

WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2004

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members I have to report that today I received from the Auditor-General a report titled *Audit Report No. 7 2003-04: Results of Audits Performed for the 2002-03 Aboriginal Councils*. I table the said report.

PETITION

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation—

Mental Illness Fellowship North Queensland

Mr Wallace from 101 petitioners requesting the House to take all steps possible to assist the Mental Illness Fellowship North Queensland provide help for the rural caregivers of the Mentally Ill Program until the end of the financial year

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Aviation Industry

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 a.m.): The efforts of my government in developing an aviation industry are reaping reward after reward. Members have heard me detail how successful this has been with civilian operators of the likes of Virgin Blue and Australian Airlines. Today, this has now been further enhanced with developments in the defence sector.

Australia is to get two more long-range radar surveillance aircraft. This means four Boeing-made AWE&Cs will be fitted out in Queensland, creating an extra 170 jobs over three years. This is a reported boost of some \$800 million for the local defence industry. This fit-out is an ideal boost to the aviation industry in Queensland, given that the F-111 is to be phased out. The bonus is that this will be a high-tech, absolute state-of-the-art fit-out, which means that the technology and associated gains will be based right here in Queensland. This will be to our advantage and will mean that our growing reputation as the nation's aviation hub and its true centre of excellence will be put beyond doubt.

Originally the four aircraft were going to be modified—all in the US. But the decision to buy an extra two means that it is now economical for the four to be modified at Amberley. The first aircraft will arrive for modification towards the end of next year. Boeing ensured that the work came to Queensland based on the continuing aviation capabilities here; confidence in and availability of skills; and the momentum of development created here by the state government. At this point I want to thank the Minister for State Development, Tony McGrady, and the former Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, for working closely with Boeing and me in developing this aviation strategy.

This work will keep Amberley going past the loss of the F-111, which is due to be phased out in coming years. It will position Queensland to chase other large aircraft modification opportunities in both civil and defence areas. State Development and Innovation Minister, Tony McGrady, will meet David Gray, the Boeing Australia Managing Director, at lunchtime today at parliament.

Today's exciting news follows last month's announcement of a \$2 billion aircraft contract with links to Brisbane, with Qantas joining with European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company—EADS—to become the preferred tenderer on a defence contract. Coincidentally, I met with EADS officials in Marseilles while on my latest trade mission earlier last month. Qantas Defence Services and the military transport division of EADS have been chosen to provide the RAAF's fleet of new air-to-air refuelling aircraft. EADS A330 multirole tanker transport aircraft will replace the RAAF's ageing Boeing 707 aircraft. There will be five A330 aircraft. The basic aircraft construction will be carried out in Europe, while Qantas will install and integrate refuelling modifications for four of the five craft here in Brisbane.

In Queensland alone we have seen the aviation industry sector expand by over 4,200 jobs since 1998. Today's news and the obvious flow-ons means that this will be the platform for even more and more jobs in this exciting Smart State sector. This is what the Smart State strategy has been all about, and it is delivering. This growth rate is sustainable. Since 1998, jobs created in the Queensland aerospace industry are significant. I seek to incorporate those details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

These jobs include:

- Virgin Blue headquarters, engineering and training facilities (about 2000 jobs)
- Qantas 767 Maintenance Facility (680 jobs)
- EADS Australian Aerospace Helicopter Assembly Facility (100 jobs)
- Australian Airlines Operational Hub (300 jobs)
- National Jet Systems Maintenance Facility (70 jobs)
- Singapore Airlines Lear Jet Training Facility (15 jobs)
- Raytheon Logistics Centre of Excellence (67 jobs)
- Hawker Pacific Maintenance Facility (50 jobs)
- Boeing Regional Headquarters (800 jobs)
- Virgin Blue/Flight Safety Boeing Training International (50 jobs)
- Smith Aerospace Headquarters (55 jobs)
- Qantas Snapfresh Facility (230 jobs)

Mr BEATTIE: As I said, the Smart State strategies are working and that is proof.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.): Last night the federal Treasurer delivered a budget that further widened the gap between those who are better off and the battlers. It is a budget driven by ideology and cynical politics. The average taxpayer is already paying \$5,500 more income tax every year under the Howard government. However, the tax cuts announced last night will help only those who are earning more than \$52,000 per year.

Mr Horan: Whinge, whinge, whinge.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South!

Mr BEATTIE: Big earners get big tax cuts under this budget.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory!

Mr BEATTIE: Average weekly earnings in Queensland for those working full time are around \$48,200—about \$4,000 short of where they need to be to get a tax cut. But the average weekly earnings for all employees, which includes part-timers, are \$35,500—some \$17,000 short of receiving a tax cut from the Liberal Treasurer. This means that the average Queenslander will not get back any of the thousands in extra tax that they have been paying.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I intend to listen to this statement. If the member does not want to listen to it, he can leave the House.

Mr BEATTIE: Nationally, 8.5 million Australian families will not receive a cent in tax cuts. What is more, they will have to pay more for health care and to give their kids an education as the federal government moves increasingly to a user-pays system to deliver basic services.

More than \$15 billion in tax cuts have been targeted at those who earn more than average weekly earnings. This is a tragedy for those Australians who are most in need. So much could have been done to boost the health, education and transport sectors, but was not. In the lead-up to the budget, I called on Mr Costello to show some care and compassion in his spending and put several areas of need in Queensland on his budget map. Last night, he threw care and compassion out the window. He has not taken the opportunity to reverse the cuts to hospital funding of \$160 million imposed on Queensland by the federal government last year.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Horan: You got more money. Tell the truth.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South!

Mr BEATTIE: Members should just think about the extra operations that could have been delivered and the thousands of Queenslanders who will now miss out on operations that would improve their quality of life. This is at a time when the Howard government has wrecked Medicare—

Mr Horan: More money.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South! That is my final warning.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I intend to hear the statement.

Mr BEATTIE: This is at a time when the Howard government has wrecked Medicare, driving down bulk-billing rates and forcing Australians to pay more to see a GP or put extra pressure on our hospital emergency departments. This budget fails the almost 35,000 Australians who are turning away from university and TAFE every year because of inadequate federal funding being turned. The 25 per cent HECS hikes, legislated last December, mean that on average the cost to students and families will be an extra \$1,336 each year from 2005. There is no new funding in this budget for vocational education, even though skills shortages are readily beginning to bite and thousands of Queenslanders are being turned away. This falls pathetically short of the extra \$348 million—

Mr Johnson: That is because of policies of your government. That is why.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory, I now warn you. This is my final warning.

Mr BEATTIE: This falls pathetically short of the extra \$348 million that was needed. The small increase of 1,410 places to Queensland was already funded. So where is the \$3 billion over the next five years just to bring Queensland's national highways to a reasonable standard? The Commonwealth has put in only an extra net \$1.9 billion over five years in roads and rail funding for all of Australia. That is a pathetic disgrace. Those who are stuck in traffic on the Ipswich Motorway, the Pacific Highway and the Bruce Highway have had it confirmed once again that the federal government has no interest in them at all.

What is the Howard government's game plan to home affordability? While most states have been delivering cuts in stamp duty for first home buyers, as we did, the federal budget does nothing for first home owners. As expected, there is nothing extra in the budget to help those who need public housing. The disadvantaged have never been a priority for Mr Costello.

The absence of national competition payments in the budget papers, interestingly, beyond 2005-06 is a \$150 million sleight of hand by Mr Costello. This is effectively a \$150 million cut in service delivery—\$150 million less to be spent on schools and health. I know that Mr Costello has called for an inquiry into the future of national competition policy, but he has treated the states with contempt by cutting competition payments.

Queenslanders will see through the Howard government's cynical attempt to buy them off at the next federal election. Over the eight years of the present federal government new spending in non-election years averages \$3.9 billion. In election years the new spending average is \$32.7 billion. Funny about that!

Obviously the coalition does not care about the environment. There was not one word in the Treasurer's speech, and there is no funding for tree clearing. There was not one word about the environment. This means that, when it comes to the federal government's Kyoto targets, Queenslanders are being forced to go it alone in bearing the cost.

With a surplus of over \$10 billion per year available due to the contribution of the long boom, the credit for which mostly belongs to Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, the federal government had an opportunity last night to make—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr BEATTIE: As I was saying, with a surplus of over \$10 billion a year available due to the contribution of the long boom, the credit for which mostly belongs to Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, the Howard government had an opportunity last night to make decisions for far-reaching benefit to Australia that addressed in a real and substantive way the needs of this nation over the next 20 years as the baby boomers age.

It could have made lasting investments in roads, transport and water infrastructure, increased health funding in the face of demands from an ageing population and increased the national education and training effort to further lift our productivity going forward to help pay for the demographic changes. It could have made changes to taxation aimed more at national savings through putting greater emphasis on addressing iniquitous triple taxation of our retirement savings. Instead, it has squandered it on a cynical, short-term, election-driven \$15 billion bid to shore up the coalition higher income earner vote in key marginals. Costello's budget, as I feared, has left a bad taste in the mouth for Queensland. He has put his political future and this year's election ahead of the needs of Queenslanders.

I want to say one other quick thing about the state of growth in Australia. Last year Queensland's growth was 5.3 per cent. If we took Queensland out of the national growth figures and considered them, we would see that the growth for the rest of the Australian states was 2.3 per cent. Queensland has been and is the engine room of Australia. We were entitled to a fair go when it came to education and health. We have been denied that in the budget. The reality is that unless we get—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I think I am entitled to—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BEATTIE: I would think that after the last couple of weeks and the Opposition's performance in this House it would have actually had some respect for this institution.

Mr Horan: You interject all the time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Horan: Look what happened to our member for Burnett yesterday.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, how many times do we have to warn him?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr BEATTIE: The member for Toowoomba South is one of the rudest members in this House.

Mr Horan: I don't fall for your stunts, that's why.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South. This is my final warning.

Mr BEATTIE: I think his electorate would be pretty disappointed if it knew how he performed here.

When it comes to the growth of this country, Queensland is the engine room. We were entitled to a fair go last night. The battlers have missed out. I would like to see National Party and Liberal Party members go out and explain to all Queenslanders who earn below \$52,000 why they are not going to get tax cuts. They can go out and explain why people are waiting in hospitals. They can explain why kids cannot get into universities. They can go out and explain—

Mr Schwarten: The long waiting list for public housing.

Mr BEATTIE: The long waiting list for public housing. I will be happy to go out in this election campaign. They can have their screaming and ranting—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have talked before about talking across the chamber. The Premier is on his feet. I intend to listen to him. If anyone in this House does not want to listen, I invite them to talk now so I can warn them and remove them from the House.

Mr BEATTIE: I simply want to conclude by saying that I am happy to go out and fight for Queenslanders. I am not going to roll over and accept some contribution from my federal colleagues. It is about time the opposition stood up for Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Biotechnology and Sugar

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 a.m.): As I advised the House last month, I will be leading a trade and investment mission to the United States, Brazil and Chile from 26 May to 8 June. I want to thank a number of sugar industry representatives who will be joining me. Amongst other things, the mission will marry two areas of great importance to the future of our state: biotechnology and sugar. Biotechnology and sugar are where an emerging and traditional industry meet, and both gain from the experience. Sugar can make use of biotech to branch out with more value adding, while bio industries can take advantage of the sugar industry's plentiful raw materials. Ethanol is just one example, albeit an important one, of this symbiosis.

Other products that have great potential in the Smart State include lactic acid, bioplastics and furfural. Lactic acid is made by fermenting glucose and is widely used in the food industry to increase shelf life. Finasucre has a European subsidiary, Lactia, which makes lactic acid from sugar. Lactic acid is also used to make bioplastics. Toyota bases a proposed process for producing bioplastics on lactic acids and a lactic acid polymer. The polymer has very similar properties to polythene, used currently in plastic bags. I know that you know all of this, Mr Speaker, but I thought I would share this with the House.

Furfural is an organic solvent derived from woody vegetable material such as bagasse. The government, through the Department of State Development and Innovation, has given \$250,000 to Proserpine Cooperative Sugar Milling Association to develop a detailed engineering design for a furfural plant at Proserpine mill. Furfural is the only chemical produced from renewable resources that can replace crude oil based compounds. It is a strong solvent with a flash point of 80 degrees centigrade, similar to the flash point of kerosene. It is used in the manufacture of lubricating oils and to produce high-value polymers such as plastics, resins and man-made fibres. It has recently been used in South

Africa and Spain as an agricultural chemical replacing highly toxic chemicals, and applications for its use are under way in the USA.

The relevance of this is simple. Our new sugar industry reform package will spur the development of such value-added industries. The government is also investing in research and development at the Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through biotechnology, the bureau of sugar research stations and the Sugar Research Institute.

This is the future. This is about taking Smart State strategies to enhancing our sugar industry. I seek leave to have more details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I intend to strengthen the links between the Queensland sugar industry and biotech through my involvement with Bio 2004 and my visit to Brazil—the global behemoth of the sugar industry.

Brazil is the largest economy in South America, and Queensland's 2002-03 exports of \$275 million represented two-thirds of Australia's exports to the country.

This will be the first visit to Brazil by a Queensland Premier and my proposed engagements include:

- A meeting with the Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Mr Roberto Rodrigues, who had a very productive meeting last year with then State Development Minister, Tom Barton.
- A meeting with representatives of Unica—the agency responsible for more than 60% of Brazilian production—when I'll learn more about the reasons for the industry's success and its reform process.
- An agribusiness reception in Sao Paulo.
- A meeting with Volkswagen AG Brazil, which makes 42% of Brazilian-manufactured cars and has a pact to build 100,000 ethanol-powered vehicles in Brazil, and
- Meetings with major ethanol producers.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ethanol

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.49 a.m.): My government is pursuing a long-term policy agenda on biofuels and, in particular, ethanol. In the next few years, we believe Australia and the world will increasingly embrace ethanol as the need to include renewable energy sources intensifies. The benefits of ethanol are clear: it is more environmentally sound, reduces pollution and helps us meet our greenhouse targets. It provides new options for our primary industries and promotes jobs in regional centres.

The sugar industry, after our recent reforms, is one industry that stands to benefit. Our new legislation is a framework to encourage the sugar industry to pursue a range of value adding opportunities, including ethanol production. We want to capture these benefits for Queensland. As I said, we want to use Smart State strategies to value add for the future. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This requires serious engagement in the policy debate on ethanol. There are two key issues to promoting ethanol—supply and demand—and the Queensland Government is addressing both. In relation to demand, promoting consumer confidence requires demonstrating that ethanol is safe for use in most cars.

The success of the Caltex trial in North Queensland shows consumers will use ethanol and I commend Caltex and CSR Refineries for continuing this trial.

We threw our support behind the trial when it first started last year, and some QFleet vehicles are using E10 in Brisbane and in the North.

Ensuring supply is also crucial. This means creating incentives for investment in ethanol production. I am now delighted to inform the House we are filling the leadership vacuum left by Canberra.

To encourage the ethanol industry and increase supply, the Queensland Government will host an international conference early in 2005. To clarify and progress the ethanol debate, we will invite a range of high profile speakers with technical and practical expertise.

The experience gained in Brazil, Europe and the US will give valuable insights on both supply and demand issues. There will be a strong emphasis on using state-of-the-art technology. Brazil wants a partnership with Queensland to produce ethanol. Brazil needs the Smart State to become a major ethanol exporter, because this would improve reliability of world supply and encourage huge car markets particularly Japan—to become major buyers of ethanol. It is a bit like the theory from the old days when Australia ran on the sheep's back—about every person in China having woollen socks. If every Japanese motorist filled their tank with biofuel, we could say Queensland runs on cane juice!

Already, senior officers of the Government have held discussions with Brazilian Government representatives with a view to them participating in the conference. As I have informed the House, I will travel to Brazil this month and hold discussions with Brazilian Ministers and key industry participants in the sugar, ethanol and car industries. I intend to forge closer links between Queensland and our colleagues in Brazilian industry on this important matter.

Contrast our approach with the Federal Government's. Its 12.5% levy, phased in to 2015, does little to stimulate investment. Unfortunately Queensland cannot effectively mandate ethanol in fuel. The Federal Government is the only body capable of doing this—and the failure is shameful. A Federal mandate works in the United States, France, Spain and Thailand, and even Japan may soon have a mandate.

Queensland is moving ahead, and I invite the Federal Government—especially Queensland Ministers like Warren Truss and Ian MacFarlane—to join us in giving ethanol a viable future.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indigenous Art

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 a.m.): Queensland's indigenous artists are making their mark on new canvas—the international art market. I am delighted to advise the House of the early results of the current exhibition in the United States. Out of Country, an initiative of the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing Export Agency, was opened by the Minister for Education and the Arts, Anna Bligh, at the Australian embassy in Washington DC on 1 May. She must have had some great sales skills because 26 works sold in the first week. That is close to half the 56 works displayed. These sales have reaped approximately \$48,500. The embassy, which has been remarkably supportive—and I want to thank it today—reports more than 2,200 people have viewed the exhibition to date and there is loads of potential for more sales.

I would hope all members would support this indigenous art strategy that the government is pursuing. It is not just about arts; it is about jobs and opportunities for indigenous people. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*. I hope people will read it because this is the future for indigenous people.

Leave granted.

The exhibition continues until 27 May in Washington DC, before touring to Charlottesville to show at the prestigious Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, University of Virginia, from 11 June to 14 August.

The program of events for the exhibition has included two Smithsonian Associates lectures, by Jennifer Herd—artist and head of the Indigenous visual arts unit, Griffith University—and Vic McGrath, Torres Strait Islander artist, Elder and member of the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing Export Agency advisory board.

Both lectures sold out.

Along with Ms Herd and Mr McGrath, three other Indigenous artists attended the official functions: Fiona Foley, who is currently based in New York; Craig Koomeeta and Ken ThaidaySnr.

They are among 29 artists represented in

Out of Country, which introduces Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art to the American market.

It includes paintings, prints, sculptures and fabrics, from regions including Aurukun, Lockhart River, the rainforests of the tropical north, the Torres Strait, Central and Southern Queensland.

Out of Country was a revelation for American art lovers and collectors, whose previous experience of Australian Aboriginal art was the desert art of the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Queensland Aboriginal art is distinct from the desert dots, and Torres Strait Islander visual arts are rarely seen on the international stage.

Guests invited to the opening included senior US administration, congressional, business and military people, collectors, museum representatives and senior Embassy staff.

I gather prominent and influential people are now the proud owners of Queensland Indigenous art.

Out of Country is not a flash in the pan, it is part of an emerging pattern of success for our Indigenous artists.

As I advised the House last month, another exhibition arranged by the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing Export Agency, at Dusseldorf in December and January, sold 19 of 39 works displayed.

Each of these sales is a symbol of the future for Indigenous people, because the art industry offers untold social, cultural and economic rewards.

Young people like members of the Lockhart River Art Gang—who are meteors on the international art scene—show what can be achieved by artists from remote communities who have talent, ambition, and the right guidance.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Education Week, Principal for a Day Program

Hon. A.M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education and the Arts) (9.51 a.m.): Queensland state schools educate about 70 per cent of this state's children. They are the backbone of our education system. Next week communities across Queensland will recognise and celebrate the great work happening in our 1,294 state schools during State Education Week. For the first time this year as part of these annual celebrations, Education Queensland has invited 40 community and business leaders to step into the role of a busy state school principal to experience life at the chalk-face.

The program will see participation from the Torres Strait to the Gold Coast, with Comalco general manager, Andrew Harding, from Weipa working alongside the principal at Western Cape College and Suki Mead and Luke Bradman, breakfast radio announcers from Hot Tomato FM on the Gold Coast working alongside Elanora State School principal. Other participants taking part in the inaugural Principal for a Day program include the former Brisbane Lord Mayor, Clem Jones AO, Australian Institute of Management CEO, Carolyn Barker, Dr Evelyn Scott AO and news presenter Kay McGrath.

The Principal for a Day program is based on a successful program which has been running for the past 10 years in New York schools. High profile people who have taken part in the US program include Senator Hillary Clinton and Jerry Seinfeld. The program has been successfully run in Victoria for the past three years. The Principal for a Day program will give Queensland business and community leaders a behind the scenes look at some of the innovative and inspiring work happening in Queensland state schools.

Participants will job shadow principals during a normal school day, taking classes with students, talking to parents and maybe even getting a chance to do a shift on the school tuckshop. Our schools also stand to benefit from having an outsider's view of their operations. I would like to thank this year's participants for giving up their time to take part in the program. I would encourage local members to find out what is happening in their area and their school and hope that this will be an important first step in establishing a lasting and valuable relationship between participating schools and their principals for a day.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Vocational Education and Training, Skills Shortages

Hon. T.A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.53 a.m.): The Commonwealth budget has totally failed to address growing skill shortages in Australia. Its failure to do so is not only short-sighted; it is reckless. Over the past 12 months, state and territory governments and industry have been warning about the need to tackle skill shortages by increasing the national investment in vocational education and training.

As I told the House yesterday, the Australian Industry Group warned that over the next five years 170,000 skilled workers would leave the workforce, and projected that only 40,000 would replace them. The gravity of the situation has been recognised by the Senate. Late last year a Senate committee warned that there were not enough skilled metal, engineering and manufacturing workers to carry out the \$20 billion worth of major infrastructure and resources projects expected in the next 10 years.

That is a recipe for disaster not only for Queensland and Australian industry but also for the economy. The Howard government has pig-headedly refused to respond to calls by state and territory governments and major industry groups for substantial increases in funding for vocational education and training.

This budget contains no vision. It contains no policy initiatives that will make a difference to skilling Australians for the future. The Commonwealth Treasurer talks about the need to increase productivity, but the budget contains no measures to increase the skills of the 70 per cent of young Australians who do not attend university and the majority of adults who have no postschool qualifications.

There are no training reforms in the budget that have the medium- to longer-term focus that is necessary if a longer-term strategy that is necessary for sustainable economic development in Australia is to be achieved. There are no initiatives in this budget to support the Commonwealth Treasurer's claim to be interested in improving the capacity of Australians to participate in the labour force.

Of all the education sectors, vocational education and training is the most directly responsive to industry skill needs, including the skill needs of enterprises in the new economy sectors most caught up in technological change. Vocational education and training is also essential in incorporating innovation into work through training and is the major provider of qualifications forming the direct basis for employment opportunities.

The vocational education and training system in Queensland continues to grow, and the Beattie government has presided over record numbers of apprentices and trainees in training. The great danger is that the Commonwealth government's lack of vision will stifle our state's economic growth.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Prisoners, Absconding

Hon. J.C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.56 a.m.): I am pleased to report that two prisoners who absconded from the West Brisbane Community Custody Centre at Wacol on Monday night were returned to secure custody late yesterday afternoon. John William Wells and Wayne Paul Edie had both been granted release to work by independent community corrections boards. Only a prisoner who has successfully completed all recommended programs to address their offending behaviour, exhibited breach free behaviour for a prolonged period of time and achieved an open security classification will be considered for release to work.

The focus is on obtaining and maintaining employment and commencing reintegration into the community through leave to an approved sponsor. Random surveillance checks are conducted to ensure that their precise whereabouts are known at all times. Prisoners will be returned to secure custody if there is any reasonable suspicion that they are likely to breach their order or otherwise behave so as to expose the community to risk.

Wells and Edie were present when a head count was conducted by staff at the West Brisbane Community Custody Centre at 11.15 p.m. on Monday but were found to have escaped at 11.45 p.m. The Dog Squad and the Corrective Services Investigation Unit were called to the centre. Their release to work orders were immediately suspended and warrants were issued for their arrest. Between 5.30 p.m. and 6 p.m. yesterday they handed themselves in to the Cleveland Police Station. They have now been returned to secure custody at Arthur Gorrie and charged with being unlawfully at large.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Drug Court Trial

Hon. R.J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.58 a.m.): I am pleased to advise the House on the progress of the north Queensland trial of the drug court which has now been under way for 18 months. As members would be aware, the drug court is an innovative program introduced by our government to try to break the cycle of drugs and crime. It was introduced in south-east Queensland almost four years ago—in fact, we will celebrate the four-year anniversary on 13 June—and the program was extended to north Queensland in November 2002.

So far the number of graduates from our two drug court programs is 97. The north Queensland program is continuing the good work undertaken here in the south-east. So far there have been eight graduations—four from Townsville and four from Cairns. Overall, since the north Queensland trial began 18 months ago, the court has evaluated 172 people—99 in Townsville and 73 in Cairns. Some 86 intensive drug rehabilitation orders have been made out of those 172 evaluations.

However, many of these people have found the drug court is not an easy option. Twenty-four people have been removed from the program, returned to the court and sentenced. This is a stark reminder to us all about the powerful addictive force of drugs such as heroin, cocaine or amphetamines.

There are now 48 people completing various phases of their rehabilitation program in north Queensland. The success to date of the north Queensland drug court trial is a significant achievement. With rehabilitation taking between 12 and 18 months, depending on the extent of the addiction, we are just starting to see results flowing through.

Eight graduates in the first 18 months is a very good sign. This is a very positive outcome, not only for the families of these people but for the entire community. Research tells us that about three in every four crimes is drug related, especially property crime. Every successful rehabilitation means there are fewer crimes committed by drug-addicted offenders who are trying to support their habit.

There is no question the drug court offers potentially great social benefits and our government is committed to this program. The north Queensland trial is using slightly different criteria from the program here in south-east Queensland, and this will help us determine the most cost-efficient and effective way to operate drug courts in the future so they can return maximum benefits, not only here in the south-east but also in our regional cities.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tugun Bypass

Hon. P.T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.00 a.m.): I would like to inform the House of the latest progress to date on the Tugun bypass.

I am delighted to say that today chief executives of the Queensland and New South Wales governments are meeting on the Gold Coast, along with a senior representative from the federal government. This tripartite meeting will attempt to resolve any outstanding issues with New South Wales in relation to building the road west of the airport, or the C4 route as it is known.

Today's meeting was urgently convened after I met with New South Wales Roads Minister, Carl Scully, two weeks ago when we were both in Perth at the Australian Transport Council ministers meeting. I also spoke with the federal transport minister and the federal roads minister.

We agreed to organise this meeting in response to Mr Scully's environmental concerns with the C4 route. The fact is the Beattie government is confident we can resolve these concerns. We have a 5,000-plus page environmental impact statement that is waiting on New South Wales's green light to be released. This will show numerous mitigation measures that we believe will deal with environmental

concerns. In addition, we will give the New South Wales government 70 hectares of compensatory habitat in New South Wales in the Cobaki that we purchased years ago for the building of the C4. This is 2.5 times the amount of land that would need to be compensated in New South Wales as a result of building the western route.

Of course, the Premier has also given me \$240 million—which is burning a hole in my pocket—to build this road, as well as \$120 million on the table from the federal government.

A government member interjected.

Mr LUCAS: It was very hard to get it out of his pocket, but it is in my pocket now and it is not going back to him; it is going on the road. I welcome the federal government's support for the western route and providing input at today's meeting.

The Beattie government has always said that the federal government has a role to play in ensuring the Tugun bypass can be built. I have noted media reports that the federal government intends to advise the New South Wales government that additional funding for Pacific Highway upgrading will be contingent on New South Wales agreeing to the C4 route.

I do not proposed to comment on how the Commonwealth negotiates with New South Wales, except to say that its involvement demonstrates all along what the Premier and I have been saying about the Tugun bypass: it is a road that goes across state boundaries. The Commonwealth is the government either side. It built an airport across those state boundaries; it clearly has a role with the constitutional and financial powers in resolving the issue.

Mr Springborg: What does Mark Latham think about using those powers?

Mr LUCAS: I am absolutely delighted that the Leader of the Opposition has such a strong interest, because when I spoke at the Australian Transport Council ministers meeting with federal minister Anderson, one thing he did not say to me was, 'Hurry up, Lawrence, you are delaying me, I have only got 10 minutes.' He actually listened to what I had to say about the Tugun bypass, as did the federal roads minister. I am delighted that they are heeding Queensland's call and playing a positive role. Minister Scully and I have agreed to meet soon after today's meeting to discuss the outcomes from it.

I will keep the house informed of the progress, as I know this is an issue that affects about 70,000 motorists per day who use this section of road. Motorists waste \$3.5 million in fuel each year when they are forced to sit in 20-minute delays through this seven-kilometre section. That is without the 11,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year in fumes from idling motors stuck in the Tugun gridlock.

Building the Tugun bypass remains one of the Beattie government's highest priority transport projects. I will continue to negotiate with the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments to convince them that the C4 option is the preferred option of the Queensland government and of the people of the Gold Coast and Tweed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coal Seam Gas Industry

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (10.04 a.m.): Coal seam gas is one of Queensland's recent success stories. Our abundant supplies of high-quality coal means that we have massive quantities of gas trapped in coal seams, a resource with enormous potential benefits to Queensland. From making up four per cent of our gas demand in 1998, coal seam gas now represents 27 per cent of gas supplied in Queensland—a figure that continues to rise.

Projects like north Queensland's gas-fired power station, which will be fed from CH₄'s coal seam methane operation at Moranbah, will increase that demand even more. The north Queensland power project alone represents an investment of around \$500 million in Queensland's future.

Later today I will introduce into the House legislation that will implement the Beattie government's coal seam gas regime, which will provide a framework that will boost the coal seam gas sector and allow many developments to proceed with certainty. Among the many areas covered by the new, comprehensive Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Bill 2004, it will implement a regime that will create greater stability for the coal seam gas industry and provide clear rules, rights, and obligations for the coal and petroleum industries to work cooperatively to develop coexisting petroleum, coal, and coal seam gas resources. It will also introduce a new, integrated safety management regime, which will ensure that coal seam gas can be produced without compromising the safety of workers in existing or future coal mines.

Most coal seam gas production in the past has taken place where coal mining and coal seam gas production are not in conflict, and the original Petroleum Act did not foresee a situation where petroleum

operators and coal miners might have an interest in the same deposit, for different resources. That lack of foresight is understandable, given that the act in question was drafted more than 80 years ago.

The new regime will bring all commercial production of coal seam gas under a single piece of legislation to provide clear, unequivocal rights to coal seam gas, providing the certainty investors need to bring new gas projects to fruition. It will also remove the different legislative standards for mining tenure holders and gas tenure holders, ensuring a level playing field for everyone in the industry. The Beattie government's coal seam gas regime will underpin a growing industry of incredible potential, safeguard our position as the innovators in this industry, and ensure Queensland continues to lead the way on coal seam gas. Coal seam gas is already a Queensland success story, and the Beattie government's coal seam gas regime will provide the framework it needs to continue to create jobs and prosperity for Queenslanders in the years ahead.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Child Protection, Cherbourg

Hon. M.F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.06 a.m.): Last week the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Liddy Clark, and I announced an additional \$77,493 to help children and young people in the Cherbourg community who have been victims of sexual abuse.

This special allocation will provide a sexual abuse counselling service for the next 12 months. The funding is in keeping with commitments Minister Clark, the Premier and I made to the people of Cherbourg during separate visits to their community earlier this year. Those visits were in response to requests from members of the community, particularly mothers and other women, who sought help for children and young people who had been subjected to child sexual abuse and violence.

Today I want to commend the very courageous women leaders of Cherbourg who stated their major concerns about violence and in particular sexual abuse of young indigenous children. They stated 'enough is enough' and that strong commitment for change has been backed up by this funding commitment of the Beattie government.

The government recognised the need for a counselling service and is providing funding for the Wide Bay Sexual Assault Association for the Kid's Intervention and Prevention Program. The money will provide a full-time counsellor, operating costs and some one-off establishment costs to cover the lease of a vehicle for 12 months, telephones and the purchase of a laptop computer and printer.

In the next 12 months the Department of Child Safety and Queensland Health will work closely with the Cherbourg community to identify appropriate cross-government responses to the therapeutic needs of children and young people who have been exposed to risk or harm. The Blueprint for Implementing the Recommendations of the Crime and Misconduct Commission Report into Foster Care identified the need for five more sexual abuse counselling services across the state in light of the over-representation of indigenous people in the child protection system.

Funds of \$3.4 million are available in 2004-05 for family reunification services and sexual abuse counselling services. In June 2004 my Department of Child Safety will seek submissions for funding for these services and key representatives in the Cherbourg community will be encouraged to apply for a share of this funding.

Sexual abuse is repugnant. It can have a horrific impact on children, and counselling is one way to make sure there is help available to those children who have already been through what can only be described as very disturbing ordeals. The funding shows the Beattie government's commitment to improving the lives of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I am confident funding of this nature will make a difference to many young lives.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Autism Awareness Week

Hon. F.W. PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors) (10.10 a.m.): Because this is Autism Awareness Week, I would like to speak in support of all Queenslanders with Autism—including the family members, friends and carers who assist them in so many ways. Autism is a lifelong condition that predominantly affects boys rather than girls. While symptoms can vary enormously from person to person, there is no known cure. The most recent snapshot figures indicate that around 10 per cent the Queensland population has some form of autism. As my parliamentary colleagues would already know, about 20 per cent of the Queensland population has a disability, including those with physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Therefore, autism and its related conditions affect a significant proportion of all Queenslanders who seek assistance from my department. Disability Services Queensland provides recurrent funding of some \$2.1 million to Autism Queensland to help them provide a range of services and support to people with autism. My department also provides funding to many other organisations that provide services and support to people with autism and direct, individualised support packages for individuals.

I met recently with the CEO of Autism Queensland, Pat Comben, and hope to visit their facilities at Sunnybank soon. I congratulate Autism Queensland for the great work they do. While financial support and assistance is obviously a necessity for those with autism, there is something that is even more important—understanding. My department has been striving to promote the development of more welcoming and inclusive communities; communities that understand and accept people for who they are, not what disability they have. If we are to enjoy truly inclusive communities, where all people can participate and be accepted, we need greater awareness and understanding. I urge all members to help raise the level of awareness and understanding of autism. Understanding is important, not only during this awareness week but also whenever and wherever possible.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Destination Management Plans

Hon. M.M. KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (10.12 a.m.): I am pleased to advise the House that the Beattie government is taking the development and marketing of Queensland to a new level with management plans for the state's visitor destinations. The plans have been prepared by Tourism Queensland for the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Whitsundays, Tropical North Queensland, Townsville, Mackay, south-east Queensland country, central Queensland, Bundaberg, Fraser Coast and the outback destinations. The plans will become the blueprint for the development and marketing of Queensland through to 2007.

The whole process is guided by Beattie government priorities, the Queensland Government Strategy for Growing Tourism and Tourism Queensland's own corporate plan. The plans will enhance industry coordination, strengthen industry partnerships, coordinate stakeholder interests and expectations and provide industry leadership. Each management plan includes destination analysis and strategic vision covering destination outlook, target markets, competitive positioning and destination management goals and strategies. The next stage of the planning project will explore the status of industry coordination and tourism business relationships in the state.

We want to develop a best practice tourism industry network plan that details how effective industry coordination can be achieved and managed, and defines the roles and relationships of key stakeholders as part of a coordinated business system. The plan will provide a clear understanding of Tourism Queensland's role as a lead agency in tourism industry network coordination.

Our tourism industry operates in a dynamic environment influenced by changing government, business and consumer priorities, as well as global events. It is Tourism Queensland's role to continue to grow the state's tourism sector in this ever changing environment. They do a brilliant job. The destination perspective is a proven and effective management system that enables Tourism Queensland to best meet market, industry and government needs.

For some years now, Tourism Queensland has recognised the benefits of planning for discrete visitor destinations, each with distinct and differing development and marketing needs. This planning builds on that success. Each destination management plan is tailored to identify and meet the needs of its specific destination. Teams representing all divisions of Tourism Queensland have developed the draft plans. As Tourism Minister, I am proud of that. The planning teams have an extraordinary range of professional skills and experience, which I believe is the best in Australia.

Tourism Queensland has been consulting extensively with regional tourist organisations and other key partners in each destination. It is vital to involve all key stakeholders in the planning process. Tourism Queensland is reviewing and refining the way it provides leadership and services to a diverse group of tourism stakeholders. We have sought input on the plan from tourism stakeholders throughout the state. Queensland's destination management plans are the envy all states and territories in Australia. The final plans will be released in June and I am look forward to these smart tourism plans being implemented from July 2004.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Johnstone Shire, Development Application

Hon. D. BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Planning and Women) (10.15 a.m.): I rise today to inform the parliament of my decision to refuse an application to allow the

subdivision of canelands at Kurrimine Beach in the Johnstone Shire. As I informed the parliament last month, a Kurrimine Beach cane farmer has applied for permission to proceed with a rural residential subdivision of a 17-hectare cane farm on Murdering Point Road. This farm is a significant distance from the main population centre and located in a rural area in which the main activity is farming.

My decision followed the Johnstone Shire Council's approval of the development application—in direct contravention to the recommendations of the council's planners, and against the council's own planning scheme, both of which designate the land as rural. The development—if it were to proceed—also contravenes state government planning policy aimed at protecting against the loss of valuable agricultural resources.

There are many good reasons why discretionary rural subdivisions should not occur, including: the loss and fragmentation of valuable land; conflict between farming and residential uses; higher servicing costs to government; and impacts on the long-term viability of agri-industries. Even though the right decision is clear to me, it is not an easy decision. I understand the disappointment this will cause the farmer and his family.

Along with many of my colleagues in this place, I share a great deal of concern at the hardships presently faced by Queensland's cane farmers. But simply subdividing the family farm is not the answer to the sugar farmers' plight. At all levels of government we must do all in our power to guard against the loss and fragmentation of valuable rural land that should be protected for farming activities, and against encouraging dispersed pockets of urban population within shires that have little capacity to provide, or pay for, services that people in our communities demand. Quality access to schools, to health services, to public transport, to water and sewerage services are all important considerations for local councils, and are key expectations of local communities.

Indiscriminate mixing of urban and rural uses is not only poor planning but can also lead to demands for restrictions on standard farming practices, such as spraying, the hours of operation for farm machinery and the control of odours. Mixing rural and urban uses could in fact also lead to an increase in the rates payable by surrounding farmers—as farms are revalued to reflect the value of neighbouring residential properties.

The decision by the Johnstone shire had the clear capacity to set an unfavourable precedent. However, all councils must understand that I have refused the application on the grounds that: firstly, the proposal conflicts with both the council's strategic plan and planning scheme, in that the cane farm is located in an area designated as rural; secondly, the proposal conflicts with State Planning Policy 1/92 aimed at protecting scarce agricultural land for future farming; thirdly, there is no demonstrated community benefit from locating development at this location; and, fourthly, the need to provide facilities in multiple scattered residential locations is too great a burden on the ratepayers of the Johnstone shire.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Firefighters

Hon. C. P. CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.19 a.m.): Last week the Beattie government honoured a group of firefighters who had clocked up an amazing 1,360 years of combined service with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. I awarded national medals and clasps representing 15, 25 and 35 years of service to Brisbane region firefighters. These proud firefighters have not only served with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service for long periods of time; they have also served with distinction. They deserve our heartfelt thanks and congratulations. Our greatest asset in the Queensland Department of Emergency Services is, of course, our wonderful people. Valued employees who consistently provide quality service over a long period of time deserve our thanks and our recognition, and that is what the national medals are all about.

The combined experience of these firefighters is something that cannot be replaced, and the department is obviously a better organisation thanks in many ways to their dedication and service. There were also a number of retired firefighters at the function who were honoured for their long service. It was great to see a number of families present at the awards ceremony last week as well. Families of our Emergency Services personnel also make enormous sacrifices, but in their own way they also contribute to the safety of Queenslanders through their support. Firefighters, like many emergency services workers, do not simply work from nine to five on weekdays. Firefighters throughout Queensland are the front line of their communities—highly trained, skilled and dedicated. At times they are even called upon to risk their own personal safety to save lives and property.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has an enviable reputation in the community, and this is because of the high quality of people in our organisation. But that is no excuse for members of our community to become complacent. We all need to take responsibility and be aware of what we can do to protect our homes and families. This is where our fire service's education programs come to the fore. Our firefighters spend thousands of hours each year educating Queenslanders about fire safety. These programs include Operation Safehome, where firefighters will do a free fire safety check-up for people's

home, Seniors Fire Ed and numerous preschool, primary and high school education schemes. Firies spend more than 170,000 hours on these community education and safety initiatives each year. They also deliver potentially lifesaving fire and road safety messages to more than 114,000 school students and preschoolers across Queensland.

SITTING HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. A.M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.21 a.m.): I advise honourable members that the adjournment may be moved at 6.30 p.m. today to be followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Smoking Bans

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (10.21 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House calls on the government to amend the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 to ban smoking in hotels, clubs and casinos throughout Queensland.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Federal Budget

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 a.m.): This morning in this parliament we witnessed the spectacle of the Premier sounding like Simon Crean. What we heard from him was whinge, whinge, whinge about the federal budget. If we want to do a comparison with Simon Crean, at least last night Simon Crean could find something positive to say about the federal budget. He said that the federal budget would have to be supported by the Labor Party. But this morning the Premier came in here and all we heard was whinge, whinge, whinge, whinge once again from Mr Beattie. There were no proactive, positive solutions. There was no effort on the part of the Premier to match in any way whatsoever the enormous efforts of the Commonwealth government in this great budget last night.

Last night's federal budget was a great win for Queensland. Last night's federal budget was a great budget for Queensland, and this is why: it was a great budget for Queensland, because this is the GST revenue windfall that is coming to Queensland. As members can see, Queensland will get some \$665 million—almost three times the windfall gain of any other Australian state and territory. Mr Premier, where is the money going? What is he doing with this \$665 million GST windfall? He is squandering it! Not only that, last year he received a stamp duty windfall in Queensland of \$1.5 billion. If it was not for the federal government, then he would have a busted budget bottom line.

