the Gold Coast—so that people can go to and from holiday destinations by rail. The pulling up of the rail corridor to Tweed Heads was a costly exercise that occurred under a previous administration. We ought not let those things happen again. I know that this administration will not. We will be putting aside land for transport corridors so that they will be there for our future needs and the future needs of our children.

While I am talking about corridors on land, I would like to talk briefly about corridors in the air. For some period there has been a concern about the air traffic that flies over my electorate. I get nearly all the air traffic on the south side over my electorate. The noise is one factor; safety is another. My constituents' concern is the deregulation of an industry which has such a big impact on people in the air and on the ground. Hardly a week goes by without reading in the newspaper that somewhere in the world an aircraft has struck trouble and people have died. It is not like a repair that needs doing to a car—a flat tyre or the radiator needing some water. In that case, a person can pull up, call the RACQ, along they come, the problem is fixed and the person goes on

their way. When accidents occur involving aircraft, the best outcome is that a person may survive with injuries; they will more than likely die. The other side of it is that taking off and landing are the critical times in the operation of aircraft. People living around airports may be affected by any incidents that occur during take-off or landing. Those issues are on the minds of some of my constituents. I urge the minister to continue to show an interest in the airport, as I know he does. We should investigate new navigational aids which direct aircraft routes over rivers or industrial areas—even though I appreciate that people work in industrial areas during the day—where the least number of people live so that the concerns of my constituents can be allayed to a certain extent.

I refer to the deregulation of the airline industry. We can see what happened to some large airlines that we thought would never, ever go out of existence. Ansett was an institution in this country. When we start deregulating, those sorts of things go out the window. I do not mean to denigrate the Russian people, but they would not be known for maintenance on their aircraft. They would not spend a lot of money on them.

Mr Cummins: Aeroflot.

Mr PURCELL: My colleague from Kawana mentions Aeroflot. I can remember a concert held at ANZ Stadium some years ago. We were woken at 4 o'clock in the morning by a very heavy noise—we did not know what the noise was for a start—that seemed to get larger and larger and go on for a long time. That was Aeroflot, with a belly full of equipment from that concert, taking a very long and low trajectory over my electorate and other electorates beyond, working its guts out.

We know what sort of air safety record Australia has and what sort of maintenance standards are adhered to. We have every confidence in our Australian workers to continue to look after our aircraft. Sometimes the Russian people may leave a lot to be desired. From what I can gather, this was a very cheap way of moving heavy gear. People who live around airports should not be put at risk. I know of the concerns of my colleague Kevin Rudd, the federal member for Griffith. He has fought a long and hard battle with the Brisbane Airport Corporation. I know that his feelings would be along the same lines as my own.

I refer to the extra river crossing, about which members of the opposition have also spoken today. That bridge will possibly be in my electorate. I would like the minister and his department to get on with setting apart corridors now so that development does not occur in those areas. When I came into parliament nearly 10 years ago, a rail corridor was bought back from the backyards of people in my electorate. That caused a great deal of trauma. I think governments should be setting aside land for infrastructure to be built at some time in the future—this bill gives it the right to do that—so that governments do not have to take people's businesses and possibly their homes off them to put in place the infrastructure we need for a modern city.

I thank the minister for making his officers available for a public meeting I had at Murarrie recently in regard to some work being carried out on the Gateway Arterial. Constituents and businesses at Murarrie, mainly on the western side of the freeway, have some concerns about an off-ramp from the Gateway Arterial that is to be taken out. There is work happening there with the port road and extensive works being done to access and egress the bridge and on to Lytton Road. These concerns have been taken on board by the department.

A working group was established for businesses and residents to work together with the department to see if a conclusion could be reached that would please everybody. Sometimes that does not happen, but I am sure that, with goodwill, it will in this case. People need to understand why certain things happen. One of the things I was concerned about when the department told me was the safety of people. I think sometimes it is convenient to have certain corridors, but if they are not safe and they cannot be made safe then people might have to cope with things being a little more difficult or it taking a little longer to get somewhere.

I have a lot of heavy transport and a lot of industry in my electorate. Transports from all of the capital cities come to the port through my electorate. There is also a heavy rail corridor. Businesses also have goods delivered to them locally from all over Australia. It is paramount that these roads work safely and work well for the people who live around those corridors.

Mr Bredhauer: In the final analysis we cannot compromise safety.

Mr PURCELL: I will take that assurance back to my constituents. I thank the minister very much.

I refer to the provisions in the bill relating to compulsory holding tanks on all ships over 10 metres in overall length. They were due to come into effect on 31 December 2001. This date was

extended to 1 July 2002 by the Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2001. This will provide greater protection to Queensland waterways and waterways users from ship-sourced sewage.

As the minister knows, one boundary of my electorate is a river. Some people see that river as other than for recreation, for the use of commerce and so forth. What happens on the river from Kangaroo Point down to the port affects people who live in my electorate—in Norman Park, Hawthorne and Bulimba and from the Colmslie reach of the river down to Gibson Island. For people who live there the river is their backyard. Having sewage discharged in that area is like having sewage discharged in your backyard. It is not what should happen. I commend the minister for these amendments.

I wish to raise some questions with the minister. I am concerned that we are limiting insurance to ships over 35 metres in length. There are a lot of pleasure craft smaller than that that carry a lot of people in and around my area on the river. I just hope that any discharges they make can somehow be correctly cleaned up. Perhaps we can clean up those reaches of the river by implementing insurance to cover those craft.

I mention in passing the maximum fines. We know what magistrates are like: they do not tend to impose the maximum fines, except in extreme cases. The maximum fine is around \$50,000. In relation to oyster leases and places in rivers where seafood is grown, those fines would go nowhere near compensating people and cleaning up the area. I commend the minister for the legislation he has brought in to sort out the coal industry with regard to the problems that arose for it from a High Court decision. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (3.58 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. As I follow my good friend the member for Bulimba I will mention that Aeroflot, Garuda and Air India have given me some very exciting travels. I do know what he means when he speaks about Aeroflot.

The Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 is amended by the bill before us to improve the management of ship-sourced sewage and make pollution insurance compulsory. The principal objective of this act is to protect Queensland's marine and coastal environment from deliberate discharges of pollution into coastal waters. My electorate of Kawana covers half of one side of the Mooloolaba-Kawana harbour, and the Mooloolah River is seriously affected by discharge of sewage. I fully support the legislation that will, I believe, clean up our river system. I have also taken the matter up with the Minister for Environment to ensure that the Kawana treatment plant located upstream is less likely to discharge sewage into the Mooloolah River, as it did some five years ago.

We have raised the bar in relation to the ability to discharge pollution into that river, which is a positive for both residents and businesses alike in my electorate. This act is also to be amended to more effectively regulate the discharge of sewage from ships, providing greater protection of Queensland waterways and for waterway users. We will obviously see an increase of pump-out facilities along with the growth of the marine industry as more and more people buy boats for recreational purposes. I also make mention of the support that I and the Beattie Labor government have received for the CAMOS rail corridor identified on the Sunshine Coast. I believe that there was a promise from our federal coalition members prior to the last election, but I can remember that a federal Labor government under the Building Better Cities program came up with funds to assist the Gold Coast railway. When SunTrain gets some federal funding, I eagerly await an improved system for the Sunshine Coast.

These amendments will also reduce the amount of ship-sourced sewage being discharged into coastal waters and so reduce the likelihood of any environmental or negative health impacts. The amendments will aid in the protection of water quality enjoyed by boat owners, fishers and the community of Kawana. The proposed amendments will apply to all ships in Queensland coastal waters and will allow for the prescribing of the areas where sewage cannot be discharged, such as marinas, boat harbours, rivers, estuaries, the Great Barrier Reef or in the vicinity of environmentally friendly sites, such as oyster beds. It will also allow for the prescribing of on-board sewage treatment systems including holding tanks, on-board sanitation devices and portable toilets. It also allows for the prescribing of special requirements for ships with large numbers of persons on board or ships that frequent sensitive areas, and the need to report incidents of sewage discharge.

I compliment the minister and his department for introducing to my electorate a new university rail bus, as we refer to it, which links Maroochydore through to Mooloolaba, Mountain Creek and Sippy Downs to the Landsborough Railway Station. Instead of having to go north,

people now go south to get the train, which is where the majority of people come from. Now that the university is becoming very popular and, as a result, is experiencing parking problems, university students are utilising that service very well. It was a very proactive thing that the minister's department and this government did. I commend the relevant people involved. I also make mention that the principal objective of this act is to protect Queensland's marine and coastal environment by minimising deliberate and negligent discharges of ship-sourced pollution into coastal waters.

In recent weeks the Beattie Labor government has announced a \$17 million arterial link that will ease congestion for Sunshine Coast motorists. Tenders are to be called for the \$17 million link between the congested Nicklin Way and the Sunshine Motorway. The four-kilometre, two-lane Kawana arterial road will be ready to drive on by the end of next year. It will take pressure off the northern end of the Nicklin Way, which sees up to 48,000 cars come through it every day at Minyama. That is where my office is, so I can guarantee members that night and day it is a very busy area. The Kawana arterial proposal is about to become a reality with this call for tenders. The road will help offset the increased traffic from Kawana's expanding population, which is expected to grow from 20,000 to approximately 40,000 people by the year 2015.

The road will initially divert up to 8,000 vehicles a day off the northern end of the Nicklin Way and construction will be a two-stage project. The first stage will be a four-span pre-stressed concrete bridge over the Mooloolah River and link the road from the river west to the motorway. The second stage will see the new interchange built to join the Kawana arterial to the motorway, halfway between Mountain Creek and Sippy Downs in the electorate of Kawana. The Nicklin Way intersection with Kawana Island Boulevard, formerly known as Aquatic Drive, at Warana will also be upgraded to provide an entry point for arterial traffic. The Kawana arterial is expected to be hugely popular with Sunshine Coast residents, with Main Roads initially expecting 8,000 cars a day to be driven on this new road. I think this is a figure that will be reached quite easily.

The Beattie state Labor government is also about to spend \$1 million on a consultation study with the public and relevant local councils regarding future improvements to the Sunshine Coast Motorway. Letterbox drops and public meetings will provide information and the opportunity for constituents to give feedback to both the local member and the department. As the minister realises, the Sunshine Coast at present does not have a four-lane link between the coast and the Bruce Highway.

I also thank the minister for giving serious consideration to some proposed intersection improvements, possibly traffic lights, where the Sunshine Coast Motorway off-ramp meets Sippy Downs Drive near Chancellor Park at Tanawha. Motorists near the university often find that they face serious traffic problems near the old Bruce Highway, which is now a tourist route, including the Super Bee area. Obviously it is around the peak times from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. that residents commuting to and from school and the university experience major difficulties. I have met with members of the Department of Main Roads, and Maroochy Shire Council's Planning Chairman, Councillor Hermann Schwabe, has agreed to be a partner in making sure that we get it right.

As the minister knows, some \$1 million was set aside to be spent on planning and consulting for the design and upgrades due in coming years for the Sunshine Coast Motorway. In the meantime, we will look to address ways of how we can ease this congestion. At present, motorists exiting the motorway have to travel to Kirby Court or Crosby Hill Road and do a U-turn as they often cannot cross Sippy Downs Drive. I hope that we may be able to identify some funding to ensure improvements are made and possibly an improvement to the off-ramp next to the palm farm.

In closing, I also want to make mention of the Nicklin Way and the outdated vegetation that was foolishly planted by conservative local councils. Melaleucas, or paperbarks as they are commonly known, were chosen at the whim of a councillor and everyone realises that this variety of tree is not suited for roadways. It is suited for swampy marsh areas, not residential areas. Footpaths are continually damaged along with kerbing, channelling and drain infrastructure—major costs to both local government and Main Roads. The root system of these paperbarks or melaleucas grows very thick in search of water. The same councillor unfortunately planted cocos palms down the middle of the Nicklin Way. Again, the short-sightedness and penny pinching of this councillor saw inappropriate seconds being purchased. So years later we can see that these stunted palms are an eyesore. Many people have commented to me about them. I am aware that the local developer may be willing to financially assist with the Caloundra City Council in replacing these cocos palms. I will take it to my community to see if they agree with an

upgrade of more appropriate vegetation and the possible removal of the cocos palms. I commend the minister for the work he has done and will be doing in the Kawana electorate. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (4.09 p.m.): Transport throughout this state is an absolute essential. It is also very important that we have adequate infrastructure. When one considers the size of Queensland and people travelling by bus, in the air or on the sea, road or rail, the infrastructure that needs to be in place is extremely important. The ability to access all areas of the state is important not only for people who attend recreational activities but also for people involved in business, because that is how the state will grow. Really, this vital link of transport will be so important to the future development of this state.

I refer to the rail situation, because improvements are being made to the northern track. Currently, a quite substantial amount of money is being spent on the track north of Rockhampton, from around the Townsville area and up to Cairns. First, as far as the tilt train is concerned, the track improvements may be of some benefit, although I doubt whether the tilt train itself will be well patronised and I have some serious concerns about it. Apart from the tilt train, the important issue is that the track is being upgraded. The improvements to the rail track will allow freight being moved south from Cairns a faster, smoother journey. Not only will such freight be moved faster, but the track improvements will allow for more weight to be carried. It is absolutely essential that provision be made for necessary realignments, because as we increase capacity as far as speed is concerned some of the corners and so on will need to be removed. We need to make provision now for any future development, even though we will not carry such freight in the immediate future.

The same applies as far as the roads are concerned, too, particularly the state highway, because we need to make provision for bypasses around towns. For instance, provision has already been made at Cardwell for a bypass. It may not happen for 20 or so years. It will depend largely on the amount of traffic on the highway, the growth of the Cardwell area and so on, but my point is that it is better to make the provision early because it will probably cost less and there will be less disruption to people. That is very essential, because as time goes on it does become very expensive to increase the capacity of transport corridors.

We will have some problems with rail as we consider increasing speeds. There are a lot of 'occupational' crossings within Queensland, particularly in relation to the sugar industry, where freight needs to cross the rail line at fairly close intervals. The increase in costs that would occur if we allowed for a space of kilometres between these crossings would make the transportation of sugar cane very expensive. Of course, the sugar industry is now in a position of not being able to afford any additional costs that may occur in maintaining rail crossings which have been so essential in the past and which will continue to be in the future.

I refer to the sewage holding tanks and the on-board cisterns that will be put in place, particularly in boats or ships over 10 metres in length. This is a good initiative. It is essential that these ships or boats have that capacity, because we do not want sewage being disposed in areas where it should not be disposed. In the future, if we are to deal with this in an effective manner, we will need to consider disposal areas at various points along the Queensland coast where sewage can be pumped in. Of course, ships need these facilities so that they can pull up alongside such a facility, be it in a marina or wherever, and dispose of their waste. If we do not do that, people, particularly those who own these ships, will dispose of it in places where they believe it will not necessarily be detected.