There is another stark difference between his budgeting technique and that of the federal government, and that is that it runs at surpluses; he runs at deficits. If it was not for this \$665 million GST windfall—that is more than any other state has got out of the GST process—he would not have a balanced budget. What is he going to do? He complains about everything. What is he going to do? Is he going to bottle it up and send it back to the federal government? No, he is not. He is going to pocket it and use it to his advantage. Therein lies the opportunity for better health, better education, better aged care, better services and better facilities for Queensland electors.

Time expired.

International Nurses Day

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (10.24 a.m.): Today is International Nurses Day, a day to celebrate and acknowledge the unique work that nurses do in our community. This year will mark my 27th year as a nurse and it will be my last, for the time being anyway. During this term I will have passed the time allowed under the Nursing Act to be absent from the profession and retain a licence with recency of practice. It will be a bittersweet moment for me—pleased to be serving the people of Aspley but sad to leave a profession that I am extremely proud to be part of. The member for Mansfield asked me yesterday if 27 years ago as a student nurse at the Royal Brisbane Hospital I could have imagined being in this place, and my answer to him was yes. I did imagine the possibility.

For the work of nurses is so important and so rarely understood by the general public that it is critical for the voice of nursing to be heard loud and clear in the corridors of power. I have always held the view that having politicians who were nurses was critical to ensure that the issues of importance to nurses were understood by decision makers and policy makers.

Nursing work is, by its history, predominantly viewed as women's work and unjustly undervalued for far too long. It is also largely invisible work by the very personal nature of nursing work. Caring for people at their most vulnerable is at the centre of nursing work and something that people rarely talk about. It is, however, work that makes a real difference to our communities in so many ways, and we should make the effort to talk about nursing work regularly. I know that my nursing colleague the member for Noosa, Cate Molloy, would join me in expressing a real pride that nursing is spoken about often on a regular basis in this place, and indeed part of our job is done.

Of course, I do have to note that at the last state election it was the Labor Party that was the only party to have a nursing policy, and a good one. I am confident that the 52,000 nurses in this state have noticed that those opposite are yet to consider the importance of a good nursing policy. This morning I had the privilege of representing the Minister for Health at the International Nurses Day breakfast held by the Queensland Nurses Union, the Queensland Nurses Council and HESTA group joining Her Excellency Quentin Bryce and nearly 260 nurses for a morning of celebration and reflection.

Time expired.

Southport State High School

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.26 a.m.): On 28 April the member for Southport got up in this House and read from an article written by Mr Rob Stones, the principal of the Southport State High School, in the school's February newsletter. This article contained a shameless attack on the Prime Minister, accusing him of using wedge politics and divisive issues to stay in government. I find it extraordinary that this government not only allows but in fact boasts in this place about a current public servant using a taxpayer funded newsletter to espouse this ideologically based ALP diatribe.

We constantly hear from this government how more resources are needed in our state school sector, yet the government appears to be quite happy—in fact, quite proud—to allow one of its principals to misuse a school's newsletter funded from the school's budget in this way. The minister needs to come out and denounce the actions of this misguided principal and apologise to the taxpayers of this state for the needless waste of valuable education dollars. In conclusion, may I just suggest to Mr Stones that if he wishes to provide political commentary—

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cunningham, that is a reflection on the chair and the member will withdraw.

Mr COPELAND: I withdraw.

Mr LANGBROEK: If he wishes to provide political commentary and take cheap shots at the Prime Minister instead of using a taxpayer funded state high school newsletter to espouse his biased and ALP oriented diatribe, he should leave the security of the classroom and run for public office himself.

Cabcharge Vouchers, Townsville-Thuringowa

Mr WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): I rise to bring the attention of the House to Townsville taxis and their treatment of Cabcharge customers. As honourable members would know, Thuringowa and Townsville are popular destinations for corporate and government employees. Many of these employees are issued with Cabcharge vouchers or cards to enable them to take taxis to their destinations. In Thuringowa and Townsville's case, only the vouchers are accepted by every taxi. However, for the privilege of using this voucher, customers are charged an extra \$1 on top of the metered fee. We are told this \$1 charge is to cover administration fees connected with the Cabcharge voucher. I have had a number of people who visit the twin cities ask why the fee exists when just about every other city in Australia accepts the voucher without the extra charge. However, when it comes to use of the Cabcharge cards, taxi users in Thuringowa and Townsville really get a bad deal. The cards are only accepted in very few cabs in the Townsville taxi fleet.

These cabs are owned by private operators who have taken it upon themselves to install the technology needed to accept cards. Indeed, only last week I spoke to an army officer who was in Townsville to look over a number of Defence assets. He told me that he regularly travelled to different destinations across Australia and used a Cabcharge card to account for his taxi use. He was most upset after travelling to Lavarack Barracks from the airport only to be told that his Cabcharge card would not be accepted.

I have been informed by cabbies, who do a wonderful job and have to face angry Cabcharge customers, that cards are not accepted because the \$1 charge levied on Cabcharge vouchers was used to employ someone in the office. This is clearly unacceptable and leaves a sour taste in the mouths of travellers in the twin cities. I urge the operators of Townsville taxis to review their Cabcharge usage so that visitors to Townsville and Thuringowa can enjoy the same benefits of Cabcharge vouchers that people in other cities are able to enjoy.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Wolston Park, Escape

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 a.m.): My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the escape yesterday from Wolston Park of a patient who has been charged with rape and who had a history of escaping from custody. Will the minister confirm that this patient was permitted two hours unescorted leave when he absconded? Also I remind the minister of the Mullen Chettleburgh review undertaken following the escape of Mark Briscoe in January 2002, which recommended improving monitoring and supervision of patients on leave. Will the minister also advise this House if these changes have occurred and, if not, why not?

Mr NUTTALL: Some of the information in the question that the Leader of the Opposition asked is inaccurate. I will quickly go through that. The individual was a patient of the high security in-patient service at Wolston Park, which is obviously the Centre for Mental Health. He was detained there by a forensic order under the Mental Health Act. On 30 April this year, the patient's condition was reviewed by the Mental Health Review Tribunal. The independent tribunal approved leave with a view to allowing complete discharge into the community in a staged and graduated process.

At Wolston Park there are two areas. One is a confined area inside the compound and that is where this gentleman was located. When he was allowed for two hours release, he was actually allowed outside the internal area to the external grounds of the compound where other patients who are not considered to be dangerous reside. That was approved by the Mental Health Tribunal. The gentleman walked off the premises. That was reported at about lunchtime. He was located at approximately 10 to seven this morning and has been returned.

These are matters that are continually reviewed by the Mental Health Tribunal. This morning, I spoke to my director-general in relation to the release that was approved by the Mental Health Tribunal. I have asked my director-general to speak with the Mental Health Tribunal in that regard.

In relation to the second part of the member's question, I will go back and check to ensure that the recommendations of that report have been acted upon; and if they have not been acted upon, I will find out why.

Napranum Alcohol Management Plan

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. I draw the minister's attention to the preliminary assessment of the Napranum alcohol management plan prepared for the community justice group and Cape York partnerships. The report states that without an appropriately resourced regional alcohol management strategy there is a high probability that the Napranum alcohol management plan and others—and I repeat 'others'—will fail. The report also states that there is little support, mentoring or training provided to the community justice group and concludes that a crucial area of government policy implementation has been outsourced to a small group of unpaid and untrained volunteers and that this is both unconscionable and unsustainable. Is this report's finding an indictment on the Beattie government's failure to properly endorse these alcohol management plans in these remote indigenous communities?

Ms LIDDY CLARK: No, it is not an indictment on the Beattie government. As we all know, the alcohol management plans—and they were endorsed by the member for Gregory in his address-in-reply speech this year—are tough. They are tough in all regions. They are supported by the community justice groups. At the moment, the community justice groups in the areas that the member is talking about are in the middle of their forum. They were meeting on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. They are undergoing a huge amount of training within that area. We all know that it is a tough time.

The results that are happening from the alcohol management plans are enormous. In Kowanyama, the woman who runs the woman's shelter in Kowanyama has said that the number of people presenting there with alcohol related injuries has dropped dramatically, so much so that she is looking to use the facility for other industries such as arts and craft. That is enormous.

It is really, really important in the alcohol management plans—and the member must understand this—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms LIDDY CLARK: Foetal alcohol syndrome is horrific. Generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been affected by foetal alcohol syndrome. It is not nice. It is abhorrent and we must not let it go not considered. We need to do everything that we can. Yes, part of the initial Fitzgerald report was the alcohol management plan. The second part of that was to resource other areas so that we can maintain people's lifestyles. It is happening. It is tough.

Miss Simpson interjected.

Ms LIDDY CLARK: It is happening. It is tough. The member knows how tough it is. The member for Gregory knows how tough it is. He has stated publicly how it has to work.

Miss Simpson: Where are the resources?

Ms LIDDY CLARK: The resources are happening.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Miss Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warrego! The member for Maroochydhore! Order!

Ms LIDDY CLARK: This is a really important issue. The second part of the Fitzgerald report is about what we do next, and that is happening now. We are training councils, we are training the justice groups—

Miss Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroochydhore! This is my final warning.

Ms LIDDY CLARK: Those resources are happening and the results are happening.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Yeerongpilly, I inform the opposition that interjecting or asking further questions during an answer is not acceptable. You repeatedly ask for detailed answers to questions. You have had two so far this morning and you still have not given the ministers the courtesy of finishing the answers to your questions. So I warn you now that if we are going to have a repeat of this, opposition members interjecting on ministers' answers will be asked to leave the chamber. I now call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Kelvin Grove Urban Village

Mr FINN: My question is directed to the Premier. I understand that the Premier is returning to the Kelvin Grove Urban Village today, only two days after the cabinet met there. Will the Premier tell the House why he is spending so much time there?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Yeerongpilly for his question, because I know that he shares the government's vision about the Smart State and its future. Today I am opening the \$60 million creative industries precinct at Kelvin Grove Urban Village. It is an icon of the new Smart State and the new high-tech jobs that my government is creating.

The Department of State Development and Innovation has provided \$15 million to help create a high-tech jobs generator at the precinct called the business enterprise centre. The centre will be run by CIP Pty Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of QUT, which has the role of linking the creative industries precinct with industry to develop brainwaves and creative thinking into commercial results and consequently jobs, which is what this is all about. The creative industries precinct is a purpose-built, high-tech site minutes from the CBD where academic study, creative experimentation and commercial development can flourish. This collaborative development between my government, the QUT and business is a great example of what the Smart State is all about. The precinct is part of a major redevelopment project, which will also include an institute of health and biomedical innovation, which begins construction in July, and the \$600 million Kelvin Grove Urban Village, a partnership between the Department of Housing and QUT, in which the Minister for Housing has had a key role.

Monday was an excellent opportunity for cabinet to see first-hand the creativity and technology behind the \$600 million Kelvin Grove Urban Village. Within 18 months, the urban village will take its place as a unique and dynamic destination in Brisbane—home to hundreds of new residents and a great place to visit.

The Queensland government is committed to a Smart State future with new high-tech jobs for our children. That is what this is all about. We are spending record amounts on research and development—an investment in future jobs. It is sad that the federal government last night revealed that it is cutting the proportion of federal funding devoted to science and innovation. It is down to 2.83 per cent of federal funding at a time when it should be substantially increased if we are to keep up with the rest of the world.

It is no wonder that Professor Roger Kitching of Griffith University was forced to say at last night's Smithsonian function that Queensland is now the Smart State in the dumb country. He said that the rainforest and reef cooperative research centres are now on death row and that unless wiser heads prevail they will cease to exist in 18 months. He calls it dumb. I call it appalling. The federal government's future is viewed as more important than the Great Barrier Reef and our rainforests.

I say to all members of this House that it is absolutely imperative that these CRCs are funded appropriately. It is about protecting the Great Barrier Reef. We all know that we are confronted with problems associated with global warming. If we do not have the research then one of the great wonders of the world will be put at risk. That is why the cuts in funding are not appropriate, and I would urge the

federal government to review them. We simply cannot have state governments providing leadership without the federal government providing it as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Gregory, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers of Raceview State School in the electorate of Ipswich.

Police Resourcing, Aboriginal Communities

Mr JOHNSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer to the preliminary assessment of the Napranum alcohol management plan and in particular to the findings that the Napranum Aboriginal police are 'completely underresourced to undertake their statutory functions effectively'. Following the minister's woeful failure to properly resource the families department, why is she now underresourcing indigenous communities in her new police portfolio?

Ms SPENCE: I have not seen the report the member refers to about the success of the Napranum alcohol management plan, but I have looked into the issue of the policing on indigenous communities in this state. I have the figures available for police in every indigenous community in the state. I am pleased to make them available to the member.

In the majority of indigenous communities the police to population ratio is above the state average. I have talked to the commissioner and senior police officers about this issue on a number of occasions, because I am concerned that we have proper police numbers in remote parts of the state, particularly in Aboriginal communities where these alcohol management plans are being introduced. As I said, in most cases the police to population ratio is above the state average.

Senior police tell me that they are not underresourced in most of these communities. Some of them, of course, are lacking in police presence and have for a long period of time.

Mr Johnson: So will you take stock of this report?

Ms SPENCE: I have not seen the report. I am happy to read the report. We are looking at putting police in Hope Vale for the first time. They are considering police in Wujal Wujal for the first time. I acknowledge that there are some Aboriginal communities in this state that have not had an on-the-ground police presence. That is something the government is addressing.

When members sit there and advocate for more police in particular areas, they should ask themselves which areas in this state they want to take those police from. The representations I get from all members of parliament all the time are for more police in their own local areas or to expand their own police station to 24-hour policing. It seems to me that everyone wants more police in their area. While I am very conscious of the need to make sure that we have adequate police numbers in Aboriginal communities in this state, I think we all have to bear in mind that if we put more police in those areas then they are going to come out of some other areas of the state. Ultimately, these decisions are a matter for the Police Commissioner, not for me, but the member can be assured that it is an issue I will constantly monitor and continue to discuss with the Police Service.

Multicultural Events

Ms STONE: My question is addressed to the Premier. I have no doubt that, as minister responsible for multicultural affairs, the Premier could speak for ages about the events that happen around Queensland and the different ways we celebrate multiculturalism. However, on this occasion I would ask the Premier for only a snapshot of the events of diversity that are happening around the state.

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for her question. Across Queensland community groups, councils and educational institutions are celebrating cultural diversity through activities and events focused on the arts and entertainment, equity and human rights. Just this month, for example, we have the major Paniyiri Greek festival in Brisbane, to be launched next week as part of a special community cabinet meeting honouring Greek culture. In fact, there will be a community cabinet meeting held at the Greek Club in the electorate of the Leader of the House, Anna Bligh. I know that that will have the support of all my ministerial colleagues. This year we are also celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Greek Orthodox Church of St George, which I attended with the local member and the member for Ashgrove. As well, the sixth annual Greek Fest in Townsville will focus on Olympic themes. This festival has previously attracted more than 30,000 people over two days and will be held on 22 and 23 May.

The Eritrea community festival in Brisbane on 22 May will showcase Eritrea culture and focus on community engagement. Also, on 22 May the Zillmere Multicultural Festival will be highlighting cultural diversity in that area and strengthening community relationships. In Wide Bay the Yag'ubi multicultural festival was held last week, as the local member would know. It featured at least 60 local ethnic groups with more than 5,000 people attending.

On 31 May the Gatton Shire Council will conduct a shire-wide community relations audit to gain an awareness of needs and issues of multicultural groups to be used in the council's business plans. From 25 to 27 May the Multilink community services in Woodridge will conduct a three-day conference

for managers, community workers and small community organisations. Also this month the Wide Bay Volunteer Resource Association is conducting six rural and regional workshops, bringing together multicultural groups and non-profit community organisations.

Through the Multicultural Assistance Program funded by my government we invest \$2.4 million annually to support community efforts and fund dedicated workers, ethnic schools, nationally accredited interpreters and translators and research on multicultural issues. Today I pay tribute to Queenslanders who are supporting migrants and refugees and showcasing diversity. My government values their work, so we are delivering on an election commitment to provide an extra \$3 million this term for multicultural initiatives such as the ones I have spelt out.

I should also say that Karen Struthers, my parliamentary secretary, is currently working with me on a multicultural strategy for a number of programs that we will be announcing shortly to be delivered this term. We are determined to ensure that the richness in our diversity and our multiculturalism go from strength to strength so that we will continue to be a tolerant society.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Cunningham, I welcome to the public gallery student leaders and teachers from Caboolture State High, Bribie Island State High and St Columban's College in the electorate of Pumicestone.

Ms C. Wong; Medical Board of Queensland

Mr COPELAND: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. I refer to the conclusion of the Ombudsman in relation to the matter of Christina Wong and the Medical Board of Queensland that substantiated her complaint against the board and found that the board's monitoring of the health assessment and monitoring program was deficient and constitutes maladministration. What steps has the minister taken to provide redress to Ms Wong, and what does he propose to ensure that the procedures of the Medical Board of Queensland do not permit similar situations to occur in the future?

Mr NUTTALL: In relation to the question raised by the honourable member, I indicate to him that I have been given one brief on that matter. As he can appreciate, I have been in the portfolio only three months. To be across every issue is quite difficult. I will undertake to come back to the member and give him all the details he has asked for.

Yesterday the honourable member raised a series of questions and made some serious allegations. I indicated to him that I would get back to him. There were events yesterday involving both the honourable member for Burnett and the honourable member for Cunningham which I believe were stage managed simply for the media. Yesterday the honourable member for Burnett made a statement in this House during debate on matters of public importance, accusing me of not conducting and not being prepared to conduct an inquiry into the matters raised by him in relation to the mental health unit at Bundaberg.

He proceeded to bring down four nurses and place the four nurses in the gallery while he grandstanded. What he did not tell this parliament and what he did not tell the *Courier-Mail* was that I had written to him on Friday of last week, and in that letter I gave him a series of undertakings in relation to addressing the issues that he had already raised. I visited the Bundaberg Hospital in April of this year. I met with nurses and the Nurses Union. My director-general and a member of my staff spent two hours yesterday afternoon meeting with the nurses who were brought down by the member for Burnett.

I told the member for Burnett in that letter that the director-general had arranged for an external and independent evaluation of the mental health unit. I gave the member an assurance that during the course of the evaluation all the staff would be afforded every protection available should they wish to raise their concerns about the unit. Despite having given him those assurances in writing, he chose yesterday to make a scene. He raised issues with me and I gave him an undertaking of what I was going to do. I gave him an undertaking of how it would be addressed. I gave him assurances about the staff and yet he continues to knock the hospital. Let me say this to the member: while he continues to knock the Bundaberg Hospital in the fashion that he does, it makes it very difficult for us to attract decent staff to come and work at that hospital.

Federal Budget, Education and the Arts

Dr LESLEY CLARK: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education and the Arts. Can the minister please explain what the federal budget provides to education and the arts in Queensland?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question and for her well-known support for education and the arts in her electorate. I think most people would know that I have been one of those people who has optimistically held out hope that this federal budget would see some change in the federal minister's views about particularly the funding of education. Unfortunately, in this year's federal budget education is the great silence.

As Queensland drives a visionary agenda to lift our education, our training and our skills, the Australian government, it seems, is content to simply tread water. There is nothing new in this budget for our schools—nothing on top of what was announced two months ago. As I have told this House a number of occasions now, all that was offered two months ago was simply the same funding that has been received by schools in Australia for the last four years with indexation, which simply means that the funds will buy the same as they are already buying.

Not only that, as I have already told the House, it continues to reinforce the Howard government's public/private wedge which it pursues actively as a policy. Public schools out of this budget will see over the next four years a 27 per cent increase—that is, the standard indexation—while private schools will receive a 47 per cent increase in their funds. It is a very stark contrast. Our government believes that every child in every classroom, public or private, should reasonably expect the same minimum support from the federal government and this is not happening.

I said that I have looked for something new, and I was pleased to see one very small new initiative. There is a proposal to see an allocation of \$1,600 per school around the country for values education. While I welcome any new funds into our schools, I cannot help seeing this as yet another backhander from the Commonwealth after the disgraceful comments by the Prime Minister about the lack of values in public schools. Every member in this House knows the great job that our schools are doing to teach children values. I do not believe the job they are doing needs anymore criticism from the federal government, but the money it is providing we will happily take and use to build on the great work that is happening.

As always, the devil is in the detail. Where is the extra money coming from? The funds have been made available for this values education by funding cuts announced in last night's budget to a program to encourage women to enter non-traditional occupations programs and another program offering government agencies incentives to employ apprentices. The budget papers say—

There is no longer any need for employer incentives for women in non-traditional trades as women are already well represented in industries such as cleaning, hospitality and some cooking fields.

Well may the Treasurer say go forth and multiply, because his alternatives are not much better. Well may he encourage women to go back into childbearing roles because he does not see any role other than cleaning, mopping and cooking, and regards those as somehow non-traditional industries.

A government member interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I take the honourable member's interjection. It is not entirely clear whether he wants them wearing shoes.

Federal Budget, GST

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to the GST figures contained in last night's federal budget that show Queensland will receive an extra \$164 million this financial year over the forecast released less than two months ago at the treasurers meeting, an extra \$70 million next financial year, \$110 million in 2005-06 and \$116 million in 2006-07, and I ask: with Queensland set to receive a whopping \$460 million GST windfall from now until 2006-07, why does the Premier not allocate some of this extra money to state schools and public hospitals for which he is responsible and stop blaming the Commonwealth for its own failures?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. The answer is we will and we are. It is important that we understand we are the growth state of Australia. Every week 1,200 to 1,300 people move to this state. That means we need more money for our hospitals and more money for our schools. That is why we are putting more money into our hospitals and schools. That is why we are building more schools. That is why we are employing more teachers. That is why we are putting money directly where it needs to be put—that is, into service industry delivery. So are we pleased with the progress? Yes. But does more need to be done? The answer to that is yes.

The Leader of the Liberal Party should not forget the 1,300 people who come here every week. Someone has to pay for that. We have to pay for that as a government and we are entitled, frankly, to that revenue from the federal government because we are the growth state of Australia. We are entitled to that money. All we are getting is our entitlement. What he did not mention in his question was what is happening to specific purpose payments. I sat around the table with John Howard and Peter Costello and had negotiations in relation to GST some years ago, and no guarantee was given that SPPs would be protected in terms of their real value. That is my concern.

As Acting Treasurer this week, since Mr Mackenroth is attending the coal conference in Germany representing the Queensland government, I have been concerned to try to get two commitments from the federal government. One has been maintaining specific purpose payments in real value, not just in money terms but in the services they can buy. The other concern that I have is to make sure that the principles of the Grants Commission are not eroded. What we saw last night in relation to competition policy is that in the forward years we do not have the \$150 million put there anymore. Does that mean

the federal government is simply going to stop the competition payments at that time? It will mean less money for education and health if they do.

So there are two crucial issues I am concerned about. One is to maintain the real value of specific purpose payments. The second one is to ensure that we maintain the principles of the current Grants Commission, otherwise New South Wales and Victoria will seek to undermine them. That is where Peter Costello needs to give this state a clear understanding. The third one is to maintain those competition policy payments beyond 2005-06.

The final thing I want to say is this: I know there were some light-hearted comments this morning about the \$21 that those of us who earn over \$52,000 are going to receive. There is no doubt the Leader of the Opposition and others are delighted to get their \$21 a week or whatever it will be. They should be giving their \$21 to St Vincent de Paul because they will need every cent of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Kallangur, I welcome to the public gallery school leaders and teachers from Caningeraba State School in the electorate of Burleigh.

Federal Budget, Health

Mr HAYWARD: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the health announcements contained in last night's federal budget, and I ask: will these announcements go far enough to meet patient care in Queensland?

Mr NUTTALL: The simple answer to that is no. Yet again we have been left out. The Howard government has outlined one-off cash payments for quick fixes in this budget, but no long-term solutions for the critical strategies that are needed to plan for Australians in terms of their long-term health care issues.

All Queenslanders would have seen last night from the very few announcements that were made in health—if you look at the front page of the *Courier-Mail* it is not mentioned once—that the Howard government's Medicare reforms were flawed and that the only major spending that the federal government had in mind for all Australians simply did not eventuate. That should have eventuated for Medicare.

While we do welcome the additional funding for diabetes patients, children with cochlear implants and our veterans so that they do get better access to specialists, we need to see where the gaps are. Our elderly patients on growing hospital waiting lists who need cataract operations, people who are now lining up for second and even third hip and joint replacements or life-saving heart operations; we all deserve to know how these are continually going to be funded in the long term.

Very disappointingly, the federal government's commitment to rural and regional and remote Australians, particularly in Queensland, provides little more than the funds that are already there in their existing forms and existing programs. The federal Treasurer has at least, I suppose, seen the benefits in the argument that I put forward regarding attracting more doctors to rural areas through reducing HECS fees, and I am pleased to see that that is in the program. I actually spoke about that plan with Tony Abbott several weeks ago when I attended the Ministerial Health Council meeting.

A lot was made of an announcement of about 12 more medical positions at the James Cook University. There are no more additional places than they announced at the start of the year. The government's overall spending for specific purpose payments has increased by just eight per cent and yet spending on health care grants is up by only five per cent. The cost of providing medical care for the people of Queensland gallops away at a far greater rate than the cost of inflation.

The private medical health schemes were allowed to increase their fees by seven and eight per cent in recent times and yet inflation was only three per cent. It is a clear indication that the cost of health care continues to increase. However, the money that is coming from the federal government is not meeting that demand.

Chinese Peanut Imports

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries. Minister, it has been reported that Woolworths' supply of peanuts was recently put to tender and was won by China, which will now proceed to fill Woolworths' shelves with imported peanuts. Will the minister confirm that this has occurred and outline what the impact will be on peanut growing areas such as the South Burnett, which is commonly known as the peanut capital of Australia, and what the cost will be to Queensland's economy?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I am unaware of the allegation and the assertion that the honourable member has made, but it is quite interesting because the Peanut Company of Australia, which of course is based in the Burnett, has expanded its operations Australia wide, and it has expanded for one reason and that is that our peanuts are regarded as the best around the world. Consequently, the reason for the expansion is for export.

The peanut industry not only has expanded in different parts of Queensland, especially in some of our cane growing areas in north Queensland; it has also expanded into the Northern Territory and also Western Australia. The Peanut Company of Australia's plans for its expansion are to double production as soon as possible to satisfy the demands of its exporters.

In regard to the specific question that was asked by the honourable member in relation to Chinese peanuts being imported by Woolworths, that is an issue I certainly would like to take up with the CEO of Woolworths, considering the fact that Woolworths has come out, as has Coles, and said that it will not accept imported bananas from the Philippines. Roger Corbett, the CEO of Woolworths, also stated when he last visited a dairy producing area in the Gympie region that he would communicate directly with the Prime Minister to see what can be done to assist our dairy farmers in relation to the low prices that they are receiving for their milk, especially the generic milk.

Mr Horan: From Woolworths—low prices from Woolworths.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Low prices from Woolworths, that's right. I wrote to Roger Corbett two weeks ago to see whether he has had correspondence with the Prime Minister and as of yesterday I had not received a response. I take on board what the honourable member has said. I will pursue it further and see what I can do.

Federal Budget, Housing

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works and Housing. The federal Treasurer claimed that the budget he brought down last night will greatly benefit families, but was there any good news last night for low income families needing affordable housing?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for his ongoing interest in the issue of affordable housing. The budget last night did something for all the families in this parliament by giving them \$2,200 a year more. No doubt that is why the Tories think it is a great idea, but we on the Labor side of politics do not believe in that philosophy. That is why they have warmly embraced this budget, because of the fact that their pockets are going to be filled with \$50 notes.

It is good news if you are a soldier because you are going to get \$80 million spent on your housing, but if you are a battler out there you got no pleasure whatsoever out of last night's budget, because for the second time in a row—the second time in a row—Treasurer Costello has been able to get through a budget speech without one word mentioned about housing in terms of affordability. The reality is that they are the forgotten people of this country. They are the forgotten people. He is going out and telling people to procreate and at the same time telling them that they will not have a house to live in.

The fact of the matter is that we hear from the Liberal Party here this morning of the great \$400 million surplus we are going to get from the GST. That is about exactly the same amount of money that the Tory federal government has ripped out of Queensland, that it has taken away from the people of this state who require affordable housing. You people over there have the hide to criticise this government—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: And don't you start interjecting over here, my friend.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will address the chair.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, Mr Speaker. That group of people over there who represent the federal government, who want to put \$2,200 in the pockets of the rich and wealthy people of this state, are the same ones who are telling us about the \$400 million worth of GST. We are supposed to get excited about that, but that is what the Housing Department has lost in terms of affordable housing in this state. All we ever get from this lot over here is criticism of this government, but you will never, ever once hear this group of people over here criticise the federal government's policy on affordable housing. Yet at the same time they come to me whingeing that we cannot provide accommodation for people who need it and somehow it is this government's fault.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Never once have we ever, ever, ever heard this group of people over here take on the federal government's policy of pushing more and more people over the edge. No wonder our public housing waiting lists are growing. The member for Nicklin knows this better than anybody because he came to me the other day with a suggestion, and I would love to be able to fund it; it would be a great thing to be able to do. I am proud of the record that this government has put \$200 million a year more into housing when we have had the heart and soul ripped out of it by the federal government. The reality is \$3.4 billion worth of reticence, and housing has never been more unaffordable in this state.

Fruit and Vegetable Industry, Voluntary Code of Conduct

Mr HORAN: In November last year the minister told parliament the voluntary code of conduct for the fruit and vegetable industry was working pretty well and he did not think it was acceptable to have a mandatory code in a deregulated environment. Given a recent food price study has confirmed the marketing system is dysfunctional and volatile, and following allegations of intimidation, rip-offs and victimisation raised during the review of the Voluntary Retail Grocery Code of Conduct, is the minister now prepared to change his previous position and, if so, can the minister advise the House what action he would take to support the fruit and vegetable growers' push for a mandatory code of conduct?

Mr PALASZCZUK: As I can well remember, when we talk about the voluntary code we really talk about a national code because, as I said last year, state governments cannot impose those sorts of codes on their industry because of the freedom of trade between states.

However, there is good news. The director-general of my department, officers of the department and I have had lengthy discussions on this issue with the Queensland Fruit and Vegetables Growers Association and individual growers within the industry. I am taking their submission on this issue to the primary industries ministerial council meeting next Wednesday. I have that item listed for discussion and debate at that meeting.

The federal government has conducted its own inquiry into the issues that the honourable member has raised. Unfortunately, that report has not been published. Many of us who read the *Australian Financial Review* would have read a synopsis of that report in the *Australian Financial Review* about 10 days ago. It certainly outlines some of the difficulties that our primary producers have when accessing and working with the people within the market. I assure the House that as the minister I have an agreement with the Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers to take their submission on this issue to the primary industries ministerial council meeting next Wednesday. It is listed on the agenda. I will certainly be presenting their case on their behalf.

It is 87 days since the Leader of the Opposition called the Queensland Farmers Federation 'completely gutless'. From a reading of his report on his trip, I saw the honourable member was on the road to Damascus. After reading Jules Verne's book *Around the World in 80 Days* we know that it took a person 80 days to get around the world. It is 87 days since the Leader of the Opposition apologised to 18,000 primary producers. The Leader of the Opposition should take a deep breath and have a think about it. He should ring up Gary Samson and say to him, 'I am sorry for calling 18,000 primary producers in Queensland completely gutless.' That is the challenge.

Federal Budget, National Highway

Ms NOLAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please reveal whether last night's federal budget will provide the funding necessary to upgrade the Queensland national highway system which federal Transport Minister John Anderson has previously said is the worst in Australia?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for her question. The honourable member is a very strong agitator for the Ipswich Motorway upgrading. One could forgive her for being devastated today when she saw what happened in the federal budget last night. The people of Ipswich, like so many people from other parts of Queensland, were unfortunately let down and duded after the bar was raised so high by Senator Campbell and Minister Anderson when it came to the possibility of federal roads funding.

This might be the seventh consecutive Costello surplus, but it is the third consecutive deficit for Queensland national highways from the federal government. This budget gives national highways \$187 million in Queensland but all of the projects have been previously announced, except for \$1 million for a bridge over a creek in Bundaberg. Everything else in this budget was previously announced. There is nothing new.

We need \$600 million per year over five years to get a fair share and a fair deal on our national highways. The federal government has indicated how much money it will allow for AusLink. If we got a notional 20 per cent of that, that would be \$428 million. But that also includes rail funding. It also includes council and federal black spots. If we take \$199 million out of that it shows what will be left. A \$200 million-odd increase is not the big bang theory that we were expecting from the federal government when it comes to our national highways.

Let us look at why this federal budget is so cruel. Senator Campbell was in the *Courier-Mail* a few weeks ago waxing lyrical about his view of roads in Queensland, taking tolls off the Logan Motorway, the Brisbane urban corridor, the Western Bypass and the Ipswich Motorway. What has happened? We have a \$50 million reduction. That is what we got out of the budget.

Let us have a look at the budget in detail. The Bruce Highway was allocated \$21 million for works previously announced. There was nothing for flood proofing in the north Queensland area. For the

Warrego Highway it detailed the existing \$3 million for the Plainland interchange. There was \$3 million towards the Toowoomba bypass.

Mr Shine: Miserable!

Mr LUCAS: That was already expected. It is a \$580 million project, I point out to the member for Toowoomba North. Barkly Highway got \$32.4 million for two bridges. That has already been announced. For the Ipswich Motorway there is \$66 million for safety works, but that has already been announced. The \$600 million that is needed for the six-laning of that road is not forthcoming. We do not want to write home about the Gateway Arterial. Some \$500,000 was allocated to continue planning. I would have thought that we get less than that in tolls in a day. We got \$6.4 million less than we sought. The Cunningham Highway and the six-laning between Dohles Rocks Road and Boundary Road on the Bruce Highway are existing commitments. The Tugun bypass was an existing commitment. The Gladstone port access was an existing commitment. There was nothing for Townsville or Cairns.

Mortgage Brokers

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. In March 2003 the Australian Securities and Investments Commission released its damning report into the mortgage industry revealing a significant fringe element of unscrupulous operators with rising incidences of fraud, secret commissions and kickbacks. With the regulation of customer credit being a state responsibility and with over 30 per cent of new home loans arranged through brokers, what actions have the minister and her department taken to prosecute rogue mortgage brokers?

Ms KEECH: I thank the honourable member for her question. She has a couple things wrong, not surprisingly. First of all, the regulation of the property industry and particularly with respect to investment advisers is not the responsibility of the state government. Surprise, surprise—it is the responsibility of the federal government. The member needs to be talking to her federal cronies to support her if she has problems in that regard.

In August last year at the ministerial council on consumer affairs, fair trading and consumer affairs state and territory ministers backed Queensland's push for national regulation of property investment advisers. The federal government is trying to, not surprisingly, squeeze out of this one by saying it is the states' responsibility. Clearly it is not. It is the responsibility of the federal government. We have asked them to take that responsibility on board. They have refused.

Regulating the real estate industry certainly is the responsibility of my department, the Office of Fair Trading. The officers do an excellent job in that regulation. When it comes to giving advice on property investment which leads to investment in the property market, that is a federal government responsibility. If the honourable member has problems with respect to the regulation of the industry, I would encourage her to speak to her colleagues in the federal government.

Justices of the Peace

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: My question is directed to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Minister, I refer to the availability of justices of the peace to our constituents for their everyday needs. What measures are being taken to make it easier for Queenslanders to have access to the services of a justice of the peace?

Mr WELFORD: I thank the honourable member for that important question. I know the honourable member out in Chermside every day of the week through the length and breadth of his electorate is busy occupying himself entertaining JPs and paying attention to their important daily needs. The Beattie government is the first to introduce initiatives to make it easier for people to find a JP. There are more than 70,000 JPs in Queensland, yet it has always been difficult for people to find a JP when they need one. Two years ago I took the first step to help Queenslanders overcome this problem by introducing a directory of JPs on the Internet. Last year, I set up a program of JPs volunteering their time and being available to the public at some of our magistrate's courts.

Working in partnership with Westfield shopping centres, we have gone a step further. Recently I was pleased to launch a new program called JPs in the Community at the Westfield shopping centre at Chermside in the electorate of the honourable member. This program involves JPs volunteering their time for a few hours a week at their local shopping centre to put up with their local member. It is an innovative and commonsense solution to a real community need to keep him out of their hair. The JPs branch of my Department of Justice and Attorney-General is providing assistance in several ways, including refresher training for any of the JP volunteers. A kit is provided which includes general information for the public about JP services as well as fact sheets and brochures.

Since the introduction of this program at Westfield Chermside, its acceptance by JPs and the local community has been overwhelming. The number of volunteer JPs has expanded from seven to 16 and centre management at Chermside advise that the service has become so popular it been extended from Monday and Wednesday to include Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Mr Schwarten: Why so short?

Mr WELFORD: That is as long as they can put up with him. This is a smart idea for the Smart State, and it is why it is being adopted throughout Queensland. Shopping centres at Browns Plains and Robina and Ashmore on the Gold Coast are also providing facilities for local JPs to offer their services. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Westfield and the other shopping centres that are taking up this initiative for supporting their communities in this way. I thank the many JPs who are giving up their time to make this service work. I look forward to providing support for other shopping centres not only in Brisbane and the Gold Coast but in regional Queensland to follow suit with this valuable JP service for our community.

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

Mareeba Wild Animal Park

Ms LEE LONG: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Community anger and outrage continue at the manner in which his departmental officers conducted the dawn raid, including nine officers, on the residence of the owner-operator of the Mareeba Wild Animal Park, which included the refusal to allow a young mother to get dressed or even access a bathroom without an escort. The allegations were not of a criminal nature but mainly about fencing discrepancies, and I ask: will the minister explain to the House why such gung-ho tactics were used by his departmental officers?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think it is important to note that last week both the member for Tablelands and the member for Barron River received an exhaustive and detailed briefing from senior compliance officers of my department that responded to a number of misinformed and inaccurate assertions made principally in the media by a number of people. I think it is important to take the opportunity today to place on record exactly what has happened.

In relation to the first matter that the member mentioned in her question regarding the allegation that a young mother was refused permission to get dressed for the purposes of an interview with officers of my department, that assertion is wrong. Whilst I do have the details of exactly what happened, I think privacy and discretion are the better part of valour in relation to this particular allegation. I am happy to tell the member outside of this chamber exactly what happened with this young mother. I do not want to do anything that may embarrass this particular person. But, as I said, I think it is important to state that my department's actions were based on receiving a number of serious allegations regarding the Mareeba Wild Animal Park owned by Mr David Gill.

My department is bound to investigate complaints or alleged breaches of permit conditions under the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act. These serious allegations involved potential breaches of permit conditions, including public safety, security of the animals, unreported deaths of animals, unreported escapes of animals and overall animal welfare.

Mr Schwarten: They are dangerous animals.

Mr ROBERTSON: The member is quite right; they are dangerous animals involved in these particular matters. My department is conducting these investigations in the standard manner, and we followed standard law enforcement practices in the recording of evidence. Recently the department issued further complaints against Mr Gill. Specifically, these matters include the escape of a cheetah, failure to maintain appropriate enclosures, failure to report the death of a lemur and the keeping of class 1 declared pest animals without a permit. All of these are breaches of the act and are criminal offences.

These matters are serious. Fortunately, the cheetah's escape did not breach the park's perimeter fencing and did not pose a serious threat to public safety. It did, however, pose a threat to zoo staff. Furthermore, Mr Gill in the UK has recently been asked to rectify his fences to ensure public safety. The park was closed to the public in early April and my department was heavily criticised for its treatment of Mr Gill. The decision to close the park was made by Mr Gill himself for his own reasons. There was no order, suspension or any other instruction given by my department to close the park. I want to place on record this important matter—that is, we support the Mareeba Wild Animal Park. We understand its importance to the regional economy of the Tablelands. It is a valuable tourism asset. We want it to succeed, but not at the expense of public safety and not at the expense of the welfare of the animals.

Disability Services, Mackay District

Mr MULHERIN: I refer the Minister for Communities to the Mackay and District Education Centre's new night-time attendant care program. Could the minister please explain how this service will help people in the Mackay district with a disability?

Mr PITT: I do thank the member for Mackay for his question. He is a strong advocate for people with a disability in his electorate. I think it is important to note that he is a very good local member and takes a great interest in community groups in his area. This particular project will assist up to 40 people

with a disability in the Mackay district. They will sleep easier each night knowing that this innovative new service, being run by the Mackay and District Education Centre, is now in place. It is called the Night-time Attendant Care Service, and I understand that some people call it the Lights Out service.

It allows a support worker to attend to a whole range of procedures that are necessary for people with a disability before they go to bed. People with a disability are sometimes very concerned about going out at night and having to come home and not being able to attend to these procedures without some support. The Beattie government has allocated the Mackay and District Education Centre \$134,511 in recurrent funding under the innovative funding community initiatives program. The centre's new night-time service is a great example of innovative and flexible programs being designed to meet the needs of individuals and groups.

The Night-time Attendant Care Service is one of just a few of its kind in Australia. There are a couple of others, but this is one of the first in Queensland. It began its operations early this month and operates between 8 p.m. and 2 a.m., giving people with a disability some flexibility in returning home after a night out. Clients are assisted with regular lights-out tasks such as locking up, taking medication, changing clothes and generally getting ready for bed. By providing assistance which is outside traditional support hours, the service will give people with a disability, as I said, greater flexibility and choice in their lives.