There is also a clause in the bill relating to salvage operations and to ships over 35 metres in length having compulsory pollution insurance. That is a good initiative, because very often ships break up and there is a cost in terms of getting rid of the wreckage left along the shore. It is also essential with these larger ships that we make sure they do the right thing. If they need an insurance policy to do that, that is also extremely important. At the end of the day, while ever we put in these provisions, it is essential that somebody polices them. It will be costly to do it. For the large part, the boating and fisheries people have been doing it. Certainly, in many instances, their capacity to carry out a number of operations in terms of ensuring the right thing is done with fish stocks does not give them the ability to carry out the duties proposed in this legislation. It will be very interesting to hear from the minister how these additional requirements will be carried out and who will instigate and police them.

I refer to the prospect of diseases coming into Queensland via sewage, waste disposal or whatever. Very often, it ends up in these tanks and then has to be disposed of. There is a

concern with diseases that potentially could come into Australia. I know that in the Northern Territory there was an issue in terms of the white spot syndrome virus. There is also the yellow head virus and the gill associated virus. That is a very big issue as far as the prawn industry is concerned. Then there are a range of other problems that may occur, because in populated areas of Victoria and Tasmania there is the Northern Pacific sea star. In New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia there is the European shore crab, a major predator on native bivalves and farm cell fish species. These form dense populations and alter ecosystem functions. Then there is the black striped mussel in the Northern Territory that was found in 1999. It has a whole range of issues that could be very detrimental to our fish stocks and to our species of crustaceans throughout Queensland. Further, the Mediterranean farm worm has populations in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia and has been detected in Tasmania but may not have established. We have to be vigilant about the introduction of these types of species, whether into aquaculture or the native breed stocks of prawns, crustaceans and a range of fish that are so important to us as far as commerce in Queensland is concerned.

Of course, there are the Great Barrier Reef waters. These barrier reef waters are very closely watched by organisations such as World Wildlife Fund for Nature, which is making a lot of mileage out of what the sugar industry does. If we were to infest these waters with a range of species not indigenous to the area, it could reach a point where there is a loss of coral trout and the prawning industry.

I refer to the Transport Operations Act and road use management. Although this is not necessarily referred to in the bill, this is really an omnibus bill. I wrote to the minister about a young person in Ingham who rode a 400cc motorcycle on a road when he was licensed to ride only a 250cc motorcycle. As a consequence, he was issued with a summons. Section 78(3)(b) of the Transport Operations Act, which we discussed recently in parliament, deals with people who have not renewed their licence. I know that they had a 12-month period to do so. In the particular case to which I refer, about 200 people were affected by the legislation. Of course, an amendment to the act rectified that situation. They are okay, but there is another group who, simply because they were operating a vehicle which they were not necessarily registered to operate, mandatorily will lose their licence for six months.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr ROWELL: Okay. I believe that the mandatory requirements are far too stringent. I wrote to the minister about this on 23 April. I think that, if a person rides a 400cc motorbike across a road when he is really entitled to ride only a 250cc motorbike, a fine would be sufficient. But under this act that I spoke about, he now loses his licence for a mandatory six months. In regional areas such as north Queensland, people are very dependent on their licences so that they can drive themselves to work. I have spoken to some senior people in the Department of Transport about this issue and I have written to them. As yet, they have not responded. Maybe time has not been sufficient.

Mr Bredhauer: It was only a couple of weeks ago. Give us a break!

Mr ROWELL: Yes, but I just wanted to raise it.

Mr Bredhauer: I get 400 letters a week.

Mr ROWELL: But I also raised it with one of the minister's senior staffers probably a week before that. I thought that there may have been an opportunity to rectify that issue within this type of legislation. I am just pointing out this issue because that chap was trying to get a certificate of competency to operate a haul-out unit. Although this chap had a UD licence, he was not able to operate that vehicle because he could not get a competency certificate because he had lost his licence for six months. That means that he could not be employed as a haul-out operator because that particular course was run fairly infrequently, probably four or five months apart. Unfortunately, he was not able to get a job and not able to drive, simply because he rode a motorbike across a road and lost his licence for six months.

I am not trying to be unreasonable about this. I am just saying that this chap has been severely affected. I understand that probably as many as a couple of thousand people around the state have experienced a similar problem. I would be pleased if the minister could look at this matter, because I think that it was not intended that a person who committed such a minor offence should receive such a draconian type of penalty. Had he been doing the wrong thing on the bike, such as exercising undue care, I would have no qualms about whatever penalty he received. But the problem with the act is that it has a mandatory requirement of six months of loss

of licence. I would be very pleased if the minister could look at that matter. I am sure that, in time, when commonsense prevails that matter could be addressed.

Another issue that is critical in this bill relates to the need for navigation devices. Along the northern shoreline there are many areas where there is shallow water. If the navigation devices have been damaged or impaired—somebody has done the wrong thing, somebody has taken them away—very often that can lead to a vessel being grounded. I know that it is very difficult to enter Dungeness, with which I know that the minister would be familiar. It is essential that the channel is marked often. There is some concern about that. Because of the nature of the area, there is a continual shift of sand. As a result, very often those navigation devices need to be readjusted. If that is required to be done, I would like that matter to be taken on board. I know that it costs money to do that, because unfortunately there is a very narrow timeslot in which that can be done because of the tides that go in and out of Dungeness, but it is essential that those navigation requirements are in place.

I applaud the initiative that the minister has put in place in this bill in relation to school buses. People who live along isolated bus routes or in remote areas where they rely on aircraft, or whatever, are being disfranchised to some extent because of their location. It is costly for them to move from point A to point B. Just the cost involved in maintaining a car and the cost of fuel is one of those imposts that they have to live with on a day-to-day basis. We have to give some support to the public transport systems. To some extent, they have to be supplemented and I think that the initiative that the minister is putting forward is fine.

The matters that are addressed in this legislation are extremely important. However, at the end of the day, the implementation of some of those essential issues is going to cost money. I believe that the department, in terms of this legislation, has to have the capacity to implement this legislation's provisions.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (4.25 p.m.): I rise today to speak to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2002 and to give it my support. This amendment bill provides for amendments to a large range of acts administered by the Departments of Main Roads and Transport. I support the amendments that have been put forward, but will confine my comments to just two of the acts that the legislation amends.

Firstly, I refer to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995. The primary objective of that act is to protect the coastal and marine environments of Queensland. It is vital that our coastal waters are protected, and this amending legislation will help to minimise the deliberate and negligent discharges of ship-sourced pollutants. I am aware that the original controls on sewage holding tanks and discharge provisions were not quite acceptable to the boating community and have not necessarily been as successful as had been planned. After further consultation by the minister's department, the need for a stronger, more practical outcome-oriented achievement was identified.

The proposed amendments will apply to all ships in Queensland and allow for the prescribing of the areas where sewage cannot be discharged, such as marinas, boat harbours, rivers, estuaries, the Great Barrier Reef or in the vicinity of environmentally friendly sites such as oyster beds; the use of on-board sewage treatment systems, including holding tanks, on-board sanitation devices and portable toilets; the special requirements for ships with large numbers of persons on board or those that frequent sensitive areas; and the need to report certain incidents of sewage discharge. It also further defines 'culpable person' as the ship's owner or master and also will include any other member of the ship's crew whose act or omission caused or contributed to the criminal discharge of sewage.

My electorate of Glass House touches the Pumicestone Passage, but my concern extends to all of the waters around Queensland. It should be noted that I have many Landcare and Waterwatch groups in my electorate that are working hard in the catchment areas. I have groups such as Barung Landcare, the Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group and the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, who spend many hours of their volunteer time coordinating activities and educating the public in relation to Landcare and the way in which we should be treating our environment. So it is very important that we then extend that care further and make sure that we are also covering it from the waterside to where the water eventually flows.

I would specifically like to mention, too, Margaret Thompson, Lin Fairlie and Mim Coulstock, who are doing an enormous amount of work with the Landcare groups in my area along with people such as Elaine Green and Jan Kesby, who is coordinating the Mooloolah Waterwatch Group and who has involved a lot of the schools in the area, such as Mooloolah State School

and Glenview State School. They are making sure that young people learn about environmental issues and, through that education process, hopefully those young people will educate their parents. Conondale State School also falls into this category. The parents of the students of that school, the students and the volunteers of the school all work hard to deal with Landcare issues.

When we talk about the environment, most members' electorates, like mine, would have a number of groups that care for the environment. On the southern end of my electorate there is the Pumicestone Region Catchment Coordination Association and the Caboolture Region Environment Education Centre, not to mention very specific groups such as the Friends of Lagoon Creek who, as their name suggests, concentrate on the Lagoon Creek area, which is a massive task. Once again, they educate the public, remove the pollutants from the stream, and make sure that further pollutants do not go in the creek.

So when I talk about the environment, I am talking about all of these people working together on the land to make sure that the catchment work is being done and that we, as a government, are putting the legislative requirements in place so that boat owners are also doing their part for the waters around Queensland.

I will speak briefly on the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, which promotes a safe, effective and efficient system of public and passenger transport. I am one of these big supporters of public transport. I feel that the more we get out there and promote it, the better our environment will be and the better the road environment will be.

I have specific concerns about areas such as Maleny and Landsborough which do have good bus services but where we could be looking at putting more services in to service more people some time down the track. We have the excellent rail bus, which picks passengers up where the train drops off, and we have Sunbus and other operators. However, we need to increase those services because every trip on public transport is one less damaging act to the environment through the use of a vehicle.

I will also put in a plug for Mooloolah, one of those little areas which is serviced by a rail line but which has no east-west connection via bus services. People there are working very closely with Queensland Transport to find a way around that. We need to encourage them so that when they eventually have a contracted service, that service works efficiently and, if it does not, we can look at other options.

The amendments allow for penalties for poor performance on service contracts and, in severe cases, for the suspension or cancellation of contracts. It has not been much of an issue in my electorate of Glass House, but other members have been troubled by the allocation of bus routes which are not being used to their full potential. If bus companies are not using allocated bus routes to their fullest potential, we need a mechanism to ensure that they are held accountable and that services are freely available for people who want to use public transport, whether that be to get to the hospital, to school or to do their shopping.

In view of all these amendments, the department will now be able to ensure that vital transport services are maintained. I congratulate the minister and his departmental team on their work and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (4.31 p.m.): I rise to make some brief points about the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I have some sort of illness, so I will make just a few points.

In my electorate, the B&S bus company operated a daily run between Mackay and Emerald on a trial basis. It started in November 2000 but unfortunately as recently as March this year, because of difficulties operating the bus, the company decided it would terminate that run on 22 April. Subsequently, I wrote to the minister at a time when this House was looking at financial assistance to bus runs throughout the state. Subsequent to that letter, an amount of \$18,590 has been allocated to B&S Coaches Queensland for its continued operation until 30 June 2002. I would be very grateful indeed if that bus company could be considered for further funding into the future. That operation between Mackay and Emerald not only satisfies transport requirements but also endeavours to service agricultural areas, particularly Clermont and Nebo, by transporting spare parts, produce and other things that would normally be difficult to get there. I look forward to some support in that area.

The legislation covers quite a number of areas. On the aspect of marine pollution, the legislation certainly lives up to everybody's understanding of what needs to be done, particularly in my electorate and the electorate of Mackay. We now have a magnificent marina—it is perhaps a little late—that will cater for the anticipated operation of charter boats, the tourist boats travelling

backwards and forwards from the Whitsundays to southern ports, and hopefully, at a later stage, the bigger boats coming in from overseas. That marina will be used extensively. Hopefully, this bill will ensure that the reef close by and the fishing grounds will not be polluted. I am very supportive of that, certainly in respect of the nearby reef. Obviously the preservation of the reef is of huge concern to the tourist industry and to everybody who lives close by.

Members would be aware that Hay Point is in my electorate, so I have a fairly substantial rail transport industry. A lot of people work in the industry, rely on it for their livelihood and, of course, the coal companies rely on the railway to get their product to port. There are some ongoing issues in relation to maintenance. Even though they seem to have quietened down in recent times, I continue to receive calls from operators of locomotives who are concerned about the level of maintenance on the line. That continues to be a problem.

Another issue which has raised its head just recently, which the minister would be well aware of, is the concern of the rail, bus and train union about the possible takeover of QLink by Toll Holdings. I have some concerns for QLink employees if that moves ahead. Hopefully they will be well looked after. It would certainly be preferable if it can be stopped or if operations can be made profitable. Third party access to the QR line, particularly by the coal group in that area, is an ongoing concern for rail employees. Hopefully the operation has now become efficient enough that third party access will not become an issue in the near future. Let us hope it continues to go that way.

An issue on the north coast line is the closure of the fettlers gang at St Lawrence. St Lawrence is a railway town and back in the early part of the century it was basically an overnight watering stop for the coal-fired trains and workers barracks were there. It has a long history and association with QR Queensland. It is a sad day, unfortunately, that the last of the railway workers are now to leave St Lawrence over a period of time and they will be based in Marlborough. Effectively, there will be no fettlers gangs between Marlborough and Sarina, a distance of almost 300 kilometres. That is a fair length of line to have no base for a fettler gang.

The infrastructure needs of the state are great. Of course, the linking up of the coal line between Abbott Point to the north and Hay Point to the south has been an ongoing issue for quite a period of time. That would happen up past the new Hail Creek line, and the development of that line from the main line north to Hail Creek will be a step in the right direction. The missing link between that particular line and the Abbott Point line would be back to about 60 or 70 kilometres, so it would give quite a bit of flexibility in the longer term for a rail corridor to be looked at to link those two lines.

The Bruce Highway, particularly from Rockhampton through to Mackay, unfortunately has a reputation for very serious accidents. Quite a lot of those are single vehicle accidents. That particular stretch of road is about halfway between Brisbane and Cairns, so it is a fatigue area. I am not sure how people can be stopped from driving further than they should or becoming fatigued when driving in that area.

I take my hat off to the people who run the driver reviver just south of St Lawrence. My Lions Club in Sarina regularly mans that stop over long weekends, as does the Sarina scout group. That is certainly an exercise in logistics. I congratulate everyone involved. One hopes that their presence over the long weekend helps to make that road safer. We need to see whether we can do something to break the monotony of that road or to highlight the dangers of that road to motorists.

Some time ago I raised the subject of the Hay Point-Bruce Highway turn-off with the local manager in Mackay. On the southbound lane of the highway at the turn-off to Hay Point there have been a number of accidents where, because of the camber of the road, vehicles have hit the kerb rail and rolled. After some consideration, a speed limit of 80 kilometres an hour was introduced. An engineering study needs to be undertaken on that turn-off; merely reducing the speed limit along the Bruce Highway to 80 kilometres an hour is not effective. The Police Service would increase its revenue were it to set up a speed camera in that area, because most people do not even see the signs.

Last but not least, the bill makes a provision for BHP Billiton, which is a large employer in my electorate. I congratulate the minister on moving quickly to ensure that the situation with dual tax liabilities for Billiton will be corrected by this legislation. I support the bill.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (4.43 p.m.): I am pleased to make a brief contribution to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I note that one section of the bill amends the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act to improve the management of ship-sourced sewage and to

make pollution insurance compulsory. The intention is to amend the act so as to more effectively regulate the discharge of sewage from ships, providing greater protection of Queensland waterways and users.

Not many honourable members would be aware that the electorate of Nudgee is a coastal electorate. Whereas it is predominantly based in the north Brisbane suburbs, the eastern boundary of the electorate extends along the shores of Moreton Bay and in particular the Boondall Wetlands and Nudgee Beach areas, which are significant wetland areas not just for recreational and environmental purposes; the area is also crucial to the health of fish stocks in Moreton Bay. Hopefully, these amendments will go some way towards protecting the environment in such a crucial part of my electorate. Interestingly, the Boondall Wetlands area is a staging point for migratory birds that travel from as far away as Siberia on their way to New Zealand.

Ms Boyle: They stop off in Cairns, you know, for a holiday to break their flight.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: There are a number of places on the east coast where the birds stop off, including Cairns and in my electorate at the Boondall Wetlands. This legislation will go some way towards protecting their flight path.

I take this opportunity to speak a little about some public transport and roads infrastructure issues in my electorate. Over the past few years I have been fortunate in respect of public transport in having had extensive upgrades to the railway network. At railway stations there have been a lot of upgrades to parking facilities, security and in particular access. At the moment, Queensland Rail has a very good program for improving access for people with disabilities.

My electorate has been very fortunate to have had a number of lifts and vastly improved ramp accesses installed at a number of stations. Recently, new lifts and ramp accesses were commissioned at Nundah. That has been very well received. Nundah is currently undergoing an extensive redevelopment, with the Brisbane City Council investing with local owners of businesses in a \$2.5 million suburban centre improvement project. The improved access for Nundah station will greatly assist people in gaining access to that development. Also, on the other side of the track in my electorate is the Golden Years Centre, which provides recreational activities and support services for the elderly. Having good access through the Nundah station, which divides the shopping centre from the Golden Years Centre, will be a great improvement.

Those improvements at Nundah complement a number of installations that have taken place over the last few years—new lifts at the Toombul, Northgate, Virginia and Zillmere Railway Stations and also improved ramp accesses at a number of stations, including Sunshine and Geebung. Within the last few years, Banyo Railway Station has had pedestrian gates installed, and a new pedestrian level-crossing was recently commissioned at Nudgee Railway Station, which has also been very well received. I am pleased also that Queensland Rail has put a bit of money and attention into the Nudgee Railway Station over recent times, with a new car parking facility and drop-off zone, and also within the past few days the installation of an additional shelter for inbound passengers using the new pedestrian crossing at the western end of the station.

There is an issue with respect to the Banyo workshops that I have already drawn to the attention of the minister. The Australian Defence Force owns a large parcel of land—about 30 hectares—in Banyo which it has indicated will be sold. It is adjacent to approximately 20 hectares currently occupied by the Banyo railway workshops. In total, we are looking at about 50-plus hectares of land which is uniquely placed for a sensible integrated development. It is close to public transport, being adjacent to the suburban Shorncliffe railway line, five minutes away from the airport and a couple of minutes away from the Gateway Arterial. It is crucial that Queensland Rail work in close cooperation with the consultants that have now been engaged to work with Queensland Rail on this issue—the same consultants working with the defence force. It is crucial that Queensland Rail gives its full cooperation to the master planning of this area.

There are some key issues for the Banyo-Nudgee community arising out of that proposal or any proposed sale of that land. Access to the land is critical. Currently, the only access is via residential areas and also the local shopping centre. The Army land which is adjacent to this parcel of Queensland Rail land would be ideal for access, particularly if the land or parts of it are to be used for industrial or commercial development. I hope that, as part of the master planning process and the identification of opportunities and constraints, appropriate access which will take heavy traffic away from the local Banyo residential area and shopping centre, particularly by using Army land access onto Earnshaw Road and ultimately Crockford Street, which then leads to Nudgee Road and the Gateway Arterial, will be pursued.

In terms of its future use, it is obvious that due to many years of heavy industrial usage by Queensland Rail there are contamination issues, but I know that the local councillor and the local federal member would support a proposition to see as much residential land in the development of that parcel as possible. There is one minor concern that I have contacted the minister about. In recent meetings I have had with Queensland Rail about the use of that land an option has been raised to consider leasing some of the large workshop buildings for some sort of commercial activity. I have expressed some concerns, given that the only access is via residential areas and the local Banyo shopping centre, that if that usage by commercial operators were to involve heavy traffic a great deal of consternation and difficulty would be caused in that local community. I am hoping that sense will prevail and that we can come to some sort of negotiated outcome that will be in the best interests of the local community.

Another issue that I think the minister needs to look at with respect to both Queensland Rail and the Department of Main Roads is overpasses. I know that Queensland Rail has a policy of ultimately doing away with as many overpasses over railway corridors as is possible in the city area. One of the difficulties, particularly with a lot of suburban areas, is that level crossings are right in the middle of suburban shopping centres. I have seen several instances where the local business district is almost completely obliterated and decimated by the installation of large scale overpasses.

I think there is a need for Queensland Rail and the Department of Main Roads to start looking at more community friendly overpasses over rail corridors. I have been searching for a way of doing this. I was in Chinchilla a couple of weeks ago conducting the education and training forums. The Chinchilla overpass is a good example. The way it works is that rather than having a 100-metre or 100-metre-plus section of road either side of the crossing, the ramps leading up to the overpass over the crossing are run parallel to the railway line itself. In effect, if one is looking at it from above, it is in the shape of an S-bend. It takes up a minimal amount of land. In this instance, from what I could see, it caused minimal disruption to the local shopping centre.

Mr Johnson: It is very well done.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: It is very well done. I think that it is an example of the way in which we could use what I am referring to as community friendly overpasses in many city areas.

Mr Johnson: It's safe. It is very safe. You haven't got people trying to rush across railway lines.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: That is right. The Chinchilla example is one which I hope to pursue with Queensland Rail in terms of some areas in my electorate.

I want to raise a couple of other issues with respect to the Gateway Motorway. There is at the moment a planning study for the Gateway Motorway looking at a second river crossing which would enter the electorate of Clayfield. But the Gateway Motorway does extend along the eastern section of my electorate. There are also major upgrades being looked at to the Gateway Motorway to handle the substantial increase in traffic that is using that corridor.

One of the issues which has arisen in recent days, at least in terms of my receiving a formal briefing on it, is a proposal by the Brisbane Airport Corporation to develop quite a major commercial retail and recreational precinct right next door to the Gateway Motorway at the entrance to the Brisbane Airport. Whereas there are some positive aspects of this development—there is talk about hotel development, commercial office space and so on—there is one area of significant concern that I have about this proposal.

The proposal, as I understand it, is called the Gateway Port Development. From the briefing that I have had, there is an intention by the Brisbane Airport Corporation to develop quite a significant retail precinct in this area. The difficulty with this is that approximately one kilometre away is the Toombul Shoppingtown and also the Nundah shopping centre, which is about to undergo quite significant development.

I am concerned that if the Brisbane Airport Corporation is to develop a large retail precinct—and I stress the term 'large retail precinct'—it will have a detrimental impact on the viability of Toombul Shoppingtown and, in particular, many of the traders and retailers who operate out of that centre, and also have potentially a significant impact on the viability of the future development of the Nundah shopping centre. It would be in direct competition with it. One of the key issues here is that Brisbane Airport Corporation is not bound by Brisbane City Council development processes or application processes, so the Brisbane City Council and indeed the

state government do not have a great deal of control or influence in a legal sense over this development.

One other issue of concern if such a large shopping precinct, but particularly a retail precinct, was to go ahead on this site is the impact it would have on the Gateway Motorway. The Gateway Motorway is really not a local road. However, having a major retail precinct in this area would attract a lot of local traffic and would impact on the free flow of traffic on the Gateway Motorway, which is meant to convey vehicles for longer distances than just people going to and from a shopping centre. I have raised this matter through the Minister for State Development's office and intend to pursue it quite vigorously, along with local councillors and federal members, because we do have concerns about the impacts this will have on our constituent traders. Hopefully the state government will have some influence with Brisbane Airport Corporation on this matter. We sit in partnership in the Australia Trade Coast initiative with BAC and the Brisbane City Council. Hopefully, through negotiation, BAC will give due consideration to the potential impacts on local businesses and modify its proposal to a more realistic and acceptable retail precinct in that area.

In conclusion, I want to note quickly a couple of issues. There are some major resurfacing works under way in my electorate at the moment, both on the Gateway Motorway and also on Sandgate Road in the Boondall area. I also make mention of two Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme projects: the successful completion of the Boondall State School drop-off and pick-up zone and the impending construction of a drop-off and pick-up zone at Virginia State School. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (4.55 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to speak in support of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. I wish to endorse the comments and observations by the minister in his second reading speech and also the comments by my colleagues in support of the legislation. I will not go through each of the arguments in support of the bill.

I want to take this opportunity to address a number of transport and road issues in my electorate. Particularly, I want to initially focus on Samford Road, which is the major four-lane corridor through the centre of my electorate and is essentially the spine of the traffic network in the north-western sector of the suburbs of Brisbane. It is carrying an increasing amount of traffic day by day, accelerated by the rapidly growing suburban development that is taking place not only in the suburb of Ferny Grove but also in Upper Kedron and then, as we move into Pine Rivers, the Camp Mountain area, the Samford Downs area and the Samford Valley area generally of Pine Rivers. In the area of Bunya Riverside and Bunya Downs, also within the Pine Rivers Shire, there is an increasing amount of development, leading to a lot more people wanting to use the roads but also a lot more people wanting to use the public transport system.

The Samford Road upgrade project has been on the drawing board for some years. Now, as published in the roads implementation plan in September last year, the funding for the Samford Road upgrade is allocated to the second of the approved years, 2002-03, and is approximately \$5 million of the \$10 million needed to undertake that upgrade. I am grateful for the support of the minister and the Department of Transport and Department of Main Roads for the scheduling of those much-needed upgrade works. Additionally, in the same financial year is allocated the funding of about \$1.3 million for the construction of the Samford Road passing lane between Wahminda Park and the Camp Mountain Road intersection on the way to Samford Village. This will relieve the considerable amount of congestion that occurs on that road, particularly for outward-bound traffic as one travels over the range to get to Samford Village. That project also has been under consideration, planning and development for some time and has received considerable support from the public, as has the Samford Road upgrade project. Both projects are eagerly awaited. We are looking forward to the commencement of those two projects in the next financial year.

Another matter associated with Samford Road is the recent approval by Brisbane City Council to augment the approval by the Department of Main Roads of the construction of a bus indent on Samford Road for Mitchelton State High School. This project has experienced some difficulties because it is a very unusual site on which there is the access into Mitchelton State High School from Samford Road on a difficult part of the terrain of the road, and also bearing in mind the particular configuration of the road at that juncture.

Finally, the planning has been settled and funding has been approved for the construction of that bus indent for at least two buses. That will relieve the pressure and congestion on Samford Road travelling west, both in the morning and in the afternoon, when school buses are calling to drop off and pick up school students from the high school. I can tell the House and the minister

that the Mitchelton State High School P&C, principal and school administration are extremely grateful for the approval of this project. That is to take place in the next few months, as I understand it.

I draw the attention of the House in general terms to a whole range of issues that have been raised with me by constituents about different parts of Samford Road. They are of a relatively minor nature but they are of significance to individual constituents and residents living near the road. I was fortunate to be able to have a meeting recently with Mr Kelvin Marrett and a colleague of his from the Department of Main Roads' metropolitan district office to examine a number of these issues—about 12 in number—that have been raised with me by constituents over the last several months. I put on record my appreciation to Mr Marrett and his colleague for their willingness to examine each of the issues that have been raised with me and to take away the information I provided to examine if there may be some remedial action that could be taken to address the points of concern.

I also acknowledge the tremendous assistance I have received over a number of years from the district director of the metropolitan region, currently Don Steele and previously Bob Drew. Of all of the government departments I have had dealings with in the last several years, the Department of Main Roads has been one of the two or three departments that have provided excellent service, both to me as the local member and to various constituents who have had a range of issues—some big, some small. Each has received commendable attention.

The next concern I draw to the attention of the House relates to public transport access, particularly on buses, in what is commonly called the hills district of Pines Rivers shire but which immediately abuts the outer north-western boundary of Brisbane City Council. It includes the suburbs of Ferny Hills, Arana Hills and Everton Hills, which latter suburb is in the electorate of my colleague the Honourable Attorney-General and member for Everton.

I will give a little history to the bus network there. About 18 months ago Brisbane Bus Lines decided that it would discontinue its contract with the Department of Transport in the provision of public bus services in the hills district. In a very short time frame Queensland Transport was able to engage Brisbane Transport to step in to fill the void. Fill the void it had to, because there was very little time to do that. While there were some teething problems in the transfer of the bus provider from Brisbane Bus Lines to Brisbane Transport, I am very happy to report that over a period of time all of the issues the general public raised, at that time and since, about the new bus routes and the new service provider have been substantially addressed by Brisbane Transport and ultimately by Queensland Transport.

The issue of concern I raise for the information of the House today is the increasing number of calls I receive from particularly elderly and also young people about the extension of the bus service within the hills district to provide increased service at night, on weekends and particularly on public holidays. Particularly I receive expressions of concern from elderly people who, but for access to public transport, become housebound over weekends and public holidays. At Easter, for example, where there is an extended, four-day break from normal weekday bus services, people find it difficult to access alternative transport arrangements to move to the shopping centres or just to move to meet their friends and get out of the house. They have raised with me their concern, which I have passed on to the Department of Transport. There is interest—as I say, it is growing interest—in the area for the extension of the bus service to meet those growing needs. I look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Transport to examine the viability in the long run of providing services to meet those growing needs.

The Ferny Grove Railway Station car park is an additional concern that I wish to address. I have spoken about this matter before. We are in the planning stage for an upgrade of the car park at the railway station. Demand presently well exceeds supply of parking for the growing number of commuters who use the Ferny Grove terminal as a point of access to the Ferny Grove line into the city. The terminal actually services all of those north-western suburbs, extending into the Samford Valley up to Mount Glorious, Mount Nebo, Dayboro and Bunya riverside. I know the growing importance of this project to the local community. I will continue to make my representations to the Department of Transport and to the minister about the timing of the funding for that project. I look forward to progress being made as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the role the Pine Rivers Shire Council is playing in attempting to address long-term strategic solutions to the metropolitan road network in its area. It has recently developed the integrated local transport plan for the Pine Rivers Shire Council and has consulted

with the Department of Main Roads about its draft. I look forward to working closely with the council and DMR in relation to the future of that plan.

Additionally, I note that Brisbane City Council has recently announced that a local area plan exercise will be undertaken for the Upper Kedron and Ferny Grove suburbs within Brisbane City Council. These areas about the hills district, which I spoke of earlier. During that planning project it will be considering, among many other things, the issue of improved local road networks to access the major state controlled road, being Samford Road, for which the state government has already taken major responsibility. With those brief comments I commend the bill to the House.

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (5.08 p.m.): I, too, rise in support of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. I will signal some important elements of this bill so far as Cairns and the broader area of the tropical coast are concerned. I welcome the changes to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 in regard to the provision for the identification and allocation of rail corridor land before the existing provisions expire.

There is something very special about travelling by rail. I inform honourable members that there seems to have been a resurgence in interest in rail travel by the tourists who visit Cairns. The expectation is that this will increase as the years go on. Therefore, for freight purposes, domestic travel purposes and international tourism purposes, we are keen to ensure that the rail corridor all the way to Cairns and beyond is indeed alive and well, so to speak.