Clients of the service will be able to attend evening events knowing that they can still get the assistance they need when they get home to prepare for bed. It is a very practical way for this government and the Mackay community to support people with a disability. My department, Disability Services Queensland, is working hand in hand with these organisations to assist them to bring projects like this forward and to see them pan out on the ground. Together they have identified a need in the Mackay area. Not only have they identified a need, they have actually developed a service model to meet that need and have secured the adequate funding.

I want to congratulate everyone involved in the project, including the local member, who has done so much to help the group. I thank him for his support. As I said, they saw a need and they provided an innovative response. I am sure that people across Queensland will appreciate the work that the Mackay community has done in showing the way in this respect.

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

PETROLEUM AND GAS (PRODUCTION AND SAFETY) BILL

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.30 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act about exploring for, recovering and transporting by pipeline, petroleum and fuel gas and ensuring the safe and efficient carrying out of those activities, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.31 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill represents a significant leap forward for Queensland's vital petroleum and gas industries. The Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Bill 2004 is the first comprehensive reworking of petroleum laws in more than 80 years in Queensland and marks a new phase in the way our petroleum resources are developed, managed and regulated. This bill will, for the first time, introduce full competition in awarding petroleum exploration tenure, encouraging open and more responsible management of our land and resources. It will also result in the safer production, transportation and use of petroleum for all Queenslanders. Industry will receive a major boost from these laws not only through full competition in awarding exploration tenure but through the benefits to our rapidly growing coal seam gas industry as they implement the Beattie government's coal seam gas regime, which will clearly define the legal rights, obligations and priorities for developing coexisting petroleum, coal, and coal seam gas resources.

This is the first legislation of its kind in Australia—innovative legislation for an innovative industry. As I informed honourable members in this place last year, coal seam gas is a fuel source for the 21st century and already more than 27 per cent of Queensland's gas is supplied by coal seam gas—a massive increase from the 1998 level of four per cent. And that percentage will only increase over time. Townsville's refitted gas-fired power station will soon be operational and will be powered by coal seam

methane captured by CH₄ in the Moranbah gas fields. This growth industry is not only about economic benefit and creating jobs for Queenslanders; it provides twofold benefits for our environment.

In the first instance, it means the gas caught in coal seams is a valuable commercial commodity and one that is worth capturing and using. Until recently, it was flared or vented into the atmosphere as part of coalmining operations, adding damaging methane to the atmosphere. Second, it provides a cleaner source of power than traditional coal-fired generation, which also means lower greenhouse emissions.

Coal seam gas has been one of the driving forces behind the success of this government's 13 per cent gas policy and, given our vast coal seam gas reserves, it is an industry with enormous potential to help meet Queensland's energy needs well into the future. There are two cornerstones of this regime. The first, and foremost, is safety, which must never be compromised; and the second is this government's firm commitment to seeing both coal and coal seam gas resources developed.

It is a regime that will create greater certainty for explorers and developers to invest in the industry as well as provide clear rules, rights and obligations for the coal and petroleum industries to work cooperatively. Parties from the two sectors will need to cooperate, consult and negotiate to reach mutually agreeable solutions that benefit both, respect the existing rights of each, and lead to the coordinated development of both resources. When both parties reach agreement, overlapping leases and other tenure applications can be granted with clear definition of rights. That means the applications can proceed quickly, without unnecessary delays or barriers. If agreement cannot be reached, then the framework allows the Land and Resources Tribunal to recommend the best outcome in the interests of resource management—decisions that will be open, transparent, and available for public scrutiny.

Many of the safety requirements of the regime will be incorporated in the comprehensive safety regulations that will support this bill. Inspectors and authorised officers will have the power to conduct audits and inspections and collect information to ensure that the safety management plans required by this bill are being followed. Those inspectors will also have the vital role of investigating accidents and responding to emergencies to protect public safety.

Under the new competitive regime for awarding all exploration tenures, an authority to prospect for petroleum will be granted only after a tender process has been completed. Petroleum leases may be granted to the holder of an authority to prospect, subject to stringent requirements. This change means that we will be allocating the state's petroleum resources much more efficiently and transparently and delivering real certainty to the industry.

The future of conventional petroleum tenures under the new regime has been an important issue, and I can confirm that a number of current authorities to prospect are proposed to remain under the Petroleum Act 1923 to maintain their status under the Commonwealth Native Title Act. It means retaining the original Petroleum Act for some tenures. But that act will be amended later this year to ensure that many of the obligations and procedures of the new regime are incorporated to ensure that processes are consistent.

One final but very important aspect of this bill I want to mention is the provisions for compensation to land-holder concerns. The original legislation made little provision for compensation to land-holders. This bill fully remedies that by incorporating the compensation principles used in the Mineral Resources Act 1989, which provide land-holders with additional grounds for compensation that better reflect the real impact of authorised petroleum activities on land-holders and ensure that mining and petroleum industries are operating under uniform rules for assessing compensation.

This bill will provide a modern, comprehensive framework that will bring about more certain and transparent management of our gas and petroleum resources. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney , adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 29 April (see p. 760).

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (11.36 a.m.): It is a real privilege to speak in the address-in-reply debate for the 51st Parliament as the member for Aspley. I acknowledge and appreciate the endorsement of the people of the electorate of Aspley at the 2004 election and I thank them for this opportunity. What an amazing experience it is to win the once blue-ribbon seat of Aspley and turn it into a red-ribbon seat for a second time.

The win for the Labor Party in the seat of Aspley is a message by the majority of support for the policies and plans of the state Labor government—not just for the state but for my local community. It is also a message that continuing to work hard and achieve results for the people of Aspley must and will be at the foundations of my priorities for the next three years. I believe at the heart of my electorate support is that the election commitments that have been made for my community were, in their genesis, what my local area identified as its own priorities. If I were to measure my real achievements in Aspley,

they would be close engagement with my community and the playing of a small part in the further development of community capacity, particularly in terms of local people determining the priorities that they have for our community. These, of course, are the priorities that underpin the Beattie government election commitment in the Beattie-Barry plan presented to the Aspley electorate during the campaign.

The Aspley community benefits from a raft of commitments to improve health and education services, in particular the improved numbers of beds at the Prince Charles Hospital and the establishment of an accident and emergency department. We are also the recipient of a multimillion-dollar smart schools renewal. We have, of course, vital road improvements, including the fast-tracking of the Linkfield Road connection—a project that the member for Kurwongbah, Linda Lavarch, and I have worked very, very hard to achieve and are very pleased to have been able to deliver to the people of our electorates. There are improvements to the Police Service, with the commitment of a community police beat within Bald Hills and commitment to a very important group of people in my community, small business operators.

Listening to and then delivering on what is important to constituents in an electorate such as mine is absolutely critical. I am extremely proud and certainly kept on my toes by an electorate that is prepared to participate in the broader debate on state and federal issues. The people of the Aspley electorate are regular contributors to local and state based papers in their letters to the editor, to talkback radio and to many community forums. They are interested in decisions made by governments of all levels. The people of Aspley are clear about their desire for a community that is fair, inclusive and safe, and they demonstrate a real capacity and preparedness to look at and speak about the broader issues that impact on Queensland. They identify health, education, the environment, and quality-of-life issues such as employment, safety and aged care as priorities for them.

As such, it causes me real anger to listen in this House to members opposite make it a regular practice to deride urban voters like those of the Aspley electorate for not understanding issues such as tree clearing, the sugar industry, racing and regional development. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Many people who live in my electorate came from the country or have strong ties with rural and regional communities. But more importantly, they do take the time to inform themselves of the debates in such areas. They understand the issues that underpin their decision making at election time. I understand that, and my opposition would do well to learn it. I do intend in this term to continue to defend my community in this House from the attacks of those in the opposition who would seek to use wedge politics between city and country communities as a means of advancing their own opportunistic agendas.

For me personally, the chance to be Aspley's representative in state parliament and in the Beattie state government is a dream come true. I am a working-class woman—a mother, a trade unionist and a nurse—and I celebrate the unique democracy that we all share. It is a democracy in which ordinary people can achieve a seat in our parliament. It is a democracy that we should fight hard to protect and promote. But the opportunity to be a state MP is achievable for me because so many people believe in the same ideals and are prepared to put in the hard work to achieve the victory that we now have.

The Aspley campaign has once again been a team effort of true believers of the ALP, trade unionists who passionately advocate for the workers of this country, my friends and my family. My two election wins in Aspley are moments in history for the Labor Party. We won for the first time in 52 years in 2001, and to be returned is in large part a reflection of the hard work of those members of my campaign team and my staff.

Mr Lawlor: And you.

Ms BARRY: Thank you. I wish to indicate my thanks once again to my union comrades and in particular my own union, the Queensland Nurses Union. I received incredible support and assistance from the Queensland Rail Union, the CFMEU, the AMWU, ASU Clerical, the MUA, the ALHMWU, the BLF, the members of the Queensland Council of Unions and the Left unions. I thank them for their support of me.

I am at my heart a proud trade unionist. I was amused during the election campaign to see my Liberal opponents seek to portray my trade union links as a negative. I note that I was identified in their literature by my time as a trade union official. I think they called me a hack. This obviously comes from my time as an organiser and then a professional nursing officer with the Queensland Nurses Union. Of course, there was never any mention in the literature that my job as a Queensland Nurses Union official was to represent the nurses of Queensland who work in the areas of aged care and the private sector. There was never, of course, any mention that I myself was a cancer nurse for 18 years. I guess that did not really fit in with their attempts to demonise me.

For the record, I am a nurse who was and still is a trade unionist through and through. Nursing unions are the growth unions in this country, and nurses have always been strong supporters of collective actions to advance both professional and patient care. It is a source of pride for me. No apology is needed and none is given. For the record, there are a lot of trade unionists in the Aspley electorate who would agree with me.

I have worked hard to engage with young people in my electorate and have been ably supported by many youth members of the ALP, tireless in their commitment to making the world a better place for all people, in particular those people who are disadvantaged by the Howard government policies in particular on refugees, women, workers, those people marginalised by their sexual orientation and students. I really thank them for their help. My special thanks to Lisa, Jodie, Shannon, Nick, Miriam and the Young Labor team. Our party's future is really safe in their hands.

Every day during the campaign and the last three years local ALP members have worked tirelessly to ensure our message was heard by the people of Aspley. I have in my local ALP branches some of the longest-serving members of the Labor Party in the state—Les Thorpe, Kev O'Leary, Michael Duffy, Tommy Dale, Lyn Masters, Marie Maurer, Faith and Loretta Fanning and Terry and Anne Hampson, just to name a few. They are my inspiration and they are my mentors.

To one gentleman in particular, Les Thorpe, I want to say thank you. Les, you are an amazing man who regularly got me up at 4.30 a.m. on a Sunday to attend markets—

A government member: Is he still your friend?

Ms BARRY: He is still my friend—to talk to people and to sell the good message on behalf of the ALP. He came every day during the campaign and afterwards to work hard for the party and for me. So I want to take the time in this House to say to you, Les: my thanks on behalf of the ALP team and in particular the girls and blokes on my campaign team who, like I do, love you to pieces. In a year when the Labor Party celebrates the centenary of the first Labor government in the world, I know that people like Les Thorpe and Kev O'Leary only spent 52 years waiting for an ALP win in Aspley. I am sure that it felt like forever, but they never, ever gave up.

Mr Lawlor: It was worth waiting for.

Ms BARRY: Thank you. Such is my respect for you that I would basically follow you where you lead, and I certainly owe you a trip to Barcaldine next year.

To Gavin Brady, who is the Labor candidate and the future federal member for Petrie: comrade, you can expect my wholehearted support in your campaign because you are a man who cares for the people in our community. I thank you for your support and I really anticipate your win at the next federal election.

My staff, supporters, friends and family were incredible, as they always are, in their hard work day and night on the campaign. My staff, Kerry, Noeline, Gai and Callum, and their families are my partners in my role as the member for Aspley. 'Beyond the call of duty' fails to describe the work they do for me and my community. Loyalty, talent and a work ethic like theirs are priceless, and I try hard every day to appreciate them in every way.

My parliamentary colleagues gave selflessly to help us win the seat of Aspley. Without exception the colleagues that I share this side of the House with are committed to good governance and ensuring that the people of Aspley share in it. I have to of course name the members for Kurwongbah, Stafford, Nudgee, Everton and Ferny Grove and Mr Speaker, who are my immediate neighbours, for their ever-present support.

The ALP headquarters team delivered whenever and wherever we needed them. Thank you in particular to Cameron, Anthony, Simon and Andrew for their guidance. Maria McDonald, Ross Schmike and Denis Jones completed a dream campaign team and made me smile even when the days were dark. Such beautifully grounded and compassionate people as these are the heart of our party's success. Thank you for looking after us.

Emily's List members were passionate in their support, both financially and emotionally. I have been a member of Emily's List since 1997 and am a foundation member. I am very proud to be an Emily's List supported member. I am very proud to be part of an organisation that promotes the principle of supporting affirmative action, pro-choice women to achieve public office. They are there always. A commitment to Emily's List is not just at election time but is for the long term. The level of support that I and other Emily's List members receive is enviable—not just financially, when money is important, particularly to candidates who are first starting off, but at any time, anywhere. You can ring up an Emily's List mentor and discuss your campaign with experienced campaign managers, you can complain, you can whinge and you can just look for support. It is a commitment, like I said, for the long term. I thank them very much for their work and I look forward to advocating for them on their behalf.

My husband, Lloyd, my children, Jerry, Lizzy, Alex and Philip, and my parents, Stan and Val, are the reason I get the chance to represent the people of Aspley and the state Labor government. They are a considered, compassionate and absolutely supportive family who understand that this is a job that we do together as a family. It is our commitment to our community. I have four teenage children, and they are magnificent young people—teenagers in the middle of busy lives. I am absolutely blessed for their maturity, their humour and their love. People often say to me, 'How do you manage being an MP with four children?' I say, 'Because they are the type of fantastic kids they really are.' I really couldn't do it

without you guys. As for my husband, Lloyd, he is my soft centre. He is where I go to be a little crazy, which is often. To him I say: thank you and I love you heaps.

In conclusion, I do want to thank my campaign manager. It is a real family affair in Aspley, because my sister Sue was my campaign manager. She has been there for the last three years. She is a teacher, a mum and a strong local worker in her own area. She has a fine eye for the crime of 'politician speak', and she guides me in always being real. She rightly understands that people want to engage with their political candidates in a straightforward way, and she is one of the reasons I believe I have had success in connecting well with the people I represent. She tells me when I sound like a walking advertisement and gets me back on track. She is my mate, my mentor and a woman who loves the Labor Party and looking after people as deeply as I do. She of course protects, loves and tells off her little sister as often as she needs to, and that is as good as it gets in a campaign manager. So thank you to Susie.

In conclusion, I try to find the words to say thank you. I realise that the true way to say thanks is to deliver wherever and whenever I can on the hopes and the aspirations of the many people who supported me, and I look forward to working hard during the next three years for the people of Aspley and Queensland.

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (11.49 a.m.): Firstly, let me offer my congratulations to the Speaker on his election for the third time to the position of Speaker of this House. About three years ago I stood in this chamber and made my first speech in this place. I spoke about the economic and social pressures on people living in the electorate of Southport, as is the case in other areas of the state. They were concerned, as they still are, with the cost of living, the cost and difficulty of accessing health care, the need for their children to get a good education, the importance of training, job security and the creation of new jobs, the effectiveness of community policing and the protection of our environment and also the lack of public housing.

It has been a privilege to represent the people of Southport for the past three years—workers, unemployed, sick, disabled, senior citizens, struggling small businesspeople and many others. I consider the past three years was my apprenticeship, and I am now better qualified to represent the people of Southport and I thank them for again putting their faith in me. I again assure them that that faith is not misplaced. The people of Southport have had three years of first-hand experience of a Beattie Labor government and obviously liked what they saw. They expressed their approval through the ballot box, where we increased the primary vote by 3.3 per cent to 54 per cent. I think it is appropriate for me to express my commiserations to my opponents—Mr Williams, Mr Latto and Bob Bennett. Having been beaten three times in Southport before I was successful in 2001, I know exactly how they feel.

There are many people to thank for our success. As with the 2001 victory, it is not a victory for me but for many people—branch members, staff, family and community members. Particular thanks go to my greatest fans and maybe my only fans—my children, Ali, Jane and Phil. Ali and Jane live in London and could not come home this time, but I know they were supporting me from afar. Phil came home from London, where he was working between university years when the election was called and he was a great help to me. My dad, Jim, assisted as did my brother Gerard. My campaign manager, Terry Callaghan, and staff, Sharyn Masters and Peter Keech, were towers of strength as were so many branch members, particularly Don Townsend, and many other friends, especially Lindesay Jones. John and Meg Coonan, Jeff and Judy Brown and Jack Carroll came from interstate to help on the election day.

There are a few issues that I would like to mention, and the first relates to health. Under Labor, Queensland Health has employed an extra 1,800 nurses and spent a further \$180 million on new hospital equipment. We have committed to employ a further 1,500 nurses in the next three years. The federal government's own Productivity Commission says that Queensland now has the shortest waiting times in Australia.

Locally during the past three years the Beattie government has spent \$55 million on an upgrade of the Gold Coast Hospital, \$3.1 million on an MRI unit at the Gold Coast Hospital and also committed \$7 million for the Cardiac Catheter Centre at the Gold Coast Hospital. Additionally, \$110 million has been allocated to tackle elective surgery waiting lists and \$10 million for two travel and dental teams which will effectively give an additional 18,000 free dental visits.

Back in the dark National Party days of 1997, 40.5 per cent of category 2 patients across the state were waiting too long for their surgery, which was nothing short of an embarrassment. More people were being added to the waiting list than were being treated and the best the coalition government of the time could hope for was that 40 per cent of patients would be treated on time. People might remember that under the Nationals the Gold Coast Hospital was underfunded by \$10 million a year, prompting a *Gold Coast Sun* driven protest in the streets. In less than six years we have moved from a position where the Nationals were too embarrassed to release waiting times to a point where 2003 is likely to go down as the best year on record for patients waiting for elective surgery in these categories.

Rather than rest on its laurels, the government has continued to address waiting times for elective surgery. Bulk-billing by GPs has plummeted by 11 per cent under John Howard and here in the federal electorate of Moncrieff the rate of bulk-billing has fallen by a whopping 13.5 per cent. It really should not come as a surprise, as when in opposition John Howard told Sydney radio listeners—

We will be proposing changes to Medicare which amount to its de facto dismantling... We'll pull it right apart. The second thing we'll do is get rid of the bulk-billing system. It's an absolute roort.

The impact on the state health system is that the public hospitals are now under much greater pressure than ever before because it is more difficult to find bulk-billing doctors.

In relation to transport and traffic congestion, the Gold Coast of course is a rapidly growing city and it is unfortunate that the Gold Coast City Council tries at every opportunity to wash its hands of the problem whilst at the same time approving many high-density developments which exacerbate the problem. The government formed a committee chaired by my parliamentary colleague the member for Broadwater, Peta-Kaye Croft, which with the Gold Coast City Council and Main Roads Department is investigating solutions for the traffic congestion on Frank and Broad streets. The Beattie government is also committed to a \$247 million upgrade of the Gold Coast railway line, which will allow trains to run at 15-minute intervals and thereby reduce the delays and the congestion which is presently experienced on this very popular service which was reintroduced by the Beattie Labor government. We should always remember, too, that it was the coalition government which ripped up the train line to the Gold Coast in 1966. Not only did it rip it up; it ripped it up with such haste that a locomotive was left at Coolangatta which had to be dismantled and brought back by road.

Mr Shine: That was visionary.

Mr LAWLOR: Very visionary. Southport is undergoing extensive redevelopment and it is therefore particularly important that we continue to protect from commercial development our major open space, which is the Broadwater and the western foreshore. We must not allow our greatest natural asset to be taken over and used for projects such as special events precincts or the relocation of the Indy track.

In relation to education, some of the new students at the Arundel State School will be younger than usual. These students are part of the Beattie government's prep year trial. By starting early, these students are helping the Beattie government build a bright future for them and Queensland's education system. The new prep year trial is just part of what the Beattie government is doing for education in Queensland.

This year 26 per cent of the state's budget has been invested in education. This investment will deliver on Peter Beattie's promises for more teachers, smaller classes, new schools, a prep year trial, school upgrades and programs to make sure students are either learning or earning. Peter Beattie's commitment to education and making Queensland the Smart State is all about delivering the jobs of the future. State schools in the Southport electorate have received unprecedented attention in respect of maintenance and facilities, and this attention will continue for the next three years.

Policing and community safety is a key issue on the Gold Coast, and the Beattie Labor government is determined to fight for the best deal for the community in this regard. Since coming to government in July 1998, the number of funded police in the Gold Coast police district has increased by 145 officers—from 503 to 648 as at 1 October last year, including an extra 87 officers since February 2001. The good news is that these increases to police numbers are set to continue. In this financial year about 300 extra officers will be employed thanks to funding provided by the government. In fact, each year we have been in government we have increased police numbers by about this figure, and as these police numbers show we are getting our fair share of them on the Gold Coast. A \$2.4 million redevelopment of the Southport station is also scheduled.

We have also committed to a police beat at Arundel. Also the so-called antihoon legislation has been a great success. Car hoons have no respect. They treat the roads as race tracks. They need to be stopped. The Beattie government has new laws which aim to teach car hoons that if they drive dangerously they had better get used to walking. More than 800 hoons' cars have been taken off the road. In the south-east region 306 have been impounded and in the Gold Coast district 233 have been impounded.

It is time to get tough on car hoons. These new laws protect our community. On the Gold Coast the results speak for themselves.

Since being elected the Beattie government has been committed to reducing unemployment and creating jobs. In my local suburbs this commitment has been delivered through almost \$6 million in Breaking the Unemployment Cycle funding between October 1998 and September 2002, which created 629 jobs. A further 185 jobs were created up to last year and there is more to come.

In relation to public housing, \$475,000 was approved to upgrade 12 three-bedroom houses in Molendinar. That included painting, new fencing, pergolas and driveways. The government has helped transform Molendinar by improving the visual appearance of the suburb, the quality of housing, as well as community safety and pride through renewal activity. Construction of 22 units for seniors and the

disabled in Railway Street and North Street and the purchase of \$1 million plus of land for further construction of public housing is another indication of the importance that this government places on public housing.

The Department of Public Works continues its commitment to training of apprentices through Q-Build. In February 2004 five apprentices started their career on the Gold Coast. They were among 100 new apprentices and trainees who were successful in winning jobs across Queensland. Q-Build has a strong reputation for excellence in training apprentices. The apprenticeship program is a real investment in the future of our state's building industry. About 60 per cent of the new apprentices are based outside Brisbane. The program also represents a massive investment in our state's regional skills base, and this program will continue.

Legislation has been passed in this parliament to end broadscale tree clearing in Queensland where the equivalent of 1,200 football fields a day are cleared. Over 20 million hectares will be saved for future generations. Like no other government before it the Queensland Beattie Labor government has worked and is continuing to work to promote balanced and environmentally sustainable development. This is appreciated by the voters in most electorates, including Southport.

One of the minuses of the most recent election is the loss of three good friends to all of us in Trevor Strong, Steve Rodgers and Christine Scott. I wish them all the best in the future. Who knows, we might see them back here one day. Again I thank the people of Southport for placing their trust in me. The support of and service to the constituents of Southport continues to be my highest priority.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.02 p.m.): I rise in this address-in-reply to thank the community of Gladstone for their continued support in fulfilling my role. This is my fourth term. It has been a privilege over that time to work with the residents of my electorate in an endeavour to get answers to the problems that they face and also to bring their concerns to the parliament of Queensland.

Gladstone, which incorporates the city of Gladstone and the shire of Calliope in its entirety, is a dynamic and diverse community; one that sees what can be done, not what cannot be done. That has been demonstrated through a number of years of significant growth. Industry development in the area has meant that there is a mix of industries that potentially place significant strain on emergency services, but employ great numbers of people at various plants.

It is a region that is highly dependent on the alumina industry. Therefore, the potential is there for adverse effects should there be a downturn in alumina. But it is balanced by the urban communities of Gladstone, Calliope, Boyne-Tannum, Mount Larcom and the townships in the Boyne Valley. The area also sustains rural industries such as grazing, horticulture and small crops. I have found working with those various groups in the community challenging, but most rewarding. Overwhelmingly, people in the electorate just want a fair go.

As other members have stated, the election campaign is a particularly focused time and all members are grateful to those who offer support, not just through the ballot box but also from those who offer practical support in the lead-up to election day. I would like to particularly thank Wendy, who is a born organiser and just wonderful in organising rosters, et cetera; her husband, Don; Trish and Floss; and Kitty, who unfortunately had to resign as my electorate officer 12 months ago to come to Brisbane as her husband was studying. She came up to help with the campaign and she also came up to offer support on election day. I also thank Alan, a member of the community, who was just brilliant in the run-up to the election.

I would like to thank those members of the community who allowed corflutes to be placed on their property. It takes with it a degree of risk, I guess, and I would like to thank those people for their support. I thank all those who offered their support to man booths on election day. It was a long day and a hot day.

In particular I thank my husband, John, who over many years has been prepared at times to play second fiddle. I think members' spouses do that often. No member in this chamber would be able to do the job successfully without the support of their partner. Those who do not have that support would have an absolute uphill battle, and their life would be a misery. I would like to thank my husband John for his support.

I thank our daughters, Wendy, Becky and Emma, who came on election day to help, and their partners. I have not checked with the partners how willing they were; I think it is just best left as it is, but I thank them for their support as well. I would also like to put on the record my thanks to Mum and Richard. My Dad was always supportive before his death. Mum and Richard have continued on with that support and I value their encouragement.

Since the state election we have had the council elections, and in my electorate the two mayors were returned but there are several new councillors on both councils. I welcome the new councillors to an area of work that is very challenging but gratifying and enjoyable, and I look forward to working with both councils in an endeavour to advance the concerns and the issues in relation to the community.

The fundamentals of government funding remain uppermost in the community's mind. Funding for health, safety, emergency services, education and housing continue to be fundamental and will continue to be because they are the essence of a contented life. The knowledge that you have the health services available to you when you need them, that you can do your business, that you can go out to your social function, to school and work with a degree of safety, and the knowledge that housing is available and affordable when it is needed all meld together to provide a quality of life that people look forward to.

We have had many challenges in my electorate in the health area with what many in the community see as a diminution of services. A reduction in the number of visiting specialists, resignations of obstetricians and other supporting specialists, and a reduction in ophthalmology services, to name a few, have meant that people in the community feel very aggrieved at the level of health services. I put on the record, however, that since the new minister took his portfolio my ability to discuss the issues of concern and get a well-thought-out response has been gratifying. I thank the minister on behalf of my community. We can look forward to seeing some solutions to those problems. The staff who work at the hospital are excellent. The nurses work above and beyond the call of duty. They work long hours, at times in very difficult conditions and at times put themselves in positions of risk. If one reads the paper one can see how many of the nursing staff have been subject to physical as well as verbal abuse from patients for varying reasons. I put on the record my thanks to the staff and the doctors and I look forward to their situation improving. I thank the Minister for Health for his direction when looking at the redesign of the medical and surgical ward nursing station. That will go a great way towards reducing the problem of mixed wards.

Another area of great concern in my electorate is that of affordable housing, particularly when there have been industrial booms. Our region has had a history of fairly static development and then a Comalco, a CAR or an Aldoga project comes along and there is an exponential growth in the number of residents in the region. They need affordable housing. It not so much the construction workers that have difficulties; it is those on fixed incomes and who have been consistent contributors in the community who are challenged to pay the increased rentals and maintain a quality of life for them and their families. We are through the worst of it now. When Aldoga comes on line the same thing could potentially occur. It is not those on construction wages; it is those on fixed incomes who are challenged most when rents increase from \$100 to \$200 and \$230. In the next wave the rents will increase from an already inflated base. I will speak to the Minister for Housing about affordable housing during this term I am sure.

I appreciate the minister's support in relation to boarding houses and men's shelters. There is a significant and identified need in Gladstone for a men's shelter. A committee has been formed to create a men's shelter. Judy Wicker is the president. A site and a building have been identified that would be eminently suitable. Comalco has allocated \$100,000 to allow group apprentices to modify any buildings or contribute to the building of a new structure. We are seeking capital to purchase a building that is in a central location and suitable for these gentleman who are perhaps alone as a result of either spousal death, marriage separation or some other unfortunate event in their lives. These people need care and support. The shelter we envisage being made available to them will satisfy a great many of their needs. I look forward to speaking with the Minister for Housing in relation to that capital.

As in many electorates, roads are an important artery to move those in the community from place to place. The Department of Transport in Gladstone has been suffering greatly with long waiting times in its office for licence renewals, machinery inspections and the like. The new machinery inspection process has not been well accepted by the taxi and trucking industries in Gladstone. I look forward to the minister reviewing that process to see where it can be improved. The building needs extension to allow for an increase in staff and to ensure that people are not waiting half an hour to three-quarters of an hour to get served. It is too long, particularly when many people come in their lunch hours.

I have spoken before about the need for boom gates at Witney Street and Mercury Street. An older gentleman was killed on the Witney Street crossing. It was an error of judgment on his part but no less tragic. There has been toing and froing between the council and the state government in relation to who is responsible for this. However, the reality is that it is a QR line that transverses the community. The community has to access the school which is on the opposite side of the track. Young children are walking across there on a daily basis. Boom gates are essential. There are lights there now, but that is an insufficient barrier.

I thank the Minister for Transport, Paul Lucas, for visiting the electorate some time ago to announce the construction of toilets at Calliope River. The Calliope River boat ramp is the major boat ramp in the Gladstone area. Quite a cross-section of people use it. I did an interview on radio about the need for the toilets. It was highlighted that it might be okay for fellows when they go fishing not to have toilets but the rest of us are a little disadvantaged. I know that the older ladies who go fishing will greatly appreciate that structure at Calliope River. I thank the minister for that.

The dredging of the Boyne River remains a priority. The previous Minister for Transport said in correspondence that on a cost-benefit analysis the dredging of the Boyne River did not stand up. The community's response to that has been that if there is one fatality that statement will suddenly become

quite inappropriate. The most cost-effective way of doing it is to have it dredged when the dredge is doing the port. I look forward to talking with Minister Lucas in relation to that.

Policing in our region, as in all areas of the state, is critically important. Boyne-Tannum is a growing and dynamic community. It is a lovely place to live. It is on the beach. A great number of people have settled there. It does not have a 24-hour police service at the moment. The closest police station is either Gladstone or Calliope which are about 20 minutes away. The community feels greatly exposed at night. They look forward to having a 24-hour police station. During the previous Police Minister's term the station was extended to allow sufficient room for the staff. That has been very much appreciated. We need staff numbers built up to allow a more appropriate service for the number and demographic mix of people at Boyne-Tannum. There has also been an identified need for a Water Police presence and at least one dog handler in the Gladstone area to be able to cope with the mix of industry and issues that police have to deal with. I place on the record my appreciation of the police officers who do a great job, often under very trying circumstances.

Access to Awoonga Dam has been a matter of great concern to the community, particularly in the Boyne Valley. During the alliance negotiations members of the Boyne Valley were assured that they would be given another area to replace the existing picnic area that was heavily used by people from Boyne Valley, Gladstone, Calliope and elsewhere. That has not been forthcoming. I attended the meeting with the alliance when the undertaking was given.

There has also been an issue of accessing the Awoonga Dam for waterskiing other than through the ski club. Rod Page, the CEO of the Water Board, has given an assurance that these matters are being reviewed and a report will be available at the end of the financial year. In terms of the Boyne Valley residents' access to Awoonga Dam, there is only one answer and that is that the Water Board honour the undertaking given to the Boyne Valley residents in good faith. They deserve to see the realisation of that undertaking.

There are still a number of areas in the electorate that have problems with the reliability of their power supply. It is overwhelmingly because of the age of the power supply. Many areas of the state would like to see funds directed into the upgrading of the power supply to ensure as reliable a supply as possible. Overwhelmingly, those areas that are most unreliable are in the country.

The Department of State Development plays a vital role in my electorate. They oversee the Aldoga Industrial Estate. The GEIDB committee looks after that area. Residents of Targinnie have been poorly compensated for the purchases of their property. I have raised that issue before in this House. The poor valuations are well under replacement values and well under recognised property values in the region. They have been impacted on most greatly by SPP. SPP was the trigger for those purchases. SPP has now been sold to QERL. I had a meeting with Jeff Sanderfer from Sanderfer Holdings of America and several other members. They gave an outline of their proposal for the next couple of months. It sounded very responsible and very targeted. I raised the issue of the situation facing Audrey and Don, an older couple who must be treated as a priority in terms of the company finalising the purchase of their land, which is in its stage 2 development lease. Mr Sanderfer gave an undertaking that he would review that situation, and I look forward to an early response from him.

Because of the mix of industry in the electorate from aluminium refining and smelting to the production of sodium cyanide, chlorine, cement and shale oil, the potential demands on the Department of Emergency Services are great. Fire services have an acknowledged safety turnout of one in three. One in three allows for breathing apparatus to be used at any time of need. However, because of a policy that was adopted statewide in response to difficulties in the south-east corner, once seven absences a month have been reached, the turnout is one in two. This does not allow for the safe use of breathing apparatus and means that firefighters are asked to standby when they should be responding to the event or are asked to take a risk and go in with BA without the proper supervision. I call on the new minister to review that situation to ensure that the turnout is one in three except in the most extenuating circumstances. Boyne Island is looking forward to its new ambulance station, which again has been a matter of some conjecture.

The area of child safety is one that is important in all parts of this state—in fact, in this nation. I want to thank Minister Reynolds for his briefing on the new structure that he is looking at putting in place. My prayer is that the structure will be as effective as it sounds. We say that our children are the most important people to us. We have to match that with actions that will produce safe and protected results. To that end, the area of communities and disabilities needs additional staff in the electorate in the form of FSOs who bear the brunt of the work in terms of investigating notifications. Folk who work there do a brilliant job, but they are well understaffed.

There are other areas of concern and other issues to be raised, but time will not allow that. Again, I place on record my thanks to the community of Gladstone for its support and give it an undertaking that in this three years to come I will do my best to represent its concerns to government. I will do my best to represent the government's initiatives to it, particularly where those initiatives are supportive of the community. I look forward to working with other members of this chamber to ensure that the state of Queensland can grow productively. In those areas of most sensitivity like child safety and Aboriginal

safety, I hope that together we can work to ensure that those young people—both Aboriginal young people and other young people; all young people—grow up in a safe and nurturing environment.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (12.22 p.m.): Australians see themselves as egalitarian, offering a fair go. The America of today, particularly under the Bush administration, makes no such pretence. What we are seeing in the US is mushrooming deficits resulting from massive expenditures on defence and wars and equally massive tax cuts, the most recent amounting to \$700 billion of which some 40 per cent went to the top one per cent, thus destroying America's future tax base. The consequence of this unravelling of the American economy has become not the justification but the rationalisation for cutting welfare programs, public education, Medicare and social security. Whilst America spends some 13.1 per cent of its GDP on health compared with an OECD average of 8.5 per cent, 42 million Americans have no health cover. Public education is in total disrepair. The outcome is that students going to private schools have 10 times more chance of getting to college. American states, particularly under Republican regimes, have also destroyed their tax base to such an extent that they are verging on bankruptcy. Some are emptying their prisons because they cannot afford to run them.

In a recent publication, *How Australia Compares*, the authors ran the ruler over 18 medium to large liberal democracies. A major finding was that Australia's income distribution is highly unequal, and becoming more so. Given the unequal spread of its moderate wealth, Australia is amongst the worst of the developed nations in which to be poor. Our self-image of a nation with an outstanding rate of home ownership is challenged. Our rate of home owners—69 per cent—has hardly changed in 25 years. In that time, the British, the Italians and the newly prosperous Irish have sprinted past us. Our national income has declined from high a century ago to average now. Incomes of older people are dropping against the international trend, and Australia has a higher proportion of older people living in poverty. Disabled people have very low incomes. The publication states that relatively we are not highly taxed. Is Australia an egalitarian society? I think not.

I am encouraged that in Australia there is a definite and continuing shift in public opinion from a preference for tax cuts to the need for budget surpluses to be spent on services. There is also an encouraging debate going on about the urgency for greater government investment in social infrastructure. Australia has a large current account deficit which is impacting in higher interest rates relative to other developed countries. We need substantial infrastructure investments if we are to overcome this problem. Our capacity to invest adequately in infrastructure is being severely limited by our obsession with balancing our budgets. Australia's national public debt is currently 3.4 per cent of GDP compared with about 50 per cent in Europe and about 80 per cent in the US and Japan. In my contribution to the address-in-reply debate today, I want to underline why we need to improve our social infrastructure and the performance and accessibility of our education system, and raise our participation in employment as well as give a fair go to young people, indigenous people and refugee children in detention.

I have recently spoken in this House about the surprising championing of social capital by one of the high priests of capitalism—the Productivity Commission. The Productivity Commission has argued that the concept of building social networks and increasing public trust enhances social norms such as honesty, integrity and concern for those less advantaged, and this is seen as an aid to economic growth. A more recent report by the Productivity Commission nominates the following five reforms as essential for increasing growth. Firstly, getting the best out of our social infrastructure—health, aged care and other community services—which account for a sizeable and growing share of GDP and whose quality and efficiency is a key to future living standards. Health and community services are not a drain on the taxpayer but a key part of our quality of life. Secondly, raising the performance and accessibility of our education and training systems. Education and skill acquisition are not only important for personal development but also a vital factor on which innovation and economic growth depend. Knowledge is valuable for its own sake, and education helps us to develop as people and should not be merely seen as an input to production and growth.

Thirdly, raising the working age population's participation in employment, including the reduction of long-term unemployment and involuntary retirement, thus alleviating the major contributor to poverty. Fourthly, ensuring the operation of social safety net mechanisms aimed at social hardship. Social security arrangements that discourage people from working impact unfavourably on the dignity and satisfaction that is so important to an individual's place in society. Fifthly, devising better mechanisms for addressing and avoiding any adverse and environmental consequences arising from economic activity. Ignoring the damage that economic activity has done and is doing to the natural environment is short-sighted stupidity. The study *How Australia Compares* states that on most environmental measures Australia compares poorly.

It is heartening that the market economists of the Productivity Commission have come to understand that the addressing of these important issues is vital to not only economic growth but also our quality of life. I note that there was nothing in last night's budget to address these much-needed reforms argued by the Productivity Commission. There was nothing about social infrastructure. There was nothing about health or education and training. A massive \$10 billion surplus has been wasted by

being directed at bribing the electorate. It is a pork-barrelling exercise that is just so short-sighted that it is disgraceful. Keynes once said that when considering the short term and long term you had to go for the short term because in the long term you are dead. The trouble with politics today is that people make these disgraceful, short-term decisions because they want to get elected again.

Researchers who reviewed the international data found that in the two countries with the most flexible labour markets, the US and Britain, marginal workers fare no better and frequently far worse than their counterparts in the rest of the OECD. The report concluded that labour market policies consistent with the Washington consensus—

... have contributed to rising economic inequality in the countries that have implemented them. This should not be particularly controversial since the stated goal of these policies has been precisely to raise inequality in order to price less skilled workers back into a labour market where technology and trade have lowered the monetary value of the work they perform.

According to Professor Galbraith—

Relative wages are much more a matter of politics and much less a matter of markets than is generally believed. They are subject to the powerful effects of public policy, albeit policy governed in large measure by private interests and private pressures and frequently hidden from view.

In other words, what has really changed is the commitment to egalitarian policies and full employment rather than the economic environment. Australia is fortunate that the minimum wage has continued to be a matter of contention in the arbitration system rather than the political system, as it is in most other countries. The total deregulation of the labour market would have horrendous consequences for those vulnerable Australians who do not possess the skills to demand decent wages in a market economy. Experience with the Howard government's industrial relations policies points to the human consequences of adopting an unquestioning deregulatory dogma.

The bipartisan Senate poverty inquiry found that 21 per cent of households—about 3.6 million Australians—now live on less than \$400 a week, which is less than the minimum wage. This inquiry also identified the phenomenon of the working poor. Many of Australia's poor households are in work, but receive very low pay. The poverty inquiry found that—

Driving this change has been the casualisation of the work force in the last two decades and more weakening of the industrial relations systems.

Under the Howard government, the unemployed are simply being churned from welfare to one temporary job and back again, each time further damaging their confidence and compounding the cost to taxpayers. Since John Howard was elected, the amount of casual employment has grown by about 40 per cent. The Chifley Research Centre found that this growth in casual employment placed Australia second to Spain among OECD countries. The report found that many casual jobs resulted in lower pay and were unstable in terms of predictability of earnings, working time, skill, vulnerability to occupational health and safety hazards and work type.

Casual work, while high among 15- to 24-year-olds, is also a problem for more than one-quarter of women over 25. It is concentrated in occupations where more than half of all women are employed: clerical, sales and service. More than one in four Australians is engaged as a casual. This figure is projected to rise to one in three Australians by the end of this decade—one in three workers who cannot take sick leave, one in three workers who cannot take holiday leave.

Research conducted by the federal Department of Family and Community Services found that the mantra regularly repeated by the Howard government that 'any job is better than no job' does not provide a solution to long-term unemployment. It has long been an article of faith in the department that providing the long-term unemployed with some exposure to the world of employment in the form of some kind of casual work is a route to lower welfare dependency. In fact, the research shows that men who work casually while they are on the dole have a higher chance of returning to welfare.