We have the *Queenslander*, which is very well frequented; the heritage train, which commenced operations only last year; and the very popular Kuranda tourist train. Of course, we look forward to the tilt train coming to Cairns and, from our point of view, it has been a long time in coming. We have heard over and over of its tremendous popularity in its early stages for travel between Rockhampton and Brisbane. Whilst we do not expect as much commuter traffic as there is between Rockhampton and Brisbane because of our distance from Brisbane, nonetheless the boost to rail related tourism will be significant for Cairns. We understand that the tilt train will get to Cairns somewhere around the middle of 2003 and look forward to its arrival.

Another important element in this bill is the amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 in terms of ship-sourced sewage discharge and making pollution insurance compulsory. It is not widely known that Cairns is home to the largest fishing fleet in Australia. Despite being the small port that it is, it is intensively used by other kinds of shipping as well. It has heavy transport shipping, particularly in terms of the tankers which not only come into Cairns but also pass the area adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef. It is a port for cruise ships. Thanks to the Cairns Port Authority, the cruise shipping industry has grown particularly through the 1990s so that we now expect some 22 visits from major cruise liners to the port of Cairns in 2002. It is also home to a major reef fleet, carting tourists in their thousands out to see the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef pretty much every day of the year. It is also home to many dive boats, recreational fishing boats and even some of the super yachts, whose costs are beyond my imagining.

All of those boats, particularly those of significant size that carry large numbers of persons, should comply with modern standards in sewage management in terms of on-board sewage treatment systems, including holding tanks, on-board sanitation devices and portable toilets. They should be carefully scrutinised and required to deal with any accident that occurs as sensitively, quickly and effectively as possible. Trinity Inlet is a precious wetlands and is a difficult inlet to navigate. We also have an international responsibility in terms of protecting the Great Barrier Reef. I take the opportunity to particularly recognise the good work done by our harbour master, Captain Alan Boath, and his staff. They do have a difficult port to manage with many demands upon them from competing shipping interests, and they do it very well in both the good times and the bad times. I also recognise the tremendous skills of the unseen heroes—the pilots who take boats through the Great Barrier Reef area and into Cairns. They also do it so very well.

I have also noted the comments of other honourable members of this House with regard to the importance of aviation issues, particularly the importance of Brisbane airport to Brisbane and to the state of Queensland. I note the particular issues facing the Brisbane airport mentioned by the honourable member for Bulimba in his speech this afternoon. I inform him and members of this House that aviation issues have been of high concern in the city of Cairns over this last month. That has been reflected in quite wide media coverage—print and electronic—of the various issues that have arisen.

Cairns, in all honesty, is in competition with Brisbane, particularly as an international airport. Members can understand that it is important to us that we make sure that our issues of concern are well represented in Brisbane. The sorts of issues that have been canvassed in recent weeks

are whether there is a need for a second runway, 24-hour usage of the airport and the subsequent noise effects that can have for some people in some suburbs, and a proposal supposedly endorsed by the federal minister, Joe Hockey, for Cairns to potentially become the second biggest international airport in Australia—a new, high-level international airline hub.

The difficulty with discussion of these issues—and I understand that they are of considerable interest to business, tourism and locals, who can be affected as well—is that they risk missing the point. They risk missing the very important imperative we have at the moment to take some action to protect the traffic we already have at the Cairns international and domestic airports and towards growing that traffic, particularly with the establishment of Australian Airlines later this year. We have some opportunities. Unless we take the opportunities that are before us right now to make sure that the real costs to airlines of landing an aircraft in Cairns are reduced or minimised at least, then the grand visions of growth at Cairns airport in the longer term may well be put at risk.

It is important therefore to understand the present position and to work within that. In order to understand this present position, we need to go back a little bit and remember that it was only last year that Cairns airport was put at risk by the loss of some international airlines and their services to Cairns. At the time those airlines made the clear decision on the basis of the costs of landing an aircraft in Cairns being so very much higher than they are at airports such as Brisbane. Additionally, we bore the dreadful demise of Ansett and the impacts of air travel after 11 September. We have managed those latter two effects on Cairns as well as possible, but we have not yet managed the issue of the costs to airlines of landing in Cairns.

There is an imperative to reduce these costs. I suggest to honourable members that all of us in Cairns would do well to turn our eyes to practical action on the following three elements. The first of these is efficiencies in the air side of the airport. There has been much discussion of facilities within terminals for passengers. Important as these are—and I certainly do not suggest that they be in any way ignored or downgraded—they are not the whole story. The costs to airlines are often on the air side. I am told, for example, by one of our aviation experts in Cairns that it costs an airline \$200 a minute for every delayed minute, whether domestic or international—\$200 a minute! If there is a two-minute delay on a flight that leaves Cairns at least once a day for each day of the week, that is a very substantial cost imperative as the months go on and one that an airline surely does not wish to bear and should not have to bear if action can be taken.

The second difficulty at Cairns airport is one that is not getting as much coverage as I believe it should—that is, the Airservices charges as they are applied to regional airports and in particular to Cairns airport. Despite some representations by the Cairns Port Authority at the chair, board and CEO levels last year, the federal agency that is Airservices Australia has not taken on board the tremendous impact of the cost imperatives and their disincentive to airlines to fly into Cairns. In fact, it recently announced further increases for Airservices charges into Cairns—that is, a 9.9 per cent increase for navigation charges while the increase for charges in Brisbane is 2.1 per cent. At the same time, there is an increase of 8.2 per cent in our firefighting charges at Cairns airport while there is an increase for Brisbane of only 5.8 per cent. It is particularly concerning that our federal member, who should surely be working as hard on this issue as possible, is apparently ill informed. He was recently quoted in the *Cairns Post* as saying that there is no need to become so anxious and that Airservices charges as they apply to Cairns have reduced over recent years.

In fact, this is not true. These charges have steadily increased and in fact have risen by some 50 per cent since 1997. At the same time, costs have plummeted in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne compared with regional airports like Cairns because of the policy whereby air services charges apply. It is not a reasonable policy. It is a penalty for regional airports and it makes hypocrisy of the claim by Joe Hockey, the federal minister, that Cairns airport could become the second largest in Australia. It makes hypocrisy of the encouragement in the media to our federal member, Warren Entsch, to pursue this while at the same time not mentioning the very real imperative we have today and next week to cut these costs for air services charges as they so badly affect right now the airlines that fly into Cairns.

The third issue about which there has been insufficient discussion is the federal government's intended privatisation of airport firefighter services. I know that there are those, most often on the other side of the House, who believe in privatisation and that privatisation will necessarily bring down costs. The experience with privatisations in various industries, internationally as well as in Australia, is that this is not always so. I am indeed concerned that in Cairns we should have discussion about the impending privatisation of the airport firefighter

service. It is an essential service and, presently, an excellent service. It is and will remain of course a monopoly service, and these are not the circumstances in my view in which we should accept privatisation. The risk of the airport firefighting service charges going up even higher post privatisation is a serious one.

I must say that I am supported in my concerns by the tourism industry. Airline pricing and access were identified by delegates to Tourism Queensland's recent conference on tourism futures as the top issues for Australia's tourism industry. Mr Bill Calderwood, CEO of TTNQ, has said that it is vitally important that travellers can afford tickets to Cairns on airlines still making a profit. In a *Cairns Post* article he said—

The real challenge is for us to make sure we maintain that we ensure good access and ensure airline economics do not work against us.

I draw these issues to the attention of the House. For the vibrancy of Cairns, we need our transport links to be well maintained, particularly so far as aviation is concerned, and to be affordable. We are in an exciting geographic position in the north of Australia. We know well that that, as much as the special environmental wonders of the Great Barrier Reef and the tropical rainforests, is the key to our future success. Unless our transport links are well maintained and make us easily accessible, this is all put at risk.

I recognise the importance of this bill as it affects transport links into Cairns and far-north Queensland. Whether it be by road, rail, air or sea, we need to recognise the important elements being put in place in this bill. Therefore, I commend the minister on his action in this regard and at all times as well as his staff in ensuring that those transport links, those vital links to Cairns and far-north Queensland, are well maintained.

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (5.25 p.m.): The Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2002 amends eight separate pieces of legislation, and I would like to speak to just one of these that is of vital concern to far-north Queensland. Water quality is recognised as crucial to the health of the Great Barrier Reef, which itself underpins the health of the tourism industry in far-north Queensland and the sustainability of our fishing industry.

The 1995 Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act was designed to control one threat to reef water quality, namely, ship-sourced sewage. Such pollution also poses a threat to coastal water quality in marinas and estuaries throughout Queensland. This act is now to be amended to more effectively regulate the discharge of sewage from ships, providing greater protection of Queensland waterways and waterway users. Mandatory sewage holding tank requirements currently exist for new ships of 10 metres or more in overall length and were set to apply to all existing ships over 10 metres in length from 1 July this year. These provisions, however, were strongly objected to by the boating community and have not been seen to be effective in achieving the objective of the act. Consultation has identified the need for a stronger, practical, outcome-oriented scheme, which I fully support.

The proposed amendments will apply to all ships in Queensland coastal waters and will allow for the prescribing of the areas where sewage cannot be discharged, such as marinas, boat harbours, rivers, estuaries, the Great Barrier Reef, or in the vicinity of environmentally friendly sites such as oyster beds; the use of on-board sewage treatment systems, including holding tanks, on-board sanitation devices and portable toilets; the special requirements for ships with large numbers of persons on board, or that frequent sensitive areas; and the need to report certain incidents of sewage discharge. Specific details of these requirements will be drafted into the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Regulation 1995 later this year. I would appreciate it if the Minister, in his reply to this debate, could elaborate further on these regulations, in particular the issue of pumping out facilities that no doubt will be required in marinas and ports.

It is also proposed to amend this Act to make pollution insurance compulsory. This applies to ships over 35 metres and is to pay for the clean-up of any pollutant discharged by any ship, or to pay for its salvage or removal. Without these amendments, the state government may be left to pay the costs, as indeed it has in a recent example in the Fitzroy River where the state paid over \$300,000 to remove an uninsured ship.

Control of pollution from ship-sourced sewage has proved to be more difficult than initially anticipated. However, the control of point sources of pollution is still much easier than the control of diffuse land-based sources of pollution. Currently, there is a debate raging about the impact of land-based agricultural activities on the Great Barrier Reef. At a recent sugar industry briefing here at Parliament House, Ian Ballantyn, CEO of Canegrowers, the association representing canefarmers, claimed, 'The scientists are not against us.' So, what do the scientists say on this

vital topic? A group of 13 eminent scientists from the CRC Reef, AIMS, JCU, Sugar CRC, Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network issued a statement which summarises the current level of scientific understanding on impacts of terrestrial run-off into the Great Barrier Reef world heritage area. Lest it be said that I am singling out the cane industry, this statement refers to the impact of run-off of sediment and nutrients from all land-based activities. Provision of a creditable and comprehensive science base that reflects the general state of knowledge accepted by the scientific community is critical to the public debate. The two-page statement issued by the CRC Reef Research Centre provides such a consolidated view from our scientific community and I table the entire statement for the interest of members.

However, with the indulgence of the House, I will read into the *Hansard* record the conclusion of these eminent scientists, because the health of the Great Barrier Reef is of such national and international significance and it is vital that any debate about this issue in this House be soundly based on science. The conclusion states—

In summary, the assessment of the potentially adverse impacts of terrestrial run-off and delivery of pollutants to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area from land-based activities is not straightforward and will continue to be so for a while. The main reasons for this are threefold. We have little or no baseline data to indicate what the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area looked like before European settlement. Much of our understanding has only emerged over the past decade or two, so that in many instances we have to infer from other reef systems with longer records and from the interpretation of records embodied within coral cores. Against the backdrop of strong disturbance from natural processes, many of which have recovery periods of decades, it is very difficult to distinguish or even quantify the relative contribution of anthropogenic disturbances. It is likely that adverse human impacts from enhanced runoff will be first observed in the reduced capability, or failure, of coral reefs or seagrass beds to recover from natural disturbance rather than as direct impacts. We are dealing with complex ecological processes, where inherent ecosystem buffering capacity makes it difficult to identify clear human-induced trends in change from relatively short-term studies. However, in many ecosystems, apparent resistance to change due to high buffering capacities can be followed by an abrupt ecosystem collapse once critical disturbance thresholds have been overstepped. Predicting these thresholds is extremely difficult, yet they are absolutely critical, as an overstepping can often lead to irreversible changes or to very slow rates of recovery when the pressure abates.

All three reasons are important enough to adhere to the precautionary principle in managing the land-based sources of impacts on the GBRWHA until we achieve more certainty in our understanding of impacts. The very real risk is that by not undertaking any significant action now to reduce delivery of elevated levels of nutrients and pollutants to the GBRWHA, we may overstep some thresholds leading to irreversible loss of near-shore reef systems and sea grass beds. Moreover, post-European land use has very significantly altered and in many cases caused significant damage to rivers or loss of wetlands in the majority of the catchment area of the GBRWHA. The direct and indirect impacts of the changes to or loss of freshwater biodiversity and food chain links to the GBRWHA have yet to be fully assessed.

In conclusion, on the basis that:

- i. available evidence indicates that post-European land use has significantly increased runoff and sediment associated nutrient and contaminant delivery to near-shore regions of the GBRWHA,
- ii. runoff has had clear detrimental impacts on freshwater aquatic systems,
- iii. there is significant risk that this impact is currently or may in future damage areas of high exposure along the wet tropical and central Queensland coasts of the GBRWHA,

there is a continued urgency to work towards a reduction in the runoff of sediments, nutrients, herbicides and other pollutants into the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The government is engaged in a wide range of measures, in partnership with industry and the community, to achieve such a reduction of pollutants impacting on the reef, including those which are the focus of this section of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. As guardians of the Great Barrier Reef, it is critical that we succeed. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (5.30 p.m.): I am pleased to rise to speak in support of the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. I will speak in particular to the amendments that this legislation makes to the ship-sourced sewage provisions of the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995. The Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 is being amended to improve the management of ship-sourced sewage. This will provide greater protection to Queensland waterways and waterway users from the ship-sourced sewage.

This legislation is good news for Queensland, but in particular the Gold Coast. My electorate includes many of the most beautiful waterways in Queensland, taking in Wavebreak Island, the Broadwater, South Stradbroke Island, the Coomera River and Saltwater Creek. My electorate is a popular area for boaties. The local boating industry and the residents of my electorate have waited with anticipation for this legislation.

The issue of sullage has been raised in a number of public forums that I have attended, including the Paradise Point Progress Association meetings. I am told that of the 160,000

registered recreational boats in Queensland, 50 per cent of those vessels are registered in the south-east Queensland region. Therefore, there is a great need for sewage pump-out facilities and legislation such as this.

The principal objective of this act is to protect Queensland's marine and coastal waters from deliberate and negligent discharges of ship-sourced pollution. Currently, mandatory holding tank requirements exist for ships 10 metres or more in length. However, even if a ship is fitted with a holding tank, sewage could still be discharged in some coastal waters. This could pose a risk to those areas that are sensitive to sewage. The previous sewage management requirement, which was based on length, did not recognise the sewage-generating capacity of a ship or the number of persons on board. The existing provisions were strongly objected to by the boating community and were limited in their ability to achieve the object of the act.

It is well understood that the discharge of sewage can cause undesirable health risks and environmental impacts. The discharge of ship-sourced sewage could impact on important marine habitats, recreational and commercial activities, and the general enjoyment of Queensland's waterways. Consultation through the development of the amendments identified the need for a stronger, practical outcome-orientated approach to ship sewage management.

I understand that Mr Steve Fisher, who is the chairperson of the Queensland Marina Association—and a Gold Coast man who is well respected by the association's members—sat on the key stakeholder committee that was consulted in relation to the development of this legislation. Through this consultation, the boating community now has a greater understanding of the potential impacts of sewage discharge and the need to adopt appropriate on-board sewage management measures. I would like to commend the marina and boating industry for being proactive in addressing this issue. I acknowledge that the process has taken some time, but a lot of information has been sourced from the Boating Industry Association in preparing this legislation.

The proposed amendment will apply to all ships in Queensland's coastal waters and will allow for the prescribing of the areas where sewage cannot be discharged, the use of on-board sewage treatment systems, special requirements for those ships with a large number of persons on board or those that frequent sensitive areas, and the need to report certain incidents of sewage discharge. Specific details of these requirements will be drafted in the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Regulation 1995 later this year. During this drafting process, key stakeholders will once again have an opportunity to consider the amendments, particularly those areas that will require greater protection from ship-sourced sewage. I understand that the Gold Coast City Council has expressed that it would like to see the number of nil discharge waters expanded. There will be an opportunity for the council to put those options to the key stakeholder groups during the further drafting process. I am happy to support that request.

An education program will be used to further raise awareness of the amendments. Opportunities are also being sought from other interested state government agencies, local governments, environment and community groups, port authorities and boating and yachting clubs to play a role in distributing educational materials. I take this opportunity to commend the Gold Coast City Council for its approach to this matter, as I understand that the council is already including in development conditions the requirement of pump-out facilities. I refer to the following slogan that was provided by Gold Coast City Council in conjunction with the healthy waterways campaign and which appears in an advertisement in the latest *Volunteer Marine Rescue* magazine—

Pump it don't dump it. Keep our Waterways clean—Boaties, please use the sewage pump out facilities.

I think that is a fantastic slogan that I am sure a lot of boaties will latch on to.

I am very proud that, in line with community concern and interest by boat owners, the Runaway Bay marina has been forward thinking in relation to sewage discharge. A pump-out facility will be installed at the marina and the management and staff are keen to promote this extra service that will be offered to boat users and to the industry. The manager of the Runaway Bay marina, Mr Glenn Allen, advises me that in this regard the boating industry is moving in the right direction to improve and maintain the standards of the marina industry. I congratulate Glenn and his wonderful team at the Runaway Bay marina, as they run a world-class facility. I am delighted to support them in their efforts to keep our waterways healthy for now and for the future.

These legislative amendments and the further education will lead to a legislative position that will reduce the likelihood of any environmental and human health impacts from ship-sourced sewage. The amendments and awareness will also pave the way for increased interest in the use

of sewage management equipment plus technological improvements in sewage treatment technology. These amendments will benefit all of those Queenslanders who use, value and enjoy Queensland's coastal waters.

The minister's office has been very helpful in relation to the representations that I have made on this matter. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Department of Transport and, in particular, James Murphy, who is the Assistant Senior Project Officer (Environmental Management) for his assistance and knowledge on this issue. Finally, I would like to congratulate the minister and thank him for being patient with me every time I asked him when this legislation was coming to the House. I thank the minister and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (5.37 p.m.): I rise to support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill that is currently before the House. I speak to this bill with the following perspective: I have been a crew member on many racing yachts and boats. I have spent years racing boats in Moreton Bay and up and down the coast of Queensland. My electorate also includes a significant portion of the Moreton Bay Marine Park, in which are located the five southern bay islands of Coochiemudlo Island, Karragarra Island, Lamb Island, Macleay Island and, of course, Russell Island. So the legislation that is being debated before the House will have a significant impact on the people of my electorate as well as other people in Queensland.

The proposed amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1995 are extremely important. Recently in my electorate there was an error of judgment and a commercial barge made contact with a navigation beacon and severely damaged it. This amendment will allow the state government and the Transport Department to investigate the cause of the damage and also the ability to recoup the cost of repairing that beacon. Anyone who has ever sailed or motored around Moreton Bay will understand the importance of these navigational aids. At low tide, the passages are often quite clear, but at high tide and at mid tide they can be very, very tricky to navigate without the use of these aids. This amendment will assist the state government in creating a safe boating environment for all Queenslanders.

A number of members have spoken about the government having to pay quite a substantial amount of money to salvage an abandoned ship in the Fitzroy River. We had a recent example in my electorate where the Point Halloran Neighbourhood Watch, through its boat watch program, identified a boat which had sunk off the beach at Victoria Point due to poor maintenance. At high tide, only a metre or so of that boat's mast was visible. If a vessel was coming in to moor late at night, this posed quite a significant navigation risk. The Department of Transport quickly responded by marking the sunken boat. This legislation will provide a little bit more power, a few more teeth, to the state to investigate the surrounding circumstances, to salvage a vessel and to recoup the costs from the owner of the vessel. In this case, the owner lived interstate and there was quite a degree of difficulty in getting the owner to take action.

The amendments to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 will also have a significant effect on members of my electorate. As numerous members have already said, this is about minimising the discharge of ship-sourced pollutants into coastal waters. By that, we refer to sewage and other waste products. In my electorate there are a number of oyster bed leases that could be compromised by boaties pumping out sewage, and the general biodiversity of the Moreton Bay Marine Park can be significantly damaged by waste being recklessly pumped into the water. I like the slogan mentioned by the member for Broadwater: 'Pump it, don't dump it.' That is a fantastic motto to live by. The Moreton Bay Marine Park is a breeding ground for a number of endangered species, including dugong. Early this week the parks and wildlife officers in my electorate informed me of how low dugong numbers are becoming in the Moreton Bay Marine Park. That is very worrying. They are a beautiful animal, as anyone who has seen them would attest to. Anything which has a negative impact on the environment of these beautiful creatures should be addressed.

Last week, the Minister for Innovation and Information Economy and I travelled to far-north Queensland and looked at the biodiversity we have in Queensland, both in the terrestrial area and in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. As the minister stated in parliament this morning, potentially lifesaving drugs are being located in all sorts of marine species. To risk losing these lifesaving drugs through the negligent behaviour and environmental vandalism committed by some irresponsible boaties is unthinkable. This legislation, which prevents and minimises the damage caused by irresponsible boaties, is a step in the right direction.

The amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 are also directly relevant to my electorate. The service contracts are a great initiative of the government.

However, we need to be able to enforce them. There are a number of situations where service suppliers do not meet their commitments under service contracts, yet very little is done to them. If a service provider or transport provider signs a contract with the state government, it is important to have the ability to make them meet those minimum commitments.

We have had the example of National Bus Lines being in some financial difficulty. Currently, the Department of Transport is very sympathetic to supporting them to allow them to maintain this urgent and essential service in my electorate. However, if at any stage a public service provider does fall over, it is important to find a replacement as quickly as possible without going through a full tendering process.

Debate, on motion of Mr English, adjourned.

ELECTORAL (FRAUDULENT ACTIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 April (see p. 1157).

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (5.45 p.m.), continuing in reply: Prior to parliament rising on the last night allocated for debate on private members' bills, I was commenting on a number of issues raised in the contributions of honourable members. I was talking about the contribution of the honourable member for Indooroopilly on a number of issues. Another issue he referred to was constitutionality. Basically, the Commonwealth proposes offences against the joint electoral roll and I am talking about offences against Queensland elections.

The honourable member for Callide robustly pointed out Labor members' duplicity in this issue. Previously, they have come into this place with amendments to the Electoral Act of Queensland, seeking to make some sort of virtue out of necessity. He pointed out that many members opposite had very selective memories from last term. He also pointed out very succinctly that by voting against this bill, members of the government will be testing the Premier's credibility. As I previously pointed out, the Premier himself said that electoral rorters or cheaters should go to 'jail, jail, jail and jail'. He also said that the statute bar which currently exists in Queensland, which basically stops the prosecution of people who have engaged in electoral cheating activities more than 12 months ago, should be done away with. Basically, those two objectives are the primary objectives of this bill before the parliament.

The member for Algester said nice things about intent, mouthed platitudes and talked about the government's legislation and those sorts of things. Basically, a lot of its legislation was window dressing. At the end of the day, the legislation put through by the government just prior to mine is a fair bit about window dressing. I suppose only time will tell if it is going to work. Of course, those opposite stood up here and predictably gushed about how good the government was. A fundamental flaw in the government's approach is that it has not pursued the matter of identification at the time of enrolment or voting, issues which LCARC should not drop the ball on. Interestingly, there was no submission from the Premier to that committee when it had to comment on my bill. I have said that the issue of constitutionality is subjective. I also challenged the committee and it did not really make any practical suggestions about ways of meeting the Premier's objectives as outlined by him in the lead-up to the last state election. The committee conveniently forgot about that particular fact.

Also, not once has the member for Algester or other government members stood up here in the last couple of weeks and sought to defend what the Premier actually meant when he said 'jail, jail, jail' for people who commit electoral rorting offences and that the statute bar should be lifted. We could lift the statute bar. If members have problems with the rest of the bill, they could do something practical about lifting the statute bar, which basically stops the prosecution of people if the offence happened more than 12 months previously.

The honourable member asked whether under this bill, were it to be introduced federally, Peter Reith and John Howard could be prosecuted for saying things that were not necessarily true or that were subjective. That is not what this is about. In 1995, then Minister for Industrial Relations Foley told an estimates committee that the workers compensation scheme was in the black, yet three weeks later it was revealed to be \$300 million in the red. These things are extremely subjective. The Queensland parliament has power, plenary and ample, to legislate matters relating to its own legislation.

The other thing I am surprised government members did not mention is the Attorney-General's indication that he would not bring legislation into this parliament to amend the Electoral Act until such time as this bill had been decided, reported and voted on. That is as I recollect it. That did not happen.

The honourable member for Beaudesert spoke about the government's domination of the committee system. Although the committee said nice things about the intent of the bill, there was a sense of the inevitable, and that is that the government was not going to support what was proposed and was finding a way of opposing the bill I put forward to the parliament.

The member for Ashgrove spoke about his past experiences in the parliament and also the gerrymander. I acknowledge the genuineness of the member for Ashgrove in his contribution in this parliament. Interestingly, when I was involved with the Young Nationals I used to hold a very strong opinion on the zonal system and used to speak against it. Be that as it may, we have to try something in politics. Principle is not only on the government side of the chamber. I take the member's mind back to how the system evolved in Queensland at a time when the Labor Party had previously been in government.

I have spoken previously about the issue of minimum mandatory sentencing. The member for Ipswich said that rotters are not judged by the electorate; they must be judged by the court. When the Premier made the statements I have elucidated tonight he was very clear in expressing what he thought the courts and the parliament should be doing—that is, until he got a massive majority and forgot all about it. The other issue mentioned by the honourable member is that there is an appeals process in Queensland for inadequate sentences. That is true, but it is also necessary to point out that some previous Attorneys-General in this state have been somewhat lethargic in respect of the process of appeals.

I return to the issue of what the Premier really meant when he said 'jail, jail, jail'. He did not once mention that as being a credibility issue. It was also mentioned that the dissenting report was not very long. I challenge the honourable member to find one dissenting report in the records of this parliament that has been longer than the report of the committee. That has never happened. Dissenting reports point out the principal concerns of the dissenting members. The member also went on to say that this parliament should not usurp the role of the High Court. At the end of the day, the High Court would be the adjudicator on any issues of constitutionality that may arise.

The member for Kawana spoke a fair bit but did not say very much about my bill. He spoke a bit about another bill that had been dealt with in the preceding days. Some other luminary in this parliament said once that 'when you've got a good speech to make, you might as well make it twice', and the member certainly did that. I would not say it was a good speech, but he certainly made his contribution twice.

The member for Mundingburra attacked Justice Ambrose over the Mundingburra case. At the end of the day, Justice Ambrose made an adjudication. I think it was probably a fair one. The people had the chance to decide at a subsequent by-election, which they did. The member went back and said a lot about Fitzgerald. As I have said previously in this place, we could probably go back to the Boer War if we wanted to.

The member for Bulimba was genuine in his comments that people might unintentionally fill out an electoral enrolment form incorrectly and be sent to jail. That is not the intent. The amendments that I will move in committee would clarify this, that is, a prima facie intent would have to be established. Surprisingly, the member for Logan almost spoke to the bill for once, but then he spoke about the RACQ. The member for Nicklin understood the intention of the bill and I thank him very much for his support. He pointed out that any concerns the government and the committee had would be addressed by amendments that I was to move, firstly, to make sure that the offences were classified as a misdemeanour so that no statute bar applied; secondly, that the offences had to be prima facie; and, thirdly, that concerns over the broad nature of offences were addressed in terms of how they would impact on the outcome of an election.

Tonight I urge all honourable members to support this bill for one simple reason: in a bipartisan way, it meets the principles espoused in this parliament by Premier Beattie, who said only a year or so ago that electoral cheaters should go to jail, jail, jail, regardless of whether they are members of the Labor, National or Liberal Parties, and the statute bar should not apply. This bill achieves that objective.

Question—That the bill be read a second time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 21—Bell, Copeland, E. Cunningham, Flynn, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Lee Long, Lingard, Malone, Pratt, Quinn, E. Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Simpson, Watson, Wellington. Tellers: Lester, Springborg

NOES, 60—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Bligh, Boyle, Bredhauer, Choi, E. Clark, L. Clark, Croft, Cummins, J. Cunningham, Edmond, English, Fenlon, Foley, Fouras, Hayward, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, Male, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nolan, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Phillips, Pitt, Poole, Purcell, Reilly, Reynolds, N. Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, D. Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Strong, Struthers, C. Sullivan, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T. Sullivan, Reeves

Resolved in the **negative**.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (6.02 p.m.): I move—

That the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's consideration of subordinate legislation be reported on to the parliament, together with the committee's regular report on bills.

The aim of my motion is to make this government more open and accountable for its actions. In Queensland we do not have a house of review, and the best we can offer for review of bills and regulations is the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. In November last year this parliament agreed to expand the powers of this committee to enable it to scrutinise ministers' amendments to bills and also required explanatory notes to be submitted with all amendments. My motion is simply about removing the veil of secrecy that currently surrounds the committee's consideration of government regulations, referred to as subordinate legislation.

How often have we heard the saying 'The devil is in the detail and the detail is in the regulations'? Often the regulations are simply tabled with the Clerk and it is up to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to scrutinise those regulations to ensure that they comply with the committee's terms of reference. In summary, the committee considers how proposed bills and regulations have regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and the institution of parliament. I am a member of this committee and believe it is time that the secrecy surrounding the committee's consideration of these government regulations should be removed. It is in the interests of good government and will assist in better understanding the interpretation and ramification of these regulations to have the secrecy removed.