Prior to the Howard government's decision to axe ATSIC, it had announced a move of more than \$1 billion in funding for Aboriginal programs into mainstream departments. That change will result in Aboriginal employment, infrastructure, housing, legal aid and other programs coming back under the direct control of federal departments. One of the problems with Howard's abolition of ATSIC is that Aboriginal leaders will not want to serve on his advisory committee. Consequently, the questions that must be addressed are: how can the diversity of opinion within indigenous communities best be dealt with and what is the best way to find a balance between the right to self-determination and the need for accountable government?

Federal Labor's position, as yet sketched only roughly, is that there should be a series of regional bodies and a separate, directly elected national council. Unlike the Howard government's position, federal Labor understands that most Aborigines strongly identify with communities. Australia has a poor history of accommodating its indigenous people whose needs seem almost as dire as ever. The expected lifespan of Aboriginal people born now is the same as that of other Australians born a century ago when few had running water, when sewage ran free, when antibiotics were unknown and when babies often died. Australians who believe in a fair go must not accept the shameful statistics of an Aboriginal person's lifespan being 20 years shorter than that of the national average, Aboriginal infant mortality rates treble the average and the inadequate provision to Aborigines of education, health,

housing and jobs. This appalling situation demands the formation of a national representative body for indigenous people to advise and lobby governments. The future of indigenous affairs rests on how governments engage Aboriginal communities. Any change—no, any successful change—must be community driven. The delivery of services must come from the ground up. Resources and services need to be pulled together at a local level.

Noel Pearson has written of the need to separate the election of regional representatives from the election of national leaders in order to create an efficient national leadership with a strong mandate from the communities. He stated that policies based on acknowledgement of and compensation for the past and recognition of Aboriginal rights are justified, but they do not in themselves lead to social improvement. Pearson has always fought for recognition of land rights but has come to understand that strategically the most important task is that Aborigines form a strong movement for the restoration of social and cultural order. Aborigines must create a demand for the best primary education for their children. Pearson stated—

Our experiences in Cape York Peninsula show that educational improvement will not be driven by the government's formal goals to improve Aboriginal education; it is driven by parental and community demand.

In this context, one should note the overwhelming community impact of Latham's comments about the benefits of parents reading to their five-year-olds. It is self-evident that dysfunction, violence and substance abuse can be defeated only by a conscious promotion of personal and collective responsibility.

It is time that the false perception of buckets of money being thrown at Aborigines is laid to rest. Tony Koch in a recent *Courier-Mail* article said that Aborigines have a right to receive education, justice, health and other services the way that everyone else does. Who could deny that. Koch went on to say that the dilemma is in the delivery and that Aborigines must be listened to and cooperated with so that they can take ownership of their own destinies. What is required is a hand up, not a handout.

In the area of Aboriginal affairs, political bipartisanship is essential. It is to be hoped that the wedge politics of the Nationals in New Zealand, who are currently benefiting from their racist and divisive campaigns about the favourable treatment of Maoris, will not be emulated by the Howard government. Any attempt by John Howard to use Aboriginal policy as an election wedge—his 2004 *Tampa*—would not only be disgraceful but would also be a disaster for indigenous people.

I have long held the view that the provision of public goods is the great equalising force in society. I am pleased that recent research indicates that the majority of Australians do not think that compassion and profits should mix. That research showed deep scepticism about the commercialisation of care and revealed that Australians believed that governments are better suited in delivering child, aged and health care than any other organisation, especially businesses. Australian federal governments have been promoting the entry of private businesses into the provision of human services such as aged care, child care and health care in the name of enhancing customer choice and improving service efficiency and quality. Australians are universalists when it comes to human services such as health care. They believe that everyone should have access and think that governments are best equipped to do this.

The research shows that quality control is essential. People do not trust those who are in it for a buck and are uncomfortable with the idea that someone should profit out of looking after people. The imperative to make money leads to the fear that firms delivering human services for a profit would be under pressure to cut corners to maximise returns.

Statistics for 2001 show that for-profit businesses dominate in the nursing home sector, accounting for 57 per cent. Also, in the area of long-day care, private firms ran 67 per cent of the centres. It is instructive to note that government funding accounted for 74 per cent of the income of for-profit firms operating nursing homes and 44 per cent of the income of private owners of child-care centres. The mushrooming increase in equity prices for child-care businesses provides a stark underlining that public funding is ending up in the pockets of business owners.

I am nostalgic about my involvement in a community based child-care centre at East Brisbane in the early 1980s. Although 80 per cent of the wages then came from government subsidies, it was high-quality, affordable long-day care. No corners were cut, nor profits made available to high-flying entrepreneurs. Sadly, that centre is now closed. Simply put, the continuing privatisation of Australia's welfare state is accelerating despite strong public scepticism about those who are in it for the buck and the belief that governments are better suited to deliver human services. I am strongly opposed to any future public-private partnerships in the areas of health, education and community services. It appears from the research I have quoted that this is also the view of the general community.

An article by Tim Hughes argues that the better educated the population the more productive it would be, the higher would be average incomes and the faster would be the rate of economic growth and that the federal government would gain taxes massively in excess of the cost of providing tertiary education. The article noted that for the first time ever, the coming financial year would see the Commonwealth spend more on grants to non-government schools than on tertiary education.

Hughes argues that the substantial fee increases will inevitably have two effects. The first will be to reduce the country's total investment in education, with the ultimate overall effect of reducing our overall standard of living below what it would otherwise be. The second will be to see a further deterioration in the participation in tertiary education of students from poorer families. Hughes, whose *Courier-Mail* articles are normally those of a market economist, concludes that in terms of both equity and economic efficiency the Commonwealth's continuing privatisation of tertiary education is to the detriment of us all.

I suppose we should also ask why the federal government is funding more to independent schools than state schools. Why do those schools whose student body is drawn increasingly from high-income families and who simply do not need a cash increase still receive it?

As the oldest member of this parliament I am pleased to have as a neighbour our youngest member, the recently elected member for Mount Coot-tha, Andrew Fraser. I thought about young people and about John Howard's 'barbecue stopper' issues, such as balancing work and family and superannuation. I ask members of this House today to consider what it would be like to be an 18-year-old confronting the following issues: the fact that a good education will not guarantee stable employment; being priced out of higher education; beginning adulthood with a large HECS debt; the possibility of paying rent forever; and knowing that your generation is exhibiting signs of depression 10 times that of previous generations. I think these young people are not even invited to the barbecue.

On Labour Day I proudly marched under the Labor for Refugees banner. I have made speeches in this House about the issue of refugees. In a civilised country, there are no circumstances that would justify the imprisonment of children behind razor wire. The trauma and psychological effects will be starkly underlined when the Howard government belatedly tables the long-awaited Human Rights Commission report. In an act of disgraceful cynicism, Howard will undoubtedly release this report in the shadows of the budget.

The boats have stopped coming. Howard and Ruddock have already won the *Tampa* election as well as the fight to deter unregulated asylum seekers. To continue the detention of 80 children on Australian soil, as well as the 85 currently in Nauru, not only shames Australia but is an enduring stain on our nation's conscience. The Old Testament prophet Micah got it right when he said, 'What does God require of you but that you love justice, do kindness and walk humbly with your God?'

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (12.42 p.m.): I rise to thank my loyal constituents of Mundingburra for again putting their faith in me and electing me for a third term as a member of the Beattie government for its historic third term. I am honoured and privileged to be given the opportunity to represent the people of Mundingburra for another three years. However, I did not win the election on my own. I had a very dedicated and hardworking team led by my campaign director for the second time, David Lowe. He is an absolute legend. He and his butchers paper led a remarkable team of friends, family and members of the Labor Party who worked tirelessly to get me re-elected.

Special thanks go to my parents, Colin and Adele, who are truly the EV/PV champions; my fabulous staff—Angela, Ray and Alison; the Bell family, for all their support; and Gerd Johannsen, who faithfully turned up at 9 a.m. every day of the campaign and did everything from cleaning the kitchen to stuffing envelopes. I give my sincere thanks. I thank my very beautiful last son, Darcy, and his mates from Pimlico State High School, which is a great state high school, who came in voluntarily to work a full day on the election day, as did my daughter Dominique. They came into my office on several occasions to help out wherever possible.

Running an election campaign is definitely hard work and tiring. However we also had a lot of fun. Ray, one of my electorate staff, brought in his barbecue. From the minute you opened the front door of my office, you could get a sausage.

Ms Jarratt: That is so important.

Ms NELSON-CARR: It was very important. They are very hungry people.

February is a time when we experience a tropical heatwave. However, that did not stop my volunteers, or me, from door-knocking even though sweat was pouring off, particularly at letterbox time.

Ms Jarratt interjected.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I take that interjection. It is not a good look turning up at the door with sweat coming off your eyelids or shaking hands with someone when your hand is wet.

I thank the people who enabled me to put corflutes in their yards, especially Harold Ferguson, who had six pictures of me on his fence. Even I was embarrassed to drive down the road. I thank the volunteers who spent a Saturday afternoon stuffing 15,000 envelopes and those who handed out how-to-vote cards on a steamy election day. These are the people who deserve the recognition of helping me and the Beattie government gain re-election. These volunteers can be proud that they helped return a government that fights for the rights of everyday Queenslanders struggling to create a life for themselves and their family. What a win it was! The people of Queensland have put their faith in the Beattie government and we will not let them down.

To our new members of parliament—Andrew Fraser, Simon Finn, Craig Wallace, Jason O'Brien and Paul Hoolihan: congratulations on their election. To those we lost—Christine Scott, Steve Rodgers and Merri Rose: I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Once again, Emily's List played a huge part in the election of women to the parliament. Women currently make up 38 per cent of the Labor caucus, and Emily's List funded 23 candidates across the state and saw 16 endorsed MPs returned to government. It gave \$15,000 to the Queensland campaign in early money and directed donations as well as training and support. To our returned women—me, Margaret Keech, Karen Struthers, Bonny Barry, Lesley Clark, Peta-Kaye Croft, Nita Cunningham, Jo-Ann Miller, Christine Smith, Desley Boyle, Liddy Clark, Carolyn Male, Rachel Nolan, Linda Lavarch, Judy Spence, Julie Attwood, Dianne Reilly, Cate Molloy, Carryn Sullivan, Anna Bligh, Barbara Stone, Jan Jarratt and Desley Scott: I offer my thanks for the support and chats throughout the election campaign. I really look forward to working with you all again, because we have a long way to go, girls.

I continue to acknowledge the support I have received from the union movement and the important role it plays. I am a member of the Queensland Teachers Union and the Australasian meat workers union, and I strongly support my local union officers. In particular I acknowledge the support I received from the AMIEU, the CFMEU Mining Division, the Metal Workers and the missos. I give them my thanks.

I step into a new role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier in North Queensland—one which will allow me to become involved in several major projects and issues within the north Queensland area. The Premier and cabinet came to my electorate of Mundingburra for a community cabinet meeting recently. We had a fantastic turnout. The ministers took over 160 deputations from the people of north Queensland. I believe this large number proves that people are interested in playing an active role in the governance of Queensland. Obviously community cabinets continue to be a popular idea which is well championed. I am thoroughly enjoying my new role—getting into areas which always seem out of reach for women politicians, such as commerce and economics, state development, transport and main roads, just to name a few.

I look forward to working closely with local organisations and the city councils to secure important initiatives for the region. It is well known that Townsville is experiencing huge growth. Business confidence is at an all-time high, job numbers have increased by more than 18 per cent in just 12 months, exports have increased to \$1.2 million in 2003-04 and Townsville's gross regional product was higher than the state's average in 2002-03.

Several projects in the region are important for the local and wider community. These include, of course, the Douglas Arterial road, where work is due for completion in 2005. This will link the Townsville and Thuringowa communities. The Riverway project in Thuringowa will give the people in Thuringowa the opportunity to own their own unique recreation area. It will be an asset for Thuringowa and the region as a whole. I know that my colleague the member for Thuringowa is very hopeful that the latest funding round will be positive for the Riverway project.

The proposed ocean terminal is essential to ensuring the port of Townsville is seen as a powerful force in the north's tourism market. Of course, last night's budget, which announced no money for the port access, is a major blow to north Queensland, particularly anywhere north of Rockhampton. This is something we desperately need. Our state government has already committed \$8 million to stage 1 and the federal government gave us nix.

That brings me to the budget delivered last night. There were absolutely no reforms. Reforms are missing. It is just bribing electors with short-sighted, knee-jerk responses to an insurgent Labor opposition. John Howard's disingenuousness is breathtaking. The areas that needed topping up are health, housing, education and training. The casual employment rate for people who live below the poverty line is extraordinary. As the member for Ashgrove has elaborated, immigration and particularly the detention of children are things which this federal government should not be feeling proud about. We have had funding slashed from CSR in Townsville, and that is a real blow to the north as well.

The Beattie government is committed to the Townsville-Thuringowa region, and all election promises for the region and surrounding areas will be met if they have not been already. I have a list of them here which I will not read out. I seek leave to have that list incorporated in *Hansard*

Leave granted.

- the creation of an estimated 1,850 jobs in the Townsville-Thuringowa district under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle
- the employment of up to 31 extra teachers in the education district over four years
- the air conditioning of up to 117 classrooms in Townsville and surrounding areas under the Cooler Schools program
- \$94.9 million on the state controlled roads in the Townsville, Burdekin and Charters Towers areas
- \$2.5 million in 2004-05 under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme
- \$1.4 million a year towards urban bus services
- the continued support of the Townsville Rail workshops as an important employment generator in the local area

- two extra cancer nurses, four additional radiation therapists and two additional specialist cancer doctors for the Townsville Hospital
- \$2 million for installation of a new linear accelerator to provide radiation therapy
- establishment of a dental outreach team in Townsville consisting of two dentists, two dental assistants and a dental technician
- completion of the consolidation of Townsville's community health and mental health services at North Ward and Kirwan
- \$57 million for engineering works on the Ross River Dam
- over \$1.8 million for key police station upgrades and construction
- \$8.5 million for ambulance and fire service station upgrades and construction
- \$4.6 million towards the construction of 26 public housing properties
- \$5.1 million for renovation of 130 public housing homes across the Townsville region
- continuation of funding community renewal programs in Vincent, Palm Island and a new program in the Upper Ross in Thuringowa.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I am honoured to be the parliamentary secretary to the Premier and I look forward to working with him closely during this term.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support, especially my husband, Russell. I can happily say here on this occasion, taking the words of Gladys Knight and the Pips, that he really is the best thing that ever happened to me. I am proud to be back as part of the third-term Beattie government. We have achieved a lot in the past. However, we still have a lot to achieve during the next three years. The people of Queensland are counting on us to lead this great state, and I have no doubt we will all be up to the challenge.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (12.51 p.m.): It gives me immense pleasure to rise today and deliver my address-in-reply in this, the 51st Parliament of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. In doing so, I cast my mind back to a little more than three years ago when I stood here as the member for Capalaba for the first time delivering my maiden speech. I spoke of my heritage as a Chinese Australian and the contribution of those before me to the wellbeing of this nation. I spoke about and committed my loyalty to this nation and her people. I spoke of the love I have for the Labor Party—the political party which has given me my education and its policy which has made me who I am today.

I spoke of the agonies I felt as well as so many others in the community when stereotypical, ill-informed populist views of a few almost destroy the fabric of a multicultural society. I spoke also of the inspiration that I have and the country that I want Australia to be—the land of many and yet as one great, fair and proud nation. I spoke of my personal faith and how important God and my family are to my being.

The last three years have been both challenging and rewarding. The saying of putting your ear to the ground, nose to the grindstone and shoulder to the wheel—a very awkward yoga position indeed—took on a new meaning but it is all well worth the effort. My late father taught me many valuable lessons about life, and one thing he did was to sit down with the family once a milestone was reached to talk about the success and failure of him as the man of the house. It is basically a self-evaluating exercise and it does help the family to take stock, check costs, count our blessings and refocus our vision.

In fact, since the taxpayers of Queensland are my real employer, I think it is only fair that I give them a brief account of what I have done and where I have failed during the course of the first term of my contract. This is what I intend to do this afternoon. As an engineer specialising in project management, I cannot do anything without a plan. I firmly believe that if one fails to plan then he plans to fail. During the first three months of my first term, I set out to listen to my constituents and ask them specifically if they could tailor-make their local MP what kind of a person they would like him or her to be. Should that person be able, articulate, smart or hard working? It was a bit like reverse engineering, where the product is already on the market shelf and then questions were asked of the buyers as to what they want. But I was prepared to change my mode of operation to cater for their demand.

The majority of them told me that they do not really care how smart we are as the local member or how well we can articulate an argument. They want their MP to be available and to care because they believe we are neither available nor care. The fact is that I believe most honourable members in this House from both sides of the political divide do care. Clearly, the market acceptance of us as a product is not very high and there is some repositioning to do.

A corporate plan was devised and a mission statement from my office was created as the outcome of those surveys. Our mission in Capalaba is that we want to be one of the most friendly, available and efficient electorate offices in Queensland. It was a big ask, but I am so thankful that my team and my members share the vision. Objectives were formulated and activities were carefully developed to deliver the intended outcomes. For example, everyone in the office, including me, is constantly reminded that the negative perception of an MP's office is that we are a public institution and therefore we are cold, institutionalised and clinical. We have to change that perception and show that we are in fact friendly and that nothing is too much trouble for us.

Although I do not subscribe to the saying that customers are always right, I do however believe they all have the right to be listened to and to be treated with common courtesy in the same way that we would like to be treated. We created a mission statement for my office titled 'Because we care'. We really want to tell the constituents that the only reason for my existence as the local MP is not to fulfil part of the political process but that we do care about the issues that bother them. We care about what they think and we care about what they want.

Although we cannot promise to deliver what they desire all the time, one thing we do guarantee is that we care enough to listen to them and go into battle for them. I want the community not only to know that we care but also to know that there are many people working in the community who care as well. There are many volunteer groups in my electorate who are doing wonderful things, but their efforts at times are hampered by the lack of resources and funding.

In response to the needs in the community, a utility was purchased without the use of any public funds so that nonprofit organisations in my electorate can use the vehicle at no cost besides nominal expenses for insurance and petrol. The maintenance of this vehicle, now nicknamed the 'choice mobile', is generously sponsored by the business community of Capalaba. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the generous support of the Capalaba Park Shopping Centre, Retail First, Yu Feng Group, Alan Lucas and Partners, Mortgage Bureau, C & C Printing, National Bus and Sciacca lawyers for their support.

Another objective to satisfy the mission statement is that I make myself more available. I was in a shopping centre two years ago and a constituent approached me and said, 'Michael, I would like to make an appointment to see you but you are too expensive for me to see.' I said, 'What do you mean? I do not charge anybody to see me.' She said that as she is employed full time she has to take time off to see me, which is a cost in loss of income, or a day taken from an accumulated holiday, which erodes into her hard-earned time for rest and being with her family, or she has to lie about being sick. All of these scenarios serve as a hindrance for a constituent to visit me.

I am pleased to report to the people of Queensland that my office is now open on Thursday night to 9 p.m. So I am available to my constituents who are not available during office hours, except of course during sitting days in parliament. I also undertake house calls for those who have physical difficulties or other circumstances that prevent them from visiting my office. Yes, we care and we are available.

Another objective of my office is being efficient. I advise that up to 70 per cent of correspondence is being replied to within the guidelines I set for the office, which is one week, but I believe this is not good enough for me, let alone my constituents. I apologise to those who have waited for too long for my reply, and I undertake to improve this area of my service delivery. I thank my staff, Shaun Hipkins and Emma Parnell, for keeping up most of the time with my demanding requests for excellence in providing timely and professional services to our constituents. As I have to remind myself many times, to us it may be a mere routine request, another task that we have to do; to our constituents, more often than not it is their last port of call.

Shortly after my first election win in 2001, one of my booth workers queried me as he noticed I never asked anyone to vote for me during the campaign; I asked them to vote for the ALP and the Beattie Labor government. I told him that I could not bring myself to ask anyone in Capalaba to vote for me because at the time—three and a half years ago—I had done nothing for them. I could only ask them to reaffirm their trust in the ALP and to re-elect another Labor government because of the good governance of the Beattie Labor government.

This election is different. Not only have I asked my constituents to vote for the ALP and again the Beattie Labor government; I have asked them to vote for me as their local member. I believe my team has worked hard for the community, but there is so much more to be done. I want to continue with my work as a proud member of the Beattie Labor government and, as they say, the rest is history.

I would like to thank my campaign director, Linda Plint, my comrades and friends Alan Roche, Ruth, Jack and Eddie Bennett, Richard and Diane Tetley, Susan Burke, John Hoggs, Joe Ludwig and the AWU for rendering valuable assistance to me. Thank you to all of you, as you delivered to the ALP the biggest swing of primary votes—an increase of over 15 per cent in my seat.

As for the constituents of Capalaba, I undertake to work hard, as I have done before, to fight for the wrongs in our society and for the rights of my constituents. I am totally disgusted with the federal budget last night, which gives tax relief for those on high incomes and absolutely nothing for anyone earning less than \$52,000 a year. I would like Mr Costello to come to my electorate to count how many people in my electorate earn \$52,000 a year. I suspect that would not take very long. On the other hand, queuing up at a doctor's surgery that still bulk-bills will take a lifetime, not to mention the waiting list for public housing for which the federal government has totally abandoned its responsibility.

Debate, on motion of Mr Choi, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 20 April (see p.177).

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 p.m.): In rising to participate in the debate on this bill, I have to declare a special interest under standing order 158(b). The interest is quite obvious: I am a leaseholder landowner in Queensland and this particular legislation specifically seeks to address a provision which was taken out of law with certain amendments which were made in parliament under the Parliament of Queensland Act of 2001. My recollection is that that was an inadvertent action and it happened consequent upon the consolidation of the Queensland Constitution and the establishment of the Constitution Act and the Parliament of Queensland Act following a fairly long and protracted process of review.

This bill arises as a result of the report by the Auditor-General on the affairs of Ken Hayward MP. The CMC found that its investigation identified evidence which, if accepted, could support the view that Mr Hayward's interest in the proposed land transaction may breach the prohibition contained in section 71(1) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 which prevents members of parliament from transacting certain types of business with state entities.

It reinstates the exemption in relation to members of parliament previously provided in the Constitution Act of 1867 so that members could deal in land with the state of Queensland in common with other citizens without affecting their entitlement to sit as a member. It is claimed that this exemption was inadvertently omitted when the Parliament of Queensland Act of 2001, a consolidation of existing provisions, was enacted. This bill has a retrospective effect back to the commencement of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, which was on 6 June 2002.

The bill inserts a new section 70(2) (a) (ii) which permits transactions in relation to interests in lands by members of parliament with the state or state entities on the same basis as such transactions can take place with members of the public. Members of parliament are thus, for example, entitled to obtain and transact crown leases of all types, a matter of concern to members outside the south-east Queensland area. Provisions of the bill are to be regarded as transitional provisions pending consideration of section 71 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 by the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee which will consider the issue.

Given the complexity of property rights now being created by the state—and I just raise this by way of contribution and the Premier no doubt would be aware of some of these, because there are a complexity of property rights issues that are arising, including the issue of water and the separation of water from land with regards to water trading, also with regards to potential fishing issues, and with regards to carbon sequestration matters which are arising—there may be some interest in those sorts of issues in the future with regards to transacting business with the crown. I just raise that by way of contribution and it may not be an issue.

Mr Beattie: That is not a problem.

Mr SPRINGBORG: This bill deals with specific issues, but what I am saying is that maybe somebody might raise at some future time some contention with regards to those matters.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the Premier very much. I look forward to what the Premier has to say with regards to that. Insofar as the circumstances of members of this parliament are concerned, there are a number of us who, by virtue of where we live and the businesses that we have transacted in our previous private lives and currently transact on a somewhat diminished basis because of our parliamentary duties, live on properties that are leasehold land. We have farmed and grazed those pieces of land. I have quite a number of constituents whose house blocks are leasehold land. It is not only a matter of owning a commercial block of land which people make an income from, there are people out there who have bought crown leases for their house, and it might be only a half-acre or quarter-acre block. There are many thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who are in this category.

Some 70 per cent of the land mass of Queensland is crown land and is actually operated by leaseholders and those particular leaseholders have generally purchased those leases. Some of them are occupied on a generational basis by virtue of the fact that it was a block that was selected and opened up. But there are many thousands of these particular leases that are transacted each year on a whole range of bases. As I said, it is not just an issue for outside of south-east Queensland, as manifested in the case of the honourable member for Kallangur; it affects other individuals as well in the more populated areas. It is quite ludicrous to establish and subscribe to a proposition that that in any way causes any conflict of interest between the member of parliament and the job which they seek to do. Because it is an interest in common, it was always considered an interest in common, it always

should be considered an interest in common with many other Queenslanders. This provision was inadvertently left out following the consolidation of the Parliament of Queensland Act.

I acknowledge and thank the Premier for the rectification, which is a part of this particular amendment bill, and I look forward to what the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee may report at some future time. But it was appropriate that the status quo seek to be reinstated because there was, quite frankly, nothing sinister in what has previously existed for over a century in this state.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.07 p.m.): As the chair of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee I have a particular interest in the proposed amendments to the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 which are contained in the Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill 2004. This bill concerns the restrictions of members transacting business with an entity of the state. The scope of these restrictions on members is a matter that the parliament referred to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee for examination at the end of last year. The previous committee made considerable progress with its inquiry into these matters. However, the parliament was dissolved for the state election before that committee was able to finalise its inquiry and report to the assembly.

The newly constituted Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee is now giving detailed and careful consideration to these matters and other related matters.

Section 71 of the Parliament of Queensland Act, which commenced on 6 June 2002 provides that—

A member must not transact business, directly or indirectly, with an entity of the state.

The restrictions on members are designed to ensure that a member's personal interests do not impair the member's ability to act solely in the public interest when discharging their public duties. The restrictions are about members of parliament avoiding conflicts of interest when conducting any private business transactions. The scope of the term 'transacts business' is set out in section 70 of the Parliament of Queensland Act. As currently worded, the scope of the restrictions on members is very wide indeed. It is wider than that which applied to members before the commencement of the Queensland of Parliament Act.

Prior to 6 June 2002 the scope of the restrictions on members was set out in the Constitution Act 1867. The Constitution Act included an unequivocal exemption from the restrictions on members transacting business with the state in respect of certain crown land transactions.

This exemption provided that the restrictions explicitly did not extend, for example, to a lease or a contract relating to land, mining or dredging. In other words, any agreement that a member of the assembly entered into with the state involving crown land prior to 6 June 2002 was specifically exempted from the restrictions on members transacting business with the state.

During the very complex consolidation in 2001, in which the document passed through a number of processes, the specific exemption relating to land transactions with the state was inadvertently excluded from the Parliament of Queensland Act. The restrictions on members were therefore unintentionally widened without any consultation or debate by parliament and without announcement. It was clearly not parliament's intention at the time of the consolidation process to widen the restrictions on members transacting business with the state beyond those that already applied under the Constitution Act. Parliament did not intend to prohibit members from engaging in transactions with the state involving crown land.

The inadvertent exclusion of these land exemptions, nonetheless, had the unintended consequence of widening the scope of the restrictions on members. It is quite fitting that this unintentional widening of the restrictions on members should be rectified as soon as practicable. The Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee is currently giving in-depth consideration to the appropriate scope of restrictions on members transacting business with an entity of the state with a view to making any necessary recommendations to parliament as soon as possible. As part of its current inquiry into this matter the MEPPC is also examining contemporary views regarding standards of accountability expected by members of parliament in relation to possible conflicts of interest.

The proposed amendment to the Parliament of Queensland Act contained in this amendment bill is intended to remedy the defect that has been identified in the Parliament of Queensland Act with regard to a member selling an interest in land to or acquiring an interest in land from the entity of the state. The stated objective of the amendment bill according to the explanatory notes to the bill is to reinstate the previously applicable exemption in respect of land transactions from the statutory prohibition on members transacting business with the state under section 71 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001.

The amendment will ensure that any agreements involving land transactions that members now have with the state, which were entered into after 6 June 2002, will properly be exempt from the restrictions on members. I am pleased to note that the amendment bill contains a clarification which expressly states that any sale to or purchase of any interest in land between a member and the state

must be on terms not more favourable to the member than they would be to a member of the public. This is an important point. It will dispel any perception of a conflict of interest situation such as a member being able to use their official position to receive preferential treatment in relation to such transactions or improperly benefiting from their position as a member.

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.12 p.m.), in reply: I thank both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mount Ommaney for their contributions in the debate on the Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill. As I said in my second reading speech the bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to reinstate a previously applicable exemption in respect of land transactions.

I note that the member for Southern Downs mentioned the issue of water rights and other rights. This matter, and any other matters relating to interests in land that may be affected, can be considered by the MEPPC in its comprehensive review of these issues. The government will consider any recommendations that the MEPPC may have in this respect when it responds to the report.

If the Leader of the Opposition looks at the objectives of the bill, it states that the bill proposes to reinstate a previously applicable exemption that was inadvertently omitted, which we have all talked about. Section 71 prohibits members from transacting business with an entity of the state. An agreement entered into by a member that contravenes section 71 can be invalidated under the terms of section 72. In addition, a contravention of section 71 can be grounds for the assembly to resolve that the member's seat is declared vacant.

This provision also existed under the previous legislation, the Constitution Act 1867. However, the previous legislation provided that this prohibition extended only to contracts for the provision of wares and merchandise. Agreements for the sale or purchases of interests in land were exempted from the prohibition.

We are going back to that position where we are talking about interests in land. I will not go over what happened here, but the effect of the inadvertent omission has been to increase the scope of section 71 beyond that of the previous applicable provisions. Section 71 now applies to cases which were specifically and intentionally excluded by the earlier provisions. The scope of the provision has been extended at least as far to disqualify members from entering into agreements with the state that involve transactions in land. The bill amends section 7 of the act to reinstate the specific exemptions concerning land transactions between members and the state.

My intention and the government's intention is clear. We are talking about interests in land. The Leader of the Opposition made reference to water rights and other rights. I am very careful not to go down the road of a property rights debate, which neither of us would want, other than to say that if the water rights are in some way associated with land transactions then they would be exempted under this legislation. When we have a look at the comprehensive review we will have a look at this again. My view would be that water rights associated with a lease or land would have to be covered by so-called land rights, if I can use a broad definition of property rights. My interpretation of these particular matters would be that provided they are associated with the land they would be covered and therefore exempt. I believe that would have been the original intention of the act.

To be perfectly frank, the Leader of the Opposition has raised a very interesting point. The logic of this is that we were talking about exempting land transactions. When this was initially drafted as part of the Constitution it would have been intended that land transactions would have included water on the land that was being transacted. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to reach the conclusion that since land is exempted the water attached to land would also be exempted.

For example, this would mean in the case of the Leader of the Opposition—and I do this only by way of illustration because he quite rightly made a reference to his leasehold land—that his owning of the lease would be exempt and if he had water rights attached to the lease they would be exempt. This would mean that he could hold the water rights and hold the land on which the water resides. To do otherwise would be a farce on anyone's interpretation and would be simply unacceptable.

As I said at the beginning, it is quite clear that while this came out of the matters involving Ken Hayward the greater application was on the Leader of the Opposition's side of the House because of the leasehold arrangements. It would seem to me, without wanting to open up this argument about the definition of property rights which I am mindful is a big argument out in the bush, that it is not unreasonable to conclude that water attached to land and a transaction would also be exempt. I put on the record that that is my intention in relation to this amendment. That would have been the case prior to this unintended change. What was the other thing the Leader of the Opposition mentioned?

Mr Springborg: I can raise it when we discuss the clause. I asked about the issue of profit a prendre and possibly carbon trading if that ever comes in.

Mr BEATTIE: Carbon trading is a very useful one. That is one of the directions in which we are heading. I am personally committed to carbon trading, particularly with regard to what is happening with Kyoto. We need trees for carbon trading. That has to be associated with the land. Maybe in another 100 years there will be trees without land. Perhaps bioscience will take us in that direction. But in our lifetime

land will be associated with trees. I think again that would have to be exempt in terms of the intention of this legislation. When they were clearing trees in the 19th century when our predecessors were in this House, they would have included trees as part of land and that would have been exempt.

So carbon trading is simply an advance in terms of how forests are treated. Again, I put on record that my intention and the government's intention here is to deal not just with land but those things that are attached to land—that, for example, may be water and things that grow on that land such as trees. I think I have answered both of the member's questions. Was there any other area he wanted to mention, because I think we should get this on the record? I think they were the two things the member raised.

Mr Springborg: That is right. I will explain myself when we get to the clauses.

Mr BEATTIE: Sure. I am happy to. We will continue this issue in debate on the clauses, because I want this on the record. I thank members for their contributions. This is correcting an oversight, and I think it is sensibly supported by all members.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) in charge of the bill.

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr SPRINGBORG (2.21 p.m.): I do not wish to labour the point, and I accept the assurances which the Premier raised earlier in his summing up. In no way was I seeking to indicate that I felt that there was anything sinister or did not consider those other issues in this amendment bill, because I know that they were not issues that were specifically associated with this. We are basically dealing with issues of land transactions. When I raised the point in my speech in the second reading debate regarding what transacting business means between a member and the state potentially, I was talking about emerging issues that may pose some challenge at some future time. They may not either, and they were specifically to do with the carbon sequestration process.

Two pieces of legislation have gone through this parliament under the hands of the Minister for Natural Resources to do with profit a prendre to allow carbon trading on both freehold and leasehold land and the issue of water. It is very true, Premier, that to date there has been an historical attachment of water to the land. The title of that land had attached to it a particular water right, if a water right came with that. So that was attached to the title of the land. The water trading process, which has become a dynamic out of the water reform process, has started to allow the detachment of water from the land in certain regions across Queensland. I think the Burnett region might be the only one at this stage, but it will go broader than that. Notwithstanding the provisions of this act that quite clearly—

Mr Beattie: I think it says here, Lawrence, it came from the land.

Mr SPRINGBORG: All I am saying is that it may be very well to say to members of parliament on that side of parliament that they can own water separately and trade water separately. It is separate from a particular parcel of land under what is being proposed. I am just saying, Premier, that at some future time I do not want to see a legal issue that might arise with that. It is still an interest in common, but it is still a matter of transacting business between the Crown and a member of parliament potentially. All I am saying is that some people could argue that there may be a conflict if they can trade something else other than the land. Notwithstanding that it historically came from the land, it is going to be allowed to be separated from the land and traded under a whole brave new world regime. That is all I am trying to say.

Potentially with the issue of carbon as well—even though obviously those trees are going to be associated with that land—it may be that the regime is that the the business be transacted through the state. I think that it is envisaged that the transaction, if it does come to pass, be between that land-holder and maybe a big power company or some industrial company or whatever the case may be. So water is probably potentially the greater issue that I raise. I am not saying that it is a problem that we need to be jumping all over, but as this whole water trading regime develops and there are transactions, one could potentially be transacting business between the commercial water provider and oneself. It may be between individuals, but it may be a parcel of water that goes back through, or one might acquire in some way through, the SunWater process. That is why I raise it.

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for the point he has made, and I think it has been a valuable contribution. If we go back to basic principles and think logically as to how this would be interpreted by the courts, they would go back to the position prior to this legislation which caused the problem—that is, the unintentional amendment. That definition of 'land' would then go back to when Queensland became a state almost 150 years ago. I think it will be our 150th anniversary in 2007. But what the case then would have been is that the definition of 'land' would have included water and would have included the trees on the land. Even though the member is talking about carbon trading relating to forests on that land, there is a parallel, and that parallel back in the 19th century would have

been that landowners would have cleared the timber off the land—and many did—and then sold that timber through sawmills and whatever.

In other words, if someone was a member of parliament at that time, they would have been clearing that land—or they could have been—and selling that timber. So they actually had a tradeable right in the timber on their land. Carbon trading then, if you think about the logic of this, is simply another form of clearing the land and clearing the timber. Instead of sawmilling it, you are carbon trading it. I think the logic of trees is very clear. In terms of water, presumably if one had land in days gone by in the 19th century and they had a neighbour who desperately needed it, they could have pulled the water out of their creek or whatever and actually sold it to their neighbour in a drought. So they actually had a tradeable right, if you like—

Mr Springborg: It is a temporary transfer.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right. But now we are, with more sophisticated arrangements, looking at tradeable rights. But the water is still intrinsically linked to the land until such time, in a parallel to trees, one actually sells the water or the water rights. So I think we can trace a direct link between the trees for sawmilling or trees for carbon trading to the land. I think we can trace a direct link between the water to the land, whether it is simply selling it to a neighbour in the 19th century or trading rights. I do not think that there is any intention to erode what was the position when this state became a parliament under that 1867 act. So to answer the member's question specifically—and I put it on the record—the intention is that they would be included within the definition of 'land'.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Beattie, by leave, read a third time.

TERRORISM (COMMUNITY SAFETY) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 20 April (see p. 179).

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.28 p.m.): The Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill forms part of an Australian government approach to the dangers claimed to exist as a result of a heightened terrorism threat. When I talk about Australian governments, I talk about all Australian governments working in unison. Given the real nature of this threat and the concern felt in the community about this posed threat, the opposition supports the bill. This bill does, however, contain some matters about which there are some concerns, and I will raise those during the course of my contribution to the second reading debate.

This bill is just one of a raft of pieces of legislation that this parliament has considered and passed in the past two years. As I recollect, at no stage has the opposition offered any real concerns to the passage of almost half a dozen of them, because we believe that it is extremely important to have a comprehensive and very real response to any potential terrorism threat.

It is hard for any of us in this place, and also out in the community, to ascertain the extent to which we are threatened by terrorism. Certainly, in a psychological context, many people, if not the majority of Queenslanders and Australians, feel somewhat more vulnerable to the threat of terrorist attack than what they did, say, prior to 2001. It is yet to be seen whether any terrorist attacks manifest themselves on our shores. We certainly hope that that never happens, but vigilance is an extremely important weapon to have in our fight against terrorism.

I think that we all remember the extraordinary events of 2001—September 11—because it was a parliamentary sitting day. That morning, those of us in this place who did not see the events the night before on television woke and were quite staggered, quite stunned and quite distraught at what we saw unfolding before us with regard to the attacks on the World Trade Centre, its subsequent collapse, the subsequent collapse of other buildings around them, the death and destruction, the enormous amount of remorse and outpouring of grief that was associated with that and the vulnerability that I believe we all felt as a consequence. But not only did that terrorist act impact upon those people who were killed or wounded or those people who lost their loved ones but also it impacted far more broadly throughout the world. I understand that some 300,000 jobs or thereabouts in the United States airline industry were lost as a consequence of the downturn in people travelling. Immediately, hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars, were wiped off the value of stocks throughout the world. The world went into an interesting stage of how to respond to this threat, which although it had been around for some time, had manifested itself in the most extraordinarily graphic way. I think that in itself, although that terrorist act was

sophisticated, it was still terribly base. As a consequence, it made us all feel more concerned and vulnerable. So it was appropriate that we learned how to respond to that threat and become more vigilant. People themselves did that in their own way.

Subsequently, about 14 months later on 12 October 2002, we saw those tragic bombings in Bali and, in recent times, we saw the events in Madrid. I note the recent bombings at the Olympic site in Athens. The authorities there are indicating that in no way is that linked to some form of global terrorism network or operation. I certainly hope that that is the case, because today people feel very, very cynical, very sceptical and very concerned when any terrorism act manifests itself in the world. Immediately people believe that it is linked in some way to a calculated and coordinated global terrorism plan.

As I said, not only are the Australian state and territory governments and the Commonwealth government coming together but also most nations are coming together in order to respond to this terrorism threat. How effective our response can be is really subjective rather than objective. But if we do nothing, there is no hope whatsoever of being able to detect and deter a potential terrorist threat. If we at least attempt to do something, there is a far greater chance that we are going to detect and deter a terrorist act. In actual fact, it should be an infinitely greater opportunity for us to be able to respond to it.

The other thing that causes us to be as concerned as we are is that, in this day and age, for each and every one of us there is a far more immediate response and knowledge of terrorist acts and a far more graphic description of them. From time to time, as would many other people, my wife says to me, 'The whole world is going crazy. We are all under threat and we are going to blow ourselves up.' I say to her that it is very difficult to qualify if we are under any greater threat today as an individual than what we may have been in the 1300s, the 1400s, the 1500s, the 1800s, or the 1900s. There is no doubt that, in the history of mankind, some pretty terrible things have gone on. But at that time there were no human rights monitors, there was no satellite television, there were no reporters, there was no way of getting information out. If information came out, it was by way of a runner, by way of a carrier pigeon, or by way of a bit of folklore

Mr Beattie: Word of mouth.

Mr SPRINGBORG: As the Premier said, word of mouth. Basically, people would hear that some terrible massacre had happened or something dreadful had happened, but the accuracy was always to some degree debatable. It may have been weeks, months, if not years after it happened that that information came out. But today, we see what happens in our lounge rooms as it happens. Does that make us more insecure than we have been at any other time? In reality, we will never know, but I just say that I am not convinced that our basic human nature and inhumanity is any different from what it was 1,000 years ago. In actual fact, I think that the majority of people and the majority of civilisations are far more humane today and far more focused on human rights and the protection of life than what they may have been at any other time in our history. Nevertheless, there are people who seek to attack us where it hurts us most, that is, our families, the public utilities that we use every day, our basic feeling of security—the symbolism of the World Trade Centre, the nightclub in Bali, the concerns that we have over our essential infrastructure, whether they be power or water facilities. They are things with which we are vitally concerned every day. I ask members to imagine the impact of a terrorist attack or an attempted sabotage on one of those public utilities or one of our iconic facilities that we see every day. Therefore, we must do everything that we possibly can to avoid that. It is claimed that this legislation tries to do that.