I refer members to page 1 of the committee's annual report tabled in this House in October last year where it set out the committee's role in examining bills and subordinate legislation. Unfortunately, members never know about many of the issues the committee takes up with ministers in relation to the interpretation of regulations, notwithstanding that at the same time as the committee is pursuing issues members of parliament may have constituents concerned about the interpretation and meaning of regulations which are identical to the committee's consideration.

At page 12 of the committee's annual report, reference is made to the committee's consideration of the subordinate legislation. At the moment, this annual report is the main method of informing members of parliament and the wider community of the issues that the committee has scrutinised in relation to subordinate legislation. I believe it is wrong that the committee's scrutiny of government regulations is presently prohibited from publication, apart from a brief summary in the committee's annual report.

I also acknowledge that the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee recently reviewed the issue of members not being able to disclose private deliberations of parliamentary committees, notwithstanding how beneficial that member may believe the release of that information may be to the parliament and the community. This committee also stated in its 48th report to this House that—

Debate in the assembly is not a valid reason to disclose private committee deliberations.

Standing Order 197 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Queensland Legislative Assembly reinforces the prohibition against the unauthorised release of committee proceedings. It states—

The evidence taken by a committee and documents presented to it which have not been presented or reported to the House, shall not, unless authorised by the House or the committee, be disclosed to any person other than a member or officer of the committee.

In this regard I also note that the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee in its 48th report recommended, amongst other things, that—

The Standing Orders Committee consider redrafting Standing Order 197 in more precise terms.

Recently our committee met, and amongst the range of resolutions we carried were the following involving government regulations. One was that the committee write to a minister requesting an explanation as to the effect of a subsection and requesting that this provision could be worded more simply. On another occasion, a minister acknowledged that a regulation in question could have been drafted more clearly and advised how, by the insertion of a footnote, readers of the regulation would be alerted to the matter. On another occasion, the committee indicated a view that notification should be in writing, whereupon the minister clarified the intent behind the regulation and provided an undertaking for further amendment to this regulation.

It is issues like these, where there is uncertainty and confusion with the interpretation of government regulations, that the tabling of the committee's consideration of the issues will provide a better opportunity for clarification of the interpretation of relevant government regulations, not just for members of parliament but also the community, and especially specific sections of our community directly affected by the new act of parliament and its regulations. It is the regulations that support the acts of parliament that provide the machinery for the acts to be applied. I believe that acceptance of my motion will play an important role in removing the veil of secrecy that currently surrounds our committee's consideration of government regulations. There is no need for this secrecy to continue.

I understand that, while the government supports the intent of my motion, an amendment will be moved by the government, the substance of which will be to refer this matter back to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee for consideration on how this motion can be implemented. I see no reason why the secrecy currently surrounding our committee's consideration of government regulations contained in these 18 pages of a committee meeting yesterday should remain barred from the view of members of parliament and the community. There is no commercial-in-confidence material. There is nothing that will prejudice any court proceedings. There is nothing that will reflect badly on any minister. There is nothing that will stop the wheels of government moving. Let us be real and move forward.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (6.08 p.m.): I rise to second the motion. In this chamber we pass a lot of primary legislation that carries with it many of the broader issues that are intended to be accomplished. In some instances there is detail. However, much of the process and the practical application is contained in the regulations that that legislation enables. Like the member for Nicklin, many practitioners to whom I speak—for example, members of local government or folk in the fishing industry—say, 'I acknowledge the advice that the legislation has been passed, but we will wait around for the regulations, because that is where the teeth are.'

It is my experience that the majority of people also do not regularly access the *Government Gazette*. When it used to be available only in hard copy, most people did not have access to it. With the Internet maybe more people would access it on a regular basis, but it would still be only a small percentage of the population.

On occasion in this chamber we have had lists from which we could order copies of the regulations. Some of those lists have been extensive at best. Going through the lists to order copies of the regulations, to have a look at their impact or potential impact on my community, is still a reasonably hit-and-miss process because often there can be 100 pieces of individual regulation tabled and put into place and it is not possible or practical to get all of the copies of all of those regulations.

As part of its charter the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee looks at the regulations in terms of their impact on the community. That impact can be the cost to the community in monetary terms. It can be the intrusive impacts of regulations, an example being the regulations in the police powers legislation. I am not saying for one minute that most of those impacts are not positive, but they are intrusive and they do affect people. There is a standing obligation on the various departments for a regulatory impact statement to be drawn up in certain and defined circumstances. My experience of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee—I was a member of that committee for two terms of this parliament—is that the vast majority of departments claim an exemption from formulating an RIS. Therefore, no scrutiny of the regulations occurs other than that done by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. The committee may write back to a minister and ask for a clarification as to the reason an RIS was exempted in a particular instance but really has no power to obligate ministers or departments to be more accountable.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee then, as part of its charter and as a matter of course, receives a report from the research officers of that committee. On that basis, because that process already occurs, there will be no appreciable increase in cost to implement the provisions

of this motion. The only additional cost might be a small amount in paper. As I said, regulations significantly impact on our community—as much as legislation and in some instances more. Therefore, as much information as possible should be available in the public arena. All governments talk about openness and accountability. This motion goes some way to reinforcing what is being said and putting those words into action. As I said, the government will not incur greater cost. The work is already done by very competent officers.

The member for Nicklin has indicated that an amendment is to be moved to refer the motion back to the committee for a report. I hope that report is made within a reasonable time frame to ensure that the motion, which does put in train better openness and accountability, does not just lay in a dark corner of the committee office without a report coming forward in a timely fashion. I certainly support the motion. I believe it does lead to healthier government and to a better informed community, and both are good for a democracy.

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (6.13 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

After 'bills', insert the following—

'Further, that the House refers to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee for its deliberation and report back to the House during the June 2002 sitting, the form and content of such reports on subordinate legislation.'

I think the purpose of the government's amendment is very clear. It seeks to support the motion moved by the member for Nicklin and seeks only to put in place a mechanism by which that motion may in fact be implemented. It is important to recognise that what is being moved as an amendment is simply to deal with the administration of the intention of the motion. In relation to the concerns of the member for Gladstone, I think reporting by the June 2002 sittings is speedy by parliamentary standards.

What we appear to be witnessing this evening is one of the rarest of all moments in parliamentary debate. It appears that later in the sitting hour this motion will enjoy the unanimous support of all members of the House—Independents and those in all parties. I am not surprised, because I think it does testify to the integrity of the work that is done on the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and gives recognition from all parts of the House to the importance of that work.

The scrutiny committee actually has quite an interesting background. It has operated in some form or another in Queensland, in various incarnations, since the establishment of the parliament. I understand that its first incarnation was in around 1860. Committees were originally established in the 16th century in the British parliament to perform functions or investigate matters outside of the normal routine of parliamentary business. These functions have evolved over time but fundamentally remain as a measure of open and transparent government. It seems to me that that is what every member is committing to in supporting this motion tonight—their own personal commitment and that of the party they represent to open and transparent government.

As most members would be aware, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in its current form was established under the Goss Labor government in 1995. It replaced and expanded on the role undertaken by its predecessor, the Subordinate Legislation Committee, which had been operating since 1975. So we have actually gone from a time when only subordinate legislation was considered to a time when all bills are required to undergo that sort of scrutiny.

With regard to subordinate legislation, the committee, as other speakers have noted, is currently able to seek clarification in relation to a particular matter or raise concerns with the responsible minister. Generally these concerns are addressed during discussions with the minister. However, should the committee remain concerned the option is available for the committee to report its concerns to the parliament.

Requisite reporting to the parliament on subordinate legislation does not currently exist and this motion will see that secured. In my view and that of the government, it can only enhance the level of public awareness and understanding of what can often appear, and in fact be, highly complex and technical legislation. It is very important, I think, as the member for Nicklin outlined, in a unicameral parliament.

Can I take some issue, though, with any suggestion that the motivation behind any current deficits in the process is any veil of secrecy. I think, to be fair, that the ministers of this government have a very honest and frank approach to questions from the scrutiny committee and have approached it in a very open way, but it is a deficit that those exchanges are not currently reported publicly.

My experience as a minister who submits legislation for consideration by the committee is somewhat different from the experience that has been articulated by the two previous speakers, both of whom have served on the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee for some time and are very familiar with its operations. Unlike the previous speakers I have not served on that committee. Rather, I have been on the receiving end of its deliberations, which is a different experience and one that I will be honest and say is not always comfortable.

To bring a piece of legislation to the point where the scrutiny committee is considering it means you have often been through 18 months of public consultation, draft after draft after draft, convincing your cabinet colleagues and getting it through the caucus. Then the scrutiny committee points out some problem with it! That is not always the most welcome or comfortable experience. My experience, and I think that of my colleagues, has been that the process has always been one that has ultimately improved the bill. The scrutiny committee gives constructive criticism. I look forward to this practice becoming commonplace in our parliament. The government supports it wholeheartedly. The amendment is in no way any indication otherwise. It is simply a matter of making certain that it does get implemented. I congratulate the member for Nicklin on moving the motion.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (6.18 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of this amendment. As chair of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee I also support in principle the motion moved by the member for Nicklin. My committee has a dual role of scrutinising bills and delegated legislation. While the role of a scrutiny committee is always important, it is particularly so in the Queensland context. As a unicameral legislature, this parliament has no upper house which can review legislation and challenge aspects of it which appear to unreasonably impact upon the rights and liberties of individuals or upon the institution of parliament itself.

My committee is the only entity which routinely examines new Queensland legislation in a bipartisan, unbiased way in order to assess its effect upon those fundamental values on which our tolerant democratic society is ultimately based. As honourable members are no doubt aware, my committee regularly tables in parliament a report called an *Alert Digest*, in which it reports any concerns it may have about particular bills. The *Alert Digest* also includes the responses provided by ministers to concerns previously raised by the committee about bills.

In this regard, my committee's practice is similar to that adopted by most corresponding committees in other Australian jurisdictions. Because my committee deals with bills in this manner, the precise nature of its concerns about any particular bill and the minister's response to those concerns is entirely on the public record. As regards subordinate legislation, my committee adopts a somewhat different practice which is, however, comparable to that followed by most corresponding committees in other Australian jurisdictions. If it has concerns about a particular piece of delegated legislation, my committee writes to the minister whose department initiated that legislation advising the nature of its concerns and often seeking information or suggesting amendments.

In due course, the minister will respond in writing, which may or may not prompt further correspondence from the committee to the minister, and so on. This method of dealing with subordinate legislation in my opinion works very well in terms of outcomes, as in the vast majority of cases ministers have been quite receptive to the committee's comments and criticisms. However, the process does suffer from the disadvantage that it does not take place in the public eye and, as a general rule, the correspondence back and forth between the committee and the ministers does not end up on the public record.

My committee has for some time been mindful of this matter and has been considering whether the current processes need modification. The issue underlying all this is of course transparency. Parliament has entrusted my committee with the task of overseeing, on its behalf, the exercise by the executive government of the delegated law-making powers which are conferred upon the executive under myriad acts. That oversight serves to keep the executive accountable to the parliament and to the people of Queensland. There is an obvious argument that the oversighting process for subordinate legislation should be conducted in a transparent way and, as I said earlier, my committee has been giving active consideration to this matter. I therefore enthusiastically support the general thrust of the honourable member for Nicklin's motion. However, transparency can be achieved in a number of ways other than by tabling a report to parliament, which the honourable member proposes. That proposal might conceivably give rise to difficulties in terms of staff resourcing and additional expenses such as printing costs.

There are a number of other options which also deserve consideration. The first of these would be to table in parliament the correspondence which passes back and forth between the committee and ministers. As recently as last week, I sought information from the chairs of interstate and Commonwealth scrutiny committees on their experience with this option for consideration by my committee in the near future. A second option would be to significantly expand the number of illustrative case studies included in my committee's annual report. I should mention that many of these possible reform measures could be given effect without any amendment of the committee's statutory charter and without the need for a resolution of this House. I would therefore suggest that the matters referred to in the honourable member's motion can best be dealt with by being referred to my committee for consideration. My committee would, I am sure, be happy to report back to the House during the June 2002 sittings as to what reforms it considers are appropriate.

In closing, I wish to place on record my appreciation of the valuable role played by all members of my committee—the members for Nicklin, Aspley, Albert, Pumicestone, Tablelands and Callide. I have no doubt that their understanding of the processes involved in considering legislation regulations better equips them as members of this House. Their dedication and their commitment benefits all other members, as well as the people of Queensland. I support the amendment.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (6.22 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Nicklin that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's consideration of subordinate legislation should be reported to parliament together with the committee's regular report on bills. The reason I support this motion is that there are many words and phrases in regulations presented that are not clear and concise. Thus, there is a need for clarification and interpretation on many occasions. I point out that the committee is made up of parliamentarians—some of them very experienced. If people with the benefit of that experience find it difficult at times to understand, what hope is there for the general public? This is where the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee comes in and requests that the relevant minister explain whatever it is that is not clear. The minister comes back in due course with the verification and it is duly documented in subordinate legislation.

However, because it is against the law for the committee to publicise these explanations, no-one apart from members of the committee is privy to that information. The public, the community or any industry concerned could read the regulations and come up with exactly the same queries but not have access to the explanations forwarded to the committee by the minister. This can cause much unnecessary anxiety when an explanation has already been made and is at one's fingertips, but the law says that we shall not tell. The public should be able to read and understand the regulations and reach a clear and unambiguous understanding of them. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee plays a very important role in the Queensland parliament, as it is the only form of checks and balances that the Queensland government has had since the government of the day in 1922 made the Legislative Council redundant. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee was proudly introduced by the Goss government in the 1990s. As the Beattie government likes to pride itself on its openness and accountability, one would think it would welcome this motion with open arms.

In every other state of Australia and in the federal sphere, bills and regulations are scrutinised far more closely than here in Queensland. There are many more members representing the people and they keep an eye on every bill and regulation that comes before their parliaments. For example, in Victoria there are about 128 members in the Legislative Assembly and upper house combined looking after the interests of an area about the size of Cape York Peninsula. One might think that Victoria is over governed. It is food for thought. This is in comparison to 89 members looking after the whole of Queensland. This is what happens when electoral boundaries are drawn to suit population and not area and a parliament has a Legislative Council as well as a Legislative Assembly.

The important role of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee is to apply some standard questions to all regulations that come before it. Some pass with flying colours but, more often than not, something needs to be clarified and then duly noted in subordinate legislation. It is there to stay and not told to anyone else. There are many examples that can be given of the point I make, but this has already been done by previous speakers. In conclusion, I see no benefit at all in government and the processes of government being less than clear and transparent.

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (6.25 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Leader of the House and seconded by the member for Mulgrave. In doing so, I advise the House that I support in principle the motion moved by the member for Nicklin but acknowledge that I believe that many considerations need to be explored before the House should support its detail. Subordinate legislation has a significant impact on the community as a whole. It is the means by which parliament delegates authority for creating the implementation strategy of a given piece of legislation. In other words, the detail that is necessary to make a piece of legislation work in practice is often delegated to regulations. Since 1975 the Queensland parliament has created committees to carry out the task of scrutinising subordinate legislation and, as many speakers have said, since 1995 the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has been charged with this role.