We will not be opposing the bill in any way, but we have some concerns and we want to raise some issues. I note that the Premier in his second reading speech stated that, for a range of reasons, the appropriate body to oversee this new regime is the Crime and Misconduct Commission. One of those reasons is that it has an overarching approach to dealing with organised crime. Over a period, a whole range of powers and responsibilities have been given by this parliament to the CMC in its various manifestations—the CJC, then the CJC being split in two with the formation of the Crime and Misconduct Commission, and then the reformation of those two bodies with the creation of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. To my way of thinking, traditionally I believe that the Queensland Police Service would have been the appropriate body to handle the powers and the responsibilities that have been given to the CMC by this bill that we are debating today. I note that the Crime and Misconduct Commission has extraordinary powers with regard to interrogation. We accept that. I think it is right to have those particular coercive powers or so-called star chamber powers.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: On balance, I accept what the Premier is saying. But I am just saying that there is a traditional view in the community that, as the Police Service deals with many of those sorts of matters, maybe the Police Service should have the bulk of the enhanced powers, or have the responsibility. But on balance I accept what the Premier said.

We have to ensure that the appropriate level of oversight and dynamism exists with regard to the Crime and Misconduct Commission for it to be able to undertake the role which will be given to it as this Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill passes through the parliament. It does need to be

appropriately resourced. I would imagine that, given the concern that exists with terrorism, those resources will be made available to the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

It is very difficult for me, as just another member of parliament and just another member of the public, to properly gauge the success of the Crime and Misconduct Commission in its current role and charter in dealing with organised criminal activity in this state. That organised criminal activity has so many different manifestations, whether it be elaborate drug production and distribution networks, paedophilia or other organised crime, including prostitution. I can only be assured that it is doing its job to the best of its ability and there is some increasing effect. I am not a member of the parliamentary committee which oversees the operations of the CMC, so it is very difficult for me to gauge the effect of it. Obviously the Premier is somewhat more aware as he is the minister who has primary responsibility for the Crime and Misconduct Commission. But it may be possible for somebody like me, being the shadow minister for the Crime and Misconduct Commission, to be made aware of some of those things on a statistical basis without knowing what is going on operationally. I think we do need those assurances from time to time.

If we are going to respond to the threat of terrorism, which strikes at the heart of our population in general, and we are seeking bipartisan support for the response, which we are happy to give, I believe there is also an opportunity for bipartisanship in the preparation of a response to terrorism. That is, the opposition or certain shadow ministers in the opposition should be a bit more involved in the preparation of these things. I am not talking about dictating government policy, but if this approach is something that is supposed to transcend politics and governments in Australia then I believe it is appropriate to instill a sense of bipartisanship in a practical way—not just in this parliamentary chamber but also by way of the development of the policy, the responses and the justification, because it allows us to be involved in the process and maybe make some practical suggestions from day one in the preparation of the parliament's ultimate response to the threat of terrorism.

There are a couple of issues which further concern us. I will raise them because I have raised them previously. One is to do with the planting of telephone tapping devices. I have a view. The Premier has a different view. He has his view no doubt for what he believes is a good reason. I have my view for what I believe is a good reason. I think any appropriate response from us in battling organised crime, terrorism or whatever the case may be requires our law enforcement authorities to have telephone tapping powers.

I note that the Premier says that our Police Service can, if need be, go to the Australian Federal Police or the Australian Crime Commission and seek to use its authority under joint operations. My concern is that that process is a little more turgid than it needs to be. New South Wales and other jurisdictions saw the need more than a decade ago to give their law enforcement authorities the capacity to intercept telephone conversations. I am not convinced that a suitable and sustainable civil libertarian or other argument exists against the provision of telephone tapping powers to the Queensland Police Service or the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I do not believe the joint operations aspect provides those organisations with the robustness and the capacity they may need from time to time to respond to a particular threat, whether it is organised crime or terrorism, as will happen and be built on after the passage of this legislation. I do not believe we can seriously rally against that any longer.

What we seek to do in some aspects of this legislation is give our law enforcement authorities powers that arguably exist with federal authorities. The reason is that there is a first responder need, as the Premier outlined in his second reading speech and as is justified through the legislation. I am prepared to accept that. But the same sort of imperative exists in my mind for telephone tapping or telephone listening devices. That is, we need to have that independent capacity here in Queensland. In no way am I suggesting that we give the Crime and Misconduct Commission or the Queensland Police Service an absolute free-for-all in relation to any telephone tapping powers that may come about. I am not suggesting that in any way, and I never have suggested that.

I remember the debate, in this place and in the public arena, with regard to the planting of listening devices. I think it was in 1997. Concerns were raised about how we protect the basic rights of individuals against the potentially excessive intrusion into their lives by those who would wish to plant listening devices. I remember Russell Cooper, who was the Police Minister at the time, seeking to address this issue. Terry O'Gorman was a part of the process which sought to address the issue. A Public Interest Monitor was put in place to ensure that the public interest was maintained. I believe we do need to take that whole process one step further. We do need to go towards telephone interception. That means you can have an oversight provision such as a Public Interest Monitor. If there is a certificate to tap a telephone or intercept a telephone or an authorisation, it needs to go through an appropriate authority such as the Supreme Court. There are ways of dealing with this to ensure that the public interest is properly reflected and properly respected.

I encourage the Premier and the government to again consider this. I understand that this matter has been looked at by a parliamentary committee in the past and that there was some bipartisan consideration in that area. I think it needs to go to the next step. If there has not been a manifestly

obvious problem with telephone interception powers in New South Wales in a decade or more, I do not believe we can argue that there will be a problem here in Queensland. In actual fact, we can build on the experiences of the likes of New South Wales.

We recently quite properly gave our law enforcement authorities the power to intercept electronic mail or data. That is to crack down and tap into those predators—those paedophiles, those pieces of scum—who want to use the Internet to force their way into young Queenslanders' lives; that is, get themselves into a situation where they will abuse or sexually abuse those minors. It was appropriate that we do that, because we know that that is a way these predators actually prey on young people. I would say that with the uptake of telephone technology, particularly mobile telephone technology, a similar risk exists for minors. If we look at the way SMS is being used almost routinely—

Mr Beattie: They are a pain.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I agree. I would not have sent anymore than 20 of them in my life.

Mr Beattie: My kids are sending me broke as a result.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Maybe the Premier should give them the handset and make them buy the phone card.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Good thinking. They are responsible for actually filling the thing up.

I am just saying that I think the dynamic is changing. The Premier has a reason. He believes in his reason. I have little doubt about that. I believe in what I am saying. I just think it will be a transitional step. I believe it will happen one day and, quite frankly, the sooner the better.

There are two other aspects of this bill I have concerns about. One is the broader capacity for exempting matters under the Freedom of Information Act. I note that the Attorney-General has indicated there would need to be certain further protections or exemptions from the Freedom of Information Act to make sure that matters of particular sensitivity or of a secretive nature are not generally released to the community.

I am very concerned about this, given the way that some FOI matters have been exempted in the past by this government, and the use of the cabinet exemption process. The capacity for a ministerial certificate to keep hidden anything on the grounds that it was hostile to the interests of the state of Queensland is something which is of very broad concern to me. I agree there may be matters of particular sensitivity that we should never know about. I understand that. There might be matters that are of a secretive nature that maybe I and other people should not know about. But once we start to give broader capacities to exempt people's access to information, then we create a further situation where that might be able to be abused. We are relying upon people using that exemption process for the right reason.

It is also possible, even in a modern liberal western democracy, for some people to seek to abuse those provisions in order to cover up the failing of a process, in order to cover up an authority that has overstepped its particular legislative power or statutory authority. I am very concerned about that. I would like to hear what the Premier has to say about how that may be able to be addressed.

Mr Beattie: Let me just make a point on this. I respect the member's view. This is actually something we have worked out with the Commonwealth. This is not an initiative either for me or my government. We have sought to do this in cooperation with the Commonwealth based on the Victorian experience. I just want to assure the member—and I am happy to respond in more detail later—that there is nothing half smart about this. This is actually what the Commonwealth wanted us to do in terms of protecting various measures. It was not something we have initiated on our own behalf.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I note that from the briefing note which I have and from the Premier's second reading speech. Whilst I might have some particular concerns in other areas about the government and FOI, my concern is more generic than that. We have had issues even at a Commonwealth level recently with regards to the Defence service intelligence, ASIS and ASIO and about the effectiveness and efficiency and concerns about the oversight position. My concern is more generic. Is this the right thing for us to be doing in such a blanket way, not just here in Queensland but Australia-wide? I have some concerns about it. It might surprise the Premier and others that I have a bit of a civil libertarian heart beating away in here.

Mr Beattie: It does not surprise me; it stuns me.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It may stun the Premier. I do not have much time for criminals once convicted, but I do have a very strong concern that the processes which ensure that people are appropriately dealt with from the moment that they are interrogated and taken through the court process are absolutely right. Because if you are going to pin somebody you want to make sure that the regime used to charge them in the first place does not in any way contravene their rights and liberties, that it is appropriate, that there is oversight and that it is totally transparent or as transparent as possible.

My issue has always been what to do with people at the other end who have gone through that process. So I have some very real concerns about the way that we may be applying these sorts of exemptions. Look at the situation in Iraq at the moment. I note that the President of the United States says that because they are a democracy that stuff is able to come out and they can deal with it. We can debate all those sorts of issues but I can argue what if the photos were not leaked? I know that is a little different but people do have concerns and I have concerns. I am not in any way suggesting those sorts of things are going to happen here in Australia when we are dealing with these terrorist issues, but once we in any way seek to curtail the release of information then we provide an opportunity for people with ulterior motives or those seeking to cover their own backside or to cover their trail to potentially abuse that.

I recognise and understand there are matters of state secret investigations that I should not know about, but there needs to be some form of independent oversight of what may be granted by such a ministerial exemption certificate. I think that is how we can fix the whole FOI issue in the state. Let us have somebody who sits independently; an independent statutory officer who does not go around blabbing but who sits there at arm's length and looks at it and says that it fulfils and sustains all the legislative provisions which were laid down by the government when it was put through. Yes, it appropriately should be exempt but maybe there is something else here that may not be exempt. That is all I am saying.

Mr Beattie: Can I make a suggestion to the member? Based on what the Leader of the Opposition has said, I am happy when this bill is passed to write to the federal Attorney-General and send him his comments and mine and ask him to have a look at these issues to be sure whether the safeguards we have put in place are, one, those which he wants and, two, those which are necessary to protect national security. I am happy to do that and I will give the member that undertaking in parliament now.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I appreciate that because these are real issues. Extraordinary circumstances require an extraordinary response, and we may with this legislation and the precursor legislation which is passed through this place be prepared to in some way curtail the rights of citizens and the release of information to the extent that we may not automatically or otherwise do. We accept that. But we always have to be extremely vigilant about it because we do not want to go 10 or 15 years down the track and find that there has been something happening—

Mr Beattie: And nor do I.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am not saying that the Premier does. We do not want something happening which infringes all of our sensitivities, our basic understanding and appreciation of human rights, of human dignity, of the rights and access to natural justice, et cetera. We do not want to give authorities any greater curtains to hide behind than we necessarily need to give them. I am just saying that maybe the curtains are one shade darker for them to be able to hide behind than we should be giving them.

Mr Beattie: I will do what I can. There are no games in this place. It was part of a national strategy and I will make sure that you get a copy of the letter.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I appreciate that. If I can go back to something I said earlier: sometimes legislation, particularly when it deals with terrorism and particularly when it is going to go beyond the term of any government—this government might be in office for another two terms or three terms; it might not be, who knows—is put in place which is meant to protect our citizens for a long time. I believe, therefore, it is the type of legislation that we can be more practically involved in and have a chance to contribute to from its genesis as an opposition, because I think with some of those points we could have a chance to contribute.

The last issue that I seek to raise deals with the issue of the definition of 'sabotage' and 'attempted sabotage'. I note that industrial sabotage, which we may not necessarily consider to be terrorism, seems to be exempted. I do not know whether that was a sensitivity to do with what might happen on a building site or whatever the case may be when industrial action is taken, but many people would say that what may happen on a work site, what may happen on a building site when powerlines are cut or something else is destroyed, is sabotage nevertheless. I do note that there is a way on the surface at least of addressing it, and that is if the Crown Solicitor or Crown Law indicates that that particular type of sabotage may be dealt with under the provisions of this legislation, if I am reading that correctly. The Premier can respond later on.

Mr Beattie: Yes, I will later.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Once again I think that that is a concern. Industrial sabotage can take many shapes and sizes. When there is a workplace dispute things get destroyed from time to time; there is no doubt about it. I am not saying that is right. There are workplace disputes; there is industrial sabotage. Some unions have been involved in those sorts of things. If you give what appears to be a broader exemption from the provisions of the definition of sabotage or attempted sabotage, then I think we have to be careful that that does not send a signal that you can get away with certain things.

Mr Beattie: As I understand it from my memory, any prosecution here is discretionary and requires either the tick off of the AG or the DPP. That is my recollection. I will double check it, but that is my recollection.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I understand that is the case. I do not want to have this broad exemption that may exist for industrial or other action if it is considered broadly that no individual was at threat; nevertheless sabotage or industrial sabotage or sabotage against somebody's equipment or public utility may bring with it some enormous damage. As long as there continues to be that discretion to prosecute and there is no broad exemption for some reason against particular types of industrial sabotage—

Mr Beattie: There is a discretion—in terms of prosecution. It has to be either the AG or DPP.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Okay. In conclusion, the opposition will be supporting this legislation. We have raised a couple of concerns. We will, of course, be continuing to pursue the issue of telephone interception because we think that that is an important issue, but we look forward to what the Premier has to say in response in his summing up. It may necessitate some further questions during the process of committee. We are happy to act in as bipartisan a way as we possibly can on this. It is an important community issue; there is no doubt about it. It transcends government and it should transcend politics. One of the most effective ways to ensure that we can address some of these issues and concerns we have, maybe not necessarily the philosophical issues of telephone tapping but other issues of protection of people's rights and liberties, is to be involved more in the process from the start. I encourage the Premier as the minister responsible for the CMC to provide me with some statistical overview of the success of the CMC insofar as its organised crime fighting capacity to date.

Mr Beattie: Just before the Leader of the Opposition completes his speech, I am happy to give an undertaking to do that. In relation to the phone tapping powers, I will have more to say about that later, but we have asked the Police Commissioner to make a submission to cabinet on this matter and cabinet will actually be considering it again based on his submission.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I encourage the Premier to do so.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (3.02 p.m.): I rise this afternoon to speak to the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. The world today is not the same as it was prior to the appalling terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Since then there has been an escalation of attacks and we have seen the devastating and deadly results of the bombings in Bali in 2002 and Madrid in March this year. It is important that we as a government continue to respond to the threats and ensure that our law enforcement agencies are able to prevent or respond to terrorist acts.

Amendments will now be made to a number of acts which I will speak to now. Amendments to the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 include inserting definitions for 'terrorist act', 'electronic system', 'physical harm', 'public', 'serious harm' and 'threat'. It is important to note that these definitions conform with those contained in the relevant Commonwealth legislation to ensure consistency across the jurisdictions.

By adding a definition for 'terrorist act' into the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, it increases the jurisdiction of the Crime and Misconduct Commission to include terrorism. This is a significant increase in the CMC's powers and legislative responsibility as it allows the full range of CMC coercive powers to be used for terrorism and other terrorism related major crime investigations. Additional powers such as inspecting and seizing financial records, seizing passports, compelling persons to provide information on movements of money and assets and allowing surveillance of premises where the identity of a potential offender has not been identified certainly assist the CMC immeasurably in its investigations.

There is sometimes an outcry from members of the public about perceived intrusions into their privacy whenever an increase in powers to police or the CMC are granted. I am satisfied that the CMC is a professional law-abiding body that uses its powers for the wellbeing of Queensland residents. We cannot allow our safety, our security and our way of life to be jeopardised by allowing terrorism to flourish and by not acting proactively to eliminate any deadly seeds of terrorism that may be starting to grow.

Other acts that will be amended by this bill include the District Court of Queensland Act 1967, the Freedom of Information Act 1992, the Criminal Code 1899, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Weapons Act 1990 and the Witness Protection Act 2000.

As I said earlier, this bill provides a balance between safety, provision of police powers and civil liberties. The Prime Minister, John Howard, has famously promised to make people feel relaxed and comfortable. I doubt his commitment to this promise because of his interference in world conflicts which I believe is a symptom of his government's reckless foreign policy objectives. In contrast, this government is doing everything in its power to make Queenslanders safe in their homes and safe in the streets. I commend the Premier and his department for the work done on this comprehensive bill and I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.05 p.m.): I rise to support this legislation. As other speakers have said, the world that we live in is changing dramatically and not for the better. I find myself as well as my parents saying that children today do not have the freedoms that we had as young people growing up. The freedom to spend time riding bikes around and so on, issues of personal safety, have become more and more pronounced in that parents have to be very mindful of where their children are.

Now that concern has extended to international travel, to destinations that in all of our memories have always been regarded as safe—places like the United States where terrorism was regarded as something that was, on the highest probability, not likely to occur. Whilst the incident on September 11 was extreme, it nonetheless heightened everybody's anxiety in terms of international travel. The incident in Bali I believe broke down a lot of our illusions in terms of the Pacific Islands and their laid-back nature. Whilst the people in those areas have not changed at all, their dependence on tourism for a major part of their economy has been in great measure undermined by the actions of a small number of people determined to have their voice heard irrespective of the damage that it has caused. That has led to this legislation being brought into this parliament.

Predominantly it will amend the definition of the Crime and Misconduct Act to include a definition for the term 'terrorist act' in particular. That has been defined as 'causes serious harm that is physical harm to a person', 'causes serious damage to property', 'causes a person's death', 'endangers the life of someone other than the person taking the action', 'creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public', 'seriously interferes with, seriously disrupts, or destroys an electronic system', and the list goes on. Whilst we have been aware over the years of potential breakdown in strategic infrastructure on the basis of an unforeseen incident, usually a natural disaster, more and more we are having to focus on man-made disasters intended to create harm and danger. It is a sad indictment of our society as a whole.

There has also been recognition of the crime of sabotage. These are concepts that our children, particularly the younger children in lower primary school, will unfortunately grow up being very familiar with and will remove from their experience the free society that we have been so privileged to enjoy.

The bill also makes some amendments to the Freedom of Information Act to allow for a greater exemption for the release of information which may be of a sensitive nature that would endanger the security of a building, structure or vehicle, to reinforce the safety and protection of particularly our strategic infrastructure. I guess the balance will be that those administering FOI and those departments that may in the state context be responsible for examining applications for FOI will need to be in the right sense vigilant that this FOI exemption is not in any way abused, that where there is sensitivity about infrastructure for other reasons than potential sabotage or potential terrorist acts that those reasons will not be used as an excuse not to release information on the basis that it could be otherwise damaging.

The only other issue I wish to raise is the power that will be extended under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to allow a judge to issue a covert search warrant. Currently, that is available only where there is evidence of organised crime or terrorism. This will allow those covert searches to be conducted where it is believed that evidence is likely to be taken within the next 72 hours. The theory is acceptable and understandable, but with the extension of these powers there will have to be constant vigilance that the freedoms that have been dearly earned for this state and nation are not undermined in the process of protecting the community against this new danger.

Human nature being what it is, it is always easier to abuse an invasive power like covert searches. We will have to be constantly vigilant to ensure that those powers are not inadvertently or intentionally abused. I commend all those in decision-making roles, policing roles and intelligence-gathering roles whose job it is to be constantly on guard for potential acts of terrorism against Queensland and Australia. It is disappointing that this legislation has to be brought before this parliament, but understandable in the circumstances experienced over time. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (3.11 p.m.): I rise in this debate today to strongly support the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. I do not think there have been any events in modern times that have affected the way Australians view the world more than the September 11 bombings, the Bali bombings or the recent bombings in Madrid. These events have had a very profound effect upon our daily lives. This legislation is a direct response to these terrible events and their consequences.

The legislation amends various acts, including the Crime and Misconduct Act, the Criminal Code, the District Court of Queensland Act, the Freedom of Information Act, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, the Police Service Administration Act, the Weapons Act and the Witness Protection Act. Most Australian governments have examined in recent times the capacity to deal with threats of terrorism. Recently, a new national framework to combat terrorism and the also multijurisdictional crime has been developed.

This legislation, put simply, strengthens the power of Queensland's law enforcement authorities to prevent and respond to terrorist actions. It gives increased power to the CMC to investigate terrorism related major crime, including the power to seize financial records and passports and to compel persons

to provide information on movements of money or assets. The bill also enables Queensland's Police Commissioner to enlist the help of police from other jurisdictions in a very timely and seamless way in the event of an imminent terrorist threat. The police will also be allowed to seek the approval of the courts to conduct secret surveillance of premises in the event that they believe that there is evidence of terrorism.

In supporting this bill, I say that I think it is very sad for a country like Australia that has always been so peaceful, free and democratic that we now need legislation such as this to deal with terrorism. Most members would know that I grew in a little village called Ballyjamesduff in County Cavan in Ireland. We were a couple of miles to the south of the border but we were part of Ulster. While growing up in Ireland we constantly dealt with the aftermath and threats of terrorism. Killing innocent people to make a political point or to bring political pressure to bear on some government or civil authority is absolutely and totally insane. I do not think there is any justification for it at all. Having said that, I do not think terrorism acts occur in a vacuum. Often, sadly, they are a very inappropriate and stupid response to created circumstances.

I believe the bumbling actions of the federal government, taking Australian troops into Iraq without the approval of the UN and without popular support at home, has opened Australia to an increased threat of terrorism. I think we need to get the troops home. We need to make sure that the Iraqi people can govern themselves as quickly as possible. I do not believe that John Howard should leave the troops in Iraq any longer than necessary, especially if it is to make a political point. I support this legislation which I hope will safeguard our freedoms and keep Australian residents as safe from the threats of terrorism as we knew in the past.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (3.16 p.m.): It has been indicated by the Leader of the Opposition that we will be supporting the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill. It seems as though most members of the parliament will be. I think it shows the unity of purpose of Australians to get behind our federal and state governments in making our society and our community as safe as possible. We could possibly say that this bill had its genesis in the dreadful events of September 11 and the Bali bombings. This is something that people in Australia are not really used to.

Over the years we have witnessed these sorts of terrorism acts. There have been bus bombings and public transport bombings and shopping centre bombings in other places. We tended to think that it could never happen here. I think the significance of September 11 was that it happened at a place where we thought it would never happen. It really made everybody aware of how the threat of terrorism had reached new levels of sophistication and hitting areas where it would have the most effect upon communities while at the same time endeavour to change or persuade political decision making and overrule governments to the benefit of those people perpetrating the terror.

I will never forget September 11 and the effect it had in this parliament. For the first time in the history of this parliament we did not continue that day. There was a brief statement made that morning by the Premier and me, as the then Leader of the Opposition. We closed the parliament down for the day because nobody had the heart or the will to continue that day due to how we felt. It was a very empty and tragic feeling. Those sorts of tragedies of even that magnitude have happened to people in other parts of the world. They were simply not reported as much or as significant to the world as that, but just as significant to the people it affected. Whether in Northern Ireland, the Middle East or Israel or elsewhere in the world those attacks are dreadful.

It was followed up with the awful tragedy of Bali. That brought it home to us in Australia. We are the only nation in the world that became a nation by a ballot and not a bullet. We are used to peace and wonderful democracy. The episode in Bali broke our hearts. I will never forget attending the remembrance ceremony in Canberra with the Premier. I have never in my life seen such intense and mass grief as I saw at that ceremony. It was a very solemn ceremony. It was like a microcosm of an Australian suburb before your eyes. There were old people, young people, footballers, families. Everybody there had suffered grief because people had gone to have a happy holiday and ended up in that dreadful blazing inferno.

Of course, we have seen the vivid pictures on TV of what happened with the Madrid train bombing. I well remember being on the London Underground in 1993 and the number of times that the system would stop and everyone would simply get off because a port or a parcel was discovered on the train. There was great fear and panic amongst people wanting to get off the train. At that time I attended a Rugby test match in Paris where every single one of the 70,000 people who went through the turnstiles had to be searched. We had to walk through and hold up our arms, and they checked every single person for weapons. Coming from Australia where we have been able to attend things so freely, happily and joyfully, it was a real shock to the system. That is the background to the legislation before us today and other legislation that has preceded this.

One might say that, in the past, there has been some honour in war, if I can say that. People on the different sides knew who the enemy was. They had different uniforms and, at times, they performed very courageous and brave acts in the face of terrifying odds. In the Vietnam and Indochina wars, we moved towards guerilla warfare where troops were frustrated and confused by not knowing, at times,

who the enemy was. The traditional enemy, who was someone in a uniform that one knew, was replaced by people with no uniforms, that is, ordinary civilians. At times, it may even have been women and children, which added to the awfulness and the tragedy of those particular wars.

Since then we have seen the emergence of terrorism, and the previous speaker mentioned the dreadful terrorism that has persisted for so long in Ireland. Many of us of Irish descent have wondered how a nation that was supposed to be based upon religion could resort to such continual and ongoing terror, generation after generation.

Terrorism is a dreadful thing. People could be simply going to work, shopping or attending a sporting event and suddenly their lives are shattered. Terrorism is cowardly. It is committed by people who have no thought for the innocent people whose lives they are endeavouring to threaten or violate. As a result, terrorism needs to be treated with great strength, great confidence and great preparation. There needs to be no quarter given or taken in the treatment of terrorism, in the systems we have in place that are designed to prevent terrorism and designed to investigate and detect it. Let us hope that those sorts of systems work but at the same time, in the event that terrorism does take place, there needs to be the capability to act swiftly.

There also needs to be the capability to act swiftly and decisively when investigating or preventing terrorism, because it is unknown and uncharted waters to many other than counterterrorism experts. If some new act is being contemplated, those experts need to be able to move with great certainty and great swiftness. Time is very often of the essence. If a tip-off has been provided or some investigation is taking place, time may be absolutely essential. Therefore, the legislation and the support that we provide to our Police Services and other agencies has to allow for that whilst, at the same time, remaining within guidelines so that we cannot use terrorism legislation for things that not are truly acts of terrorism.

Our police officers and our law enforcement agencies need to have certainty. They need to have the ability to act swiftly in a very straightforward chain system. If time is of the essence, we do not want them to have to go hither and yonder across the state or the nation seeking all sorts of approvals, if that approval can be provided swiftly by a senior experienced officer in whom we as a legislature have been able to confer that particular authority.

I have always felt very strongly about the need to support the Queensland Police Service and I have always felt that, when developing systems, they need to be as straightforward as possible. The chain of command and direction needs to be as straightforward and as uncomplicated as possible. I have always felt that, wherever possible, we should place much of our operational, investigative and preventative systems within the jurisdiction of the Queensland Police Service.

Some time back we established the Queensland Crime Commission which had additional powers called star chamber powers. It was allocated particular powers of interrogation. It was put in place for the investigation, control and eradication of, firstly, major crime and, secondly, paedophilia in this state. Subsequently, in a previous parliamentary term under this government, the Queensland Crime Commission was merged with the Crime and Misconduct Commission. At the time, I felt and argued that they both had specific specialist purposes. I argued that the CMC was an organisation specifically dealing with misconduct and the prevention or investigation of corruption, and should have remained as that specialist body. I felt that the QCC had developed a very close and professional working relationship with the Queensland Police Service in investigating major crime and was able to work cooperatively with the Queensland Police Service in those matters where broader and more stronger investigative powers were needed. It was able to undertake some investigations and could question people and demand a truthful answer from them. Its powers meant that people being questioned could not say that they did not want to answer questions. Those two organisations have now merged into the CMC. Much of the legislation that we are looking at today is about providing stronger powers to the CMC and also some stronger powers to our Queensland Police Service. I give that background to the CMC, the QCC and the Police Service because I do believe that, when I talk about being able to act swiftly and decisively, it is important that everybody knows their place. The chain of command and the system of approvals and so forth has to be simplified where timeliness is needed.

When we get to issues of terrorism and issues that deal with all sorts of national and international events, we can end up with a large number of organisations being involved. It could be the Federal Police or other federal agencies, the federal government, the state government, the CMC and the Queensland Police Service, and there may be other agencies such as emergency services also involved. There needs to be a great deal of cooperation, knowledge and understanding between those bodies.

The key issue in this bill—and it follows on from a number of other laws put through the parliament—involves a strengthening of the statute book to ensure that our enforcement agencies have the necessary powers to protect Queenslanders at home. That is important. This is about looking after our patch and making sure that our systems and powers are right. The CMC will be able to use its full range of coercive powers. I do not have any problem with that. I believe it must be able to do that. As I

have said, they must be able to do it in conjunction with and, if necessary, on behalf of the Queensland Police Service if it or citizens come forward with any particular complaints or information.

As I say, the CMC when investigating matters has the power to inspect and seize financial records, passports and so forth and to compel a person to provide information on movements, money and assets. This bill enables the Police Commissioner to enlist the help of police from other jurisdictions. It also allows people to seek court approval to conduct secret searches of premises for evidence of terrorism.

The bill contains additional safeguards with regard to some of the increases in powers that are provided. For example, interstate police who are called in to prevent or respond to a terrorist act in Queensland will be named. I would not mind if the minister could comment on that—what it actually means by them being named. Does that mean putting a name tag on them or reporting in a report to the parliament or to the Police Minister? What particular units of what police services are used?

The bill also allows the Supreme Court to grant police a warrant to conduct an undercover search for evidence within 72 hours of police knowing that evidence of organised crime or terrorism may occur. It is noted that that is a power that is already available to the CMC. I think it is good that that is also provided to the police, because 72 hours should provide them with the time in which to hop in and undertake that particular investigation.

One thing that is missing from this legislation is phone tapping. My colleagues and I have spoken about this matter many times in this parliament. We have spoken about it mostly in relation to drugs, because Queensland is one state where people can do drug deals on mobile phones and telephones with impunity. It is one area where they know that they are safe, because their phone cannot be tapped by the Queensland Police Service. The only way that the Queensland Police Service can obtain phone tapping of a particular line is through a convoluted system of going through other interstate or national agencies in order to get that tapping undertaken. Criminals have been able to gain technological advantages through mobile phones. Our Police Service is hamstrung—handcuffed, if you like—in not being able to tap into that technology to prevent those sorts of deals being done. In the case of terrorism, it would seem to most of us quite reasonable and sensible to give police the opportunity to be able to do that. One of the most basic communications systems that people use when committing terrorist acts or undertaking drug deals is the mobile phone or a landline. Yet our police are not able to tap into those phone services.

As I have said before, civil liberties could be well maintained. People would be rightly concerned that their telephone could be tapped, but we could use the services of the Public Interest Monitor—the PIM—which are used by the police in Queensland to undertake covert operations, surveillance operations or to put in listening devices in a house or on a premise. Really, when we look at it, there is not much difference between tapping into a phone system of a suspected drug dealer and a suspected terrorist. We are able to have covert operations. We are able to have listening devices in place under the umbrella of the Public Interest Monitor who gives permission for that to take place. Why can we not provide our Police Service with the opportunity to have phone tapping?

When we think of it, it is a glaring omission from this legislation. I spoke before about the issue that if police know that evidence of organised crime or terrorism is not yet in place but is expected to arrive within 72 hours, they are able to get a warrant for an undercover search for evidence within that time. We should be allowing the police to tap into the phone of that suspected person or group whom they believe could be about to conduct an operation. By doing that, they may very well find out what that operation or terrorist act is going to be. Without the telephone tapping powers, they may just completely miss it. They may not be able to get it or detect it at all.

I think that the lack of telephone tapping powers is a glaring omission from this legislation. I think that we have enough proof in Queensland to show that, if used properly with the approval and under the supervision of the Public Interest Monitor, covert operations and listening devices have not intruded upon the personal liberties of people. It is something that should be in this legislation.

I join with our leader and my colleagues in supporting this bill, with the sincere hope that what we do through this legislation strengthens and alerts our agencies. I commend our Police Service and the CMC on the work that they have undertaken to date in endeavouring to keep Queensland and Australia free from terrorism. Let us hope that, for all the good people in the world, their efforts are successful and this legislation helps in that regard.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (3.35 p.m.): This bill continues the Beattie government's reforms to strengthen the state's response to terrorism. I am also proud that the Howard government has picked up and run with an issue that I raised in this House on 4 December 2002, and that is the issue of port and shipping security. As I said in my speech on that day, I hope that Howard will not let his pathological hatred of the MUA prevent him from working with the union to help secure Australia's borders.

The most significant component of this bill will allow the Crime and Misconduct Commission to use its powers to assist in the investigation of terrorism related crime. In fighting terrorism, it is vital that the CMC uses its coercive powers in either a proactive or reactive manner to compel suspects and

others to answer questions. However, make no mistake: the primary organisation with the responsibility for preventing and investigating terrorist offences in Queensland is the Queensland Police Service. I acknowledge the vital work performed by the staff of the Security Intelligence Branch in the ongoing fight against terrorism and politically motivated violence in Queensland. For many years the Security Intelligence Branch has gathered intelligence and undertaken operations against those who wish to disrupt our democratic way of life in Queensland and elsewhere.

Despite what the media suggests, terrorism is not a recent problem for Australia. On 17 December 1980, the Turkish Consul-General of Sydney was assassinated, it is suspected, by members of the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide. In Australia's recent history there have been numerous other instances of terrorism and politically motivated violence. The Security Intelligence Branch has been and is currently at the forefront of the battle against terrorism.

I understand how important good intelligence is in the battle against terrorism. In my previous life as a police officer I worked in a number of intelligence roles. I am concerned about the behaviour of the Howard government towards its intelligence agencies. Intelligence is not an exact science. Intelligence agencies collect, collate, analyse and then disseminate information. Intelligence analysts review fragments of information and then make informed assessments on the basis of incomplete information. It is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. On some occasions we might have only two or three pieces of the puzzle and on other occasions we might have 50 or 60 pieces so we can get a better sense of the final picture. It is all very well and good for a lot of Monday morning quarterbacks to second-guess what intelligence agencies have done. The intelligence agencies' role is to provide information to the government on which the government can then make policy decisions. The pressure that the Howard government has placed on the intelligence agencies to provide intelligence assessments that suit its agenda is terrifying.

We have seen in the United States George W. Bush's hatred for Iraq resulting in the American intelligence community being forced to focus on Iraq at the expense of Al-Qaeda. We have seen the devastating impact of this politically driven diversion of effort. No politician or no single person has a monopoly on wisdom. The potential impact of the politicisation of the Australian intelligence community could be equally as devastating. Just as John Laws and Alan Jones disagree on religious issues, so do John Howard and I. I refuse to consider John Howard as God.

Mick Keelty has been a police officer since 1974—30 years in the business. Mr Keelty has worked in many areas, including drug operations and intelligence operations, which included a secondment to the National Crime Authority. Mr Keelty has studied at the FBI academy and has been recognised by the Australian government by being awarded the Australian Police Medal. He has also been recognised by the Indonesian government. We all saw what John Howard did to this highly experienced and respected law enforcement professional when he gave an honest assessment of Australia's threat. I urge John Howard and his sycophants to butt out and let the intelligence agencies do their job.

I admire and support the work done by agencies such as ASIO, ASIS, the AFP, DSD, ONA and DIO in protecting our national interests. However, they must be able to do their job without political interference colouring their assessments.

This bill does extend the powers of the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I believe that this bill strikes the correct balance between enforcement provisions and the protection of civil liberties. I am pleased that the Queensland Police Service is undertaking a review of the need or otherwise of telephone interception powers. I look forward to the outcome of that review.

This bill will not mean that Queensland will never experience an act of terrorism, but it does mean that our law enforcement agencies will have the tools at their disposal to prevent or, if needed, investigate a terrorist event. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (3.40 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. I indicate at the outset that the Liberal Party will be supporting this piece of legislation. We are doing so because we believe it is very important that every state in Australia be equipped to deal with the threat of terrorism, no matter where it occurs.

As a result of the continued threat of terrorism, the federal government held an Australian-first ministers meeting on 5 April 2002 to ensure that all states are capable and have the powers to protect Australia from terrorism as far as possible without impacting unacceptably on our democratic processes and way of life. I think the approach taken by both the Commonwealth and all of the states needs to be commended because they have struck a correct balance. I think that is very important to be successful in a country such as Australia. I believe it would have been unacceptable if the processes had been so overpowering as to impact upon our way of life. One of the ways we can ensure we remain steadfast and strong against the threat of terrorism is to maintain our way of life and maintain our democratic processes, because the moment we change those things that make us uniquely Australian then those on the dark side have won the war, quite frankly. That is why it is very important that we in fact stand steadfast and maintain as far as possible all those things that have ensured our way of life over the past couple of hundred years.

The federal government has also introduced various forms of legislation which have allowed federal government agencies such as ASIO, ASIS and the Federal Police to be better equipped to face the threat of terrorism. Last night the federal government added to these measures by allocating a massive \$755 million over five years to combat terrorism. \$270 million was allocated in additional resources for intelligence such as ASIO and ASIS, \$207 million was provided to upgrade protective security and for more sky marshals and \$150 million was budgeted for border protection and security at points of entry into Australia. This funding is in addition to the \$1.5 billion the federal government will spend over the next five years for the Australian Defence Force.

The Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill amends eight separate pieces of legislation and allows the various crime fighting bodies, such as the Queensland Police Service and the CMC, greater access to information and evidence of major criminal activity and the legislative tools to act upon that information. One concern I do have—I know that it is a common concern on this side of the House—is that this bill fails to incorporate the recommendations of a number of reports to increase Queensland Police's telephone tapping abilities. Late last year I announced our support for those powers to be given to the police in Queensland. In an age in which terrorism has become such a widely used political tool, the Queensland Police Service's ability to obtain the information it needs to protect the Queensland public is absolutely essential.

That will not prevent us from supporting this piece of legislation. As I said, it is very important that all states in Australia cooperate with the Commonwealth in making sure we have a coordinated approach should an act of terrorism occur. It is also important that we do everything we possibly can to make sure that we have the intelligence at our fingertips to prevent it from occurring in the first place, which is probably the first line of defence. I think the measures we are putting in place with this bill go a long way to making sure we are better prepared than ever before. At the same time, I reiterate my concern about the balance. We cannot allow terrorists to make us react in such a way that we change our way of life, that we put in place processes that would impact upon our democratic institutions. Once that happens we have lost that war—they have had a moral victory—and it will be a downhill slide on our side.

Mr Beattie: Are you happy with this?

Mr QUINN: Yes. I have indicated that we are going to support it.

Mr Beattie: I am happy to listen to your pearls of wisdom.

Mr QUINN: And so the Premier should. He could learn a lot from them. We will support the bill. As I said, it is part of the coordinated approach and we think it is in line with what we need to make sure Australia, and Queensland in particular, is safer than ever before.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (3.44 p.m.): I am pleased to speak on the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. This bill highlights the global difficulty faced in preventing acts of terror. This difficulty remains because of the asymmetrical nature of terrorist operations, which do not need to adhere to any paradigm for conflict or rule of law. The repeated failures of conventional approaches to preventing terrorism continue to reinforce how costly and unproductive many measures are.

The federal government continues to speak of the threat of a terrorist attack on Australian soil as if it were the sword of Damocles hanging over millions of homes and families across Australia. The problem with this generalised approach to terrorism is that it does little to educate individuals and business on the realities of the threat presented. The plethora of motherhood statements that are made on the threat of terror lack substance and are not linked to the realities of everyday life in Queensland.

This legislation correctly strengthens the powers of Queensland law enforcement agencies, but where is the commensurate approach to helping exposed sections of the private sector manage risk? The recent Greenpeace activity in the port of Brisbane highlights how our ports remain exposed to even benign intrusion. This is despite considerable work done at the national and state levels to tighten security.

The proffered solutions to most areas of security exposure are to bolster physical security and strengthen the reactive capabilities of response forces. This proposed legislation complements these conventional approaches with robust powers to react to received intelligence and to respond to terrorist related activity. But still there remains a gap between this activity and an informed private sector.

We need to address two key areas in response to filling this gap. Firstly, the security industry needs to receive greater government direction and support for the education and training of security personnel. The majority of the security effort in the front line against terrorism comes from private companies with security contracts. These include the security of high-profile components of Queensland infrastructure, domestic and international airports, Queensland ports, large industrial estates and mining operations; major and mega event security at Queensland stadiums and entertainment centres; the security staff working the foyers and facilities of buildings in the CBD; and the innumerable staff who stand on the gates and doors of the many amusement parks and nightclubs, where significant tourist dollars are spent.

The remuneration for workers in the security industry is not attractive, and all sections of the industry struggle to attract the required numbers of quality staff and to retain them. A significant issue that accompanies this is the risk many companies carry through not maintaining an appropriately qualified or appropriately trained work force. At the coalface there are many security personnel not appropriately trained or briefed to conduct their job effectively. The way to address these deficiencies is not only to increase regulation of the industry but also to directly target security managers and supervisors through education and training. At all levels managers need to be better trained and networked if there is to be a noticeable improvement in the security industry.

Secondly, there needs to be a dedicated process for the sharing of information and intelligence with targeted sections of industry. This has been discussed at the national level, but little has been done to follow through on this. A dedicated forum for security professionals needs to be established which covers key areas of professional security expertise including risk management, threat and intelligence based security planning, and the management of security personnel. This forum needs to look beyond simple classifications of threat into poorly explained ratings of low, medium, high and very high and provide a more qualified and better understanding of the threat environment in which Queensland businesses operate.

There is no doubt that bombs do kill but, as the member for Robina said earlier, they should not be allowed to undermine civil society. In my view, the coalition of the willing—Bush, Blair and Howard—have an interest in the war on terror. I think it is quite ludicrous that we have a war on terror, because terror is fear. It should actually be the war on terrorism. But we have a war on fear. I think in many ways these people are in the process of creating fear. Tony Blair, for example, has declared Britain to be 'in mortal danger' and 'facing threats different from anything the world has faced before'. Those statements have real shades of apocalypse.

The British have lived through the Blitz and through a period when thousands of Russian nuclear missiles were aimed at British cities. So the whole idea that we can get Tony Blair on TV looking rather paranoid making these statements frightens me. He is either extremely right about things or frighteningly mad. I think it is one or the other; it cannot be both. As the member for Robina said, we must not undercut civil society—habeas corpus, our civil rights and liberties. The fact that people in Iraq can pick up citizens because they are at a particular place and put them in jail and terrorise them and suggest that is in the interests of fighting the war on terror is quite frightening.

I would like to conclude on something a little bit closer to home for me, which is my Greekness. I think my Greek heritage is well known to members in this chamber and it is also well known to my brother Andreas, who is an MP in the Greek parliament. He was the Minister for Sport when Greece gained the 2004 Olympic Games. He promised that he would remove his moustache if they won the games and he did that. If I might tell a joke: when he went home and his seven-year old boy saw him, he asked, 'What do I look like?' His son said, 'Like a human now, Dad.' He said, 'What did I look like before?' 'A baboon,' he said. It is very important to me for there to be a successful Greek Olympics.

John Howard massively overreacted to the recent bombings in Athens—bombings which domestically are seen as little more than the work of local hoodlums. These hoodlums have been around for generations in Greece. In fact, a very dangerous group of them was picked up a couple of years ago. It has nothing to do with Al-Qaeda, but we had this massive overreaction. The Greek media and politicians have expressed stunned disbelief at the scale of this overreaction. I know from talking to people over there that privately the Greek Olympic officials are infuriated by plans to put two Qantas aircraft on standby during the Olympic Games so athletes can be evacuated in the event of an attack as well as being infuriated by the travel warnings.

I want to say quite clearly in this House that we cannot allow ourselves to be scared out of our wits, particularly by people who are overstating a problem. All things being equal, I would like to go to the Athens Olympics. I hope if things can be worked out that I will. I want to say that my actions in going—if I do go there—will not be foolhardy. The reality is that we cannot allow the overstating of problems, the scaring of people or the panicking of people to impinge on the rights that we have to live as citizens; otherwise life would not be worth living. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.52 p.m.): I rise to support the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill. This is an important bill which will help keep our communities in Queensland safer by strengthening the powers of Queensland law enforcement authorities to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks by the amendment of a number of acts. The memory of the September 11 attacks on the United States and terrorist attacks in other countries since then, particularly bombings in Bali and Madrid, have affected all of our lives. Australians have lost their lives in those incidents and we recognise how vulnerable we are to further attacks by terrorists. This has prompted Australian jurisdictions to examine their counterterrorism arrangements, including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery capabilities of any possible future attacks.

A new national framework to combat terrorism and multijurisdictional crime included a commitment that all jurisdictions would review their legislation and counterterrorism arrangements to make sure that they are sufficiently strong. Australian jurisdictions entered an intergovernmental

agreement on counterterrorism, replaced the national antiterrorism plan with the national counterterrorism plan and have prepared a handbook to support the plan. The Commonwealth has the major role in gathering intelligence and responding to national terrorist situations. However, the states will play a vital role as first responders to terrorist incidents and will augment intelligence gathering by Commonwealth agencies.

Investigations are expected to be led by Commonwealth officers in joint operations with state police using their respective powers. Commonwealth terrorism offences are also expected to be prosecuted more than state offences. The bill is a response to requests for additional law enforcement powers from the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission and to suggestions from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for a specific offence of sabotage and amendments to the Freedom of Information Act 1992 to protect certain security documents from public disclosure. In particular, the referral of legislative responsibility for the investigation of terrorism related to major crime to the CMC is significant as it allows the full range of CMC coercive powers for terrorism related major crime, including investigative hearings. The CMC had administratively taken on this function, but this bill makes the function more comprehensive and transparent because parliament itself will be conferring the terrorism function.

Some proposals are terrorism specific and others are not, but all will assist in terrorism investigations. Proposals that are non-terrorist specific are so because it is considered preferable that those powers be extended to offences in the jurisdiction of the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission rather than just terrorism incidents. This is in recognition of the fact that investigators may not yet have established that the criminal activity in question is terrorism related.

The implementation of specific legislative provisions to strengthen the powers of Queensland law enforcement agencies to prevent and respond to terrorist acts will not have any direct financial implications. Given that the need to respond to terrorist acts is likely to be rare, it is not anticipated that there will be any long-term resource implications. It is accepted that increased powers of law enforcement agencies raises issues about rights to privacy and other rights and liberties of individuals against whom the powers are potentially exercised. However, this is balanced by the need to ensure that Queensland legislation is sufficiently strong to counter terrorism.

The new freedom of information security exemption prevents access to sensitive security information. The exemption is justified as it is designed to protect national and state security information and it is in the interests of the safety of our community. The interests of national security has traditionally been a well-recognised exception to full disclosure of information and the provision is based, with necessary modification, on security exemption that has always been contained in the Commonwealth FOI legislation and has recently been incorporated into the Victorian FOI legislation. Extensive consultation with relevant government agencies has occurred, of course. In the interests of the safety of all Queenslanders, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (3.57 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. September 11, Bali, Madrid and the upcoming Olympics—we in the Western World, and more particularly in Australia, have learned to live with a low level of fear since the ghoulis images of these unspeakable atrocities have invaded our thinking. Whilst we live in relative peace in the lucky country, we are wise to remember that geographically and sociologically speaking we are a white Anglo-Saxon enclave living in South-East Asia. The appropriate response from all fair-minded Australians will have its genesis in self-defence, not in bitterness and racial hatred.

Most Australians have come to accept that when it comes to a serious terrorist threat in Australia it may well be a matter of when and not if. The threat from international terrorism remains a most serious one for Australia. All the indications are that we must reckon on a sustained campaign over many years to diminish that threat. Regionally speaking, terrorist groups like JI show themselves to be capable of adapting to the setbacks following the arrest and prosecution of most of those responsible for the Bali outrage. It retains a potent capacity to inflict harm on Australian interests in South-East Asia. Nor can we discount the possibility of a dangerous threat emerging from splinter groups inspired by the Jihadist ideology of Al-Qaeda and JI.

Regrettably, we are still in the process of exposing the scale and scope of terrorism in our region, its organisational structures and operational capabilities. A number of JI's known top operatives still remain at large. There remains a premium on effective cooperation between regional countries. Australia continues to work actively for this and can record significant progresses, including through the excellent cooperation achieved between Indonesian and Australian authorities. These countries, though not having the same lifestyle and values as us, are still cooperating in terms of the overall terrorist threat, as indeed their lives are touched by terrorism as well.

Australia is seized of the need not only to shut down the active terrorists but to contest the ideas on which they seek to develop broader support. But Australia does not see this as inherently a clash between Muslim and predominantly non-Muslim countries. Indeed we could not have made the progress we have so far if it had not been for cooperation between such countries. We must face the

fact, however, that the danger from terrorism to Australians living or travelling in the region and more widely abroad can be serious and may well remain so for some years.

Australia's counterterrorism efforts draw upon the broader international coalition against terrorism, especially strategic partners like the US, Japan, the UK and other countries which are committed to combating terrorism in Australia's neighbourhood. We welcome their readiness to share this task with Australia and countries of the region as one of the frontlines of international terrorism.

Western countries are understandably careful about intruding in a debate which is essentially one with Islam. Terrorists can all too easily exploit for their extreme purposes the measure of distrust of the west and a sense of dislocation with the processes of modernisation and globalisation which exist amongst even mainstream populations in the developing world.

Nevertheless, Australia and others remain able and willing partners for those in the region confronted with the scourge of terrorism at a time when they face other major national challenges. We know the enduring threat means this partnership must be sustainable in the long term. How then should we fight this war? What are the most effective ways of responding to the senseless brutality of the terrorists? Our first priority must be to defeat the terrorists themselves. The recent tragic bombings in Madrid highlighted that we are indeed in a race against time to prevent terrorists indiscriminately killing yet more innocent people. This also means using our law enforcement, intelligence and security capabilities to track and arrest terrorists and disrupt terrorist networks. Critically, it also means enhancing international cooperation to ensure that terrorists are defeated.

No country can combat terrorism on its own, particularly when terrorists are able to exploit the enhanced communications and travel afforded by globalisation. Muslim and non-Muslim countries have already shown they can be effective allies in the fight against terror. Indeed, we could not have made the progress we have so far had it not been for this cooperation.

Today some 3,000 terrorist suspects have been detained in more than 90 countries. Entire Al-Qaeda cells have been disrupted on every continent. Nearly \$US200 million in terrorist assets have been frozen or seized. In our own region some 200 Jema'ah Islamiyya suspects have been detained. Key figures like Hambali and Al-Ghozi are no longer at large. And, of course, many of those involved in the Bali bombings are now behind bars thanks to the extremely effective work of the Indonesian police and their cooperative partners in Australia.

But it is not enough for us to simply respond to terror attacks when they happen. The focus must be on prevention which is what this bill is all about. The citizens of our countries demand nothing less and it has to be a multidimensional effort. I noted that quite a few speakers talked about the excellent work done by the Australian and Queensland police forces in this regard: from our efforts to strengthen border and transport security—and an honourable member mentioned previously about the waterfront and the open gate that can be to terrorism as well—to the work being done to track and disrupt sources of terrorist finance, to greater political coordination between regional governments to provide a framework for practical cooperation.

This bill will have its critics in terms of civil libertarian issues, but I am not amongst them. Terrorists do not play by Mr Nice Guy rules and neither should we when it comes to dealing decisively with the threat of terrorism. Whether it be the Queensland Police Force, the CMC, or our military forces and intelligence agencies, they all need to be appropriately empowered to deal with terrorism. I believe this is good legislation and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.04 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. I feel I must stand to speak briefly on this bill to show my electorate and the people of Queensland that I am among those who are prepared to stand up and support this initiative because it is one more important step in the overall fight against terrorism.

In doing so, I think it is important to comment briefly on this new phenomena of terrorism, not exactly an entirely new phenomena but new in its form and its global reach. I wish to talk especially about the concept of the new nation state in this context. In the provisions of the new world order that was established after the League of Nations and particularly the United Nations in the past century, the stability that was sought was really premised upon the concept of a stable nation state, and a stable nation state was something that was always clearly definable and a pragmatic device to creating stability, to creating economic and social relations between various geographic, cultural and economic blocks, et cetera.

We have seen the development of the nation state and the concept of the modern state as a form of world organisation, and indeed the concept of a state as a more nebulous concept that even goes beyond specific geographic boundaries as the locus of power, as it were, across the world. We have seen the deterioration of many of these nation states and the concept, as we have heard internationally described, of a rogue state where that social fabric deteriorates and we have a situation where we have almost a state of anarchy where we have a dangerous situation whereby dangerous terrorist forces can have access to instruments of a state, particular elements of a state and resources of a state, to direct those resources to malicious ends. That is a very dangerous situation. Certainly it is one that all of the

responsible powers in the world must monitor in terms of ensuring that these rogue states do not develop and become a base for terrorism.

Terrorism itself is a very difficult concept to circumscribe today. We can say that it is essentially stateless, formless and indeed nebulous. It is one that can simply be a concept that can be basically related to an idea rather than a place or a people. In that sense it is indeed very nebulous, difficult to identify, to nail down, and therefore particularly difficult for law enforcement authorities to often comprehend, to identify and respond to. That is why we need very comprehensive legislation today to anticipate almost any eventuality.

The eventualities that we are anticipating in a piece of legislation like this, along with the foregoing pieces of legislation that have already been passed in this state and at a national level, are wide ranging in the sense that we cannot anticipate the detail of terrorist attacks—how, where and when they might occur—and therefore we need very comprehensive legislation that is not going to have legislative or structural loopholes. This is precisely what this legislation is about. It is legislation that particularly addresses the peculiarities of our federal system of government. In that context we have to ensure that appropriate interfaces, legislatively and constitutionally between our states and our Commonwealth government, are properly dealt with.

This is, therefore, an important piece of legislation which will ensure that in future we have structures in place that will allow for rapid reaction to any anticipated terrorist threat, to make it clear who is responsible and delineate the respective powers between the state and the Commonwealth should such circumstances arise.

I know I join with every one of my constituents, those in the wider population of Queensland and members present in this House, in wishing and hoping that it will never be necessary to invoke this legislation. We certainly do live in a more dangerous and uncertain world today. This legislation at least tries to create greater certainty in dealing with these eventualities. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (4.10 p.m.): Terrorism of any kind, no matter how we wish to describe it, whether old or new, strikes fear into the hearts of people around the world and, in more recent times, has taken the lives of our very own Australian country men and women. Terrorism is an abhorrent act. The terrorism of today has evolved from past accounts of what was traditionally known as old terrorism. Most would agree that the terrorism of today is largely underacknowledged by governments and that the protection of our families weighs more heavily on our minds than any privacy concerns.

According to the paper on new terrorism through the Australasian Study of Parliament Group presented on 18 July 2003, groups of the old terrorism such as the Japanese Red Army, the Red Army faction and the Irish Republican Army have had common threads. The motivation of these groups has been mainly confined to national or local regional concerns. They used violence to gain attention and usually behaved as rational political actors in order to extract specific concessions from the authorities. This generally meant that terrorism was confined to those regions where there was a political agenda. Not that this form of terrorism is to be condoned, but the new breed of terrorism is exceedingly more violent and non-selective in its target groups. It is extremely difficult to ascertain what its objective is.

The characteristics of this form of new terrorism are outlined in the abovementioned paper. It generally favours targets with high symbolic value and have a broad international focus, with religious ideologies being the primary element. It has a desire to inflict mass casualties using technology for innovative planning. These groups may have the ability to obtain and use weapons of mass destruction. I repeat these groups 'may have the ability to obtain and use weapons of mass destruction.' The members are often willing to sacrifice their own lives for a cause.

As outlined in an article by Tom Sherman in 2001 entitled 'Terrorism—a disease in search of a cure,' this new terrorism is no longer an ideology but has become an insurrectional strategy. This is now being used by people of very different political persuasions to violate the rights of many nations. Mr Sherman's article states that since 1968 the United States state department has kept statistics on terrorist attacks. As of 2001, 7,000 terrorist bombings have occurred worldwide. Between 1993 and 2000, 2,881 people have lost their lives. These figures do not include the September 11 attack, the Bali bombings or the Madrid train bombing which would more than double, if not treble, these figures.

While terrorism has not recently affected Australian soil, many Australian families have lost their lives overseas due to these unpredictable and senseless acts. While the Australian government has supported many of the international conventions on terrorism and has introduced new terrorism laws, we still have a way to go. Hindsight is an effective—ineffective tool against terrorism.

Mr Beattie: Which one do you mean?

Mrs STUCKEY: I definitely mean that hindsight is an ineffective tool against terrorism. Security measures are put in place as a reaction to a terrorist attack or threat. This is not good enough. Measures need to be put in place today to do all we can to prevent an attack from happening in the future.

The Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004 that we are debating today goes a long way to providing greater powers for the police and the Crime and Misconduct Commission. This bill certainly tightens some of the existing loopholes. However, I feel the amendments could be broadened, giving even more powers to the police for surveillance activities which may include telephone tapping. I am not suggesting for a moment that this activity is undertaken at the expense of the erosion of individuals' rights but rather to further protect our freedom—a freedom that, I am sure all members will agree—is worth protecting.

Another area to address is communication. The message on terrorism needs to be portrayed accurately through media outlets. The public needs to be aware of what security measures have been put in place and these measures need to be agreed upon by all members of parliament. This provides a uniform front that will portray solidarity which will in turn help to ease the minds of the Australian public. In sharing this information with the public we must be mindful of security sensitivity that may affect an operation.

I now move to the topic of funding. Amendments to this bill do not provide for any additional funding. The explanatory notes state that no additional resources will be required. How can a bill that gives greater powers not require additional resources to allow for effective and efficient use of these new powers? It was stated in the Queensland Police Union journal of August 2003 that the Premier has allocated a measly \$4 million over 18 months for counterterrorism measures in response to the Bali bombings. Of this amount, only \$800,000 was to be allocated to the Queensland Police Service. Compare this to the New South Wales allocation of \$40 million and the Victorian government's \$30 million. Members must wonder what Queensland's paltry \$4 million actually buys apart from some non-operational bureaucrats.

The recent incident involving terror suspect Willie Brigitte underscores the fact that we are a target and highlights the urgency and the need to support this bill as far as it goes. Queensland is a leading tourist destination not only for the Australian community but also for the international community. The Premier is always telling us that people are flocking to Queensland and that we are the growth state yet he does not seem overly concerned to allocate funds to protect the new flock.

In conclusion, despite some reservations, this bill is a positive step in a process that needs to be continually reviewed and improved to meet the changing climate that we live in. I support this bill.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (4.16 p.m.): I rise to strongly indicate my support for the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill brought into the House by the Premier. The bill, as other members have outlined, is the result of a national agreement on combating terrorism in Australia. It undertakes a number of measures to improve Australia's security preparedness. In speaking to the bill, however, I do not wish to dwell on the specifics as other members have done but rather touch on the broader issues of international terrorism.

Governments can and should improve security with measures such as those included in this bill. It cannot protect a community from terrorism. The Howard government, like the Bush government for which it is an apologist, is lying to Australians by suggesting that they absolutely can. Terrorism is by its very nature insidious. It involves attacks usually on innocent civilians and can happen any time, anywhere. Its success lies not in harming that many people as a proportion of the population but by causing such fear in a community that people are unable to go about their daily lives.

Terrorism is, by definition, the kind of warfare we get when one party is angry and is, in a military sense, inherently weak. It is by its nature faceless and gutless because it attacks civilians. The insidious nature of terrorism means that it simply cannot ever be beaten by conventional means. As such, the very concept of a war on terrorism is patently absurd.

The grammatical embarrassment of 'war on terror' is even wackier given that terror is an emotion and there is not generally a war on emotions. Historically, terrorist campaigns have only ever ceased when one side has run out of puff or when there have been genuine attempts to engage in dialogue about the issues at hand. The negotiations around the Northern Ireland question are, in the later regard, a case in point.

While we take a conventional military approach to dealing with this threat, we cannot by definition succeed. By Australia involving itself in the misguided American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq there can be no doubt that our risk of becoming terrorist targets is exponentially increased. That is the view of our most qualified policemen. Federal Police Commission, Mick Kelty, and opinion polls clearly show that it is the view of the majority of Australians.

The war in Afghanistan was bad enough. Australia's involvement in the war in Iraq is an abomination. We now clearly know that the fundamental and unequivocal reason given for the war, the search for weapons of mass destruction, was wrong. With the shocking revelations that American soldiers have been involved in the sadistic torture, rape and murder of Iraqi prisoners, in blatant defiance of the Geneva conventions, the secondary argument that we went to free the Iraqi people from an oppressive regime is also lost. With these revelations, the whole exercise of the war in Iraq has lost

its credibility, both in the eyes of those in the Middle East and most people in the west. As Mark Latham has consistently said, the longer Australia stays in Iraq the worse it is going to get.

The bill before the House includes a number of moves to improve Australia's security preparedness. It is a great tragedy that the actions of our national government are making it more, not less, likely that that preparedness will be put to the test. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (4.20 p.m.): The Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill is one that deserves bipartisan support. It moves to protect this country, Queensland and its people from the acts of those who are intolerant not just of religious beliefs other than their own but also of the fundamental principles by which this state and country are governed, that is, democracy and the right of each person to achieve without hindrance the highest office or position they wish. As a country, Australia has accepted peoples from all countries and those who have settled here are overwhelmingly at one with seeking peace and stability.

This bill provides extra security measures to ensure that our way of life and our country—both of which we owe so many for—are protected and that those who wish to desecrate those principles are detected and dealt with by due legal process. I commend the government for the work it has done in regard to this issue and, at the same time, I commend the federal government for its commitment to protect the borders of this country and the security of its people. In fact, since 11 September 2001, the federal government has committed \$3.1 billion to ensure such protection.

Last night, and I am aware that this has been echoed here today, the federal Treasurer acknowledged intelligence as one of the key weapons in combating terrorism. In that regard, this bill amends a number of acts. At first glance that may be seen as harsh, but overall it is essential. One shortfall is that the bill does not provide additional powers to the state police in regard to telephone listening devices. I state simply that to be effective we need to provide the best avenues of detection and not convoluted processes as proposed on that issue.

The world prior to 11 September 2001 may be seen in hindsight as a much gentler place. However, since that date, due to its belief in democracy, freedom of expression and the right of the individual, Australia has seen itself become the target of terrorists. Australia's association and involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor and other places throughout the world has placed us in serious threat of attack both inside and outside our borders. Of course, Australians have never backed away from a challenge to our sovereignty, nor the right of our people to live in peace. The battle against terrorism is not just one to be fought on Australian shores but in countries all over the world where there are people actively plotting to remove our system of government and to impose regimes that prohibit freedom of speech, freedom of action and our ideals.

Therefore, the Commonwealth government is to be praised for taking the actions it has. It is only by a concerted effort that this country is going to remove terrorism. I can readily recall the sixties and seventies, and terrorist groups such as Bader Meinhoff and the Red Brigade in Europe. For many years they caused havoc, yet the current threat is even more dangerous as there is a World Wide Web and a united philosophy to destroy what we and our forefathers have worked for so many years to put in place.

This bill moves to amend a number of acts. I for one will watch keenly in the following months and years to ensure their just implementation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (4.24 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. At the outset, I state that I support this bill. It has been brought about by a need to bring federal and state legislation into line. I would much prefer that it did not need to be drafted. Unfortunately, with the state of the world today—and it is not the world that we grew up in—there is a need for it.

Every morning since September 11 I have woken, heard the birds singing in my front yard and been grateful. I thank God for that. I thank God that my children are not walking to school ducking bombs. I thank God that there is no war, conflict, bombs or military aeroplanes in my area or my children or grandchildren's areas. I cannot hope any less for anybody else's children. I wish that for every child around the world.

The world is not a safe place and Australia is very lucky. Indeed, it is one of the few countries that can claim not to have felt many bombs on its shores. Unfortunately, there are Australian soldiers serving overseas. Regardless of the opinions of a lot of people in the House, I support them 100 per cent. I support the fact that John Howard sent our troops overseas based on the information that he had at the time, that he believed in and that the rest of us who supported him in those actions also believed in. As to the information that he may or may not have now, because I am not privy to it—

Mr Lawlor: You can read about it every day.

Mrs PRATT: I do not believe everything I read and nor should anybody else. The truth is that I do not have the facts at my disposal. I cannot weigh up the rights and wrongs of what has occurred. But I can say that if there is one person in Iraq who has helped any of our troops in any way, shape or form,

we owe them everything and we must do everything we can to help them attain the freedom that they have been asking for. I will support them, as I will support every action that is taken to protect a single life in any country at war. I do not like war. I do not believe Australians are a warlike people, but they will fight very strongly for the rights and freedom of others, and they will fight for ours, too. They will not back down from a fight. That is not bravado; it is just common decency.

Our troops overseas deserve our support 100 per cent. Regardless of what happens in the future, we have to be behind them. If Latham wins the next election and decides to bring them home, we must support them. If they stay there, we have to support them, too, because they rely heavily on us. We do not want what happened with Vietnam to happen again.

The attacks on September 11 and Bali have shown us that there is nothing that terrorists would not do to make a point. I remember September 11 very clearly because I was watching TV and I thought it was a movie. I thought, 'How realistic! Those aeroplanes really appear to be flying into that building.' I did not sleep that night and everyone else who saw it probably did not either. It affected me greatly, but there is no way that I would let that kind of barbaric act stop me from doing anything. To me, the very simple thing that they are trying to do is to stop us from living a normal life of freedom. Anyone who would back down from that is not worth a lot to me.

I believe that the police powers need to be upgraded. I know that the civil libertarians will yell and scream. However, the average person in this country, if they are doing the right thing and are obeying our laws, has nothing to fear. Unlike members of the Liberal Party, I do not believe that the powers to tap phones should be extended. I believe there is already enough legislation in place.

The husband of a friend of mine is in Iraq. I know for a fact that she is having a hard time and so is he. Only last week he wrote home saying that the one child he picked up and the one mother who he protected was worth the whole time that he was there—just for the thanks that they gave. So members should not all get on their high horses and think and moralise that they know what is right and wrong in the decisions that were made.

Ms Nelson-Carr: You are.

Mrs PRATT: I am not. I am simply supporting the decisions that were made on information that was available at the time. Not one of us in this chamber knows exactly what information was there. We can hypothesise, we can read the papers and we can assume. Assuming mainly makes asses of everybody. So members should just remember that they may have made a different decision at the time and they may make a different decision today when fronted with the same information. But they did not have it then. It is easy to condemn people just on somebody else's hearsay, somebody else's assumption or something else. I am not going to say that the things that are happening in Iraq in the prisons is not terrible. It is horrible. It should never happen. I cannot bear to think that people would treat other people like animals. But people forget that prior to that, Saddam Hussein was a bigger animal. All sides have committed atrocities in war. We cannot dispute that. That does not make it right. Like I said, no-one has to accept it. We have to just make sure that it does not happen again.

I support this bill. I think that it needs to be supported. I am grateful that every member in the House is supporting it. But I get so sick to death of the moralising in this place. When members know what they are talking about, then they can say something.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (4.31 p.m.): I speak to rise in support of the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. This is one area where I actually disagree with my Independent colleague the member for Nanango, because quite frankly I support the Liberals' proposal. Our Queensland police are honourable and great members of the Queensland community. I believe that they should have the right to undertake telephone tapping. Quite frankly, if people are doing the right thing, what do they have to worry about? I also support the Nationals' stance on this matter, too.

We live in a changing world. We need to be prepared to stand up and be counted. I am not afraid that the civil libertarians might say, 'But Mr Wellington, what about this? What about that?' The bottom line is that we have a different community today from what we had 20 years ago, 30 years ago or 40 years ago. We have a vastly different community and our laws need to reflect that. I believe that the proposal that the Nationals and the Liberals have flagged here today and have flagged in the media about giving our law-abiding Queensland police the power to undertake phone tapping is right, reasonable and sensible for today, the era when terrorism is with us.

That is the very reason why today we are debating this bill, the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill 2004. If terrorism was not such an issue in the world, we would not be debating the bill. It amazes me that members are saying that our Queensland police should not have this power. They jolly well should have this power and I will continue to support the Nationals, the Liberals and the other members of this House who are of the same view.

Earlier today we heard a lot of debate about what our federal politicians have said and have not said. Last night the federal budget was brought down. By way of comparison, I was just thinking that if a member of parliament or if a minister spoke about someone in a derogatory manner or in a way that a member of the community may have felt offended, the normal process is that that member of the

community has a right of reply. As we speak in this chamber about what other members in another parliament are saying, I wonder if we should offer those other politicians the right of reply, the right of coming into our chamber and responding to the allegations and the statements that the members of this parliament are making about whether they are right or whether they are wrong, whether the budget was right or whether the budget was wrong. I really wonder if that will set a precedent and the next minute we will be saying that we are going to curtail their right of reply or curtail their right to respond to the allegations and the statements that are made in this House by politicians.

Mr Lawlor: What part of the bill was this?

Mr WELLINGTON: It is about relevance and it is about the Terrorism (Community Safety) Amendment Bill. I would like to see some of these other people have the opportunity to take up the challenge and apply to the Speaker to be able to respond to some of the allegations that have been made in this House.

I know that time is getting on. I want to stand up here and say proudly that I support the Nationals, the Liberals and the other Independents and members of this House who support extending the powers so that our Queensland law-abiding police officers—police men and women—who protect us at night and protect us during the day have this extended power. Quite simply, the times today are different. I believe that, as Queensland politicians, the leaders of this state, we should respond accordingly. Notwithstanding that, I certainly will be supporting this bill, but if the Nationals or Independents want to move an amendment, I certainly will be supporting them along that line. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (4.34 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to rise to support this legislation. I commend the Premier and the government for taking the initiative of introducing this bill, the sixth element of a package of legislation that has been introduced into this parliament since September 11, 2001. That legislation complements and adds to a range of legislation that, at a state level, deals with this terrorism threat that has re-emerged in our community.

I acknowledge that like a lot of legislation—hopefully all legislation that is introduced in this House—from a policy point of view this bill is designed ultimately to give effect to our charter of social and fiscal responsibility, which was initiated in 1999. Priority No. 2 of that charter was building safer and more supportive communities within the state of Queensland, minimising the risk and impact of emergencies and disasters, and improving personal and public safety. So this legislation is on song.

I want to make three points. As a preamble, may I say that the Premier's second reading speech canvasses quite competently and very thoroughly the whole range of reasons why this legislation is needed. Many other members have spoken as well about the circumstances in which we now find ourselves and the range of additional powers that are provided for in this legislation.

As chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, I have had the pleasure of working with a very strong bipartisan committee that recently undertook a three-yearly review. In that review we acknowledged that there needed to be a strengthening in a number of areas of antiterrorism laws. I am pleased to say that, by putting forward this legislation, in broad measure the government has adopted most of those suggestions in the terrorism related area. I can also say that I am quite confident that the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission are well resourced and quite capable of fulfilling their respective responsibilities in relation to terrorism in Queensland and in collaboration with other agencies in the other states on a national level.

As I said, I want to make a number of points, but I will make my contribution brief. We should acknowledge that terrorism as a form of human behaviour is not new. In the recent past, we can go back to Madrid, Bali, and September 11. But we can go back to the 1970s and the 1980s when the hijacking of aeroplanes was the principal means of terrorism. We can go back further over decades past.

Nor is terrorism new as a form of criminal behaviour. It has always been illegal to unlawfully injure or cause the death of a person or to destroy property. There is nothing new about that. What is new about this terrorism and criminal behaviour is that it is on such an organised and mass basis. So new, additional laws are needed to adequately focus and define the powers available at a state and federal level to help meet the threat of modern terrorism.

The laws that are available at the federal level are generally incomplete, because the federal government constitutionally does not have a head of power in relation to terrorism as such. Nor does it have a head of power in relation to crime generally. What it does have is an incidental power in relation to criminal conduct related to other areas specifically nominated within the federal constitution over which it does have responsibility—for example, defence, postal telegraphs or immigration. The primary responsibility for the criminal law at a constitutional level is with the states. So it is important that the states and the federal government collaborate, as they have been doing, to create the complete fabric of laws needed to address the criminal conduct that we now call terrorism.

The other point I make is that it is fascinating to observe that those who engage in terrorism targeted at principally liberal democratic societies are better able to do so by exploiting the very freedoms and liberties of the society they seek to attack. One only has to consult the International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to identify some of those freedoms and liberties that we treasure in our liberal democratic societies—for example, the security of person, liberty of movement and freedom of choice of residence, freedom from arbitrary and unlawful interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and freedom of association. It is these freedoms which, perversely, on the one hand enable terrorist organisations and individuals involved in them to have such free and open access to our societies and the implements they need to give effect to their terrorist intentions. On the other hand, it is those freedoms within our society that are sometimes put at some risk in our response to those terrorism incidents and the prospect of further terrorism.

The final point I make, and make strongly, is that when we are legislating to protect both the individual and the community from terrorism we need to ensure the least interference with the freedoms and liberties of our open society. It is absolutely necessary to protect not only public safety but also the civil liberties of all.

As I noted earlier, this is the sixth piece of legislation in Queensland. There have been 16 pieces of legislation in the federal sphere since 2001. I think we have the balance right in this legislation. I just think we need to be careful as we progress into the future and be cautious of the problem of the incremental loss or erosion of civil liberties as we gradually add new elements to this patchwork arrangement of comprehensive legislation at the state and federal level. In conclusion, I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (4.42 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate. I will now respond to the issues raised. The member for Southern Downs raised several important issues which I will talk to in turn.

First, the member for Southern Downs focused on the role of the Crime and Misconduct Commission in relation to these new or extended law enforcement powers. The member questioned whether the Queensland Police Service should not have the predominant role. This bill does not reflect any diminution in the role of the Queensland Police Service in preventing and responding to terrorism. The reason there is an emphasis on the CMC in this bill is that its legislation has to be amended to incorporate a new role in relation to terrorism. However, the police legislation does not need amendment about this. Terrorism is clearly within the Queensland Police Service's charge. That is it in a nutshell. Indeed, under national counterterrorism arrangements the QPS is the body primarily responsible for responding to terrorism. That is where the Queensland Police Service is.

Secondly, the member for Southern Downs said that the CMC will need appropriate resources. The government agrees. The CMC already has these extended counterterrorism responsibilities as referred to it administratively by the crime reference committee. This amendment is about enabling parliament to give its endorsement to that extended jurisdiction. The CMC has not as yet reported to government any resourcing pressures due to this referral, and if it does we will consider them. The government will monitor that situation. As the minister responsible for the CMC I make that clear to the parliament. The government will of course consider any request for additional funding from the CMC, and most likely positively depending on the circumstances, should it receive a request from the CMC in the future for more finances for counterterrorism.

Thirdly, the member for Southern Downs said that it is difficult for him as a member of the public to assess how effectively the CMC is operating in relation to combating organised crime generally. I think he was saying that without any intended criticism. He was just saying that it is difficult to assess. As I said earlier in this debate, I am happy to write to the CMC to obtain statistics and other information that it is able to provide in this regard. Of course, the opposition is represented on the CMC's oversight parliamentary committee, and that is proper, so members from both sides can assess the CMC's effectiveness.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I understand that, but the important thing is that his point of view, in the sense of his shade of view, is represented.

Fourthly, the member for Southern Downs suggested that there is more room for a bipartisan approach to dealing with the wide range of state counterterrorism matters that the government is considering. The member said that, for example, government talking with shadow ministers about its response to terrorism would give a better sense of bipartisanship to the state's approach to counterterrorism. I appreciate what the member is saying. As I said earlier, we are not trying to pull any fast ones on anyone here. This is a considered and balanced approach to the threat of terrorism incidents. However, much of the information we deal with is security sensitive. Often it involves confidential information that we receive from the Commonwealth or other state governments. My government is often tied until a measure, often a national measure, is publicly released. Members can understand that if we released information provided to us by the Commonwealth or from another state in these circumstances we would not be getting anymore information. That would be the end of it. We would be taken out of the equation. So we have to respect the information and its nature.

However, I take the member's point. I will instruct the relevant officers in my department that as the government develops counterterrorism measures they inform me of how and, most importantly, when we could brief or get the ideas of the opposition. Again, I am not sure how that might work given the sensitivity of the information we are dealing with and assurances by this government to other governments that we will protect the confidentiality of that information. I do not want to lift expectations too high here, but we will try to find a means to consult.

Fifthly, the member for Southern Downs raised the matter of telephone interception, saying that the Queensland law enforcement agencies—the QPS and the CMC—should be given phone tapping powers for terrorism, for organised crime. The member referred to the government's previous statement that state law enforcement can access telephone interception from federal agencies—the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Crime Commission—through joint operations. This is what we have said. However, the member raised concerns about whether this access to federal telephone intercept powers is as seamless as it might be. In relation to using telephone interception to fight organised crime generally, I said earlier in this debate that I have asked the Police Commissioner to develop a submission for the Police Minister to bring to cabinet so that we can again look at the matter of telephone interception generally, which we will do.

In relation to using telephone interception for fighting terrorism, I am pleased to assure the member that Queensland Police Service potential access to federal telephone interception capacity is indeed seamless. Queensland entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Federal Police in January 2003 and formed a joint counterterrorism team. The team is tasked and managed by a joint Queensland Police Service and AFP management team. It was set up to investigate terrorist groups and their associates, both at state and national level. The joint QPS-AFP team would have very ready access to the AFP's phone tapping capacity if terrorism activity were to unfold in Queensland. So when it comes to terrorism there is no problem about QPS access to telephone intercepts capacity—no problem whatsoever.

During the debate the member for Southern Downs also shocked us by stating that he, too, was interested in civil liberties. I am delighted. I welcome him aboard. Specifically, he said that he was not calling for open slather phone tapping powers but rather for phone tapping with appropriate safeguards to represent the public interest appropriately. The member mentioned the Public Interest Monitor. I want to make some points about this, because there are some misconceptions we need to clarify.

The member has hit the nail on the head, of course. It would be imperative that the move include appropriate safeguards. However, we in Queensland cannot introduce telephone interception powers with those types of appropriate safeguards such as the PIM—that is, the Public Interest Monitor. This is because the Telecommunications (Interceptions) Act 1979, which prohibits listening in to the telecommunications system except for law enforcement, is a Commonwealth Act. It would trump any state legislation that was inconsistent with it, including providing for modifications of the warrant applications system such as PIM. Therefore, the Queensland government cannot constitutionally institute safeguards like the PIM into the telecommunications interception application process. This can only be achieved by amendment to the Commonwealth legislation.

We have not released this publicly but I will share it with the member: the state Attorney-General has written to the Commonwealth about this matter at my request asking whether the Commonwealth would consider amending the legislation to enable states to introduce additional safeguards in the warrant application process. Communication with the Commonwealth continues and I cannot really go any further at this stage. I do not want to embellish this any further, but as part of our accountability I want the member to know that that communication has been made. I also want him to appreciate the difficulty that exists under the federal legislation, because he made reference to the Public Interest Monitor and we need to put that in the legal framework, which I have just done so he better understands why we have limitations here.

In finishing up on telephone interception, I might add that this bill, rather than telephone tapping, provides an extended ability for the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission to access surveillance device powers by empowering them to obtain a surveillance warrant on the basis that it is likely that evidence of an offence would be obtained at a place rather than having to specify the name or identity of a person at a place, which is the current requirement.

The sixth point raised by the member for Southern Downs—he was very verbose today but appropriately so—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I am just highlighting that so he realises what an open and accountable government we are, responding to every one of the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition in painful detail. We do not want him to think for even one minute that his concerns have not been responded to.

The sixth point raised by the Leader of the Opposition was about the proposed exemption from the Freedom of Information Act. I shall discuss the FOI matter in a general sense a bit later on because

it was addressed by a number of speakers to the bill. However, in particular, the member for Southern Downs raised concern about the ability for ministerial certificates to be issued in relation to this new exception. Earlier I said that I will write to the Commonwealth Attorney-General and provide a copy to the member asking the Commonwealth Attorney-General to consider the member's and my comments of today and whether the Queensland safeguards are appropriate. Indeed, the member for Southern Downs questioned whether Australia generally needs to revisit how jurisdictions provide for these types of safeguards, and I will ask the Commonwealth Attorney-General about that too.

I might note that the Information Commissioner can investigate and review the grounds for a decision to issue a ministerial certificate that that matter is security related. This means that there must be reasonable grounds for the relevant minister—that is, the Attorney-General—to issue a certificate that that matter is security related. It is important to remember that it is solely the Attorney-General as the minister administering the Freedom of Information Act who can sign a certificate certifying that that matter is security related. In this regard, in its report into freedom of information in Queensland in December 2001, the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee noted that the QIC—that is, the Queensland Information Commissioner—is aware of only two instances in Queensland where conclusive certificates have been issued—only two. This limited use of certificates proves that the discretion is being exercised responsibly and in accordance with the objects of the act.

I want to make a general point in relation to freedom of information legislation and these amendments. I want to do this because I notice there have been a couple of articles that have appeared in the press. I want to make it very clear that, whatever arguments we may have about FOI, the new security exemption under the Freedom of Information Act here should not be part of that debate. The reason is very simple: the bill will prevent terrorists from accessing sensitive information which could be critical to them in planning and committing a terrorist offence. The Queensland government now handles far more security sensitive information, and this includes information held by the Queensland government about Queensland government security planning projects such as security plans and risk assessments of infrastructure. These include projects on critical infrastructure protection, mass gatherings infrastructure, hazardous materials facilities and government agency preparedness.

The information being collected includes information from agencies that was not previously held by government. Importantly, some information also comes from the private sector such as owners of privately owned infrastructure that was not previously collected by government and therefore would not have fallen within the ambit of the Freedom of Information Act anyway. This type of information is important and it is sensitive. It is information relating to state security and it is precisely the type of information that the new exemption is designed to protect from being made public. With the exemption in place, owners of critical infrastructure can relay to the government information about their risk assessments and security planning with peace of mind that their sensitive information will not be made public—because, frankly, we would have difficulty getting it otherwise.

Much more sensitive information is also being passed to the Queensland government from other Australian governments about national processes for enhancing security planning and combating terrorism. This information includes counterterrorism information from entities such as the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Commonwealth Protective Security Coordination Centre and the National Counter-terrorism Committee. There is now also much more information relating to Queensland government agencies and facilities. Post September 11, there is also much more intelligence information being handled by the state government. Existing exemptions are not adequate to ensure entities from which the information is sourced—be they private owners of critical infrastructure or other Australian governments, that security sensitive information they pass on to the Queensland government will not later be released under FOI.

The government holding of comprehensive and quality information on matters such as the risk assessments of facilities is critical for effective government-assisted security and disaster planning. The proposed exemption provides this assurance, ensuring the ongoing provision of the security information to the Queensland government for the protection of its citizens. Under the intergovernmental agreement on Australia's national counterterrorism arrangements, the Queensland government is responsible for ensuring the application of 'appropriate standards and arrangements for the protection of national security information'. Additionally, in implementing post September 11 security initiatives, the Commonwealth has sought that states ensure appropriate protection for Commonwealth security related documents.