In my short time as a member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee for the 50th Queensland parliament I have achieved a significant appreciation of the role that the committee has in ensuring subordinate legislation is subjected to the terms of meeting fundamental legislative principles. Requiring subordinate legislation to pass through the rigours of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee is a means by which we as legislators can be assured that matters contained within the regulations meet the same standards of fundamental legislative principles expected from bills before the House. In assessing whether subordinate legislation has sufficient regard to the institution of parliament, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee must consider whether the legislation is within the power that, under an act or subordinate legislation, allows for the subordinate legislation to be made; is consistent with the policy objectives of the authorising law; contains only matters appropriate to subordinate legislation; amends statutory instruments only; and allows the subdelegation of a power delegated by an act only, firstly, in appropriate cases and to appropriate persons and, secondly, if it is authorised by an act.

These are considerable terms of scrutiny already in place in dealing with subordinate legislation. In addition to these scrutiny terms, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee examines and oversees these processes. The committee in my experience takes its role very seriously. The committee is a bipartisan group. It strives for decisions by consensus. Communications with ministers about subordinate legislation are open and direct between the relevant minister and the committee. Transparency and accountability are goals that the committee strives for. However, I have also noted the rapid turnover of work required by the committee. I have noted the voluminous nature of the current *Alert Digest* and the time lines that need to be met to ensure efficient production responses to legislation and subordinate legislation before the House.

I am therefore concerned about the impact that the motion moved by the member for Nicklin will have upon the work of the committee, its staff and indeed its efficiency and its effectiveness. Given the inordinate volume and timing of subordinate legislation creation, I believe that it is possible that a disproportionate amount of the committee's and the parliament's time could be spent on preparing parliamentary reports. However, it is in the interests of continuously improving accountability that the member for Nicklin's proposal is worth consideration. With this in mind, I do give support in principle to the motion but support the amendment and recommend the parliament refers the motion to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. It is important to know what impact the action would have on the current workings of the committee and to consider whether any tangible value to the scrutiny and parliamentary process is achieved by recommending such an action.

When I requested a position on the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee as a new member of parliament, I knew that I was in for a great deal of hard work but that I would be a better legislator for having had the experience of being a committee member. That has certainly been a very successful outcome for me. I take this opportunity to thank the committee staff, Mr Chris Garvey and Ms Anita Sweet, for their tireless effort and professionalism. It is outstanding to watch them and to acknowledge the amount of work they do and the manner in which they do it. I particularly want to thank the chair, the member for Mulgrave, and the deputy chair, the member for Nicklin, for their leadership and their preparedness to help those of us new members of the committee in what is this important parliamentary work. In closing, I support the amendment and recommend its referral to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee for further consideration.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (6.32 p.m.): The National Party supports the intent of the motion moved by the member for Nicklin and also is susceptible of the intent of the amendment moved by the Leader of the House—

Mr McNamara interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Susceptible to be convinced, my friend—as long as the amendment is about ensuring that the motion moved by the member for Nicklin will be implemented in the way that will best serve this parliament. From time to time I do get a little concerned when matters are referred to parliamentary committees and in some cases they basically buy time as the government tries to construct a way to find problems with the intent of the motion before coming back to the parliament and endorsing the overall intent. However, on this occasion I am willing to take the Leader of the House on face value. I believe that she and other government members were genuine in what they said, that is, they want to explore ways in which this reporting of subordinate legislation can be reported properly to this parliament in a timely and cost-effective way.

I commend the members of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee whom I believe do a very sterling job on behalf of all members of parliament. I have admired the committee from the time it was established in the mid 1990s—not just in its current manifestation, but under previous committee chairs and other members. I also admired the Subordinate Legislation Committee prior to that, even though it did not report in the same way as the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. For members of that committee who seek to operate in a very bipartisan way, it can be extremely challenging.

Whilst it is the job of this parliament to make sure that executive government legislates the fundamental and proper principles on behalf of its base constituency, it can be very difficult when, potentially, members of the government or of the opposition could be brought into conflict with one of their number proposing a bill before the parliament. From time to time, scrutiny of legislation committees are forced to make some fairly serious, reserved comments in their scrutiny of legislation. They do so without fear or favour.

Once again, I do commend them on the extremely bipartisan way they go about that, because it is important. It does not serve this parliament or anyone well when, based on the reaction of their colleagues, members of a committee feel somewhat inhibited in any decision they make. From my observations of members of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party, the concerns raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee have always been accepted in a constructive way by other parliamentarians and by members of the executive. Whilst it may cause a bit of annoyance from time to time, it has worked extremely well.

As indicated by other members of parliament, an increasing volume of legislation which requires proper scrutiny and reporting back is going through parliament. I find the operation of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and its *Alert Digest* to be extremely useful to me as a shadow minister in analysing any potential infringements on fundamental rights and liberties and the chance to be able to raise them here in this chamber. It is important that in the area of subordinate legislation, that is, statutory instruments and regulation, we should have the same opportunity to appreciate the expertise of those members and of the committee staff as they sit down and analyse subordinate legislation. We know that subordinate legislation is a tool which is used in effect to bring in the operation of acts of parliament. We also hear members of the Subordinate Legislation Committee talking about issues such as Henry VIII clauses, which can be used basically to usurp the role of parliament.

If there are concerns over the way in which regulations are to be implemented or the potential impact thereof, we as members of parliament have a right to be able to examine them so that we may be better able to comment on them. They should be a matter of public record. The fundamental operation of acts of parliament is often carried out by what is contained in the regulations. Therefore, that is where most of the impact is, and we should have a chance to see it.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.35 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Hon. Anna Bligh and seconded by the member for Mulgrave, Warren Pitt. I feel privileged to be a member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. The committee was created by the Goss government in 1995, and I am very proud to say that my husband, Jon, a former member of this parliament, was its first chairman. It is a role that he was extremely fond of and certainly very proud of.

Initially, the committee's role was restricted to the scrutiny of bills and subordinate legislation. The committee has given me a far greater insight into the workings of the legislative process. The motion moved by the member for Nicklin has merit and commands in-principle support; however, it would undoubtedly place an even greater workload on those involved in the committee, and this needs further consideration. At present, there is only one full-time staff member, and the

committee has the sole responsibility of reviewing all subordinate legislation. Some consideration must be given to the staff, as the committee reviews between 350 and 500 pieces of subordinate legislation every year.

At this point, I place on record my profound thanks to chairman Warren Pitt for his help and his patience and to the committee research officers, Chris Garvey and Anita Sweet, who provide the timely and accurate information upon which our deliberations are based. I am sure that all members are very interested in perusing the *Alert Digest* produced by the staff, which is tabled here in parliament and which highlights concerns about various bills. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee is bipartisan and transparent. It is a committee that has worked in harmony and it has had a good working relationship with ministers to whom it has had to write occasionally to seek clarification or further information. Their responses are always detailed and frank and they are always happy to oblige. What is secretive about that?

It should be remembered that it was the Labor Party which introduced the checks and balances. The process we have adopted is working. It is transparent and, to date, there has been no criticism of it. I know that members of the government who form part of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee stand by their actions and remain open and accountable in all their debates. I appreciate the sentiment behind the original motion moved by the member for Nicklin, who I might add is a valued member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, and seconded by the member for Gladstone, who I believe has also been a valued member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee in the past. However, I support the amendment moved by the Minister for Education and seconded by the current chairman, the member for Mulgrave, that the matters raised by the member for Nicklin should be discussed further by the committee and reported back at a later date.

Ms KEECH (Albert—ALP) (6.38 p.m.): As a member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, I am happy to speak in support of the amendment. The Constitution acts of all Australian states declare that parliament has a constitutional obligation to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the state. Indeed, it is the responsibility of the parliament and its elected members to express the views of and represent the best interests of the people. The institution of parliament is a symbol of democracy. It is therefore imperative that the people are confident that the laws that are created are a genuine product of a democratic process. To ensure that the laws created are not only transparent and accountable but are also seen to be so, each parliament in Australia has implemented its own scrutiny of legislation process, and other members have spoken on the history of this process within Australia and in Queensland.

The role of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee is to scrutinise bills introduced into parliament and subordinate legislation made under existing statutes tabled in parliament. Its role is to examine the justice, fairness and propriety of the way in which legislation is determined and proposed. The strength of the committee is that it does this in an objective way, evaluating policy rather than politics. In fact, it leaves the politics to the parliament itself. Rather, the committee combines the wisdom, fairness, justice, and worldly experience of its members to achieve its objectives in a bipartisan manner.

The motion moved tonight by the member for Nicklin refers to subordinate legislation. Subordinate legislation is laws made by the executive government of the state through delegation rather than by parliament itself. Given the huge volume and technical manner of subordinate legislation that comes before the parliament, it is difficult for the parliament to devote sufficient time to effectively review each piece of subordinate legislation. Indeed, the member for Pumicestone has given us some facts and figures on the amount of subordinate legislation that comes before the parliament each year.

However, parliament retains the ultimate control over the process through the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. It is both necessary and appropriate that parliament conducts ongoing scrutiny of subordinate legislation. The process of scrutiny is carried out in the same manner as bills are scrutinised. It is examined for possible inconsistencies and for fundamental legislative principles. If there are any matters of concern in a piece of subordinate legislation, the relevant staff are contacted by the hardworking Principal Research Officer, Chris Garvey, and the assistant, Anita Sweet.

The strength of the committee is the honest and practical manner in which the government and non-government members work in a bipartisan manner to achieve its objectives. I must say that, as a new member of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, I have been extremely impressed by the way in which we are able to work comprehensively and cohesively in a

bipartisan manner. Therefore, I am disappointed by the accusations of the member for Nicklin and the deputy chair that the failure to publish the communication between departments and the committee in the *Alert Digest* is an attempt to hide behind a veil of secrecy. That term may make good press, but I really cannot say that is accurate. I emphasise that I am quite disappointed by that accusation.

I support the amendment that is before the House, moved by the Leader of the House and seconded by Warren Pitt, the chair of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. I commend the amendment to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.42 p.m.): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Feral Animals

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (6.42 p.m.): Tonight I raise in this House concerns in Rockhampton and the area of the Mount Archer National Park about the increasing level of destruction that feral pigs are causing. The minister has indicated that some 80 pigs have been trapped. I do not know over what time that has occurred, but I have to say to the minister that there are very many more pigs than those 80 that have been trapped.

It has been said to me by very competent people who understand wild pigs very well that traps really catch only the pigs that are not very intelligent. As we all know, pigs are extremely intelligent. The area of concern is some 12,000 hectares that extends across a range of tenures between the eastern verge of Rockhampton and Mount Chalmers. There are two reserves, Mount Archer National Park and the New Zealand Gully State Forest.

These pigs are creating havoc for a great number of people in that area. Wilsons Pawpaws are very competent growers of pawpaws and some other fruits in the area. That operation is located on the boundary of the national park. The pawpaws are continually being attacked. The people who run that operation supply pawpaws to not only Rockhampton but also Mackay and central Queensland. Nothing of note is being done for them. The situation is getting much worse. Another person is raising Angora goats. The pigs are getting into their operations and killing the goats. Wild dogs and dingoes are also killing the goats.

These three types of feral animals are coming right to the edges of Rockhampton. To some extent, those people who live on the outer edges of Rockhampton near the national park live in a hellhole. I just pray and hope that a child is not killed. The national park walking tracks have been closed. That is a sign of defeat. I do not think that we have any option other than to shut down the park and to try a shooting program with marksmen—and women for that matter—who can do the job properly. We really have to attack this issue and deal with it once and for all.

Bribie Island Crest Club; International Women's Day

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.46 p.m.): Some may remember that it was not long ago when many community based service clubs barred women from becoming members. But many women stood up and were inspired to form their own service clubs.

One such club that commends huge admiration is the Crest Club of Bribie Island. It began from an initial meeting of local women, Tracy Thomas, Karen Oysten and Louene Allthorpe, who later became the first president of the club. Its aims were based on fostering friendships, promoting personal development and building better communities. It began in 1989 and some of the original members, including Janet Kirkwood and Kerriane Hickman, are still very active in the club today.

The club is continually instrumental in raising considerable funds for many projects, two of which I will mention tonight. Crest Park borders Pumicestone Passage. This park is the site of many hours of hard work and dedication by Crest members; the most recent addition of an equal access playground was the brainchild of the club's former president, Michelle Webster. The state government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund kicked in \$33,000 and it is a credit to all of

those club members, both past and present, including Deslee Taylor, Helen Moyle, Debbie Dunn, Kay Mackay and Yvonne Bishop.

Another community project that began in 1993 is an annual breakfast honouring International Women's Day. Crest has invited a number of celebrity guest speakers to these breakfasts and all have commanded huge audiences. The current treasurer, Cheryl Collins, is delighted with the attendance at the breakfasts. Funds raised from these breakfasts have gone fifty-fifty to Unifem and to local organisations such as the Caboolture Hospital and the Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre. At this year's breakfast, the female student leaders from Bribie Island High School, Bribie Island State Primary School, Banksia Beach State Primary School and St Michaels College addressed a crowd of over 250 people at the Bribie Island RSL.

The current president, Audrey Bergman, introduced the girls. Their speeches were impressive and I would like to share with members some of their thoughts that were given at the breakfast on 8 March this year. Naomi Harney from Banksia Beach State Primary School stated that, as school captain and a young lady of tomorrow, she had yet to encounter any barriers to her efforts in taking advantage of opportunities or to achieving her goals. Ellen Rogers explained that the Bribie Island State Primary broke with tradition this year and selected two girls, Ashleigh Durbridge and herself, to be the school's captains. Ashleigh and Ellen mentioned many women who were important in shaping Australia's history. They described the many attributes of a leader, including honesty, understanding and a positive outlook. They said—

Recognise and value your qualities and skills. You have a right to an opinion and to continue to feel confident and share that opinion.

St Michael's College leader, Tessa Marsh, said that her research opened her eyes about what women in the past had achieved for her. She remarked that instead of learning about dead generals, failed explorers and ancient playwrights, we should be taught about Australian women who stood up for what they believed in. Shannon Chapman from Bribie Island State High School concentrated her speech on her many female role models, ranging from teachers to sportswomen. She said that they each have qualities that made them special.

International Women's Day is a day to remember the pleasure of being a woman and to recognise the places where we still have work to do in the women's movement. However, we have come a long way. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the speakers whom I have mentioned for their valuable contributions and to the Crest Club of Bribie Island for their efforts in creating what I consider to be a truly memorable experience. I am sure that every woman who attended the breakfast was proud to be a woman and happy to celebrate the day in such a moving and entertaining fashion.

Lockyer Water Supply

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (6.49 p.m.): This is getting to be a little bit of a habit, which I hope to break—it is a bit like smoking—but I have to say that I have risen to thank the Premier for his assistance in addressing the issue of water in the Lockyer. I have addressed this issue on a number of occasions and have asked a couple of questions. I was pleased to see that the Premier took this matter seriously. He appears to be serious about matters affecting regional Queensland. If regional Queensland falls apart, where are we going to provide the jobs? In the cities? They do not have the space!

The issue of water in the Lockyer has been addressed by many, many groups—about half a dozen of them—all using various names. They are all driving in the same direction to try to address the issue of supplying either renewed water or fresh water, both of which are very expensive projects. We are trying to look into which option is the most feasible from a practical point of view and from a financial point of view.