My department wrote to the Commonwealth seeking clarification of what specifically the Commonwealth sought. In its reply, the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department stated that its concern was to ensure that documents affecting national security, defence or international relations were likewise exempted from disclosure in state and territory FOI legislation. The recent amendments to Victoria's FOI Act do precisely that. The reply of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department to Queensland stated that the Victorian amendment 'meets our concerns'. Proposed amendment to the Queensland FOI Act reflects, with modification, the Victorian amendment. Though in this regard, the Queensland amendment does not extend to defence or international relations.

There is nothing here that is anything other than protecting Australia's interests and Queensland's interests. We have been requested by the Commonwealth to provide appropriate exemptions in relation to FOI to protect Australians from acts of terrorism. I notice that the *Courier-Mail* has run some comment in relation to this. I would just say to the *Courier-Mail* we are quite happy to have debates about cabinet issues, which are different, but there should not be a game played in relation to protecting Queensland and Australia from terrorist acts. We are not doing this other than to protect Australians, and we are doing it at the request of the Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth wants to lift the lid and change these arrangements in a different way, then we are happy to comply. We are not the initiators here. I say this again to the *Courier-Mail* and to the Leader of the Opposition: we are not the initiators here. This has been requested of the Queensland government. This has been requested of us. On the basis of our complying, we will then receive information from our federal or interstate counterparts. Without it, we will not.

If the *Courier-Mail* thinks there is something untoward here, then I for the life of me cannot see it. I have read its material. I do not think it grasped the central issue here that this is a national strategy; it is not ours. We are simply making sure that we are doing everything we can to protect Queenslanders. If they want to run a campaign against it they should direct their attention to the federal government, and if the federal government want to change their view we will. If they want to change these acts we will. As it is, we have been frugal and sensitive, and if they need changes we are happy to follow whatever lead the Commonwealth provides.

The reason I say that: it is not buck passing to the Commonwealth; the Commonwealth has the responsibility for terrorism and national security and we have to, if you like, play a constructive and sensible role here. I would hope that the Leader of the Opposition and those who have been critical—and I made some reference to *Courier-Mail* articles—actually understand the nature of these circumstances and the context in which we are acting and why those provisions are within the bill.

In terms of other matters, let me be brief because in my detailed response to the Leader of the Opposition I have covered most of the matters that have been raised by others. The member for Toowoomba South asked for the meaning of naming interstate police. I can advise the honourable member that it means that officers are identified by name to provide some certainty that they have been conferred with Police Powers and Responsibilities Act powers in Queensland.

I understand that all other issues that have been raised by members have been addressed by my earlier comments. The member for Currumbin made some comments about funding. Bearing in mind that the Leader of the Liberal Party played a constructive role in his contribution, for which I thank him, I was a bit mystified by the honourable member's comments. We will obviously consider on an ongoing basis funding for counterterrorism initiatives. The member for Currumbin was not in this place at the time, but we have had training here for CHOGM and we spent almost \$20 million, if I recall correctly—a large part of the funding coming from the Commonwealth—to train our Police Service in the lead-up to CHOGM. A lot of the terrorism training has already been done and therefore we are well prepared and we will continue to assess the issues of funding on an ongoing basis. I think it is a little poor to play a bit of cheap politics based on those sorts of issues when I thought we were all trying to be bipartisan in fighting terrorism on an international basis.

There was an issue about why the bill does not implement all the recommendations of the PCMC report. I wonder if, in the interests of time, I could incorporate my response to that in *Hansard*?

Leave granted.

The Bill broadly implements most of the terrorism-related recommendations of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee's report although there is some variance in some respects.

The PCMC recommended that surveillance warrants be extended to places for terrorism investigations only. The Bill in fact goes further than this by allowing warrants to be obtained for places for all investigations within the jurisdiction of the CMC and police. The rationale for this is that in the initial stages of investigation it may not be possible to identify the ideological element necessary to establish the activity as a terrorist act.

The Bill accords with the PCMC's recommendation to extend additional powers warrants to major crime investigations, but restricts them to terrorism-related investigations. In the Government's view, there is no clear justification to extend them beyond terrorism investigations.

The PCMC recommended extending the definition of "serious indictable offence" in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to destruction of property in a terrorist act. This will be actioned later in the year through the Queensland bill based on the national scheme of cross border investigative powers

Rather than extending the definition of "special constables" generally in the Police Service Administration Act 1990 as recommended by the PCMC, the Bill specifically authorises non-State police officers to use Queensland police powers in the event of a terrorist act or imminent threat. The broader issue of "special constables", beyond terrorist situations, is being considered on a national basis by the Police Commissioners' Conference through a review by the Police Commissioners' Policy Advisory Group.

The PCMC recommendation that CMC witness protection officers may be authorised to use assumed identities is implemented in the Bill.

The Bill does not implement the PCMC recommendations to allow CMC and police officers covert search powers without a warrant in an emergent situation involving a terrorist act. This is because the Government is not convinced that there is adequate justification to override the current fundamental safeguard for officers to apply to the Supreme Court for a warrant.

Last, but by no means least, the Bill will legislatively refer the investigation of terrorism-related major crime to the CMC. This referral is significant as it allows the full range of CMC coercive powers for terrorism-related major crime.

Mr BEATTIE: There was also a question raised in relation to an emergency terrorism situation why police should not be able to do a covert search of a place without a warrant as recommended by the PCMC. Could I also include my response in *Hansard*?

Leave granted.

The ability to covertly search without notice infringes fundamental rights of citizens.

The need to apply for a warrant to exercise these types of powers operates as an essential safeguard in balancing the protection of the community with the individual rights of citizens.

Although the police will still need to apply for a warrant to exercise covert search powers, the Government has ensured that there are adequate tools available to police to protect the community in an urgent situation by:

- Allowing police to undertake overt searches without warrant; and
- Allowing police to make an urgent telephone application for a covert search warrant.

Mr BEATTIE: There was also a question as to why Queensland is not given wider powers to respond to a terrorist act as was done in New South Wales. I have a detailed response to that. Could I please incorporate that in *Hansard*?

Leave granted.

Queensland police currently have access to a wide range of powers under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for investigating offences, including powers to question, search and seize etc. The majority of terrorist acts would be covered by existing Queensland crimes such as murder, arson, conspiracy to and attempts to commit these offences, in addition to weapons and explosives offences. Additionally, the Queensland Police Service is not limited to investigating only State offences and may also exercise their powers to investigate and prosecute Commonwealth offences, including terrorism offences.

The Public Safety Preservation Act 1986 provides additional powers to police in emergency situations such as explosions, oil spills, gas or radiation leaks, transport accidents, bombings, incidents involving firearms and weapons, or any other accident which may cause death or injury, damage to property or environment. This Act is designed to protect members of the public and accordingly, the emergency powers are directed toward this end, e.g. evacuation, closing roadways, commandeering resources, entry and search of vehicles and premises and removal of items.

The Chemical Biological and Radiological Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2003 provides extraordinary public safety powers under strict conditions to police and other emergency responders to enable them to respond to a chemical, biological or radiological emergency. These powers include power to detain, decontaminate and treat people and to seize property for decontamination and destruction.

The powers in this Bill build upon the wide range of existing powers that I have noted above. At the same time, the Bill is a measured response, recognising not only the need to fight terrorism, but also the need to protect people's rights.

In the lead-up to the 2003 State election, NSW introduced the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002. This Act provides that if the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of Police are satisfied on reasonable grounds that there is an imminent threat of a terrorist attack or that a terrorist act has been committed, he or she can declare that a certain person, motor vehicle or area (no defined limits) is a "target", which then authorises the exercise of special "sweep" powers by police to require the person's identity and search them, search the vehicle without warrant, enter and search any premises without warrant and seize and detain anything within that declared target area.

Mr BEATTIE: Can I finalise my remarks by again thanking members for their support for this legislation. As I have said on previous occasions, the world changed after September 11 and again after the tragedy of Bali and what has happened recently in Spain, the war in Iraq, all of those things have changed how we feel about the world. The only way we can, as a civilised society, deal with terrorism is to ensure that we get on with our day-to-day lives and try to live as normal and free a life as possible.

There are two things we have to ensure: one is we have to ensure that terrorists do not win. If we change our lifestyle and we change who we are as Australians then they will win. The second thing is that we have to ensure that we simply do not bring in draconian measures that take away our basic rights. We have brought in a number of very strong measures here to protect Australians, but we have to ensure that we do not give up the very spirit of who we are as Australians. One of the great things about Australians is that we are very open, we are very irreverent, if you like, in many senses to authority, and we cannot afford to give away that very essence of who we are as Australians.

One of the great things about us is that we are very open, we are very irreverent, we are disrespectful of authority, but it also means we are egalitarian and we are fair and we believe in a fair go. That is who we are. We can never change that, otherwise the terrorists do win.

Notwithstanding what I have just said, no government anywhere in Australia, no leader anywhere in the world, can give an absolute guarantee that terrorist acts will not happen. Tragically one day it is very likely it will happen in Australia. All we can do is be prepared. What this legislation that we have introduced into the House does is actually allow us to be prepared. We have to be able to respond. It is a sad thing to have to say to the parliament, but it is true.

I thank members for their support. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 46, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Beattie, by leave, read a third time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from p. 912.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (5.07 p.m.), continuing: I have pleasure in continuing my address-in-reply which I had left off before lunchtime today. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Algester on her role as parliamentary secretary to the Premier with responsibility for multicultural affairs. I know that the member will do a wonderful job. I would also like to congratulate the previous parliamentary secretary to the Premier, Mr Darryl Briskey, for doing a wonderful job as well.

There is one particular area of multiculturalism that is my pet subject; it is the word 'tolerance'. It is well known that Australia is a very tolerant society. We tolerate people's differences, differences of opinion, culture and a whole host of other issues. It is this word 'tolerance' that I have a real problem with. I would like to ask my colleagues in the House here how many of us like to be tolerated? How many of us like to be tolerated by our peers? How many of us like to be tolerated by our workmates? I think the answer would probably be we do not want to be tolerated. The word 'tolerance' has a negative connotation to it. It gives the impression that there is something fundamentally wrong with you that other people have to tolerate.

I think our nation has to move away from being a tolerant society to an accepting society. We need to learn how to accept people's differences. We may not agree with them. We may not agree with their cultural backgrounds, their creed, the way they do things or, may I say, their sexual preference. We should live not only in a tolerant society but also an accepting society. We have to move from tolerance to acceptance. In future we may become a society where we cherish people's differences.

I take this opportunity to thank my wife for being there for me all the time. I would not put up with myself, so I do not know how she does it.

Government members interjected.

Mr CHOI: I take those interjections. I have no idea how to tell her that I love her and to thank her for her support. She did suggest that a diamond ring would do. Being an engineer, I think overglorified carbon is a waste of money. I thank my children, Priscilla, Rachel and Claudia, for understanding that dad is not always home at night for them. They are very good children for our family and everybody who visits our house. I look forward to the next three years of serving the Beattie Labor government and fulfilling all the promises we made at the election and continuing to deliver better government and better outcomes for all Queenslanders.

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (5.11 p.m.): I would like to congratulate Mr Speaker on his reappointment. I would also like to congratulate all members returned and bid farewell to good members Christine Scott, Trevor Strong, Anita Philips and Steve Rogers. I hope this departure for them will lead to new and exciting adventures and an opportunity for Trevor to return to surf-lifesaving and the life of the beach; Anita, hopefully, as a member in federal politics; and a new lease on life perhaps for the others. I am proud to be the returned member for Noosa. What person would not be proud to represent not only a glorious geographical area but also a wonderful community. It is that community that I wish to most sincerely thank for returning me to this place to continue the work I set out to do—to represent them and give them a voice in government.

I recall my first three years as the member for Noosa as a time of getting to know who the people were, what things mattered to them and how very honoured and privileged I have been to represent them. This speech gives me an opportunity to reflect on all the things about my electorate that I want to share with my constituents and my colleagues in the House. I have said on many occasions that I could not have done this job without the love and support of my marvellous husband, Ivan, and our three girls, Honorlee, Melanie and Bonnie.

Ivan again has been more than a great husband and in my absences because of parliament he has run the house, done the shopping, taken Bonnie where she has needed to be, managed the older girls, their cars and their mess. My teenagers are no different from anyone else's. He continues to walk the dogs, put out the bins, cook the baked dinner, help and advise me, write letters to the editors of the *Noosa News* and the *Sunshine Coast Daily* about Howard's failure as a Prime Minister and what a botch our federal Liberal member, Alex Somlyay, is making of his role as federal member for Fairfax. He also runs his courses in international politics at the Sunshine Coast University. It was an honour to launch

Ivan's book *Rolling Back Revolution*. I am proud to say that Kevin Rudd will soon launch another book which Ivan edited entitled *In the Eye of the Cyclone*.

Ivan also arranges conferences with the help of our good friend Cate Morris. Ivan has been assistant age manager of the under 13 nippers and patrol captain of patrol 9 at Sunshine Beach Surf Club. He keeps fit, exercises and even writes letters to the editor on the merits of a healthy lifestyle only to be howled down by the nonbelievers. I am happy to say the majority of people endorse his views in that regard. So many people in the Noosa electorate subscribe to living healthy lifestyles in the knowledge of the benefits of good health. Today there is no excuse for childhood obesity, nor adult obesity for that matter, given the information and advantage we enjoy in Queensland and the burden these health problems place on the health system. I thank Ivan from the bottom of my heart for being who he is and wish him good luck in the next federal election. I know he will execute his role as the Labor candidate for Fairfax with the same passion and intellectual acumen that he has so often displayed throughout our marriage in all the challenges he has taken on.

Thank you to my great staff Duncan Thompson, my senior electorate officer, and Natarsha Rehder, my assistant electorate officer. Duncan has been my office manager since I was first elected in 2001. Since that time Duncan has been instrumental in developing systems that have ensured the smooth running of the office. He has also taken on a major role in coordinating a number of electorate projects including the Noosa River plan and plans for the Tewantin fire station and the new TAFE campus at Tewantin. I believe it has been due to Duncan's skill in liaising with government departments, the Noosa and Maroochy councils and stakeholders as well as preparing correspondence for me that we have enjoyed such excellent outcomes in these areas and enjoyed smooth running and good relationships with those identities.

Natarsha's referee said that Tarsh is 'like a breath of fresh air'. I could not agree more. I thank Tarsh for all her great work and her amazing attitude. She brings to the office such a bright and happy outlook. She is a valued member of the team. Both Natarsha and Duncan have a brilliant rapport with constituents. That is a fact that I am constantly reminded of by the people I meet on the street and out in my mobile office.

It would not be an address-in-reply without the member thanking the campaign team. What a marvellous team they were. Pam Lenthall, retired Cairns councillor—how can I ever thank her enough for the support she has given me from the very beginning of this wonderful journey. Pam was not well during the campaign but never let on to me. Pam has had major surgery since the election and has been seriously ill. Pam has made a good recovery. I know there are still some hurdles which I am sure she will overcome. Pam has been a wonderful role model not only to me but to all of those who know and love her.

Jeannie Wood is another amazing woman and a retired mayor of Dandenong, Victoria. Jeannie has been another tower of strength, friend and mentor. I thank Jeannie because she put in a tremendous effort throughout the campaign and I know she managed the Coolum crew magnificently on the day of the election. She has given selflessly to her community and I thank her for assisting me to become re-elected.

I thank Enid and Pat Hill, branchies from Noosa. Enid is a retired director of nursing from Warnambool, Victoria. Both Pat and Enid have been there as supporters and as good friends to talk things over with. Their knowledge and wisdom has always been a welcome and steadying influence as I found my feet in my new role.

Tony Haslam has been an invaluable support and friend and font of information and knowledge. It was great to see Tony resign from his job in the Noosa council and come on board the campaign team. I am only sorry that we went to the polls when Tony was away on holidays because he missed out on a great campaign and all that great camaraderie. But I am pleased he and Stephanie had a good holiday.

The wealth of talent in the Noosa electorate is untold. I thank Pam and Roger Omdahl for their contribution, expertise and advice during the tough campaign. Pam was always just a phone call away if we needed someone at short notice. Pam always managed to cheer us along with her tales of past campaigns. Roger's rather dry sense of humour was great because we all need a sense of humour and a laugh when the stakes are high.

The campaign would not have been the same without Pat Ferguson, the president of U3A. Pat has been there now supporting Labor and the matters of social justice that impact on the lives of others for many years. I thank Pat for his wisdom, knowledge and commitment to making the lives of those people less able to speak up for themselves more bearable and for the role he plays in our community in making others accountable. Thanks, Pat. I thank Lee Tarlamis who gave willingly of his time to support the efforts of my campaign office. Lee's enthusiasm and knowledge was appreciated not only by me but also the whole team. We sincerely thank Lee.

Last but not least I wish to acknowledge Mr Les Murray, an active member of the Coolum State Primary School P&C. I thank Les for his ongoing support and for the fantastic job he has done both

before the election and during the campaign. It is people like Les who care so much about our children and their future that makes my work so rewarding. Keep up the great work.

Of course I thank Matt and Beryl Molloy for keeping my family together and cooking up great dinners. They came up from Melbourne. It is a long time to be away from home when they are in their early 80s.

It is the efforts of my team of supporters that helped save Noosa from disaster. By that, I mean the Noosa electorate could have slipped back into the abyss of conservative, boring old doldrums. We needed this electorate to stay in safe and caring hands where the smallest voice to the noisiest voice has a representative who listens and responds to the wishes of the community and not the whims of sectional and privileged interests.

The seat of Noosa is fortunate to have over 200 community groups. In fact, it is closer to 400. It is those community groups that I would like to congratulate for the work that they do. The first is Coolum Lions Club. The Tewantin-Noosa Lions generous donation helped to establish Noosa's mobile library service in 1974. Coolum Boardwalk Committee came up with the concept of putting a boardwalk along the cliffs at Coolum back in May 2000. This magnificent structure is now in place and is a tribute to the efforts of the community and the committee, and Dave Simons in the particular. The Quota Club of Coolum meets on the third Tuesday of each month. Quota is seeking entries from year 12 students in a quest for student of the year. A \$1,500 scholarship tenable over three years will be awarded.

To the Tewantin RSL, congratulations. My heart is with its members as I understand that it has lost so many elderly members in the past 12 months. Here is looking forward to a better 12 months ahead.

I turn to our surf-lifesaving clubs. At Peregian Beach unfortunately this year again cyclonic conditions prevailed the weekend of the Queensland state titles on Thursday, 4 March to Sunday 7 March which meant an unfortunate change of venue from Peregian to Noosa.

Coolum Beach is a family orientated club, from nippers through to the senior club. They started patrolling the beach at Sunshine in the season of 1980-81. At that time it had only eight patrols of five to six members each. In those early days, the clubhouse consisted of a small tin garden shed. This clubhouse has gradually been upgraded and renovated over the years, with the last \$1 million face lift being completed at the end of 1998. Junior activities, that is nippers, at the Sunshine Beach Surf Lifesaving Club began in the 1993-94 season, with 47 enthusiastic members. Over the 20 years the club has established an enviable record in lifesaving activities and can proudly state that no lives have been lost between the flags at Sunshine Beach.

Noosa Heads has been serving the community for than 75 years. I thank them. Another group is the Noosa and District Breast Cancer Support Group, members of whom I had the honour of meeting and sharing stories with. The same with the Lymphadema Support Group. I thank them for all they have done and will do in the future for one another.

In what could be a Queensland first, Noosa University of the Third Age, U3A, will soon be connected to the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE as it is about to be located on the site of the soon to be completed Tewantin TAFE campus. Lifeline Sunshine Coast provides a range of valuable support services that include: 24-hour telephone counselling plus information and referral service; face-to-face counselling by appointment; men and family relationships program; community development; social and economic development services for youth; volunteer training, telephone counselling, retail/warehousing; cheap, affordable clothes; and household goods and mediation for separating couples in dispute.

Meals on Wheels Services Association Incorporated is the peak organisation established by Meals on Wheels Member Services to support them in their provision of meals to those in need. Since its inception in 1977, the membership of affiliated services has increased from 34 to a membership of 163 services in 2003. On behalf of Meals on Wheels clients in the Noosa electorate I would like to thank the volunteers from Coolum and Tewantin Noosa Meals on Wheels for their brilliant efforts serving our seniors.

I would also like to recognise the volunteers at Oz Care in Noosa, Carramar, Noosa Hospital, the op-shops and the tuck shops, as well as the Noosaville Christian Community Op Shop.

It is also important to recognise those in the community who give so much of their time to support sport. There are over 50 sporting groups keeping Noosa constituents happy, healthy and active. These include: Cooloola Coast Equestrian Group Inc., Coolum and District Netball Association Inc., Coolum Beach Bowls Club Inc., Coolum Beach Junior Rugby League Football Club Inc., Coolum Beach Pony Club, Coolum Cricket Club, Coolum Croquet Club Inc., Coolum Freestyle Martial Arts, Coolum Peregian Swimming Club Inc., Coolum Soccer Club Inc., Coolum Tennis Club, Touch Association, Dodgers Softball Club, Eumundi and District Pony Club, Eumundi Netball Club, Eumundi Tennis Club, Eumundi Wildbird Cricket Club Inc., Kin Kin Tennis Club, Lake Cootharaba Sailing Club Inc., Noosa Athletic Club, Noosa Auzzi Challengers Swim Club Inc., Noosa Australian Rules Football Club Inc., Noosa Board Riders Association, Noosa Croquet Club Inc., Noosa District Basketball Association, Noosa District Netball Association Inc., Noosa District Rugby League Club Inc., Noosa District Rugby Union Football

Club Inc., Noosa District Softball and Baseball Association Inc., Noosa District Tennis Association, Noosa Gymnastics Club Inc., Noosa Hash House Harriers, Noosa Heads Bowls Club Inc., Noosa Leisure Centre Badminton Club, Noosa Little Athletics Club Inc., Noosa Malibu Club, Noosa Outrigger Canoe club, Noosa Soccer Club Inc., Noosa Swim Club, Noosa Table Tennis Club, Noosa Tennis Club Inc., Noosa Touch Football Association Inc, Noosa Triathletes, Noosa Yacht and Rowing Club Inc. (NY&RC), Noosaville Indoor Bowling Club, Noosaville Tennis Club, RSL Indoor Bowls Club, Sunshine Coast Districts Rugby Union, Sunshine Coast Freedivers Club, Tewantin-Noosa Amateur Swimming Club Inc., Tewantin-Noosa Bowls Club Inc., Tewantin-Noosa Cricket Club, Tewantin- Noosa Golf Club Inc., Tewantin Tennis Club Inc., Verrierdale Tennis Club Inc. and Youth Row Noosa. The list is too long but I have enjoyed working with them all and hope to continue moving the Noosa electorate forward with their help.

Groups such as the local Noosa Coast Guard and the Tewantin CWA have made my work easier by sharing their knowledge and expertise with me. I would like to mention our school teachers at Coolum, Peregian, Kin Kin, Noosaville, Mount Cooroora, St. Thomas Moore, St. Theresa's, The Good Shepherd, Sunshine Beach, Peregian Community, the Christian Community School at Coolum and the Steiner School—a very special thanks for the wonderful work they all do for the kids in our community.

I think this Beattie Labor government—the Premier and ministers—has responded extremely well to meeting the needs of my electorate. This is clearly demonstrated in its response. In the jobs area, since being elected the Beattie government has been committed to reducing unemployment and creating jobs. In our local communities this commitment is being delivered through \$5.8 million in Breaking the Unemployment Cycle funding from October 1998 to September 2003 with 802 jobs created.

Schools and a quality education for all Queenslanders are also key priorities for the Beattie government. Locally we are improving education opportunities. Funding of \$8.3 million has been provided to develop the Noosa Arts and Environmental Tourism Centre, the long-awaited tourism campus of Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE. Full-time prep year trials have been established for Tewantin State School and Good Shepherd Lutheran College. The eight state schools in the Noosa electorate shared in more than \$660,000 and an additional 92 computers to boost their information, communication and technology resources and capacity.

Coolum State School received two new teaching spaces and \$260,000 for additional toilets. Noosaville State School received \$50,000 to assist the delivery of special education services and funding for a relocatable building and two new teaching spaces. Sunshine Beach State High School has a new teaching block valued at \$1.3 million. Eumundi State School has benefited from funds allocated for improved parking facilities for set down and pick up.

For police and community safety, the Beattie Labor government has been working hard to ensure community safety by supporting a range of initiatives: Building Safer Communities action teams in Noosa and Maroochy Shires; record police numbers across the electorate; a new police station for Eumundi; funding to establish a temporary new police station in the Coolum CBD; a tactical crime squad for the Sunshine Coast district; \$135,000 to upgrade Coolum fire station; the Tewantin fire station remaining open and operational; an \$87,000 extension to Noosa fire station plus a new \$540,000 frontline fire truck; and \$563,000 toward the new Tewantin ambulance centre.

Protecting our environment and providing facilities for people to enjoy are important to all of us in the Noosa electorate. Locally the Beattie government has committed to the Noosa River Management Plan; funded a sustainable living and recreation project with walking and bicycle trails in the Lake Macdonald catchment area between Cooroy and Kin Kin; and added just over 300 hectares of national park with declaration of Marcus High Dunes, D-Bird and other areas.

Noosa National Park received over \$500,000 to upgrade walking tracks and facilities, including: Tea Tree Bay's new eco-friendly toilets; Alexandria Bay to Sunshine Beach walking track; Tea-Tree Bay/Dolphin Point track; plans to replace visitor amenities and increase signage; Emu Mountain track work and rehabilitation; and the Great Sandy National Park benefited from \$554,000 for the Tewantin Visitor Centre.

For roads and transport: \$1.3 million to complete improvements at Duke Road on the Eumundi–Noosa Road; \$5.6 million for pavement overlay on part of the Eumundi– Noosa Road to commence in March 2004; \$65 million to demain the David Low Way and construct Eenie Creek Road and Walter Hay Drive; \$8 million for the Eumundi bypass and \$3.2 million in funding to upgrade McKinnon Drive to commence in 2004.

We all recognise the need to provide facilities for community use. Since the election of the Beattie government local facilities supported include: \$1.5 million toward the Noosa Youth Centre; the Eumundi Aquatic Complex; the relocation of Eumundi showgrounds; the construction of Peregian Skate Park; the construction of two outdoor tennis courts with lighting at Kin Kin; plus 40 local sporting clubs and community organisations have benefited through state government schemes.

While I am proud of these achievements there is more to be done and I am also proud that this Labor government has also committed to further improve the education facilities in our local area and will: upgrade the resource centre and administration facilities at Coolum State School; upgrade special education facilities at Noosaville State School; provide additional amenities and classroom spaces at Sunshine Beach State High School; and upgrade the telephone system at Eumundi State School.

As part of our program to 'wire our schools for the future', we will upgrade electrical infrastructure at Coolum State School, Eumundi State School, Noosaville State School, Sunshine Beach State High School, Sunshine Beach State School and Tewantin State School.

We will continue to improve our local roads by spending \$1.5 million to complete traffic signage improvements on the Sunshine Motorway, \$5 million to upgrade the Eumundi–Noosa Road, and more than \$3.1 million to upgrade the Boreen Point–Tewantin Road.

We will improve disability services by spending over \$300,000 to employ two extra staff in Noosa under Disability Services Queensland's local area coordination program. There will also be \$3 million for additional orthopaedic surgery at Noosa Hospital. We will provide \$5 million each year for the next three years for cardiac services across Queensland. We will commit \$110 million over the next three and a half years to further reduce elective surgery waiting times.

I am proud of what I have achieved in just my first term. By working with the Beattie Labor government I have made sure Noosa has got its fair share of services.

Protecting our environment from overdevelopment is a personal priority. We have achieved a lot for the families and businesses along the Noosa River, but there is still more to be done. With the continued support of my community and the Beattie government, I will keep working to get improved health services, quality education facilities and increased job opportunities for our community. Members will see from this snapshot just some of the really good things that have happened and that will continue to happen in my electorate because this government listens and delivers.

Debate, on motion of Ms Molloy, adjourned.

SMOKING BANS

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (5.30 p.m.): I move—

That this House calls on the government to amend the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 to ban smoking in hotels, clubs and casinos throughout Queensland.

I move this motion because of the inaction of the Labor government on this important health issue. In May 2001, the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 was amended to prohibit people from smoking in enclosed spaces. There were some exemptions, such as residential premises, premium gaming rooms and certain areas of licensed premises. These changes came into force in May 2002.

However, since that time the government has done nothing further to reduce the exposure of Queenslanders to passive smoke in enclosed spaces such as restaurants, hotels, clubs and casinos. In fact, earlier this year whilst travelling throughout Ireland, the Premier stated that he was impressed by the effectiveness of smoking bans in public places, with the Premier on record as saying—

Clearly the message about passive smoking causing cancer is very strong and the Irish have taken it head-on.

That comment was made in March this year, yet still the government has failed to act. In fact, on 5 March this year the *Courier-Mail* stated that the Health Minister, Mr Nuttall, had taken control of the review of Queensland's smoking laws and will take a discussion paper canvassing the prospects of a total smoking ban to cabinet before the end of April. Mr Nuttall was quoted as saying—

The discussion paper would be released for a two- to three-month consultation period before all submissions were analysed by Queensland Health.

This statement follows other comments about the government's intentions. An article in the *Courier-Mail* on 8 November last year stated that Queensland Health was working on a discussion paper that will launch a review of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998. On 18 November of that very same month last year, the *Courier-Mail* again reported that the now former Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, had fast-tracked a review of the state's tobacco laws with a view to extending smoking bans to all public indoor areas. We are nearly halfway through the month of May and as of yet the government has failed to release the discussion paper. Six months after the first public indication that the government was considering such a move, nothing has happened. We are entitled to ask why. After all of these hints and indications about discussion papers and moving to ban smoking in public places such as pubs, clubs and casinos, we are still no closer to the government's intention being made public.

Some people are starting to speculate that the discussion paper has been buried in cabinet because of fears that the banning of smoking in hotels, clubs and casinos might reduce the revenue from the major sporting facilities levy. We in the Liberal Party believe that the health of the patrons of hotels, clubs and casinos is far more important than the ability of a government to repay a loan through

poker machine revenue. We believe that people ought to be able to enjoy a night out without placing their health at risk. We believe that people working in clubs, hotels, casinos and restaurants should not be compelled to place their health at risk. That is why we moved this motion.

By the way, we are not alone in these views. Recent research has indicated quite clearly that the public of Queensland want these bans in place. A recent survey of 600 Queenslanders commissioned by the Queensland Cancer Fund, the Heart Foundation, the AMAQ and the Asthma Foundation found that overwhelmingly people want these bans in place. Eighty-one per cent of Queenslanders support a smoking ban in clubs, pubs and casinos. Only four per cent had no opinion, with only 14 per cent disapproving. It is interesting to note that that survey showed that 51 per cent of smokers supported the complete banning of smoking in licensed premises and casinos with only four per cent unconcerned. Sixty-six per cent of those respondents said that a smoking ban would make venues more enjoyable. Even 13 per cent of smokers said that it would be more enjoyable. The other point arising out of that survey was that 60 per cent of smokers said that a ban would not make any difference to how likely they were to go to a venue.

Clearly, these are impressive survey results. They are so impressive that even the Premier was moved to comment on them by saying—

They—

the survey results—

put up a strong case for a ban on smoking in pubs and clubs.

As I said, even the Premier supported a total ban on smoking in those venues. I know that there has been some discussion and public comment by the Minister for Health about a partial ban—what he calls the 80-20 rule. Research shows that that is simply not feasible. A study of 17 clubs in New South Wales showed that a separate no-smoking area succeeded in reducing the exposure to carcinogens by only one-half and, in some cases, not at all. This is not a measure that can be done by half. We either do it totally, or we do not do it at all. That is why I moved this motion.

Other overseas experiences are also well worth considering. Smoking bans imposed in New York bars and restaurants have seen employment in bars and restaurants increase by eight per cent. I think that the Victorian example shows that, even though there is an initial decrease in turnover, that turnover starts to return to normal levels after about two years. So there will be an impact in financial terms in the turnover of these establishments, but the health of the clubs' customers and patrons is far more important than a small drop in turnover for a short period. Smoking bans in Californian pubs and restaurants were introduced in 1998. New laws banning smoking in pubs and clubs in New Zealand and Norway come into effect later this year. Even Uganda implemented a ban in March this year—even Uganda!

If all of those places around the world can start moving in this direction, if the survey results and the research shows that Queenslanders overwhelmingly support this move, if the Premier is impressed by the research that was conducted here in Queensland, if he is impressed by the move to ban smoking in pubs and clubs in Ireland, surely to goodness we in Queensland can take this important step. It is far too important an issue for the government to get away with postponing putting out the discussion paper and making a decision. This matter has been going on for over six months now. The first indications that the government was moving in this direction occurred over six months ago. Successive health ministers—this minister and the previous one—said that they were going to do something about it. This minister outlined a timetable that has come and gone. It is now time to put the procrastination behind us and make sure that we put this ban in place. That is what this motion is about.

To finish my argument tonight, I say that we need to adopt the Irish approach and recognise that passive smoking causes cancer and tackle this issue head-on by banning smoking completely in clubs, pubs and casinos around Queensland. That is what we need to do. With a surname like Quinn, I am of Irish heritage. If it is good enough for the Irish, if they can do it over there, if the Premier can go over there and see the ban on smoking in pubs and clubs working and can be impressed by the results, if the majority of Queenslanders want such a ban here, let us do it. Let us stop procrastinating. We should pass this motion and then allow the government to bring the legislation into the House to make sure that we really put the health of Queenslanders first, whether they be in licensed premises or in any other enclosed space around Queensland.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (5.38 p.m.): I second the motion moved by the member for Robina. Smoking is and will continue to be an important health issue. As was said by the previous speaker, the inaction of the Beattie Labor government is inexcusable.

As I stand here speaking in support of this motion, I wish to make it clear that I am not making a judgment on a person's legal choice to smoke. There is enough medical literature available today to enable people to make an informed decision. The dangers and risks of smoking are made patently clear to those who choose to partake of this addictive habit.

As members are no doubt aware, environmental tobacco smoke has now become a significant health issue. It is important that we work together to raise public awareness about the potential harm

that exposure to tobacco smoke can cause. Many smokers are already aware of the harm that their tobacco smoke can cause and make a conscious effort to limit the exposure to others.

It may interest honourable members to learn that amongst the general public there is a recognition that passive smoking is harmful and smokers try not to smoke in the presence of children. In fact, 63 per cent of smokers stated they do not smoke at all when in the room with children and 26 per cent said they smoked fewer cigarettes when in the presence of children. Therefore, we would hope they feel the same way when smoking in the presence of adults.

The definition of passive smoking is the involuntary breathing of other people's tobacco smoke. Environmental tobacco smoke, or ETS as it is called, is a complex mixture of more than 4,000 chemical compounds, including at least 40 known carcinogens. Tobacco smoke also contains carbon monoxide, a gas that inhibits the blood's ability to carry oxygen to body tissues, including our vital organs such as the brain and heart. A review by the World Health Organisation revealed that the medical consequences of passive smoking can include bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma and lung cancer. The Asthma Foundation of Queensland's CEO, Paul McGregor, said—

Smoke is a major irritant for many people with asthma so they are caught whether they are hospitality industry workers or patrons. Being in a smoky atmosphere can bring on an attack in people with asthma and can induce asthma for the first time in others. The situation for staff having to work in such an atmosphere over a long period of time is especially hazardous.

While educational campaigns are an effective measure to reduce passive smoking, the introduction of legislation is a necessary measure to ensure that the rights of individuals who choose not to be in a smoke affected environment are upheld. Currently there is a ban protecting employees and visitors in all workplaces—workplaces that do not include pubs, clubs and casinos.

The statistics presented by the member for Robina in the ACNielsen survey show that this is not a smokers versus nonsmokers issue. It is an issue of health and the effects of passive smoking. It is good to see that more Queenslanders are taking active steps to ensure the safety of their fellow workers and patrons. I agree with the Queensland Cancer Fund that Queensland should follow the Irish and American example of implementing these bans. New Zealand and Norway are following suit, with the introduction of laws banning smoking in pubs and clubs. I urge members of this House to enthusiastically support this motion.

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (5.42 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

That the following words be inserted after 'Queensland'—

', noting that in recent months the Beattie government has already been involved in preliminary consultations with relevant stakeholders about such an amendment'.

We have picked up the spirit of what the Leader of the Liberal Party has said. I think it is important that we also highlight something we all know; that is, smoking kills. Cigarette packs confirm this death sentence, and still people smoke and fill our hospitals. More than 3,000 Queenslanders die from tobacco related causes every year. I believe it is essential that we take further steps to help nonsmokers live in smoke-free surroundings and to help smokers who want to kick their addiction and regain a healthy lifestyle.

The Queensland government started a review of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 last year. Queensland Health has already held preliminary consultations with various organisations. The next step is likely to involve the release of a discussion paper. Very soon the Minister for Health will be bringing a submission to cabinet. The discussion paper will invite submissions which will be analysed by Queensland Health, which will prepare a report with recommendations for the minister later this year. The discussion paper addresses not just further bans on smoking but also the full range of issues, including advertising and promotion, sales to minors, monitoring, enforcement and licensing. It also looks at options for reform in each of these areas and details initiatives taken in other jurisdictions.

I believe that there is strong community support for further restrictions on smoking in entertainment venues. I was in Ireland, as the Leader of the Liberal Party quite correctly observed, when the ban on smoking in all public buildings was introduced. Now it is reported that the British government is working on a plan to ban smoking in pubs and restaurants throughout the country. We have to remember: the Irish had very much a pub scene. So did the British. If the Irish could ban it, we should take its model seriously. California and New York have similar bans, and similar laws are being introduced in Norway and Sweden. It is reported that in the year after New York banned smoking in bars there was an 11 per cent decrease in the number of adult smokers. If we could achieve similar results we could eventually hope for an 11 per cent cut in smoking related deaths—330 Queensland lives saved every year.

Some jurisdictions are even further ahead in the battle against smoking deaths. Earlier this year California expanded its no-smoking zone around public buildings from five feet to 20 feet, which is about six metres. According to Action on Smoking and Health, more than 100 authorities in the USA have adopted some type of ban on outdoor smoking. Restrictions that target playgrounds and other places children are present are part of a growing national trend in the USA.

We have already banned smoking in some outdoor venues, such as the seating at Suncorp Stadium. The question is, of course: how far are Queenslanders prepared to go in protecting children and other nonsmokers? There is now a push in some jurisdictions to ban smoking on beaches and in parks, where cigarette smoke can drift on the breeze to be inhaled by nonsmokers and sting their eyes. We have tough laws to cut down on deaths from guns. How tough should we be with laws to cut down on deaths from this silent and slow killer? I thank the Liberals for their support—

Mr Quinn: Thank you for your support!

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed, this motion will be passed by the House tonight.

Mr Quinn: You have got it around the wrong way. Is this our motion or your motion?

Mr BEATTIE: Motions do not mean a great deal. The member knows that as well as I do. What is important is action. We have already been out doing it. I do not want to be unkind to the Leader of the Liberal Party. He has finally caught up with what the government is doing, and I am pleased about that. I am not going to trivialise his support, because it is welcome. The more he votes with us—

Mr Quinn: Whose motion is it again?

Mr BEATTIE: As the Liberal Leader well knows, we could have defeated his motion, but we will not. The more he supports us the higher his vote is going. Has he noticed that? And the more the opposition opposes us the more its vote goes down. There is a message in that and the Liberal Leader needs to seriously think about it. I thank the Liberals for their support and I urge the Nationals to join us in forming a united front to lead the debate on tackling this addictive drug.

I believe it is important that hotels and pubs get together and start thinking about phasing out smoking themselves. It would be nice if they had a phase-out plan which we could endorse. If they could do that over the next two or three years that would be sensible for them to protect their patrons and come up with a sensible outcome.

Hon. G.R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Health) (5.47 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment moved by the Premier. It is expected that this year alone 20,000 Australians will actually die from the illnesses caused by tobacco smoking. Of those 20,000, unfortunately more than 3,000 will be Queenslanders. Tobacco use is the single most avoidable cause of disease, disability and death in the world today. Statistics now show that one in every two smokers will die or be disabled as a result of their decision to smoke.

It goes without saying that smoking has enormous cost implications for the health system both here in Queensland and around the world. We are talking about major funding for ongoing research and improvements to medical treatments for the diseases caused by smoking and passive smoking as well as comprehensive prevention and promotional strategies.

I think it is important to note that governments cannot fix this problem alone. The Beattie government recognises that combating the detrimental effects of tobacco products requires a cultural change in our society. We recognise that governments need to keep pace with the growing and unequivocal public and scientific support for bans on smoking.

The issue at hand is much broader than whether to ban smoking in particular areas. There are associated issues, such as the sale of products to our children, the monitoring and the enforcement of laws, licensing and even regulation of advertising and displays. Just this week a Cairns man and a second man from Tweed Heads on the Gold Coast became the first adults in Queensland to be prosecuted for supplying children with cigarettes—one a 15-year-old and the other a 17-year-old. These prosecutions should serve as a warning that it is illegal, and in my view also immoral, to supply a child with cigarettes. It is a clear signal that the days of tolerating this behaviour are well and truly over. How we tackle the effects of tobacco is a community problem, and that is why any resolution of the issue requires input from all of our community. This government is moving quickly to do just that.