There have been a number of impediments in their way, not the least of which was the apparent dummy spit by the federal government recently when it said it would not provide any assistance whatsoever. I could not believe that was its stance, but that was the content of its correspondence with this government. So, as much as a humble backbencher can, I decided to take the bull by the horns. I decided to go down and plead my case and I asked the Premier to give me a letter of support. I did not suppose that I would actually speak to the Prime Minister. However, after sending up a handwritten note stating that I would not leave until somebody spoke to me, perhaps he thought it might be a bit embarrassing to have security throw out a state member of parliament and he sent down his chief of staff. With the help of this government and people who supplied me with the relevant information, I was able to gain some sort of admission

from the federal government that it would in fact address the issue of future funding—not necessarily from the area the Premier wanted, but from another area. I thank the Premier for that.

We need a whole-of-government approach to the issue of water. A number of ministers are involved: the Treasurer, the Minister for Natural Resources and the Minister for State Development. In order to make this work, the Premier needs an overview of the situation because some people do not understand the dynamics of the studies involved in recycling water. We need some sort of display of leadership. I invite the Premier to attend my electorate and see if he can draw together the diverse opinions that exist in that valley.

Airconditioning Cooling Towers

Mr POOLE (Gaven—ALP) (6.52 p.m.): From time to time we hear the term 'smart building'—smart because of design, layout, air flow benefits or the advantageous use of light, and so on. However, it appears that an important element of making a large building even smarter would be to look at the air conditioning plant's water cooling tower. For many years water cooling towers have been the breeding ground for bacteria and other nasties. This is because some of the bacteria have become immune to chemicals used in the treatment of cooling tower water. It seems to be like a dog chasing its tail—it can never catch it. Chemicals have been either modified or increased to do the job.

The build-up of biofilm on the tower wall is a real problem, as it is behind this film that the dreaded legionella bacteria thrives. Because of the likelihood of biofilm breaking away from the wall, there is a real concern that legionella is released and that is when we read and hear about legionella outbreaks, as was the case quite recently in Victoria at the Melbourne aquarium.

An alternative to chemicals is the attachment of apparatus to any existing cooling tower which has the ability to eliminate all bacteria and biofilm build-up by electrostatic means. I am pleased to tell this House that a company on the Gold Coast has a patent for such a system. The company's name is Permaclean Electro-Static Systems. The system is in use already in buildings such as Castlemaine Perkins Brewery, Golden Circle, the ABC, University of Queensland, Coca Cola, the Bundaberg rum distillery and also the Brisbane cultural centre, to name just a few.

Chemicals will probably be used by doubters for many years to come until they realise that with these electrostatic means descaling is eliminated, electricity consumption is lowered because of better water flow through the exchange tubes, there is no biofilm build-up or the chance of inhaling chemicals from spray, and less likelihood of chemicals in water escaping into the drains and eventually out into Moreton Bay or elsewhere. It is a pity that even with this government's emphasis on Smart State logic, architects and others do not follow our lead and look at alternatives to what they have been doing for years.

Mr A. Crichton

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (6.54 p.m.): With pleasure, I rise to speak about a great Sarina character and friend, Alexander (Sandy) Crichton, who passed away on 3 March this year, aged 88 years. Mr Crichton was born in Huntly, Scotland in 1913, the eldest of 13 children, and migrated to Australia when he was just 16. He arrived in Australia in 1929 and had to borrow 10 shillings from the director of a hostel in Brisbane to get himself to Sarina, where he worked on farms in the district. Later, he purchased a farm at Shinfield in partnership with his brother. Five years later, he married Ivy Haldane and they moved to their own farm at Owens Creek near Finch Hatton, where the couple had two daughters, Heather Watson of Sarina and Pauline Creber of West Hill.

Sandy was always a hard worker and during the war years he often worked throughout the night on another farm and then did his own work during the day. He was always an innovative person and was at the forefront of technology in farming. He was never afraid to try something new. He made many friends and they all pulled together to help each other when the need arose or when things got tough.

He was a councillor on the Mirani Shire Council from 1946 to 1950. He represented the sugar industry as a committee member, chairman, executive or board member between 1944 and 1981. He was an executive member, director and deputy chairman of the Mackay Canegrowers' Cooperative from 1954 to 1975. He was a member of the Plane Creek Mill Suppliers' Committee from 1955 to 1975, for 17 years of which he was chairman. He served for 17 years as director of

the Cooperative Wholesale Society and for 15 years on the Queensland Central Cane Prices Board.

Mr Crichton was a member of the Sarina Rotary Club for more than 40 years and was awarded the club's prestigious Paul Harris Fellowship Award in recognition of his service to the community. He was also actively involved in the Sarina Rifle Club, the local ambulance committee, the chamber of commerce, air-sea rescue, and the Masonic and Presbyterian fraternities. In 1992 he was awarded the Order of Australia medal for his services to the sugar industry and to the community—a very proud moment for Sandy and his family.

Sandy will be missed by his family and friends and will be remembered for his involvement in the sugar industry and his untiring service to his community.

Wood Expo, Maleny

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (6.57 p.m.): I rise to talk about an excellent environmental exhibition held in Maleny over the weekend entitled From Chainsaw to Fine Furniture. Quite often when one talks about land care and looking after the environment, one is not necessarily thinking about chainsaws. However, the display included how the wood is collected in the various areas and the types of things that can be done with it. I congratulate Mim Coulstock, the expo coordinator; Elaine Green, for all her work in getting the expo together; and Eve Scopes and all the volunteers who made it an exciting, well-organised and well-run event.

Part of the expo was the ArtisTree Project, which was coordinated by Penny Smith, who did an amazing job dealing with lots of different artists and pulling this expo together. Basically, they were dealing with the camphor laurel tree. As members would be aware, the invasion of the camphor laurel is an important issue for catchment management in my electorate. It spreads rapidly and it definitely dominates all the areas of natural regeneration. When one looks at the landscape around Maleny, it is dominated by camphor laurel trees. Unfortunately, it is a very impressive species.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: That's the problem.

Ms MALE: That is the problem; people think they are good trees and I have been asked to lobby the minister about it becoming a declared weed. The ArtisTree team cut down two camphor laurel trees from a local property. The millers came on site and the artists chose the exact size wood they would need. It was then kiln dried in a solar kiln. The wood was given to a number of artists in the area and they used it to create a fantastic exhibition of what can be done with camphor laurel.

They are aware that there is also an education process involved, in that people cannot just chop down every single camphor laurel tree they see because that would create just as many problems as it would solve. They are looking at the education of people. They are hoping to tour the ArtisTree exhibition once they gain funding, which would be a very worthwhile event all around Queensland.

All their art works were produced from wood from camphor laurels. It is the most amazing wood I have ever seen. It has a superb grain; that is very dominant. The artist Lyn Fellowes did collage artwork and Matthew de Boer, an eco-artist, made a fantastic leaf form which would have been over a metre long and the carving was just perfect.

The high school also got involved. The Maleny State High School year 12 industrial skills students made a fantastic wine table. The year 11 visual arts practice students did wood block prints. Year 11 student Joel McLune made some candle holders. There were so many artists there I cannot mention them all today. Randy De Graw's tables were spectacular. If I could have taken home the feast bowl by Jim Svensson I would have. But the price tag of almost \$2,000 was a little bit out of my league. Tony Greaves's sculpted side table, with its form, definition and intertwined hair, was magnificent.

These people are dedicated to their community and the environment. I wish them all success in the continuation of the ArtisTree exhibition.

Wild Dogs

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—Ind) (7.00 p.m.): A matter of much concern to many of my constituents continues to be the problem of wild dogs. Currently, there are so many state laws, guidelines and procedures in place that red tape is protecting these pests while farmers' stock is

continuing to be maimed and killed. Over the past 12 months, I have seen too many farmers devastated by stock losses, and just as frustrating is the inadequate response these people have received from state government departments and local councils.

For those who have ever witnessed the shocking results of an animal which has been mauled by a hybrid dog, it is not something which is easily forgotten. Nobody is more of an animal lover than I, but what these dogs are inflicting on goats, sheep, chickens, family dogs and cattle is horrendous and has to be stopped. One of the many complaints regarding this issue which I have received from farmers is the fact that they are constantly reminded about what they are not allowed to do rather than what they can do to eradicate this pest. An example of this is the two kilometre distance guideline, which was put into place in 1996. This regulation is far from practical and means that most farmers in my electorate are unable to make use of the 1080 baiting process.

Many farmers have been told to use traps, but once the dog is trapped a farmer is not able to shoot the dog if he does not have a gun licence. As members can see, these farmers are facing a catch-22 situation and nobody seems to be able to assist them. If pet animals were being attacked in a city, deterrents and practical legislation would be put into place immediately, so why are rural residents and their needs not taken into consideration?

There is only one man who has the ability to bait within six shires, which means that if he is on holidays or seconded to another area farmers can wait up to six months in order to obtain the permission to bait their properties. Currently, a database is being set up to gauge the number of attacks which are actually occurring, but this is not helping those farmers who are experiencing daily attacks on their livestock. Something needs to be done now, not 12 months down the track.

What is needed is a solution involving the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Natural Resources, local councils and farmer groups in order to prevent as many attacks as possible. This solution may incorporate elements of a bounty system or an increase in staff officers who are authorised to give permission to property owners to use 1080 bait. With the increasing number of acreage lots being developed in south-east Queensland, this problem will begin to affect residents as well as farmers. This problem is not isolated to the Gympie electorate. Numbers are continuing to rise in many other parts of Queensland. Wild dogs will continue to be a threat to both domestic animals and livestock if something proactive is not done in the immediate future.

Eagleby Wetlands

Ms KEECH (Albert—ALP) (7.03 p.m.): I am happy to inform honourable members of an exciting Beattie government environment project located in Eagleby, in my electorate of Albert. A community renewal grant of \$30,000 has provided for a feasibility study of the valuable Eagleby Wetlands, which is bordered by the Albert and Logan rivers. Local birdwatchers have recorded an amazing 187 species of birds in the area, with many of them being waterbirds. Thirty-two species have been recorded as breeding in the wetlands. I have been told that there is a possibility that up to twice this number may be breeding in the area.

I am also happy to announce that not only is Eagleby the home of rare birds; it is also home to nine species of frogs. In fact, a brief survey by the Queensland Frog Society located the rare bleating tree frog, which has been spotted in only seven other sites around south-east Queensland. I remember being taught as a child in Bundaberg that if frogs are present in a river or creek the environment is healthy.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: That's true.

Ms KEECH: That is right. Therefore, to find such rare frogs as the bleating tree frog underlines the importance of the Eagleby Wetlands community renewal project. Such a project is only as successful as the people involved in leadership roles in its implementation. Therefore, I would like to bring to the attention of honourable members the work of two volunteers who contribute to their community. Mr Kevin McMillan, as the chair of the community reference group called ERAG, volunteers almost full time to ensure that the community renewal process in Eagleby is inclusive and accountable. Rod Bloss, as project coordinator, is passionate about the potential for this wetlands project. His vision includes the establishment of nature trails and the construction of a building which would provide classroom, office and laboratory facilities for use by students of all ages. I look forward to visiting the Eagleby Community Centre to view his Eagleby Wetlands project display and to gain community feedback.

I am proud that this project will provide the people of Eagleby and their descendants with an enormous community legacy. I urge everyone to get involved, like Rod and Kevin, in this unique opportunity to give residents access to this great treasure at their very doorsteps.

Swimming Pool, Quinalow

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (7.06 p.m.): Tonight I wish to speak about a problem in the Quinalow community. In 1983 the Quinalow community raised approximately \$50,000 in hard-earned money, the Rosalie Shire Council donated \$25,000 and the Education Department contributed another \$25,000 to build a swimming pool at the school grounds. The pool has been available for public use ever since its construction until last Christmas, when it was closed because of public liability issues. The pool was subsequently reopened when it was deemed to be covered by the Education Department. However, the principal has now closed the pool to the community and is of the belief that it is not covered outside of school hours. If this is the case, she is quite right in doing so.

However, this sort of problem is happening far too often, as we all know. Next Monday night there will be a public meeting at Quinalow to discuss the matter. Mr Jim Collier from the Education Department will be in attendance. I hope this meeting will arrive at a solution to the problem. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the meeting as I will be in parliament, so my electorate officer, Mr Brian Bryant, will be attending on my behalf. This should be very fruitful for the Quinalow community as the meeting will allow people to air their concerns. The Quinalow community wants to heat the pool and add a club room, but if the pool is not open to the public it will not be able to gain a grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund.

This facility is a credit to the hardworking community of Quinalow. This group of people has led by example. It will be a terrible shame if the outcome is a continued closure of the pool to outside use by the community. If a solution cannot be found, the Queensland government will have to look seriously at the situation and take a lead to reopen the facility to the community of Quinalow. Also, I believe it must look at funding through the likes of the Office of Sport and Recreation to ensure that the community gets this much-needed upgrade to its facility.

Domestic Violence

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (7.08 p.m.): Yesterday I was proud to launch Domestic Violence Prevention Week on the Gold Coast. I am not proud that we still have domestic violence but proud that we are slowly breaking the silence that surrounds this subject. For too long it is a problem that has remained behind closed doors. Generations of women and children have suffered and are still suffering. Domestic abuse knows no class, age, nor geographical boundaries. At yesterday's launch, a field of broken dreams was planted in Kurrawa Park. Hundreds of pink and purple hearts, each with its own personal message, were planted in the park. Messages were from prisoners of the Numinbah Women's Prison, from children at the Broadbeach Special Education Unit and from victims and friends. This field of broken dreams is a very special tribute to those who have suffered through domestic violence. It is also a tribute to those who work so hard to stop the cycle. It will stay in the park for a week as a reminder of our need for vigilance.

Security and freedom from violence in our homes is not a privilege; it is a right. The Gold Coast is known to have the highest rate of reported domestic violence in Queensland. It is horrifying to think that in a place everyone thinks of as paradise, we have such a horrendous secret. Domestic violence affects all of us. Children of domestic violence have to face life without ever knowing peace and security. Studies have told us that often children of domestic violence end up as perpetrators themselves. Then we come to the question: who is the perpetrator and who is the victim?

Silence is one of our most dangerous enemies. We need to speak out and we need to act. Last October, my aunt was killed by her husband. He found out she was leaving him and he attacked her with an iron bar. She suffered horrific head injuries and died within minutes of the attack. No-one in my family knew of the abuse she had suffered over many years. She had not confided in anyone. I was very close to both my uncle and my aunt and I find it so hard to imagine how he could do that to his wife. I miss her very much, but strangely, I miss him also. The ongoing effects are shattering for my family, and even for my uncle. He has been charged with murder and is awaiting trial.

I would like to congratulate the Domestic Violence Service on the Gold Coast, and in particular Betty Taylor and Di McLeod for their dedication to such a complex problem. It is a tribute to them and to others like them that domestic violence is now being discussed at all levels of government. We must work together to ensure that the work already being done is effective and will make a real difference to the lives of the thousands of women and children whose most basic human rights are being violated every day. We have come a long way but there is still much further to go. Together we can make this happen.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.10 p.m.