In the year 2001 we amended the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act, with tougher penalties for supplying to minors, new restrictions on advertising, display and promotion of tobacco products and further bans on smoking in enclosed spaces. But, importantly, we promised a review of the act which we brought forward to December of last year—six months ahead of schedule. As the central plank of that review, I plan to take a comprehensive discussion paper to cabinet shortly. That discussion paper is expected to go out for public consultation for between eight and 12 weeks.

In that time, I am urging as many community, union and industry groups and individuals as possible to have their say on the broad range of issues raised in the paper. Those submissions will be collated and prepared by my department as recommendations that will be brought to me possibly as soon as August of this year. Those recommendations will then go to cabinet to approve new or amended laws. I expect there will be a wide range of views from the community on the issue of smoking laws, but one thing is certain: public pressure for change has brought us to this point and public pressure will continue to dictate the decline of tobacco use and what will and will not be considered acceptable in the future in making Queensland a healthier place to live.

A number of states have a range of different views. There is no one consistent approach in terms of the issue of tobacco smoking, but can I assure the people of Queensland and those organisations that have a great interest in this issue that we will consult with them widely, we will carefully consider everyone's views and we will hopefully come up with a solution that is acceptable to all.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (5.52 p.m.): The Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 bans smoking in enclosed places but it allowed certain exemptions. I would prefer to call them loopholes, but they particularly applied to licensed premises. The intent of this motion is to close that loophole that allowed people to still smoke in licensed premises. I myself have been a worker in the club industry. I was an RSL barman for two years and I saw the effect on my fellow workers of constantly being exposed to cigarette smoke day in and day out. The smokers themselves were not exposed to that smoke for the length of time that the workers were.

Then after I graduated as a GP I have had over 20 years in general practice and I have seen over 100,000 Queenslanders, and I have buried an awful lot more of them than I would care to think about and I have buried a fair few that died from passive smoking. I have been making this argument against smoking and against exposing innocent people to the smoke of other people for 30 years. It has taken an awfully long time to get where we are now.

The effects of passive smoking have not been disputed by anybody. It is about time that we made our workplaces safe. Even the hospitality unions are calling for a safe workplace for their workers. As well as a safe workplace we should have safe public places. If a hazard to this extent existed in a public place or a workplace in any other means where there was a risk of accident, there would be an absolute outcry because it is not a one in a million; this is something that is affecting hundreds and hundreds of people and we are turning a blind eye to it by allowing it to continue.

What I would ask the government is: why does it find it necessary to drag its feet on this matter? There have not been any arguments advanced on the government's side as to why we should still continue to have loopholes and smoke in these areas. It just cannot get the moral courage to legislate and protect Queenslanders. Let me make some comments on the amendment that has been moved. We will not be opposing the amendment because it is simply a statement of fact, but let me comment on two phrases in it. You have become 'involved in recent months in some preliminary consultations'. Well, good on you. This problem has been well established for over 30 years and the government has just got to some preliminary consultation in recent months.

Mr Livingstone interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I have been here since February and I am up here advocating a ban as soon as practical. Let us listen to a couple of comments that were just made by the Premier and the Health Minister. The Premier posed two questions. I would like to answer them for him. He asked how far Queenslanders are willing to go to protect children and nonsmokers. That is what the Premier just asked us. I can tell the House the answer to that, and there is no doubt about it: Queenslanders want to protect children and nonsmokers, and even posing the question is a bit bemusing to me.

The other question that the Premier posed is: why do clubs and pubs not get together and ban smoking themselves? Apart from the fact that industry self-regulation has not been a great success in a lot of areas, pubs and clubs have been aware of the problems for many years and have shown no interest. In fact, one could put a lot of money on the fact that they were instrumental in having this exemption in the 1999 act. So why can the government not make a hard decision?

The Health Minister said that public opinion has got us to this point. He is here to show leadership, not to wait until public opinion forces him to do something. He should show some leadership. Queensland should be a world leader in matters as basic as protecting people from harm—

Time expired.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (5.57 p.m.): In speaking to the motion as amended, I would like to make a couple of small points in relation to the matters raised by the member for Moggill. The first step in the modernisation of Queensland tobacco control legislation in actual fact was passed by the Borbidge government, but it was the actions of the Labor government subsequent to that which created the situation as it is now that tobacco products are banned in all but very few internal premises, and particularly in pubs and clubs.

If we have a look at the history of the legislation, in 2000 the Beattie government extended legislation even to cover herbal cigarettes, which are classified as 'other smoking products'. Its real commitment to cutting out the use of tobacco in any way, shape or form came with the release of the Queensland Tobacco Action Plan 2001 to 2003-04 which set out the government's intentions for addressing the health and social costs. To fulfil its commitment as outlined under that plan, it amended the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998, and that commenced in 2002.

If we have a look at the real commitment to banning cigarettes in relation to children and those people who may have had access, we could have a look at the act's requirements in relation to supplying cigarettes to under 18s. The main offence had an increased penalty from \$975 to \$5,250. It

also banned advertising banners and restricted the amount and methods of display of packs, required smoking products in retail outlets to display a good sized 'quit smoking', and there have been many people who have heeded that.

Similar to the member for Moggill, I have worked in pubs and clubs. I have probably also been on the other side of the bar and I would not hesitate to recommend a ban on smoking in pubs and clubs, but that is not what the government is about. The government would like to discuss with the stakeholders the implications of that. There are obviously serious health effects, and they have been outlined by all the speakers.

One of the things that has come out of the Tobacco Action Plan is that nearly all Queenslanders can now work indoors without being exposed to environmental tobacco smoke. The government has shown its real intention in that they commenced their review in November 2003 in relation to pubs and clubs, and it is the pubs and clubs who will have some serious implications in relation to banning of smoking.

As a medical practitioner I would have thought the member for Moggill may have been aware that most people smoke only when they drink, so maybe they have got to close pubs and clubs to stop smoking. There are some real implications for banning cigarettes in pubs and clubs. The government has, in fact, consulted in a preliminary way with stakeholders and will continue to do that. The Minister for Health has indicated that a discussion paper is under way and will be released, and the effect of that discussion paper hopefully will be to ban smoking in pubs and clubs. The reality is that this motion has arisen for no real reason because the government already has the matter under control and is working towards that ban.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (6.01 p.m.): It is my pleasure to rise to speak on this motion this evening. In doing so, as my colleagues have already said, we are proposing something that Mr Beattie has advocated he would support in Queensland, something the Health Minister has already promised yet failed to come good on, that is, the banning of smoking in hotels, clubs and casinos throughout Queensland.

We accept the amendment put forward by the Premier, but the proof of the pudding is in the action. This is an action that has been introduced in Ireland through legislation and has worked to great effect. The catalyst for this law was a joint report by the Health and Safety Authority of Ireland and the Irish Office of Tobacco Control. The report, entitled *Report on the health effects of environmental tobacco smoke in the workplace*, outlines the various risk factors and consequences of allowing smoking in the workplace.

In particular, the report points out that the effects of smoke in a hotel or club are worse than those of smoking in the home or in the office. The key theme to the report, which consequently led to the Irish Public Health Tobacco Act 2002, is that there are two ways to reduce exposure to and therefore the effect of environmental tobacco smoke. They are ventilation and legislation. The report, however, goes on to outline that all current ventilation devices are inadequate in keeping environmental tobacco smoke down to an acceptable level. I quote the report —

Of proposed new technology, displacement ventilation is viewed as having the potential for a 90 per cent reduction in environmental tobacco smoke levels but even this would leave exposure levels 1500 to 2500 times the acceptable risk level for hazardous air pollutants.

So if ventilation is not the most effective form of preventing environmental tobacco smoke, legislation is. There is a need to protect employees working in businesses where smoking is now present from the harmful effects of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. The reasons are clear: environmental tobacco smoke, or ETS, contains 50 known carcinogens and causes lung cancer and other forms of cancer. ETS causes heart disease and respiratory problems. ETS has adverse effects on reproduction. If ETS is present in the workplace it is likely to be of a higher level than that experienced in the home. These are the research conclusions of the report and to ignore them would be irresponsible on this parliament's behalf.

The Irish regulations which Mr Beattie was so impressed with enable the minister to legislate smoking out of a range of places. These include schools, public transport, hospitals and indoor entertainment premises. The most important, and we believe most effective, by-product of this legislation stems from section 46(f) of the Irish act, giving the minister the power to legislate to ban smoking in all or part of a licensed premises, registered club or place of work.

This regulation provides a safe environment for workers in the hospitality industry. The industry is an important part of the fabric of Australian society. The industry employs tens of thousands of Queenslanders and the health of these employees should be of paramount concern. We do not want the hardworking Queenslanders in this industry being the subject of cancer-causing substances or being subject to irritation of the eyes and respiratory system or having reproductive and cardiovascular problems.

There is no denying the health concerns that are coupled with passive smoking. As far back as 1986 the United States Surgeon General was writing of the adverse health consequences of involuntary

smoking. Since then there have been countless reports into the effects of passive smoking. However, all have come to the same statistics and conclusions. These conclusions are that those with medium level exposure to passive smoke, such as those working in a pub or club, are 25 per cent more likely to suffer lung cancer. This group of people are 28 per cent more likely to suffer heart disease and 82 per cent more likely to have a stroke. In the immediate term they are also more likely to suffer chronic respiratory symptoms such as coughs, excess phlegm which leads to shortness of breath, and chest colds.

To take these risks away would make perfect sense from a health perspective. This move also makes sense from an economic perspective. We already have a hospital system that is crippled under the strain of too many patients and not enough beds. Many of these patients are suffering from diseases that can be traced back to a lifetime of smoking. These are people who suffer decades down the track—people who, if not for smoking, may not be there.

Decades after this provision is introduced into Queensland we would see the tangible benefits in the area of health. Rates of lung cancer and heart disease will drop and overall health and life expectancy will rise. This measure also goes some of the way, as has been seen in Ireland, to changing the culture of socialising. We have seen, over the last 20 years, a shift from smoking being the thing to do—

Time expired.

Mr POOLE (Gaven—ALP) (6.06 p.m.): I rise to speak on the opposition leader's motion. In Australia the issue of tobacco law reform has had a varied response. No two states in Australia have a consistent policy and we need to consider the reforms in other states to ensure Queensland keeps pace with national and international standards in tobacco reform.

In the ACT smoking will be totally banned in enclosed places, including bars and gaming machine areas, by December 2006. The new legislation follows an examination of indoor air quality in exempt premises in the ACT which found that reliance on mechanical ventilation systems was insufficient to prevent environmental tobacco smoke exposure in nonsmoking areas.

In New South Wales legislation prohibiting smoking in enclosed public places and licensed restaurants was introduced in September 2000. This was extended to dining areas in pubs and clubs and gaming tables of casinos in September 2001. Smoking is not restricted in non-dining areas of licensed premises such as gaming machine areas and bars. A joint working group made up of industry and government representatives has been convened by the New South Wales government with the specific task of developing a time frame for eventual phase-out of smoking in licensed premises with recommendations to the Health Minister by mid this year.

In the Northern Territory from January 2003 smoking has been prohibited in enclosed public areas, including restaurants, shopping centres, schools—including the grounds—public transport and waiting areas, community and public facilities and other common access areas. From May 2003 all indoor workplaces became nonsmoking, with smoking areas permitted in licensed premises, not restaurants, subject to conditions. The Northern Territory legislation is to be reviewed again this year.

In South Australia a bill has been introduced that if passed will ban smoking in all enclosed places, including pubs, clubs and the casino, with a total ban coming into effect on 31 October 2007. There will be a staged introduction of the bans over the next three years.

In Victoria legislation took effect in 2001 which prohibited smoking in enclosed shopping centres, in all enclosed restaurants and cafes and dining areas of licensed premises. In 2002 the licensed premises gaming areas were varied according to the number of rooms, with at least one gaming room nonsmoking. An independent market research study conducted for Tattersalls to assess the impact of Victorian laws on revenue and customer satisfaction concluded that customers would experience a period of frustration and discomfort. However, a process of natural correction would find them returning to the gaming machines. More recently ABM-AMRO, a provider of wholesale investment banking products, found that gaming revenue is recovering and should return to the annual growth of five per cent by 2005.

Western Australians will make 80 per cent floor space in nightclubs and cabarets nonsmoking by 30 June this year. By 31 December 2006, smoking will be permitted in only one bar or room in hotels, taverns and other licensed venues and be prohibited in nightclubs and cabarets.

Finally, the Tasmanian government has announced that it intends to introduce legislation, to commence January next year, requiring nightclubs, cabarets, gaming areas and 50 per cent of outdoor dining areas to become smoke free and permitting only one smoking room in licensed premises and not within a metre of the bar area.

My family has suffered through smoking. It is a horrible addiction. My father died at 59, roughly my age, as a result of smoke related heart disease. My sister was 41 when she died from the same causes. During my years as a police officer I saw post-mortems. As a young police officer I remember seeing a nonsmoker's lung in a kidney dish and a smoker's lung in a kidney dish. It put me off smoking

forever. The difference is unbelievable. I wish everyone saw those kinds of things and then the horrible messages on smoking packets would work.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (6.11 p.m.): Tonight we propose the next logical step in what has been a long process in the battle against the effects smoking has in our society. It would be impossible for anyone to argue that smoking has no impact upon the health of either smokers or passive smokers as the evidence is simply overwhelming.

This debate tonight has highlighted a number of points. Firstly, the Premier whilst in Ireland this year made a statement that the tobacco laws in Queensland should be reviewed. We demand the first item on that review be to eliminate smoking indoors in pubs, clubs and casinos. If the government is serious, why the delay? Let us get moving on this. I note in the amendment proposed that there is the phrase 'preliminary consultations will occur'. We ask: why preliminary consultations? Consultations on this issue have been going on year after year.

We cannot understand the delay that has occurred, given the number of people who suffer from tobacco related illnesses. Queensland Cancer Executive Director Geoff Dunn states—

This is a health issue, not a smokers versus nonsmokers issue. Both smokers and nonsmokers know that passive smoking causes cancer, heart disease and asthma and that it is a killer—so they both support the move.

Asthma Foundation of Queensland CEO Paul McGregor states that many people with asthma were particularly vulnerable. He stated—

Smoke is the major irritant for many people with asthma. So they are caught, whether they are hospitality industry workers or patrons. Being in a smoky atmosphere can bring on an attack in people with asthma and could induce asthma of the first time in others. Situations for staff having to work in such an atmosphere over a long period of time is especially hazardous.

We therefore call upon the government to move urgently on this issue to ban smoking in pubs, clubs and casinos. There is no logical reason why this cannot occur. If the government is concerned about health issues, it should show it.

Secondly, there is the undoubted effect on the health of those who work in these industries from long-term exposure to passive smoking. As we know, tobacco contains over 4,000 chemical compounds, while employees working in a smoky atmosphere can inhale the equivalent of five cigarettes a day or a packet of cigarettes a week. In addition, about one-third of nonsmoking employees in licensed premises have been found to have four times the carbon monoxide levels of nonsmoking employees in smoke-free workplaces.

Thirdly, research undertaken by ACNielsen said that 81 per cent of adult Queenslanders approved of a ban on smoking indoors at pubs, clubs and casinos. When they were asked why, they replied they were concerned about passive smoking and its effect on health. Interestingly, one-quarter of Queenslanders believe a ban would make them likely to go to such venues more often. Two-thirds believe that it would make no difference and only eight per cent believe that they would go less often.

Fourthly, there is strong evidence that passive smoking, even for a short time each day, can lead to serious health issues. Recent evidence suggests that there may well be a link between passive smoking and breast cancer. I do not believe there is anyone who would argue with the point that the risk of passive smoking is real and that the illnesses generated from passive smoking are equally real and in some cases fatal.

Finally, the other reason for moving to eradicate smoking from pubs, clubs and casinos relates to the example we are providing to our children. Interestingly, in 1999 it was established through the triennial ASSAD survey that 61,000 schoolchildren between the ages of 12 and 17 were current smokers, with the average consumption of all schoolchildren being 24 cigarettes per week and 77 million cigarettes per year. These figures are disturbing and we call immediately for action by the government to ban smoking in pubs, clubs and casinos. The motion before the House today, though simple in words, would have a long-term benefit to the health of the people of Queensland and would save the families and loved ones of those who suffer and/or die from smoking related illnesses many days, weeks, months and years of grief, together with significant savings in medical costs to this state in years to come.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (6.16 p.m.): I am pleased to support the Premier's amendment to the motion moved this evening. Smoking is without doubt a disgusting habit. I should know because I did it for many years. I wish it was just that—disgusting. Unfortunately, the proof is there that smoking kills thousands of Queenslanders every year and disables many others. Thousands of children every year lose their dads and granddads to smoking. Unfortunately, these days many more mums and grandmothers are losing their lives to this addiction.

Queensland Health and the Queensland Cancer Fund have been working tirelessly for years to convince people of their need to give up smoking and then backing it up with assistance through Quit programs and the like. The review of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998, which is currently under way, should inform legislators of the next step. This is an important step. Consulting the community and taking on board their ideas and goals is the best way forward.

When we look at the overseas results, I believe we should be thinking carefully about adopting and adapting proven successful initiatives. Stakeholders will have a lot to consider if they choose to make a submission to Queensland's discussion paper on the future of our tobacco laws. For example, how far should our laws go?

The international trend appears to favour the strengthening of restrictions on smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces, with such legislation recently enacted in New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland and Norway. In New Zealand recent legislative amendments prohibit smoking in all indoor workplaces, including licensed clubs, pubs and gaming areas. The legislation will come into force in December 2004.

The Republic of Ireland will ban smoking in pubs, nightclubs and restaurants as part of a blanket ban on smoking in all workplaces. The laws were to have come into effect in January 2004 but were delayed until March 2004. I cannot wait to get over to Ireland because it will be even more pleasant in the pubs.

In Norway, smoking in restaurants, bars and cafeterias will be banned from June 2004. Smoking is now prohibited in restaurants, nightclubs and bars in five US states and hundreds of municipalities in the US and Canada. These include major cities such as Ottawa, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Dallas and Miami.

Following the implementation of New York's smoke-free workplace law, a report showed that takings in bars and restaurants had risen by nine per cent. The commissioner of the New York City department of finance has also stated that restaurants paid the city 12 per cent more in tax revenues in the first six months after the smoke-free law took effect than during the same period in 2002. The 2004 Zagat New York City restaurant survey provides additional evidence that New York City's smoke-free law is not hurting business. The survey of nearly 30,000 restaurant goers found that 23 per cent of respondents said they are eating out more often because of the city's smoke-free workplace law while only four per cent said they are eating out less.

California has had smoke-free bars since 1998 and studies of the Californian experience have found that the laws have become increasingly popular and have led to improvements in bar workers' respiratory health. A 2003 study in the journal *Tobacco Control* offered a comprehensive review of all available studies on the economic impact of smoke-free workplace laws and concluded that all of the best designed studies report no impact or a positive impact of smoke-free restaurant and bar laws on sales or employment. Policy makers can act to protect workers and patrons from the toxins in second-hand smoke confident in rejecting industry claims that there will be an adverse economic impact.

I must also put on the record my own astonishment at the Liberal Party's original motion. When Bob Quinn said that the split with the National Party was going to give the Liberal Party a different image, I did not expect such a bold step. So let me get this clear in my mind. The Liberal Party is supposed to be the party for business, both big and small. The proposal put forward tonight by the Liberal Party gives the impression that we should push quickly to ban smoking in pubs, clubs and casinos without examining the impact on those businesses and the public and, more importantly, without consultation. It is very interesting that the member for Caloundra wants to consult only those who agree with him. We actually need to consult with absolutely everyone, and not just those who agree with us.

I would have thought that the Liberal Party would have been urging just a little bit of caution because some initial assessments say that total bans on smoking indoors in Australia have all pointed to short-term financial impacts on businesses, but other ones have said that that is not the case. However, we are talking about consultation. The reason that the antismoking legislation that we have worked on has worked so well and was introduced without any conflict was that we were able to bring the public and the industry along with us. We did not push it through without consultation.

I was interested to hear the member for Robina say that we had not done anything. We amended the legislation in 2001 and 2002. We introduced things like further restrictions on advertising and display, further restrictions on smoking in public places and increased penalties. Did members opposite talk about it? In 2001 or 2002, did any of the Liberal team stand up and talk about it? Where was their concern then? Where was all this heart-felt concern for the people? It was not there. It is very hypocritical to come in here now and say that we have done nothing, when we have been one of the most effective governments in introducing bans and extra adjustments so that people will not smoke. We think that it is a vital thing.

I actually do not want smoking in pubs and clubs and I am hoping that it is banned, but I want to see the consultation process go all the way through to the end so that good legislation is enacted, not just the legislation that members opposite think they might like.

Mr Quinn: Do you smoke?

Ms MALE: Not anymore.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. G.R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Health) (6.21 p.m.): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Charters Towers Hospital Car Park

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (6.21 p.m.): The Charters Towers Hospital serves a huge area, and many patients, their families and friends drive to the hospital every day. Most of them have no choice but to drive because the people of Charters Towers do not have the luxury of subsidised public transport with services running to regular schedules.

I would like to bring to the House's attention the lack of appropriate parking at the Charters Towers Hospital. Patients visiting the hospital are unable to park within the hospital grounds and must park on the street in front of the hospital. This would not normally present a problem, but the Charters Towers Hospital is built on a high block of land and patients have often had difficulties making their way up the steep slopes in order to get to the hospital. Patients with disabilities or injuries face an even more difficult challenge in accessing the hospital grounds.

I have had a wide range of discussions with community groups, including the over 60s. I could not believe that the present and previous governments have not provided an outpatient and visitor parking area at the hospital. Many patients have no choice but to track uphill from parking in Gill Street to the hospital outpatients department. This is a hard walk for the sick, frail and elderly. I do not believe there are many hospitals in Queensland that do not provide parking for their patients. Some patients have family and friends who could drop them at the main entrance, but those people are then forced to find parking on the main street and trek back up the hill.

I would like to suggest that a parking area be provided within the hospital grounds. This parking area could be located in front of the nurses' quarters as the area is currently grassed. The cost involved would be far less than alternative locations. I have written to the Minister for Health asking him to take this up as a matter of urgency. Given that the project would cost very little, it should be one that the minister could direct his department to proceed with immediately because it would be a major benefit for the patients of Charters Towers. I have yet to receive a response from the minister and I ask him to look into this matter and act with haste.

Burpengary and Narangba Scout Groups

Hon. K.W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (6.24 p.m.): Tonight I wish to highlight the activities of the scouting movement in my electorate. In the last week I have had the opportunity to attend two annual general meetings, those of the Narangba Scout Group and the Burpengary Scout Group. In my electorate, scouting is a major activity for young people. The Narangba group has operated for 18 years and the Burpengary group is in its 37th year. Despite the ups and downs over that long period, both groups have been very successful.

The Narangba and Burpengary groups go from strength to strength, feeding from the population growth in the area. Like all volunteer organisations, fundraising has been a major effort during the year with both groups sending scouts to the jamboree in Adelaide in January 2004. With the support of local residents and businesspeople and hard work from many volunteers, the Burpengary group raised over \$31,000 towards the jamboree event and the Narangba group raised nearly \$20,000 towards the event.

Can members think for a minute about the volunteer work and effort that goes into raising this sort of money in the local communities, especially when one realises that there is strong competition from many organisations for funds? I think that the amount of money a local community organisation can raise is often a direct result of the work and effort of volunteers and, very importantly, the support and respect that the organisation has in its local community.

Both Narangba and Burpengary scout groups are well respected. Membership is strong with about 110 members and, very importantly, it is supported by nearly 20 leaders. Leaders are adult volunteers who develop and coordinate activities for young members. Both the Burpengary and Narangba groups are also supported by strong committees. I have been going to meetings of both groups for many years and have often spoken about the enormous amount of work and effort put in by volunteers. The truth is that without volunteer support, local business support and the community support, both those organisations would not be able to undertake the great work and support for young people in the local area. From what I have been able to observe, those local scouting groups promote good, strong leadership values for young and old alike.

Aged Care

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (6.27 p.m.): Last month I joined a large group of concerned Sunshine Coast seniors on Aged Care Action Day. Residents and staff at the Nicklin Lodge, at the

Sundale Garden Retirement Village in Nambour, invited me to attend their action day and take on board their concerns about the aged care funding crisis in Australia. More than 50 residents, their friends and families and staff at the Nicklin Lodge spoke to me about their concerns. The lodge supervisor spoke about her concerns now and for the future in funding aged care. She expressed concern that the federal government's proposed funding increase would not keep up with the increasing costs of aged care and described as a crisis the current situation involving the aged care sector.

At the meeting I heard how aged care facilities had trouble attracting nursing staff to work in aged care when they could achieve better pay working in hospitals or elsewhere. One staff member said that she could earn more money stacking shelves at Woolies. A volunteer said that she loved working with the seniors, but there were not enough jobs available to employ her. One resident's daughter said that she would love the industry to be able to attract younger staff and volunteers to work with the seniors. It is a disgrace that the industry cannot pay staff fairly to care for our seniors. We need to pay our staff what is fair and reasonable. We need the federal government to better support our staff, our many volunteers and our seniors.

At the meeting I saw many seniors, most in their eighties and nineties, signing petitions to the federal government. I understand that this was the first time that many of the seniors had signed a petition. Our seniors should not be worrying about living conditions and signing petitions. They need to be cared for with respect and in a professional and caring manner.

Last night the federal Treasurer brought down the federal budget, which I understand contains a capital injection for aged care of \$3,500 per place, with the money to be distributed before the end of June. Although the aged care sector lobbied for a \$10 a day increase in funding to make up for the lack of real growth in federal government funds over the last seven years, I understand that last night's budget posted an increase of only \$1.37 per resident per day.

An honourable member: Shame!

Mr WELLINGTON: That it is. This increase simply will go nowhere in terms of covering real costs already incurred, let alone those coming. Notwithstanding this, I note that the state budget is due to be brought down next month. As this state government has acknowledged the importance of our seniors by appointing a minister responsible for seniors, I seek leave to table a non-conforming petition signed by 355 Queenslanders which, in brief, calls for support for our Queensland seniors.

Leave granted.

Mr WELLINGTON: I table this petition in the House and call on this government to continue to lobby the federal government on behalf of our Queensland seniors. I made a commitment to those seniors that I would take their concerns to the state government. Accordingly, I call on the Minister for Health and the minister overseeing seniors issues to continue to lobby the federal government on behalf of our seniors and also seek support from their counterparts in other states and territories in Australia.

The aged care industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in this country. With the baby boomers ageing, our governments, both state and federal, need to be looking at the budgets on their tables and responding to the call for help. It certainly is a genuine call for help.

Time expired.

Corinda State High School

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.30 p.m.): I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the achievements of one of the high schools in my electorate, the Corinda State High School, over the past 12 months. Patrea Walton was appointed principal last year, following in the footsteps of Bernadette O'Rourke, who held the reins for many, many years. Both principals grasp enthusiastically all opportunities that result in better education and choices for the 1,400 students at that school.

Corinda High School was the venue for the first community cabinet meeting in February last year. Over 700 people attended this meeting to talk to the Premier and government ministers about a wide range of issues and concerns. It was great to hear the wonderful talent of the Corinda High School band on that day. The P&C's music subcommittee works hard to ensure that those little extras required by the music students in the school are provided without too much fuss. Some of the entertainment highlights were the musical *Little Shop of Horrors*; the big band festival, where students were able to play with James Morrison; the Noosa Jazz Festival; the moving opera; the minister's awards for excellence in arts; and participation in the Sherwood Street festival.

The Corinda State High School is renowned for its extraordinary boat building program, which has been in place since 1990. This is where the manual arts students build a boat from start to finish and sell it at the Brisbane Boat Show. The program was chosen as a district and state finalist in the 2003 Showcase Excellence Awards. As a result of their work in 2003, all year 12 students in this program were offered apprenticeships during 2003 for commencement in 2004.

The school is well advanced in making changes to reflect the education and training reforms for the future. Some of these changes include improvements in the area of information and communication technologies, attention to the middle phase of learning, and broadening the opportunities for students to access a variety of campus and off-campus learning. This also involved forming stronger partnerships with staff and students in the four main feeder primary schools to refocus attention and action on the middle phase of learning to ensure that students transition positively to the secondary school.

The annual general meeting of the P&C was an opportunity to congratulate and thank Mrs Jan Tovey and Mr David Rankin for their long association and commitment to the school P&C. They will both be moving on as the youngest of their children advances to higher education. Mrs Marice Schloss was re-established in the role of president and will continue her hard work over the ensuing 12-month period. It is great to see the P&C team work so well and the principal, Patrea Walton, and other teachers in the school achieve their objectives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank also the Treasurer and the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing for their assistance with the establishment of the Oxley Creek Common, which is located across the creek from the Corinda State High School. The school has used the common for grazing their cattle for many years. It would be great to see the common being used as an education facility for the benefit of animal husbandry students at all schools across Brisbane. The site has great potential for a diversity of interests since it was established as a community recreational facility about eight months ago.

Time expired.

Lockyer Electorate, Water Supply

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (6.33 p.m.): I would like to raise in this House the issue of the serious problem of a lack of water in the Lockyer electorate. Lake Dyer—Bill Gunn Dam—is virtually empty; Lake Clarendon is the same; and Atkinson Dam is very low. Moogerah Dam is at about 20 per cent capacity, but unfortunately this water is being sold to the Swanbank Power Station by SunWater.

We realise that the supply of water to urban areas is a priority and that it must take precedence. However, surely in the driest 10-year period on record and because Swanbank can access other water from Wivenhoe Dam it is up to SunWater and Swanbank to show some community concern to look after the area that the dam was originally built for and to sustain agriculture.

The primary producers of the area have no other option for water. Swanbank has another option, Wivenhoe water, which has been supplied to Swanbank for the past 12 months. Why can this not continue until the next wet season to at least help out the primary producers of the Warrill Valley region? I realise that there is no quick fix to our water problems. But to do nothing would be negligent on our part. The people of the Lockyer are waiting for the south-east Queensland Wivenhoe water report. It is important that this report is finished and circulated as soon as possible. The report will be able to support the right direction for our water strategy in the short to medium term.

There are some very exciting and innovative solutions to our water problems: we have water from Wivenhoe Dam piped across the Lockyer and also into Coominya Village, Ipswich reused water for the Lockyer and Warrill valleys, or we have part of a bigger scheme to help use of all Brisbane waste water for the Lockyer and the downs with the extra benefit of the nutrient-rich water not going into the bay. I cannot stress enough that the south-east water report must be completed so that we can have a better understanding of what water and where that water is available and how it can be used.

Let us try to solve the problem of water for the Lockyer. More water for the Lockyer electorate would make the whole area more productive. It would create more jobs. With a growing population in the area, this is the only sustainable way that we can get water to the area.

Palm Beach Protection Strategy

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (6.35 p.m.): Tonight I want to talk about the Palm Beach protection strategy. This issue has caused much controversy in my electorate. The Palm Beach foreshore is considered to be particularly vulnerable to erosion and there are serious concerns about the beach's ability to withstand a severe storm or cyclone. There is the potential for substantial damage to property occurring as well as the long-term health of the beach being jeopardised. Although the majority of property owners along the beachfront have some form of rock wall that offers them protection, less than 30 per cent of these walls are certified by the Gold Coast City Council.

The Palm Beach protection strategy was initiated in 1999 by the Gold Coast City Council. The strategy is part of a long-term approach by the council to implement the recommendations of the coastal management plan developed by the Queensland government in 1973. The implementation of the CMP is a local government responsibility and the Griffith Centre for Coastal Management was engaged to

develop and project manage the strategy through its initial stages, in conjunction with the council's beaches and watercycle infrastructure officers.

The overall short-term strategy includes several key components, such as the implementation of programs to upgrade substandard and public and private boulder walls. The walls are built to withstand a one-in-100-year storm and are required to be included in all new buildings or improvements in excess of \$25,000. Other key components include the continuation of dredging from Currumbin and Tallebudgera creeks; the increase of regular hydrographic surveys of Palm Beach to provide better information for detailed design; and the construction of a single reef in the vicinity of 19th Avenue to provide increased protection to the beach and properties in the area. The reef would be 280 metres long by 65 metres wide and 250 metres offshore, all made from geotextile bags filled with sand.

It is the proposal of this last component of the strategy that has caused the controversy. A storm of public protest erupted over the proposed reef. A large population of surfers reside in Palm Beach and have raised serious doubts about the effect of the artificial reef on the waves. There were complaints about the consultation process, which is generally acknowledged to have been poor. Concerns were raised about the lack of consideration of alternative designs and poor investigation. Overwhelming public opinion forced the committee chair of the Gold Coast City Council, Councillor McDonald, to withdraw her support for the proposal and to agree to further public consultation.

In the wake of this furore, the Palm Beach protection strategy consultative committee was formed. I accepted nomination to the committee and I have been attending meetings that aim to put both sides of the debate to a committee of stakeholders. It is my hope that this committee will reflect a true partnership between the community and the different levels of government. It is our aim to develop a policy that will allow for the protection of the beach and to provide security and value for money to Gold Coast ratepayers.

Caloundra Country Markets

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (6.38 p.m.): It was over 20 years ago that the Caloundra Hospital Auxiliary Markets, now known as the Caloundra Country Markets, opened their doors under the auspices of the Caloundra Hospital auxiliary. The markets have been located in a number of areas across Caloundra, including Kings Beach, Corbould Park racecourse, and now adjacent to the Caloundra Hospital. For many years the markets have operated and provided a livelihood to the stallholders and an income to the hospital auxiliary, which has been a great financial contributor to the Caloundra Hospital, purchasing many thousands of dollars worth of equipment for the benefit of patients and staff.

On average, in the past three or four years the auxiliary has donated in the vicinity of \$40,000 per annum to the hospital. At the same time the markets have injected \$500,000 per annum directly and many more thousands of dollars indirectly into the economy of Caloundra as a consequence of the stallholders purchasing items for sale.

The construction of the new courthouse in Caloundra meant that the site that had been available for a number of years on which to operate the markets would no longer be so. The final date on which to operate the market from that site was Anzac Day 2004. I must acknowledge the efforts of the officers of the Health Department and Justice Department in obtaining extensions to use the land to that date.

The Caloundra Hospital auxiliary made the determination that, due to rising economic costs, including public liability insurance, it could no longer operate the market as it had. However, the stallholders determined that, as the markets were an icon in the region, providing economic sustainability to them and a community outlet, they would set their minds to obtaining a new site. In their endeavour they had 2,000 people sign a petition and gave it to the Caloundra City Council seeking the council's support in locating a new venue. The council agreed unanimously to support the motion and urgent steps were taken, with the council officers to locate a suitable venue. In conjunction with Dicky Beach surf club, stallholders worked with the council and are moving to Central Park this Sunday for the first occasion.

The efforts of the stallholders are to be praised in that they never gave up on what they saw as an important issue. In addition, the Caloundra City Council provided urgent ongoing help to people who needed it. The battle as yet is not over, as the move to Central Park is likely to be temporary whilst a permanent location is sought. There are venues in mind, and the stallholders, provided they show the same tenacity as they have to date, will I am sure achieve their ultimate goal.

International Nurses Day

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (6.41 p.m.): International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every year on 12 May, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The International Nurses Day theme for 2004 is 'Nurses: Working with the poor against poverty'. Worldwide statistics tell the story. Fifty per cent of the world's population live on less than \$2 a day; 24,000 a day, mostly children, die from

hunger; 1.2 billion people do not have access to safe water; 70 per cent of the world's poor are female; and 54 per cent of the world's countries are poorer today than in 1990.

While Australia might fare better than the above statistics, there are areas still requiring significant input to improve the health and wellbeing of identified groups. For example, in Queensland the following statistics apply to our indigenous population. The gap in life expectation between Queensland's indigenous people and other Queenslanders is estimated to be 18 to 19 years. Considerable gains have been made in infant mortality rates since the early 1970s, but the reduction has stabilised in recent years and rates are still unacceptably high, at two and a half times greater than the overall Queensland rate. The estimated mortality rates for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in middle age—40 to 64 years—are amongst the highest recorded in the world.

Nurses play a vitally important role in helping to implement strategies to address issues such as family violence, alcohol and drug abuse and other factors impacting on the poverty health cycle. In Queensland we have 50,579 nurses caring for around 28,000 patients every day, and they do a great job. These nurses may work in a variety of settings, including acute in-patient, outpatient and community, and across our large state, from metropolitan cities to remote locations. The work done by these nurses is extremely varied and includes caring for a post-operative patient following a heart transplant, implementing a variety of health maintenance programs for newly diagnosed diabetics and monitoring the health of a patient with high blood pressure—even delivering babies, working with the royal flying doctors to retrieve a seriously ill patient from an outback station and looking after the daily needs of our elderly Queenslanders in aged care facilities. Our government is proud of the contribution our nurses make every day to the better health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

Nambour Hospital

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (6.43 p.m.): I rise to support the health services on the Sunshine Coast. In speaking about this issue, I note that when I have raised these matters the Health Minister and his Labor colleagues have taken to personal abuse and have tried to deny the issues which are very real and which are affecting health workers and their patients on the Sunshine Coast.

An opposition member: What's new?

Miss SIMPSON: That is right. Unfortunately, it is a case of shooting the messenger rather than listening to the message. Nambour Hospital, which is the base hospital on the Sunshine Coast, is one of the busiest trauma hospitals outside of Brisbane. It is not a little country hospital; it is one of the busiest trauma hospitals outside of Brisbane. That means there are a lot of true emergency cases presenting, and it does not have the option to divert to another tertiary level emergency facility. It is the first port of call and if it is resourced appropriately it has the level of skill to deal with those cases.

In the last few years we have seen severe attrition of some of the very specialists we need in order to see those tertiary emergency services continue as well as a great impact on the range of other services at Nambour Hospital and the network of other hospitals on the Sunshine Coast. Currently there are half the number of anaesthetists required to run the Sunshine Coast health district. Most of those anaesthetists are based at Nambour Hospital and provide outreach services to other hospitals.

During the election campaign the government came out and said that it was going to ramp up surgery at Noosa Hospital and Caloundra Hospital to take the pressure off Nambour Hospital and generally deliver better services, but it did not address the very specific issue of how to restore the specialist services that had been lost. The surgery cannot be done unless the anaesthetists are there to provide that very basic level of service that is necessary. The government has not addressed that. Good people have left the public system—from nurses through to specialists—because of the way they have been treated, the way they have been bullied, the way they have not been supported by Queensland Health and this Labor government and the way the indemnity issue was handled on the Sunshine Coast and throughout Queensland. We saw many very good, capable people choose to leave the public system because they did not get support from this government. What was the government's response? Personal abuse of those staff. We saw that with Wendy Edmond and, unfortunately, this Health Minister has continued to do that.

We need to see government support through proper indemnity cover for its staff. We need to see them not shoot the messenger but listen to the staff. It should give them a guarantee that when they speak up about the conditions they will not be attacked but listened to. We do not have a service unless those nurses through to the specialists are delivering it. A lot of the time the issues are not about money; they are about being listened to. The government should listen to what they are saying about a better way of delivering the services so that people do not have to wait five or six years just to get an appointment for basic surgery.

Time expired.

Anzac Day

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (6.47 p.m.): Like many other MPs, I attended school and community Anzac Day ceremonies. Once again, they were very moving ceremonies that made us really think about what it means to be Australian—our values and our responsibilities—and presented an opportunity to give thanks to those men and women who have fought to ensure that we keep our rights and freedoms.

For the past few years I have been given the opportunity to be part of the Anzac Day remembrance day ceremonies at schools and in the community. I am very proud that the schools and the community come together to mark this day as it is one of the most important days of the year. Shailer Park State High School this year had Mr John Aird, who prefers to be known as 'Jock', from the RSL Logan and District speak at its ceremony. Jock spoke of a lone soldier who had done his work and a lot more but was never recognised. The story he told reflects the majority of defence men and women who sacrificed their lives at war.

Shailer Park primary school also had a very moving ceremony to celebrate Anzac Day and to say thanks to the defence force men and women and their families. Children of all ages made wreaths and preschoolers made Australian flags to wave. Each class had a representative lay a wreath and school captain Nathan Schleeman told the assembly the history of Anzac Day. Mr Glen Court conducted both the Shailer Park State School and Shailer Park State High School bands at their ceremonies and, as usual, the band students gave a fine performance.

The terrorist attacks of recent years also remind us of how fortunate we have been in the past and how fortunate we continue to be to have such dedicated men and women willing to fight to protect our country. These men and women, some of whom are with us today and some of whom unfortunately are not, have significantly contributed to a safer Australia and a safer world. Even in these uncertain and unpredictable times we remain a free and much envied society. Anzac Day is a day of solemn remembrance, when we pause and recall the sacrifice of Australians who have been lost in war. We think of others who were wounded in action and others who suffered in so many other ways. We think of their families in their pain and grief and we express our profound gratitude.

I believe that Springwood residents and indeed all Australians can contribute to a better society. If we all make that effort, the result will be an even better community for us all. Continuing to celebrate Anzac Day is already making that effort. I am proud to attend Anzac Day services to thank the men and women of our defence force, who have earned the admiration and gratitude of all Australians. I also give my thanks to the families, without whose support our forces could not do their job.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge two of my closest friends, Melanie and Tony Piccini, who are in the public gallery tonight. They are celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary. It is fantastic that they can have their friends and relatives join them. Mrs Joan Harland, Janet Page, Vanessa Castles and Enio and Leah Piccini are all here tonight to celebrate the wonderful occasion of Melanie's and Tony's anniversary. I love them very dearly and I am very pleased that they are here with me tonight.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.50 p.m.